

Exhibit Mary Garden
 Philadelphia Flower Show
 March, 1968, Martha Ludei, Gerra

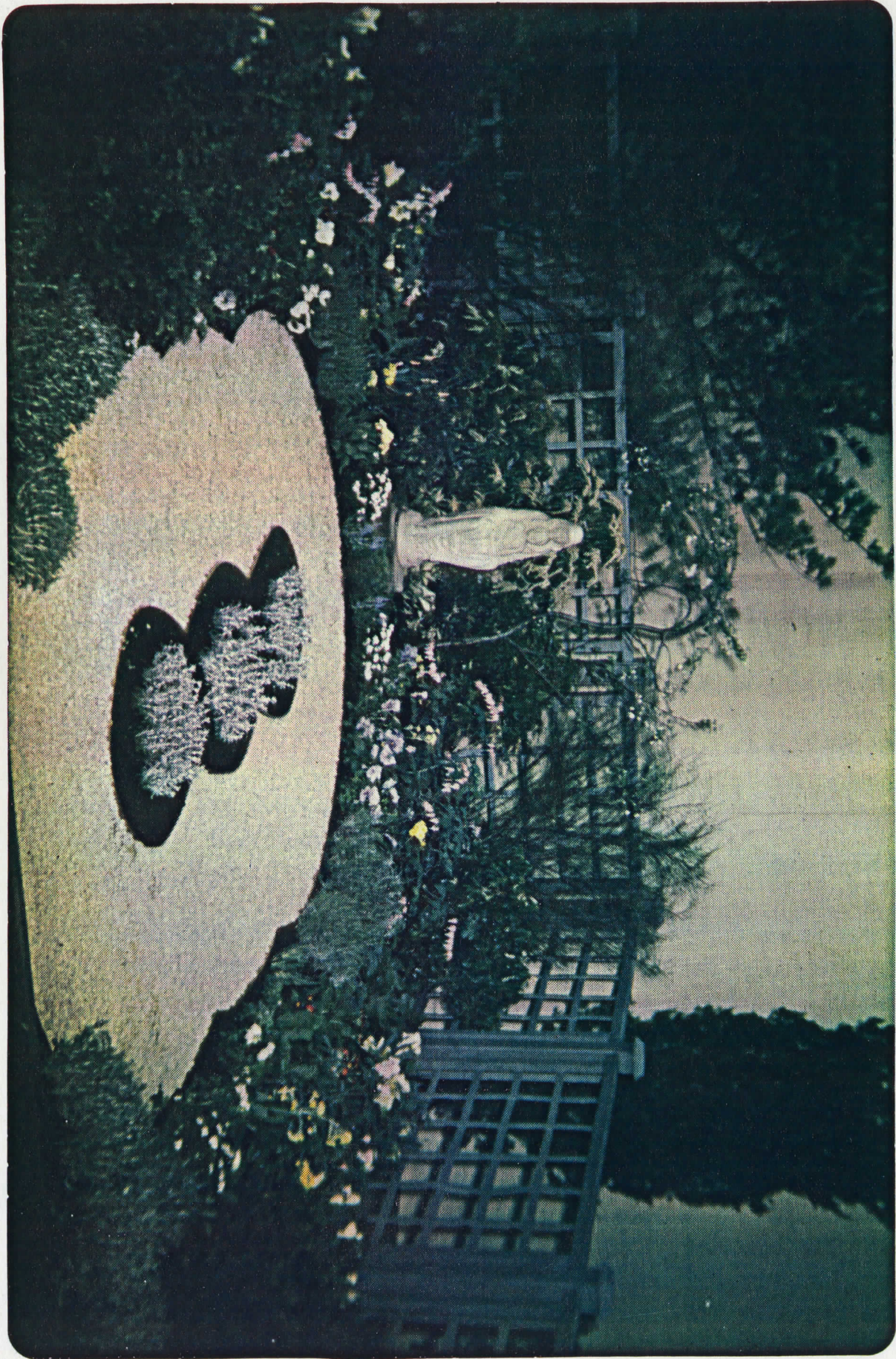


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Show Includes Mary Garden

A contemporary Mary Garden society will have, as its focal perennial - which provide a succession of blooms through the growing season.

figure, a sculpture of the Madonna and Child as the "Seat of Wisdom". The figure is a contemporary artistic interpretation by the liturgical artist, Ade Bettune of Newport, R.I.

In keeping with the historical transfer of symbolism among similar plants, some garden species, strains and hybrids commonly used today have been substituted in this garden for similar wild species of the same genera originally bearing the symbolism in the world - wide documented research.

The Mary Garden exhibit is composed mostly of plants blooming in Philadelphia and other north temperate climates in late April and "Mary's month of May". Actual Mary Gardens utilize a broader selection of plants - annual, biennial and

perennial - which provide a succession of blooms through the growing season.

Lists of 200 plants and further information are available by mail (only) from Mary's Garden, 124 W. Chestnut Hill Ave., Philadelphia, Pa. 19118. The library of the Pennsylvania Horticultural Society, 325 Walnut St., Philadelphia, contains books giving background information and also files of articles and plant lists.

The exhibit garden has been designed and its plant materials selected and prepared by Mrs. Garra, a consultant in horticulture, garden lecturer and close associate of Mary's Gardens.

Mary's Gardens founded in 1951 by two Philadelphia Catholic laymen, Edward A. McTague and John S. Stokes, Jr., is an educational and consulting partnership dedicated to restoring appreciation of medieval religious flower symbolism and religious stewardship in present day popular religious and gardening traditions.

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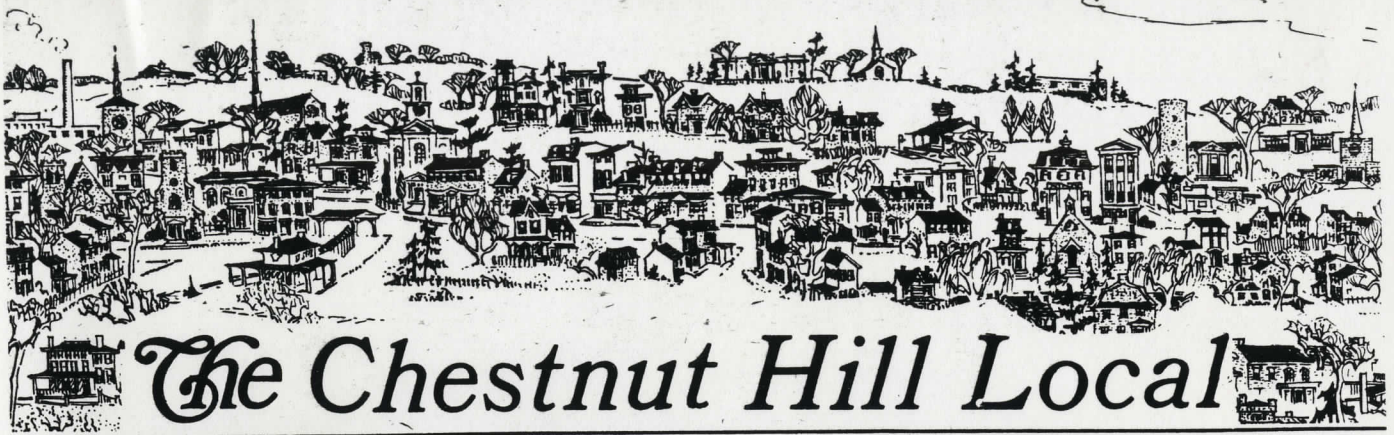
The garden designed as an educational exhibit of the flower show at the invitation of the Pennsylvania Horticultural Society

are being "forced" for March bloom in greenhouse of Ernesta Drinker Ballard of Chestnut Hill, director of the Pennsylvania Horticultural Society which is managing the show.



GETTING READY . . . Martha Ludes Garra, horticultural consultant and lecturer of Ambler, and John S. Stokes, Jr., of Chestnut Hill, examine plant materials and sculptured figure for "Mary Garden" they will exhibit at the Philadelphia Spring

THE AMBLER GAZETTE, AMBLER, PA., MARCH 7, 1968



The Chestnut Hill Local

8419 GERMANTOWN AVE., PHILADELPHIA, PA.

THURSDAY, MARCH 7, 1968

John Stokes To Put "Mary Garden" In Phila. Flower Show, Mar. 10-17

by Marie Jones

John Stokes has his own version of "Flower Power!" The Chestnut Hill resident and co-director of Wellsprings Ecumenical Center, sees in medieval rural traditions a new approach to the cultural, political and economical renewal of present day society. His participation in the "Mary Garden" which will be displayed at the 1968 Philadelphia Flower Show

next week is evidence of that belief. The show will be held at the Philadelphia Civic Center from March 10 to 17.

A Mary Garden is a collection of plants which in medieval times were given names and symbolism reflecting popular religious life and thought, Stokes explained. A convert to Catholicism, Stokes first conceived the idea of Mary's Garden back in 1949 when he met Edward A. McTague, who then lived at 113 Bethlehem Pike. He was attending a course given by McTague at St. Joseph's College Institute of Industrial Relations. (Coincidentally, this reporter was taking the same course and eventually bummed many rides to the evening school with Stokes and McTague and was witness to their conversations.) During the drive back and forth to 18th and Stiles, the two discovered their mutual interest in religious flower symbolism and entered into a spare time partnership under the name "Mary's Garden." Their idea was to make available background information, seeds and planting instructions for others interested in starting gardens in honor of Mary.

Formalized Religion

The two men felt that the formalizing of religion had the effect of separating it from the life of the people so that

it has become increasingly irrelevant and lacking in vitality. "A significant example of this," says the soft-spoken Stokes, "is the progressive withdrawal of Marian spirituality from its central dynamism in medieval Christian life to the peripheral areas of superstition and social reaction in contemporary society."

The founders of the Mary Gardens tried to discover clues to the medieval dynamism as evidenced by the extensive dedication of cathedrals, countries and lives to Mary. "Rather than through the formalized, institutional Church as it exists today," explains Stokes, "medieval man had an immediacy and directness in his relationship with God through Mary. He saw Mary as the scriptural and theological model for man's call to collaboration with Christ in building His heavenly kingdom on earth," Stokes says that it was be-

cause of Mary's symbolization of medieval man's closeness to God and his call to collaboration with God that all medieval life was penetrated with the dynamism of Marian veneration.

Oral Traditions

In the rural traditions of medieval Europe, herbs, flowers, shrubs and trees



John S. Stokes Jr., (center), Edward A. McTague and Martha Garra examine plants and sculptured figure for "Mary Garden" to be displayed at Philadelphia's 1968 Spring Flower Show, March 10-17 at the Civic Center. The plants are being forced in the Chestnut Hill greenhouse of Ernesta Drinker Ballard, executive director of Pa. Horticultural Society. Photo by Edmund B. Gilchrist, Jr.

were widely known by names and symbolism reflecting man's feelings about Mary. Thus the Bleeding Heart be-

came known as "Heart of Mary;" the Columbine was called "Our Lady's Shoes," and the Periwinkle was named "The Virgin's Flower." These names evidently were circulated in the popular oral traditions of the medieval period by mendicant monks, pilgrims, warriors, wandering scholars, roving singers, merchants and other travelers. Monasteries, then the centers of horticulture and places of refuge and hospitality for travelers, established small gardens of such plants, and dedicated them to Mary. The famous pre-reformation Mary Garden at Melrose Abbey, Scotland, is the subject of the first chapter of Rosetta Clarkson's book, "Green Enchantment."

The educational exhibit garden at the Flower Show has been designed and its plant materials selected and prepared by Martha Ludes Garra of Ambler, professional landscape architect, garden lecturer and close associate of Mary's Gardens. Mrs. Garra,

also a Catholic, was the original horticultural advisor to Stokes and McTague in the founding of Mary's Gardens, and has collaborated with them for over 17 years.

"Seat of Wisdom"

The Mary Garden that will be on display at the Civic Center is composed of plants blooming in Philadelphia and other north temperate climates in late April and "Mary's month of May." The focal figure of the Madonna and Child as "Seat of Wisdom" used in the exhibit garden is a contemporary interpretation by the liturgical artist, Ade Bethune of Newport, Rhode Island, of the

medieval Romanesque "Virgin in Majesty."

Stokes says that the contemporary insight of "Flower power" represents a secular rediscovery of the profound

appropriateness of the medieval adoption of flowers as symbols of Mary. "While it is not to be expected that nature symbols will become the medium through which

popular religious tradition will be restored in a modernized, increasingly urban society," says Stokes, "the Mary Garden does have an important message for us as a foundation for a new age of faith. Very possibly the new religious dynamism will come through the popular media of radio, TV, newspapers, theater and the arts, and it will come independently of institutional religious control, with institutional religion in a relationship of service and dialogue to such restored popular religious tradition."

"As institutional religion is restored to its servant role," says John Stokes, "we can expect that Christians will rediscover a more direct and immediate relationship with Christ. We can also expect that Mary will once again be venerated as the dynamic model of their collaborative relationship with Christ in the building of the earthly kingdom."