

# English Gardens In America



The "Gaily Gardens To Walks Yards" in 1901

RALPH HANCOCK, F.R.H.S.

*Landscape Gardener to H.R.H. the  
Princess Victoria of England.*

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by

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44 OAKWOOD AVENUE

UPPER MONTCLAIR, N. J.

*Exhibition Garden*

Near Erie Station, Upper Montclair

Telephone: Montclair 2-1809

COPPENS  
EVER,  
RECEIVED,

31th. May 1880.

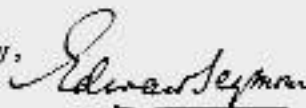
Dear Mr. Hancock,

I understand that you are shortly leaving for America to take up some work there, and I am writing this letter to wish you every success.

You will be glad to hear that the Gardens you designed for Princess Victoria continue to give every satisfaction, and are source of great pleasure to Her Royal Highness. Now that they are well established, they look extraordinarily well, and have been very much admired.

I wish you every success, and hope to hear from you when you return from America.

Yours sincerely,



Major.  
Comptroller to H.R.H. Princess Victoria.

Ralph Hancock, Esq.,  
P.O.B.S.,  
Asgarth,  
Sutton Common Road,  
Sutton,  
Surrey.

## In Comparison

**A**LTHOUGH it may be fairly said that gardening in the United States has been the most sadly neglected of the Arts, yet the rapidly growing interest discernible on all sides, promises to bring the country into the forefront of garden loving people of the world. One of the chief reasons for this apathy lies in the fact that skilled craftsmen have not been available, and repeated failure to produce a worth-while effect, has led to the entirely erroneous idea that climatic and other conditions militate against the building of beautiful gardens, such as are commonly seen in the European countries.

I cannot stress too strongly that this idea is an absolute fallacy. In my considered opinion this country has a natural advantage over England affecting major groups of plant life. I must qualify this by naming two important exceptions. The Rose is not grown so well here as in England, and the extremes of temperature make the cultivation of good lawn grass extremely difficult. In the case of the former, the rose growers of this country are yearly improving this branch of horticulture, by the elimination of unsatisfactory varieties and the introduction of new. It has, indeed, been my pleasure to see many beautiful rose gardens in the States of New Jersey and New York. In the case of trees and shrubs—coniferous, deciduous and evergreen—the United States has an all-round advantage. The quicker growth and more prolific flowering should be a source of great encouragement to the American horticulturist, and the failures may be attributed solely to

unskilled treatment. The result of this mismanagement may be seen in the average American garden. The owners of the most beautiful homes are content to plant their grounds with masses of evergreens and grass lawns. While it may not be agreed that such planting is sombre and depressing, it must be admitted that there is great opportunity for improvement.

During the last few years I have designed and constructed in England, anywhere from thirty to fifty complete gardens per year, and from this experience I have come to the conclusion that the best results are obtained by leaving proposed garden work in the hands of a first class landscape man. It is my firm conviction that the man who designs the garden should also execute the work, as he alone is able correctly to interpret his own ideas. One frequently observes that when an architect designs a garden, and a builder or landscape man carries out the designs, the result is hard and lifeless.

I shall be pleased to render advice and quote for work without charge. I have photographs of all types of gardens which may be helpful in conveying my ideas.

RALPH HANCOCK.

WHEN H.R.H. The Princess Victoria, sister of H.M. King George V. of England, recently acquired a new property, I had the honour of constructing new garden features which included the Rock and Water Garden shown below.

The Princess is a keen gardener with excellent taste, and working to the instructions of this gracious lady was a great pleasure. For various reasons rock and water gardens photograph very badly, and the photograph does not do the subject justice. The watercourse includes one main waterfall and two tiny falls but, unfortunately, these are not seen in the picture. This also applies to the alpines, heathers, etc. in flower.

A clearing made in a small wood provides a charming background for a rock and water glade of this type.







**J**UST a mixture of the formal and informal, but charming and restful in the extreme. There is a great vogue in England at the moment for this type of garden.

The idea running through it, drifts from the formality of the stone garden-house and tiny terrace, through the informal rock and pool garden, and thence into wooded and semi-wild ground not included in the photograph.

All the trees, shrubs and plants necessary in its formation, are subjects that do excellently in America. This is a very suitable type for a small piece of ground but would be equally effective on a larger site

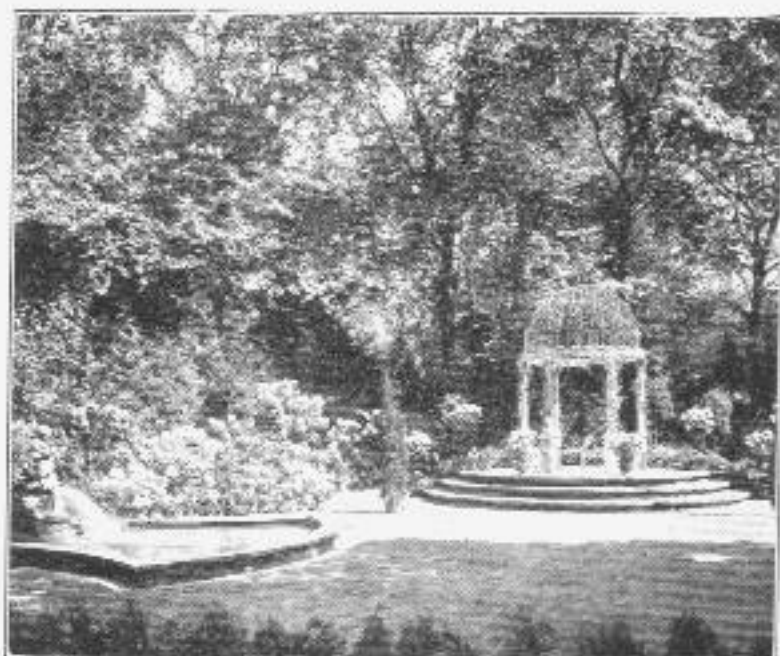


A Rock Garden constructed of heavy pieces of rock, as shown in the photograph, requires a heavy background of trees but, in a suitable setting, forms a garden of great beauty and unlimited interest.

Many people have commenced their interest in rock gardening content with rockeries made of boulders, trap-rock, or any other old stone that may have been lying about. As their keenness and knowledge increase, however, they find that a perfectly constructed and stratified garden of limestone is necessary for the intelligent pursuit of this fascinating subject.

Limestone — owing to its moisture retaining properties — is technically as well as artistically, the most suitable of all stone for rock gardening.





OF no particular design, but featuring a beautiful old Italian Temple, on a plinth of Portland Stone. The Temple shown above is of a great age, but reproductions may be obtained at very reasonable figures.

The pool on the left of the picture is somewhat unusual in design. The rock-baby fountain provides the water-music necessary to the dignified air of the scheme. In these Temple Gardens, the planting should be of a rather heavy nature. Low plantings or narrow borders would be lost.

Borders and banks of trees and shrubs should not resemble a hard uninteresting wall, but should be skillfully planted to exhibit the varied hues of the foliage to their best advantage, and to bring out the natural shapeliness of individual trees and shrubs.



A mirror-like pool is the centre piece of this circular, sunk garden, and the photograph serves to show the desirability of keeping pools clear of aquatic plants and vegetation, in order to get the beautiful reflections of the clouds and surrounding trees in the pool.

A planting of perennials may be substituted for the rhododendrons shown above, and the whole may be encircled by a planting of evergreens or deciduous trees.

It will be noticed that the paving stones are cut to radiate from the centre. Metal frogs, lizards and gnomes are frequently used to spout water into pools of this type, but the writer prefers the beauty of a small statuette to anything grotesque for this purpose.



IN the construction of a Japanese garden the choice of suitable plants is somewhat restricted, but fortunately those available are extremely colourful. The use of stone lanterns, metal birds, rustic pergolas and tea-houses, positioned with a knowledge of the subject, can always be depended upon to produce a charming and quaintly realistic effect.

Flowering cherries and almonds, wisteria, azaleas, irises and lilies, will give plenty of colour during the spring and early summer, whilst Japanese maples in their varied hues are very helpful in the later summer and fall.

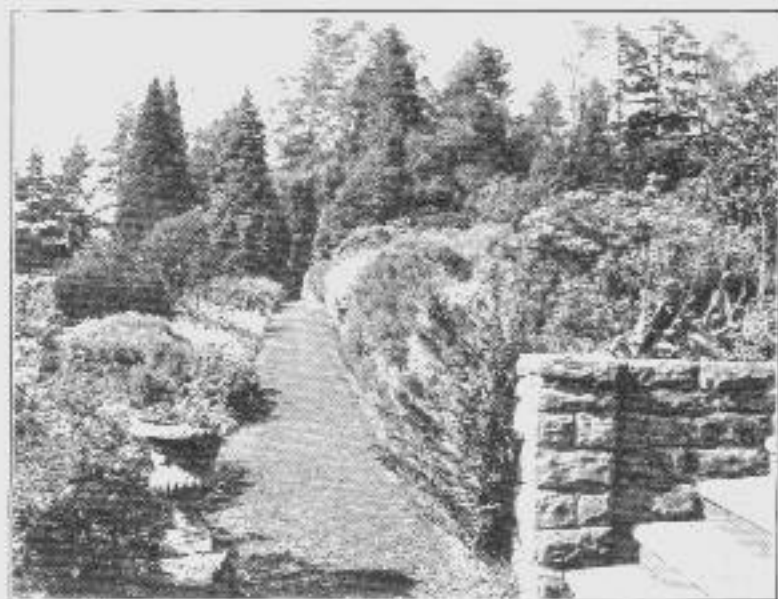
If a small natural pond is available, very little further construction is required to evolve a charming Japanese garden.



IT would be difficult to improve the air of restfulness and charm produced by this garden feature. Simplicity is the keynote of design, and the general idea of repose is enhanced by the tinkling sound of water flowing from the horn of the rock-baby fountain.

The pool reflects the blaze of colour in the borders surrounding it and, if designed in distinct relation to the character of its surroundings, may be altogether beautiful. The borders in the background may be planted as a rose garden, and in other circumstances may be rounded up by a pergola of stone carrying climbing roses.

This type is often used as a secluded spring or bulb garden. Note the crazy stone edging to the pool, planted with tiny paving plants.



THE above method of terracing solves the ever recurring problem of treatment for sloping ground, in a very beautiful manner. The effect on the right hand side of the grass walk is produced by the planting of suitable walling plants in a dry retaining wall built of York sandstone blocks. These blocks are tinted in browns, blues, greys and yellows, and form a wonderfully effective wall.

This garden may be criticised on the grounds that the plants have been allowed to cover the wall completely, thus hiding its beauty. This difficulty could be easily overcome.

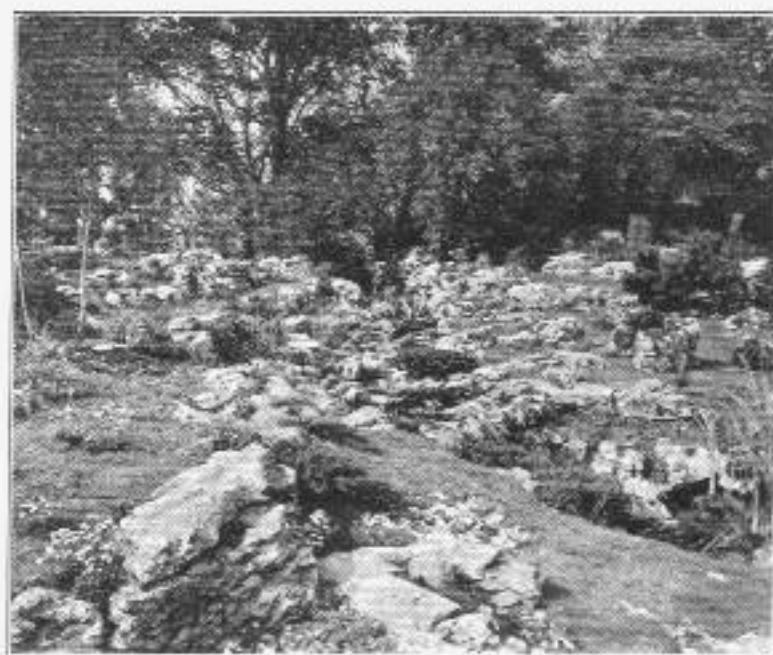
A wall is undoubtedly the most natural setting for the majority of rock plants and those of trailing habit could not be seen to better advantage than when growing and hanging on the face of a picturesque dry stone wall.



THE rock used in this Rock and Water Garden is the beautiful weathered and waterworn mountain limestone, which occurs on the borders of England and Scotland. No stone in the world is comparable with this limestone for rock gardening. Beautifully laminated, with evidence of countless years of erosion, many of these pieces of rock are miniature gardens in themselves.

Rock and water gardens are deservedly the most popular type in England to-day. The expert craftsman endeavours to reproduce sections of natural rock formation which, by reason of their beauty, have left an impression on his mind. The sound of water falling over rocks conveys an unequalled sense of restfulness and calm. A garden of this nature may be constructed on level or sloping ground.





ROCK and water gardens, rock glades and rock schemes generally, can be adapted to sites of any size, of either an undulating or flat nature. Any odd corner of the garden can be transformed into a restful, intimate nook, either with or without a tiny pool and stream, whilst a smooth hillside can be as easily treated to produce a rocky effect.

In gardens of this nature, the planting possibilities are unlimited. Large and dwarf coniferae, flowering trees and shrubs, and alpinas in thousands of varieties may be arranged to produce an effect of beauty beyond the power of words to describe.

Where no natural water exists, the introduction of water into a scheme of this nature is often regarded as a serious difficulty, but for a very small charge town water can be used as a substitute.



THE crowning glory of a Rose Garden most certainly lies in its arches and pillars, and the garden shown here was designed to display bush roses in an ideal setting.

The walling and stone pillars may, of course, be constructed from any stone, or even brick, but the soft toned Cotswold stone harmonises perfectly and is difficult to beat for this purpose.

Again, the vista through the wrought iron gates, the tiny pool and fountain in the centre, endows the whole scheme with an intimate charm.

The walls are built "dry", that is, without cement, and may be planted between the stones with countless varieties of walling plants, producing an altogether delightful and furnished effect.



**T**HE Dutch Garden at Kensington Gardens, London, one of the most famous Sunk Gardens in England, and no doubt familiar to many American travellers, has often been reproduced by the writer.

It will be seen from the photograph that the flower borders are on three different levels, divided by low walls and grass walks. The three borders may be planted with perennials, roses, and annuals, respectively.

A central fountain figure may be substituted for the lead tanks shown in picture if desired. The tubs standing on the edges of the pool are planted with the beautiful *Agapanthus*, which in America is half hardy.

Flower borders should not be a collection of single plants, each trying to make a show on its own, but a verdant and colourful massed combination from early spring to fall.