

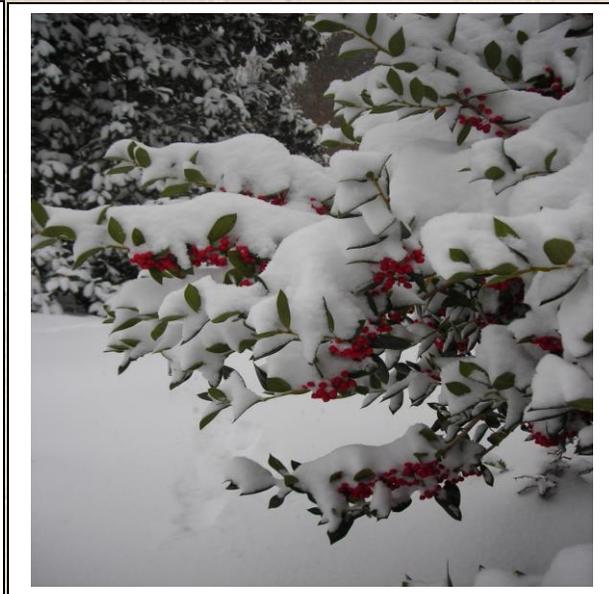
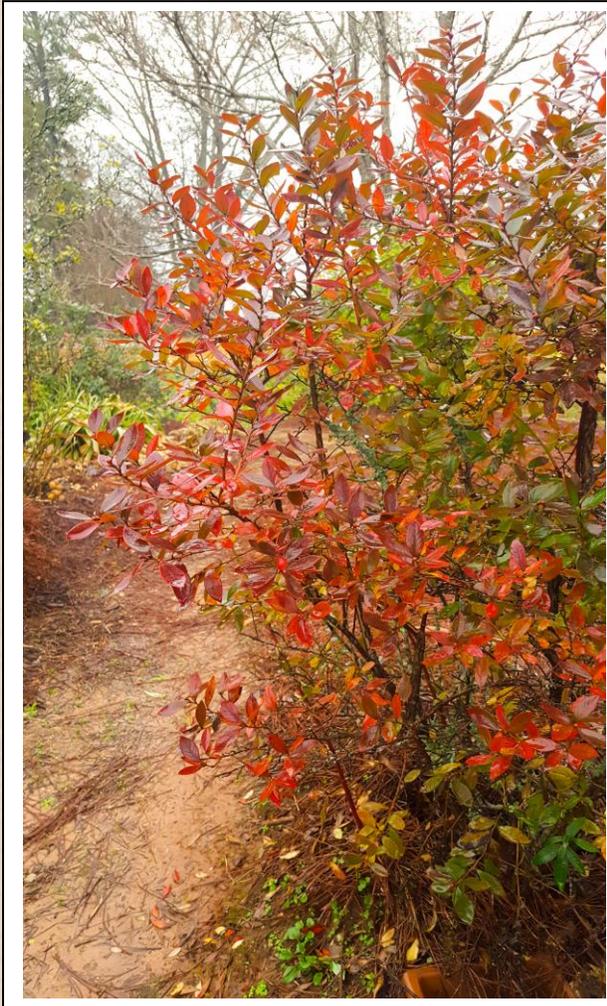
Greg Freeman's Garden Chronicle



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The summer of 2018 proved to be a hot, sticky mess like most summers in the American South. As usual, I neglected my garden greatly, but I did manage to dig dozens of daffodil bulbs and divide clumps of irises this year to give away, and I spent much of my energy doing more maintenance work than anything. Hand-pulling weeds, tidying up a bit and putting down pine straw for mulch was a process that I completed in increments. While those fire ant stings, mosquito bites and afternoons spent sweating like a horse seemed more like a deterrent to further garden visits, I think my garden will be in better shape in 2019 because of my stubborn persistence. The garden will certainly be more inviting due to the improvements and some bulb additions this fall.

While I have nothing particularly earth-shattering to report from my garden or gardening activities, I am pleased to share that a last-minute decision to make a honeysuckle cross has resulted in several developing berries from which I can harvest some promising seeds in due time. Also, I collected and refrigerated a number of seeds from a 2018 Echinacea cross. After failing to get some seeds to germinate from a similar cross in 2017, I hope I have better luck in 2019 with these chilled seeds.

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Familiar Autumn and Early Winter Sights: *Vaccinium corymbosum* ‘Sunshine Blue’, *Ilex* laden with snow and berries and *Narcissus* HK2-08, a fall/early winter-blooming daffodil from Dr. Harold Koopowitz, Santa Ana, California (USA)

Who would have thought that a blueberry bush could be so attractive in the fall and early winter? This one fails to disappoint. Rich, bold leaf color in autumn, delicious berries in summer! ‘Sunshine Blue’ is great for gardens where lower chill hours are common. For a great blueberry muffin recipe from a famous Smoky Mountains restaurant, visit this [page](#) at SouthernEdition.com, a Greg Freeman publication devoted to the American South. Though there has already been some late 2018 snowfall, this photo of a snow-draped holly was taken in 2011. And, lastly, the daffodil photo is a Koopowitz seedling that has already produced a lovely seedling. (See the April 2017 issue of the [Garden Chronicle](#).)

I think it is important to face any new year with optimism. So many circumstances beyond our control will distract us from time to time, even throw us off course, but it is important that we persevere, no matter what comes our way. As you begin 2019, I wish you a glorious year of happy gardening, and I look forward to crossing paths with many of you at a show, garden club meeting or other event. In the meantime, Happy New Year!

Greg Freeman, Publisher

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“Tea for Two, Please”

For at least two years, Jane Cox, a friend of mine in the Atlanta area, and I talked about getting together for afternoon tea at the St. Regis Hotel in Buckhead, but our schedules always seemed to conflict. To my complete and pleasant surprise, Jane phoned me out of the blue on Monday, October 1, 2018 to inquire if I had Saturday plans. I replied, “I have a Georgia Daffodil Society meeting in Buckhead on Saturday at noon, and after that I’m free.” Within seconds of answering her call, I found myself with exciting Saturday afternoon plans at the St. Regis, and the forthcoming experience would leave me feeling pampered like a king.

In the small town near which I live, a tea room once had occupied a charming old house along Main Street, and a friend and I went there on several occasions. We enjoyed sampling the various teas, and the food was always up to par, but I had never had a proper afternoon tea like one might experience at a London hotel such as Claridge’s, Brown’s or the Athenaeum. Atlanta, including the decidedly affluent Buckhead district, once boasted of at least three hotels offering afternoon tea, namely the Four Seasons Atlanta in Midtown, the St. Regis Atlanta, located at Eighty-eight West Paces Ferry Road, and the Ritz Carlton Buckhead, but the latter is now the Whitley Atlanta Buckhead and no afternoon tea options are available. In the past, Jane had taken tea at both the St. Regis and the Ritz Carlton, strongly preferring the St. Regis and its ambience, as opposed to the Ritz Carlton where tea had been served in a noisy atmosphere near the hotel bar. So our dining destination choice had already been made obvious to both of us, due to her past experience with the St. Regis and our lack of knowledge regarding the Four Seasons.

That Saturday, I navigated the congested Peachtree Road from the Cathedral of St. Philip (where my GDS meeting had been held) to the St. Regis, which is within view of the church but seemed light years away with the six-lane road bottlenecking into just a couple of lanes to permit an inconveniently placed crane to be employed for more high-rise construction. After I finally made my way to the hotel on nearby West Paces Ferry, I relinquished my car to the attending valet and found a comfortable chair in the opulent lobby.

Jane arrived momentarily and we headed up a grand staircase (that would take Scarlett O’Hara’s breath away!) to the second floor where tea is served in Astor Court. The AAA-Five Diamond St. Regis Atlanta is renowned for its luxurious accommodations, butler service and resort-like amenities, including a 40,000 square foot pool and a spa. The elegant Astor Court setting, replete



Be sure to check out www.GregFreeman.garden for original video content, including a follow-up to the last issue’s article, “Planning and Planting for Old World Flavors.”



with bespoke furnishings and overlooking a gorgeous lobby illuminated by a magnificent crystal chandelier, proved to be a sign of things to come, as our afternoon tea experience was exemplary.

From the amazing array of premium teas from which to choose to the delightful assortment of mini sandwiches, canapés and pastries, the St. Regis ensured that neither of us left feeling hungry. I was particularly impressed by the service. While Jane had made a reservation and staff would have known her by name as a result, the waiter, Harry, seemed to remember her well from her previous visits. Every attempt to guarantee our satisfaction was made. It was a most pleasant and relaxing afternoon that will continue to inspire me to both return for another visit and to take my tea rituals at home to the next level.

Enjoying a Grand Tea at Home

Of course, one should jump at any opportunity to take tea at a posh hotel such as the St. Regis, but tea lovers can enjoy the experience at home where it can be quite simple or grandiose, laid back or very formal, depending on whether one is

dining alone, throwing a party or merely trying something new. I have had guests over for very informal afternoon teas with small sandwiches, mini spanakopita triangles, and a cheese selection, and I hope to host a garden party in the near future that could prove a bit more elaborate.

When having tea, it is important to remember that one need not imitate a scene in *Downton Abbey* to make it enjoyable. While afternoon tea, both in its origins and traditional presentation, is distinctly British, it is entirely possible to have a great tea experience and make it entirely Far Eastern, or Turkish-themed, for that matter, all of which can play a part in the food prepared and even the way it is served. Often I will have hot tea, preferably Darjeeling (originating from the subcontinent in the foothills of the Himalayas), when I prepare Indian food, but I am especially



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fond of English breakfast and Earl Grey teas on other occasions. In other words, tea can be fun and imaginative, and it doesn't have to be the same each time. Furthermore, it can be educational as you explore other cultures and sample their favorite foods. Best of all, in the comfort of your own kitchen, you can make everything just the way *you* like it, and a sense of snobbery need not be a prerequisite in spite of the many preconceived notions that some individuals associate with partaking of afternoon tea.

“Tea is tea, right?”

With the exception of herbal teas (i.e. – mint, chamomile), the beverage universally regarded as tea “is produced from the leaf of *Camellia sinensis*, a bush grown in both tropical and subtropical regions of the world” (Egleton 39). “For many centuries, only the Chinese knew of the wonders of tea, but eventually the habit of drinking tea spread throughout Asia, and then throughout the world” (Martin).

Black, green, oolong and white teas, the four major tea types, basically differ by the processes through which they are manufactured and, like a fine wine, the *terroir* – the overall environment, or the microclimate, in which the tea is grown and harvested – informs the flavor and affects the quality of the final product. This, in part, as well as the timing of the leaf plucking, could explain why some teas are simply better than others and why different flavors can be detected in similar blends offered by different companies. I remember ordering hot tea with my breakfast at a luxury resort hotel in Tucson years ago where I attended a meeting, and the tea was absolutely horrid. I cannot be certain from where their tea had been sourced or perhaps how long it had been stored before being served. Given that teas can vary from brand to brand, I am unsure of whether the tea was from a high-end specialty company as one might expect from such an upscale establishment or simply a poor quality imitation, but I can attest that it was the worst English breakfast tea I have ever had.

Brand loyalty varies from consumer to consumer. I know a fellow daffodil judge and exhibitor in England who insists that PG Tips teas are far superior to Twinings, a commonly available brand that I happen to prefer. Furthermore, conversations about tea are sure to prompt passionate discourse regarding whether tea bags or loose teas are better. Certainly, London's famous afternoon tea destinations would scoff at the idea of using tea bags, but American tea drinkers have grown accustomed to tea bags, and old habits are hard to break.

In my experience, the quality and selection of Twinings black tea blends are excellent, and they are readily available at my local supermarket. [Twinings of London](#), founded by Thomas Twinings in the 1700s, has been owned by Associated British Foods since 1964. Indicating that Twinings provides goods to



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the British royal court, the company was honored with a Royal Warrant of Appointment in 1837 by Queen Victoria, and it enjoys the distinction of having supplied every successive monarch to date. Serious tea aficionados have their favorites and can often cite any number of reasons why one tea is enjoyed more than another. My personal favorite Twinings teas are Irish breakfast, English breakfast, Darjeeling and Earl Grey, which is purported to be preferred by Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II.

Green tea is not produced from the same withering and oxidation process as black tea, and several green teas – all of them distinctly different due to the varieties of *Camellia sinensis* from which they originated – are available. While various companies promote the many benefits of tea, with claims that green tea can do everything from aid weight loss to lower blood sugar, many of these claims have not been substantiated or confirmed through scientific study. Some health benefits, however, have been duly recorded by researchers. Dr. Richard Egleton at Marshall University's Joan C. Edwards



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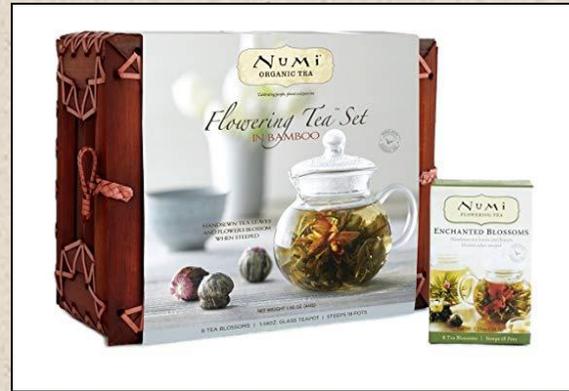
School of Medicine in Huntington, West Virginia (USA) states, “To date most of the positive effects of tea have been linked to the consumption of green tea or green tea catechins” (39), and a plethora of green teas are offered commercially, if green tea is your preference. Salada® green teas marketed by the Moorestown, New Jersey (USA)-based Harris Tea Company include a line of fruit juice-infused selections.

Particularly popular in southern China, oolong tea generally comes from specific cultivars of *Camellia sinensis*. “The term Oolong is derived from the Chinese word *Ou-loung*, signifying ‘Green dragon,’ and is applied to a variety of tea having a small greenish-yellow leaf permeating through it. They are divided into six different kinds – Amoys, Foochows, Formosas, Ankois, Saryune, Padrae and Pekoe-Oolong teas, possessing as many distinct flavors and characters caused by the variations in soil, climate and mode of preparation” (Walsh 76). Production involves withering the plant under strong sun exposure and oxidizing before curling and twisting the leaves, resulting in a semi-oxidized tea. Traditionally, the leaves are rolled into long, curling forms, but they might also be wrapped into small beads with a tail. Oolong, as evidenced by poetry, is believed to have originated during the Qing dynasty (1644 to 1912). Interestingly, a half-century-old box of Narcissus Oolong tea, harvested on Mount Wuyi in the Fujian Province where oolong tea is believed to have originated, fetched \$6500 per 1,000 grams in November 2013 at Hong Kong’s first rare tea auction. Tea consumers can breathe a sigh of relief, though, since oolong tea is sold by a range of companies at much more affordable prices and is readily available wherever quality teas are sold.

As for white tea, authors Mary Lou and Robert Heiss write, “Many tea producers regard white tea as a process of manufacture rather than a unique product that is the sum total of terroir, history,

and experience” (p. 73). Though difficult to define, white tea basically refers to tea that has been dried with no further processing, but typically white teas are immature leaves or buds that have been sundried or perhaps steamed before drying. Unlike oolong teas, leaves are generally not rolled or oxidized.

One of the most beautiful and fascinating gifts I have ever received was a Numi Flowering Tea™ gift set. Housed in a handcrafted bamboo tea chest, the set included a glass teapot and nine varieties of teas (from all four major tea types) and flowers, including Dragon Lily (white tea and osmanthus flower), Lavender Dream (white tea, hibiscus, lavender flowers) and Jasmine Pearls (green tea, jasmine flowers). The tea varieties are handsewn together and literally unfurl before your eyes into delicate flower bouquets during the steeping process. The jasmine selection is quite exquisite.



Growing Your Own Tea Bushes

Gardeners, especially those in the USA who live in locales with moderate winters, or those who grow their shrubs in containers (which are easily moved indoors to protect from freezes), can try their hand at growing *Camellia sinensis* to produce their own tea. The American Camellia Society recommends “bright light or full sun with balanced nutrients and plenty of water” (ACS 2018) for growing the species. Tea bushes are also heavy seeders, which has its advantages for amateur breeders seeking to select for characteristics such as hardiness. The prospect of producing one’s own tea sounds like a novel idea, and is probably not one that will lead to any sort of successful commercial venture. Gardeners seeking to grow tea plants outside the various microclimates throughout the Far East, India and Africa where tea is produced on vast estates and plantations should view the notion as a formidable challenge. Earliest attempts to produce tea in North America were made in Savannah’s Trustees’ Garden, which was established by General James Oglethorpe (1696-1785) in 1733. As recorded in his book *A Voyage to Georgia* (London: Printed for J. Robinson, 1744), author Frances Moore “reveals that the Trustees’ Garden was supplied with tea seed (*Camellia sinensis*) from the East Indies, olive trees from Venice, caper plants from Marseilles, and grapevines from France” (Cothran 139). Incidentally, the tea plants failed to survive, and the garden was abandoned within a decade. That said, Charleston Tea Plantation, now owned by Bigelow Tea Company, was the first company to produce 100% American-grown tea. The plantation’s American Classic tea is grown on Wadmalaw Island near Charleston, South Carolina (USA), perhaps giving hope to American gardeners, particularly those living in the American South, that tea can be homegrown, even if on a much smaller scale.

Incorporating Homegrown Produce into Afternoon Tea Delights

Scones, sugary pastries and boring quartered sandwiches with the crust removed are often associated with afternoon tea, but one can creatively include all sorts of vegetables, fruits and herbs from the garden to produce a range of delicious treats that will please even the pickiest of eaters. Sandwiches need not be limited to egg salad or ham and cheese. Use your imagination!

From flavorful herbs to healthy vegetables, you can plant an array of seeds and harvest the increase for afternoon tea occasions your guests will not soon forget. Our friends at HeavenlySeed.net offer a great selection to get you started.

HEAVENLY SEED



Greg Freeman

Greg Freeman's *Quiche de pois, menthe, bacon et Gruyère* (pea, mint, bacon and Gruyère quiche)

- 1 cup fresh or thawed English peas**
- Chopped spearmint or peppermint to taste (I finely chop the leaves from a 10- or 12-inch stalk) – about 3 tbsp.**
- 3-5 strips cooked, crumbled bacon**
- 3 large eggs, slightly beaten**
- ½ cup half and half**
- 1 tbsp. Olive oil**
- Pepper to taste**
- 1 tbsp. minced onion**
- ½ cup grated Gruyère cheese**

Mix all ingredients in bowl. Salt to taste, but remember the sodium content in the bacon and cheese. Fill greased muffin tin (six muffin capacity) to prepare individual servings or fill store-bought pie crusts for a more traditional offering.



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Greg Freeman's Hodgepodge Crostini

Crostini can reflect your personal tastes! There are no hard and fast rules. The crostini pictured above were created by splitting some whole grain rolls, smearing them with a little butter and orange marmalade and topping with minced celery, chopped walnuts, shredded red cabbage, capers (purchased in balsamic vinegar), pitted Kalamata olives, grated Romano cheese and a light drizzle of olive oil. Why combine such ingredients? Because it's what I had on hand at the time. And, for the record, they were very delicious. When preparing your own, make the best with what you have in your own kitchen or garden. Try contrasting flavors and textures. The crostini in this image were perhaps better because of the saltiness of the olives, the sweetness of the marmalade and the textures of the cabbage, celery and nuts. Do not be afraid to try seemingly strange combinations. As for the bread, there is no need to buy expensive loaves. Thinly slice pieces of that bagette you bought several days ago or make use of those rolls languishing in last night's bread basket. Top with your favorite vegetables, fruits, meats, spreads and cheeses and drizzle with olive oil or butter. Bake in the oven at 350° Fahrenheit until crisp or cheese has melted and turned golden.

Miniature quiches, cooked in muffin pans, can be customized to suit every taste, and crostini with all manner of toppings are great additions to any afternoon tea spread. Definitely worth trying, these tasty sensations are easily crafted according to your own preferences or those of your guests, using fresh produce from your own backyard garden, local supermarket or a nearby farmer's roadside stand. Remember, a good tea menu is not predominantly savory or sweet, and an honest critique of most afternoon tea bills of fare reveals that some form of bread is the primary vehicle for serving other foods whether they be fruit-filled pastries or meat-packed sandwiches. So challenge yourself to find unique and unconventional ways (i.e. – stuffed celery sticks, grilled or roasted vegetables skewered with toothpicks, etc.) to deliver a variety of flavors, especially if

cutting back on gluten or carbohydrates is a goal. However, bready items like crostini sure are delicious and easily prepared, and they help rid the kitchen of bread that might be several days old and otherwise destined to be thrown out!

Let your afternoon tea experience reflect your personality, and focus on a diverse but simple menu that will allow easy preparation and leave you time to relax, truly savor a great cup of tea and enjoy engaging conversation with your invited guests!

Cothran, James R. *Gardens and Historic Plants of the Antebellum South*. Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2003.

Eggleton, Richard. "Green Tea Catechins and Cancer." *Nutrition and Cancer from Epidemiology to Biology*. Edited by Pier Paolo Claudio and Richard M. Niles, Bentham Science Publishers, 2012.

Heiss, Mary Lou and Heiss, Robert J. *The Story of Tea: A Cultural History and Drinking Guide*. Berkeley: Ten Speed Press, 2007.

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Going Green...Architecturally Speaking

As climate change, urban sprawl and population growth continue to contribute to environmental detrition, some innovators in the fields of architecture and landscape design are making great strides through their innovative "green walls" and rooftop gardens to find better ways to incorporate green space, combat air pollution, protect pollinating insects, provide sanctuary for birds and produce food for human consumption. Perhaps none of these innovations are more ingenious than the vertical garden, which is growing in popularity and becoming more prevalent in major cities where space is limited and the obvious solution is to take a vertical direction.

Vertically Inclined

While the vertical garden was invented in the 1930s by Dr. Stanley Hart White (1891-1979), a professor of landscape architecture at the University of Illinois, it is French botanist Patrick Blanc (b. 1953) who has revived interest in green walls in the modern era. Drawing inspiration from

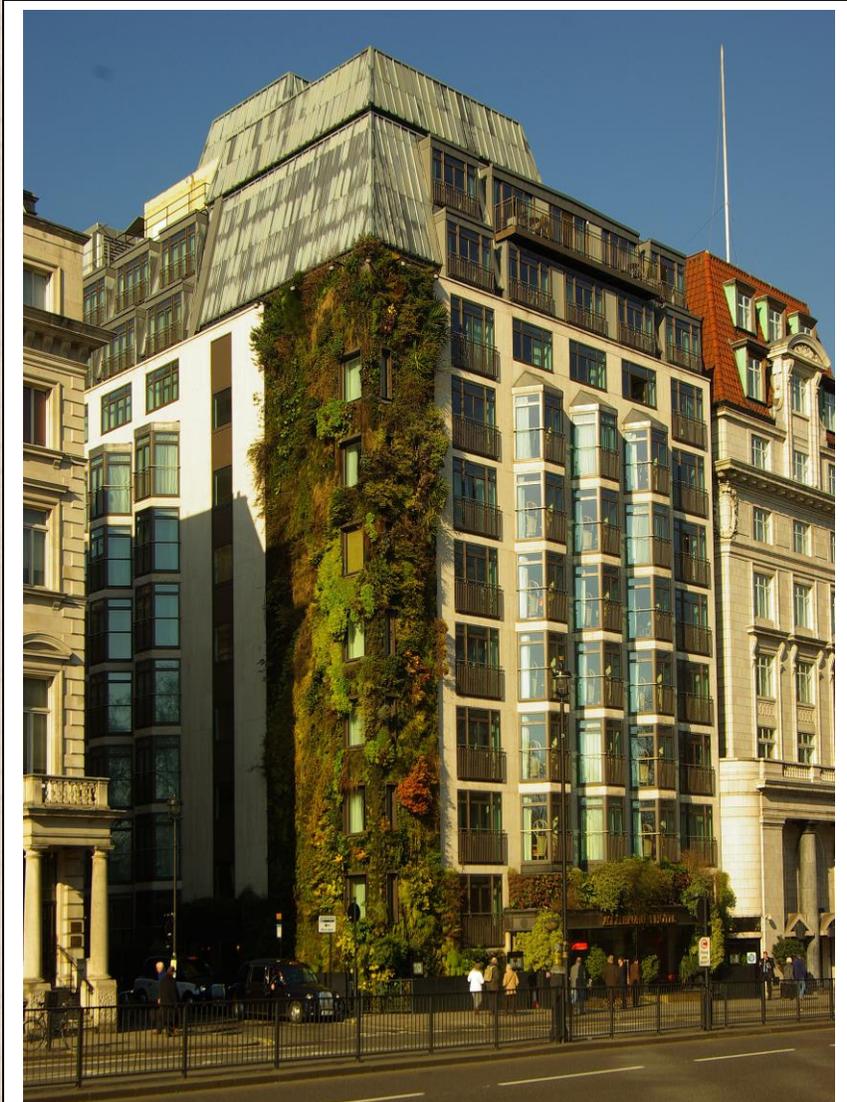
nature as he explored plants in their native habitats around the globe, “Blanc observed that plants often grew on vertical surfaces such as rocks, walls, or tree trunks without soil if there was a constant supply of water. His Vertical Gardens replicate this phenomenon artificially” (Fairs 200). Notable projects in Blanc’s growing portfolio can be found throughout the world in such locales as Paris, London, Madrid, Berlin, Bangkok, Hong Kong, Sydney and New Dehli.

When one thinks of green walls, especially in the United Kingdom, perhaps images of castle ruins, Tudor mansions or quaint village cottages partially covered in English ivy come to mind. Those living walls, however, are far removed from the creations White originally envisioned, or the growing list of grand masterpieces created by Blanc.

Making the list of fifty best inventions of the year according to *Time* magazine in 2009, Blanc’s lush exterior of the Athenaeum Hotel at 116 Piccadilly, London, was described as his “newest creation.”

Structurally, the wall is ingeniously comprised of synthetic felt attached to a frame and maintained in verdant, thriving condition through automated irrigation and fertilizing systems. Firmly rooted to the felt and thriving without soil, “some 260 species of plants (more than 12,000 in all) form a forest façade rising eight stories above London’s ritzy Mayfair district” (Time, 2009).

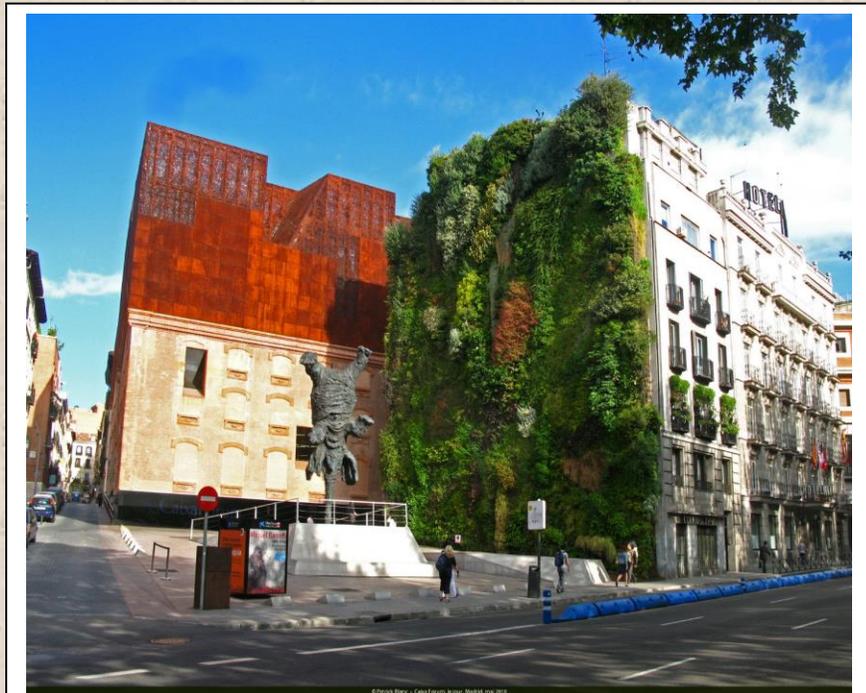
Living Art



Julian Osley / Green plant wall, Athenaeum Hotel, Piccadilly / [CC BY-SA 2.0](#)

London’s famed Athenaeum Hotel, located at 116 Piccadilly, overlooking Green Park in the heart of Mayfair, is noted for its famous living wall, the handiwork of Patrick Blanc. As a side note, this hotel and its living wall are alluded to in the author’s forthcoming fictional short story, “A Broken Glass, A Broken Promise,” which will be published in the inaugural issue of [Sires and Dams](#).

While all of Patrick Blanc's projects can be regarded as artistic creations, it is particularly apt that Madrid's Caixa Forum and its vertical garden are located in close proximity to the Museo del Prado, Spain's national art museum, where such iconic works as *The Garden of Earthly Delights* (between 1480 and 1505) by Hieronymus Bosch (c.1450-1516) and *Third of May 1808* (1814) by Francisco Goya (1746-1828) are housed. In his book, *Thinking About Landscape Architecture: Principles of a Design Profession for the 21st*



Patrick Blanc

Caixa Forum, Madrid, May 2010

Century, Bruce Sharky writes, “The vertical landscape walls of Patrick Blanc demonstrate the potential of the vegetative media for artistic expression similar to many of the landscape works of the Brazilian artist and landscape architect, Roberto Burle Marx, where his canvas was the Earth” (p. 101). Referencing the Caixa Forum, Sharky goes on to state, “Note in this work, located across the street from the Prado Museum, how much variety is achieved in terms of color, texture, and form in creating a remarkable three-dimensional composition similar to a bas relief” (p. 101).

Taking Your Own Gardening to the Next Level

Certainly, the trendsetting works of Patrick Blanc motivate all of us who strive to find creative ways to enjoy our gardening. Tackling a high-rise building project or visiting the hairstylist for a Blanc-esque, green-dyed coif are merely optional, should we desire to imitate Blanc's vision. However, most of us would enjoy trying our hand at vertical gardening, and Fern Richardson explains that it is easier than one might think:

Tropically inspired vertical gardens – scaled down from Blanc proportions – are also breathtaking on balconies, patios, and porches. Get the lush look with tropical vines that meander the walls, arching ferns that spill out of soft-fabric wall planters, and bromeliads mounted on driftwood or hanging in the air. In other container gardens, you'd probably want an even mix of trailing and other sorts of plants, but overselect trailing plants for this garden. By expanding vertically, you'll gain more room to move around or sit down and enjoy a cup of coffee or a glass of wine, without sacrificing a single beautiful plant (p. 131).

One great way to incorporate vertical gardening into your landscape is to explore nature in your own locality. Pay special attention to those plants that appear juxtaposed between rocks with minimal soil, or are otherwise cascading down steep crags. Perhaps native specimens can be purchased from specialists or related nursery-grown cultivars can be obtained. Pay close attention to the hardiness zone specifics of any plants not native to your area. Don't be afraid to experiment, especially with plants that can be acquired cheaply, and be sure to include some seasonal vegetables or culinary herbs. Your own vertical garden could elevate the gardening standards in your neighborhood and perhaps inspire a movement, particularly among plant lovers who have limited space.

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Looking Ahead to 2019: *Mediterranea*, Bonsai Honeysuckle and More Videos

Though I am not one to make New Year's resolutions, I do have a number of garden-related goals for 2019. Some will be executed easily. Others might only get underway and require more time to complete. Still, it is better for one to make plans and accomplish as much as possible rather than make no plans at all. Among the particularly ambitious projects are to remove some dead azaleas on the South-facing end of the garden, create an inviting patio with fire pit and grill and work on a new piece in my *Sculptus Hortus* series of hand-sculpted garden containers. In the meantime, I will be planting a terrarium, tending a new bonsai project and incorporating more video as I attempt to reach new followers for GregFreeman.garden.

The Making of *Mediterranea*

Few things fascinate me as much as a miniature replica of something large and complex. I am always attracted to hobbyists' model train layouts or dioramas in museums, and small habitats for

reptiles, plants or animals always grab my attention at zoos and botanical garden conservatories. Perhaps it is this fascination that has inspired me to create a small plant haven I am calling *Mediterranea*.

A large aquarium, a gift from my brother and sister-in-law, will be combined with timer-controlled light, cleverly hidden pots amidst the “landscape” and meticulously placed stones, plants and natural “decorations” to imitate various Mediterranean microclimates where an array of water and light/shade requirements can coexist. The room where the terrarium will be placed is neither heated in the winter nor air conditioned in the summer due to a lack of ductwork, thus somewhat mimicking seasonal fluctuations and providing me with ample opportunity to note how different plants might perform throughout the year. For better or worse, my project will prove to be a great learning experience, and perhaps it will help me better understand certain species and their needs.

The entire Mediterranean region is intriguing to me, and a number of destinations in Spain, Portugal, France, Italy, Morocco, Algeria, Greece, Turkey and Egypt are on my bucket list. Perhaps someday I might be able to visit some of these places. However, it is much more economical to read about them, even fantasize about them, if I must, until circumstances permit my travel to that part of the world. In the meantime, as consolation, I can work on my French, Italian, Spanish or Portuguese, enjoy some Mediterranean cuisine at my favorite restaurants and obtain seeds and plants that are endemic to the region.

With the exception of viticulture and winemaking, I can think of no greater botanical connection between virtually all of the Mediterranean nations than the production of olives. To my delight, I was able to obtain seeds of *Olea europea* from an Israeli source earlier this summer, and I am well aware that olive trees will not tolerate the South Carolina climate year-round. Therefore, I aim to sow the seeds and keep a few trees for container culture, which will allow me to move the trees indoors for the winter. The remaining seeds will be sown to produce bonsai trees, at least one of which I would like to grow in *Mediterranea*. My olive seeds, purchased in an eBay.com auction, are said to have been produced by trees that are hundreds of years old and located in the Judean Hills near Jerusalem. Amazing!

Some relatively easy-to-grow plants will be included in *Mediterranea*, namely *Ajuga reptans* (commonly known as carpet bugle and native to Europe), *Thymus serpyllum* (creeping thyme which should look great cascading over stones and overhangs) and *Anemone blanda* (often referred to as the Grecian windflower). However, I am particularly excited about some *Cyclamen hederifolium* seeds I obtained from eBay.com sellers in 2018. From Spain, I obtained the white-blooming ‘Album’. Seeds of the common green-leafed form were purchased from a dealer in the Athens suburb of Peania (Greece). And some coveted silver leaf cyclamen seeds were ordered from a seller in Glen Inness, New South Wales (Australia). While I do not necessarily expect these plants to perform well for the long-term in *Mediterranea*, the setting might make a good seed-starting home. Perhaps I will try some in the terrarium and outside in the garden for curiosity’s sake.

Since *Mediterranea* is in the planning stages at this point, I have no photographs of the project to share, but I will photograph the process of setting up the terrarium and publish images of the final product, perhaps as soon as the next issue. Either way, I will keep you informed of my experience. If all goes well, maybe you, my fellow plant lovers, might wish to try a similar terrarium of your own. We could then compare photographs *and* notes!

Honeysuckle Bonsai?

Every year, I look forward to seeing my honeysuckle shrub, *Lonicera fragrantissima*, commonly known as winter honeysuckle or Breath of Spring, display its deliciously scented blooms in the winter. No doubt, the “true glory of winter honeysuckle is its wonderfully fragrant flowers, which begin to open in late January, heralding the promise of spring” (Cothran 219). From my observation, if it blooms in early January, spring is usually not that far away. It is always interesting to see when it flowers, just to test its accuracy.



An old specimen grows on a terrace in the front yard, and I remember playing beneath it when I was a kid. Its arching branches, fully clothed in ovate leaves, gave me a great hideout in the summer, and its abundant sweet-smelling flowers lured me in the winter where I frequently watched honeybees from Dad’s hives at work on sunny afternoons.

The specimen growing in my garden was eagerly purchased in November 2006 for just under twenty dollars at the now defunct Craven, Inc., halfway between my house and Atlanta. Since 2006, several of its arching branches have rested on the ground where they have taken root. Each time this has occurred, I have taken steps to prevent colonization and dug the newly rooted plants. One was given to friends/clients of mine who retired near Lake Keowee after working in the Hollywood film industry. Evidently thrilled with its new home, the young bush has grown into a stunning specimen, eclipsing the mother plant. Others have been potted for sharing and, in 2018, two rooted cuttings were planted in shallow bonsai containers. One continues to thrive.

Since the summer of 2018, the remaining bonsai *Lonicera fragrantissima* has been manipulated to cascade over the side of the container in which it was planted. As with all bonsai trees, regular pruning and occasional repotting will be necessary to keep the honeysuckle bonsai in optimum form. It will be interesting to see if it blooms in 2019. I have had rooted cuttings bloom the year after planting before. Therefore, the idea is not far-fetched. At any rate, I am looking forward to watching the shrub mature into a beautiful bonsai. I am far from an expert on the art of bonsai. Like *Mediterranea*, this project will, no doubt, prove to be a valuable learning experience.

Incorporating More Video Content

I am well aware that many people are not keen on *reading* about plants. I am further aware that, depending on the device they might be using to peruse the internet, they might not ever bother reading this newsletter because it is published in PDF format. That said, I fully understand the role social media (Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, etc.) can play in publishing content or promoting a product. In 2019, I plan to share more video content through my social media accounts, which will help me reach new followers and better promote GregFreeman.garden and the *Garden Chronicle*. My video, *Basil Fino Verde in ‘The Climbers’, November 5, 2018*, was shared across my social networks and caught the attention of viewers from Cincinnati to Nashville to Atlanta. Almost two minutes in length, the video shows off my beautiful specimens of seed-grown basil plants (just days, as it turns out, before a killing frost left them wilted and lifeless). Video content has the potential to captivate viewers, and “likes,” “shares” and comments only serve to increase the awareness of GregFreeman.garden and my publishing efforts. So please stay tuned for new videos in 2019. If you have not connected with me on social media, by all means, please do so at this time. I can’t wait to see you!

Cothran, James R. *Gardens and Historic Plants of the Antebellum South*. Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2003.

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Photograph: *Colorful Flower Beds in Falls Park*



Greg Freeman (b. 1974), *Colorful Flower Beds in Falls Park* (2007), Digital Photograph.

I am fortunate, indeed, to live within forty-five minutes of Greenville. The city is growing by leaps and bounds, but continues to maintain its small-town atmosphere, even in the downtown area where condominiums are popping up like weeds. Home to a world class art museum, baseball and hockey teams and plenty of entertainment options, Greenville has drawn large companies, including Michelin, whose North American headquarters are located out on Interstate 85 near the airport. More importantly, conventioners, leisure travelers, television networks and major publications have discovered the South Carolina city is quite the culinary destination, and it's a perfect place for enjoying a scenic stroll or bike ride thanks to the Swamp Rabbit Trail and Falls Park on the Reedy River, where the stunning waterfall and the downtown skyline provide the perfect backdrop for the pedestrian-only Liberty Bridge. Beautifully planted walkways connect South Main Street to the park. The nearby historic Westin Poinsett Hotel, as well as a major highway and a historic bridge (elsewhere in the county), was named after amateur botanist and U. S. Minister to Mexico Joel Roberts Poinsett (1779-1851), who summered in Greenville and imported from Mexico samples of *Euphorbia pulcherrima*, the plant commonly known today as the poinsettia.

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In addition to being an avid gardener and daffodil hybridist, judge and exhibitor, Greg Freeman is an author, editor, singer, songwriter, amateur visual artist and life-long horse lover. His nonfiction writing on a number of subjects has appeared in magazines, encyclopedias and books of academic and scholarly interest, as well as *Southern Edition*, Freeman's digital publication devoted to the American South. Recently published academic/encyclopedic contributions by Freeman include a chapter in Nadine Farghaly's edited volume, *Gender and the Modern Sherlock Holmes: Essays on Film and Television Adaptations Since 2009* (Jefferson, North Carolina: McFarland and Company, 2015), as well as multiple entries in the 2017 release, *Race in American Film: Voices and Visions That Shaped a Nation* (Santa Barbara: ABC-CLIO/Greenwood, 2017), edited by Dr. Daniel Bernardi and Michael Green. Most recently, Freeman contributed to *The British Empire: A Historical Encyclopedia* (Santa Barbara: ABC-CLIO/Greenwood, 2018), edited by Dr. Mark Doyle. In 2015, Freeman released a country music radio single, "Sunlight and Shadows," garnering international airplay, and his gospel music has received national exposure through television, radio and commercial recordings. His gospel EP, *Blessing and Blessing*, featuring guest vocalists Babbie Mason, a Grammy-nominated artist, and Gospel Music Hall of Famer Calvin Newton, released in December 2018.

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