

## PLANTS NO LONGER AVAILABLE, BUT SHOULD BE

ELIZABETH McCLINTOCK

*Herbarium, University of California  
Berkeley, California 94720*

I wish to emphasize the changing fashions in ornamental plants. Perhaps this is because we now have a choice of so many garden plants and we like to have new ones from time to time. But this desire creates the fashions, making some plants more popular while others are neglected, thereby causing nurseries to discard those not asked for. Then there is a trend in the nursery industry for the larger wholesale nurseries to mass-produce, using their efficient methods for production of those plants most saleable. This results in the neglect or elimination of many useful garden plants. Fortunately, we have a number of smaller nurseries that propagate those plants that have gone out of fashion. In addition, botanical gardens, through volunteer propagators and plant sales, make available plants not to be found commercially. Both of these sources should be encouraged.

The British, who have had a similar problem, have begun to solve it through the formation in 1979 of the National Council for the Conservation of Plants and Gardens. It was organized through the cooperation of the Royal Horticultural Society, which sponsored publication of a conservation guide to garden plants. The book, *The Vanishing Garden*, calls attention to the loss of many good plants. It describes endangered garden plants in eighty genera and gives steps that can be taken to safeguard them. Recently I learned of what may be a comparable American organization, The Garden Conservancy, founded in 1989 and may accomplish a similar purpose for us. From their brochure it sounds as though the Conservancy may be more interested in saving gardens than plants; however, the first two gardens, which it chose to sponsor, are in California. They are Ganna Walska's Lotusland, Santa Barbara, and the Ruth Bancroft Garden, Walnut Creek, both known for their fine plant collections, including some interesting and unusual plants.

For today I have selected a few of the many good garden plants once available. Some were never common but can still be obtained. I wish to acknowledge the suggestion of some plants by my good friend, Philip E. Chandler, well known horticulturist and garden designer of Santa Monica, who has an extensive knowledge of garden plants.

The dates of introduction for a few of the plants discussed are from the unpublished list (dated August, 1964), *Dates of Introduction of Trees and Shrubs to California*, compiled by Harry

M. Butterfield, formerly Horticultural Specialist, Extension Service, University of California, Berkeley. He based the listed dates on his remarkable collection of nursery catalogs that go back to the earliest nurseries in California.

I hope that the following discussion will leave you with the thought that some plants once available should be used again, today, and in the future.

*Antigonon leptopus*. Mexican creeper. Coral vine. Polygonaceae (buckwheat family). Scrambling to strongly climbing vine. Leaves alternate, entire, heart-shaped, to 4 inches long. Flowers brilliant rose-pink in short racemes that end in a tendril. A striking vine, the bright flowers lasting for months. Native to Mexico.

*Angophora costata* (synonym *A. lanceolata*). Myrtaceae (myrtle family). *Angophora* is related to *Eucalyptus*; it differs in having separate petals, while in *Eucalyptus* the petals are joined with the sepals to form the bud cap. *Angophora costata* is a tree 30 to 40 feet or more tall, trunk smooth with bark peeling leaving the trunk with pink- to orange-brown spots. Flowers usually in 3s, white, petals 5, stamens many. Native to eastern Australia.

*Chonemorpha fragrans*. Apocynaceae (dogbane family). Robust vine with milky sap. Leaves opposite, large, up to 9 in. long. Flowers many, white, said to be fragrant, corolla about 3 in. long, lobes twisted to the right. Native to warm parts of Malay Peninsula. Belongs to the same family as oleander and thevetia, to be mentioned later.

*Crotalaria agatiflora*. Canary-bird bush. Leguminosae (legume family). Large shrub. Leaves composed of 3 leaflets. Flowers in long and showy racemes, petals canary-yellow, typically sweet-pea or papilionaceous in shape, the largest petal, the banner, reflexed. Native to eastern Africa. Has been in California since about 1900. I first saw it at Evans and Reeves Nursery, West Los Angeles, in the 1930s.

*Eucalyptus calophylla*. Myrtaceae (Myrtle family). Commonly called marri in Western Australia where it occurs in a limited area. Tall tree, bark rough, persistent, fibrous. Leaves alternate, with fine, more or less obscure parallel veins almost at right angles to the midrib. Flowers 3 to 7 in umbels, white to pink, showy. This eucalypt is similar to the red-flowered *Eucalyptus ficifolia* but its flowers are in pastel shades and its large, woody capsules are more deeply constructed at their apexes, forming a "neck."

*Lonicera hildebrandiana*. Caprifoliaceae (honeysuckle family). Giant Burmese honeysuckle. Vigorous evergreen vine. Leaves opposite, to 6 in. long. Flowers few in loose clusters, corolla to 6 in. long, slender, tubular, 2-lipped, yellow. This unusual honeysuckle has the largest leaves, flowers and fruits of any



honeysuckle. Native to Burma, Thailand, and southern China. In California since the 1930s, it was listed by Evans and Reeves Nursery in 1934.

*Loropetalum chinense*. Hamamelidaceae (witch-hazel family). Evergreen shrub, 5 to 6 ft. tall, branches slender, somewhat crooked. Leaves to 3 in. long. Flowers white, otherwise like those of the witch-hazel, with narrow, strap-shaped petals, each about  $\frac{3}{4}$  in. long. Striking shrub when covered with numerous flowers; does best in shade.

*Luculia gratissima*. Rubiaceae (madder family). Large deciduous shrub, to 16 ft. tall. Leaves opposite, to 8 in. long. Fragrant flowers in dense terminal clusters, to 8 in. across; corollas pink, about 1 in. long. Native to the Himalayas. This attractive shrub was never common but has been available.

*Magnolia denudata*. Yulan. Magnoliaceae (magnolia family). Deciduous tree, flowers numerous, erect, large, showy, white. Native to China, cultivated there for more than 1300 years. Introduced into California in 1854, an early introduction. Probably the finest Chinese magnolia for southern California. It is one of the parents of *Magnolia*  $\times$  *soulangeana*.

*Mandevilla laxa* (synonym *M. suaveolens*). Chilean jasmine. Apocynaceae (dogbane family). Deciduous vine with milky sap. Leaves to 6 in. long. Flowers showy, fragrant, corolla white, to 2.5 in. long. Native to Bolivia and northern Argentina. Probably never common. In California since at least 1935 when Evans and Reeves Nursery listed it.

*Montanoa arborescens*, *M. bipinnatifida*, *M. grandiflora*. Tree daisies. Compositae (daisy family). All have large, showy, daisy-like flower heads. Plants are large shrubs or small trees to about 20 ft. tall, with opposite, sometimes large leaves. Attractive and unusual because of its tree-like habit. The daisies are white.

*Oxera pulchella*. Royal climber. Verbenaceae (verbena family). An unusual member of this family because of its large flowers. Evergreen vine, leaves opposite, to 5 in. long. Flowers pendulous with white, trumpet-shaped corollas to 2 in. long and exerted stamens. Native to New Caledonia. Never common but in California since 1893. Evans and Reeves Nursery listed it in 1935.

*Pandorea jasminoides*. Bower vine. Bignoniaceae (bignonia family). Evergreen vine climbing without tendrils. Leaves opposite, composed of 5 to 9 leaflets, each to 3 in. long. Flowers few in clusters, corollas white, dark centers, 2 in. long. Two cultivars, 'Alba' and 'Rosea'. Native to Australia. An early introduction into California, listed first in 1858.

*Pandorea pandorana*. Wonga wonga vine. A vigorous, often pendulous climber, is related to *Pandorea jasminoides* but has many flowers and smaller corollas, less than 1 in. long. Young growth deep bronze. Native to Eastern Australia and New Guinea.

*Philadelphus mexicanus*. Hydrangeaceae (hydrangea family) but has been placed in the Saxifragaceae. Evergreen, scandent shrub, with long arching branches. Leaves opposite, to 3 in. long. Flowers solitary, fragrant, yellow-white, to 1-1/2 in. across. An attractive shrub, makes a good bank cover. Native to Mexico. Coolidge Rare Plant Nursery, Pasadena, California listed it in 1923.

*Pileostegia viburnoides*. Hydrangeaceae (hydrangea family). Like the preceding, also placed in the Saxifragaceae. Evergreen vine, climbs 20 to 30 feet into trees or may be a prostrate shrub. Flowers very small, white, numerous in dense, attractive, showy clusters. Native to northeastern India, western China, and Taiwan. Introduced from China by E. H. Wilson. Can be espaliered. In California since 1936.

*Prunus campanulata*. Taiwan cherry. Rosaceae (rose family). Deciduous, small tree, to 30 feet, with attractive deep rose, very colorful flowers in hanging clusters, during late winter, often February. Leaves alternate, to 4 in. long. One of the few cherries well adapted to southern California. Native to southern China and Taiwan.

E. H. Wilson brought it to the Arnold Arboretum in 1915.

*Reinwardtia indica* (synonym *R. trigyna*). Linaceae (flax family). Subshrub, about 3 ft. tall. Leaves alternate, die back in summer. Flowers bright yellow, 1 to 2 in. across, petals overlapping, very showy and attractive, but fall early. Probably never common. Evans and Reeves listed it in 1935.

*Rondeletia cordata*. Rubiaceae (madder family). Evergreen shrub to 7 ft. tall. Leaves opposite, to 5 in. long. Flowers pink, in large terminal clusters, corollas to 1/2 in. long. Evans and Reeves Nursery listed it 1935. This and *Rondeletia amoena*, also with large clusters of pink flowers are equally attractive shrubs. Both native to the American tropics.

*Sutera grandiflora*. Purple glory plant. Scrophulariaceae (snapdragon family). Subshrub, 3 to 4 ft. tall, stems sticky hairy. Leaves mostly alternate, sometimes opposite, 1 to 2 in. long. Flowers with phlox-like corollas, about 1 1/2 in. long, lavender to rose. The flowers, said to be fragrant, are seen throughout most of the year. Now being grown at San Marcos Growers, Santa Barbara, California, test garden.

*Thevetia thevetioides*. Apocynaceae (dogbane family). Oleander, and chonemorpha mentioned earlier, are in the same family. Shrub or small tree to 15 ft., with milky sap, evergreen. Leaves linear-lanceolate, to 4 in., leathery, veins conspicuous. Flowers several

together, corolla funnel-shaped, yellow, to 2 in. across. Can be grown in full sun or reflected light, but not in the desert. It is fall flowering. Native to Mexico.

*Thunbergia grandiflora*. Blue clock vine. Sky vine. Acanthaceae (acanthus family). Evergreen twining vine, rampant grower. Leaves opposite, to 8 in., angular lobed or toothed. Flowers large, few in drooping clusters, corolla blue, to 3 in. long. This attractive vine flowers from October to December.