

Alfred Russel Wallace notes 4: contributions to *The garden*, 1875–1912

Wallace is most remembered for his work on animals – especially insects and birds – but he also wrote extensively on plants. His professional writings on plants focused primarily on their adaptations and how these could be related to natural selection, on certain subjects in ethnobotany, and on biogeographical matters. But he had another interest in plants – as a gardener. After he returned to England from Singapore in 1862 he may actually have spent more hours in his gardens than engaged in any other kind of activity. On reading his autobiography *My life* it is striking how many post-1862 residential moves he made, and that among the most compelling reasons for these was a continuous search for better soils and site aspects. Most of this attention apparently was lavished recreationally – he clearly loved growing plants – but a recent discovery brings home the depth of his involvement, and leads to the question of how this may have influenced his thinking in other spheres.

The garden, founded by William Robinson (1838–1935), was a London weekly published from 1871 to 1927, at which point it was absorbed by *Homes and gardens*. Recently most of the run was made available online at the Internet Archive and Biodiversity Heritage Library as uncorrected OCR text. As I was already aware of three Wallace publications in the title, I recently decided to take a closer look, whereupon 23 more contributions by him were found.

Wallace's 26 writings in *The garden* (see Appendix) reveal him, in the first instance, seeking information about such subjects as plant husbandry, pest eradication, equipment, and seed and specimen vendors. He was sharing information as well: offering seeds and plants obtained from exotic locations, characterizing species and varieties and their needs and special adaptations, and discussing hardiness and biogeographical connections. Further, he occasionally provided observations on theoretical subjects such as the possibility of inheritance of acquired characters or diseases. Somewhat surprisingly, more Wallace items are now known to have appeared in *The garden* than in any other serial, except *Nature*.

There are also a number of comments on his contributions, or mentions of materials he or his wife sent to the editor's office. In one of the latter an anonymous editor (1907: 367) wrote: "The seedling Roses sent by Mrs. A. R. Wallace, Broadstone, Wimborne, are most interesting, and bear out what we have often contended – that amateurs could enrich our collection with many beautiful novelties if they would give their attention to the fascinating pursuit of hybridising the various garden species of the Rose with good garden varieties". Thus the Wallaces seem to have been engaged in such efforts.

REFERENCES

- ANONYMOUS, 1907 Wichuraiana roses from seed. *The garden* **71**: 367.
 HENSLAW, G., 1891 *The making of flowers*. London.
 SMITH, C. H. (editor), 1991 *Alfred Russel Wallace: an anthology of his shorter writings*. London.

APPENDIX: Alfred Russel Wallace's contributions to *The garden*, 1875–1912.

In the list below, items are numbered according to the chronological scheme created in Smith (1991) and continued in my online project, "The Alfred Russel Wallace page" (URL (published 2000–2011) people.wku.edu/charles.smith/index1.htm). Short contextual notes follow each record.

- S252a 1875. Peach-house borders. *The garden* **8** (no. 205): 353.
Notes: Request for information; signed "A. R. W."
 S291a 1878. Eradicating bindweed. *The garden* **14** (no. 351): 143.
Notes: Request for information; signed "A. R. W."
 S361a 1883. Pentstemons. *The garden* **23** (no. 606): 582.
Notes: About two species from the western United States cultivated in his garden.
 S370b 1884. Sutherlandia spectabilis. *The garden* **25** (no. 653): 441.
Notes: About this South African species he raised from seed.
 S371b 1884. Gas water v. wireworm. *The garden* **25** (no. 658): 544.
Notes: Request for information on removing wireworm; signed "A. R. W."
 S371c 1884. Datura meteloides. *The garden* **26** (no. 675): 352.
Notes: About this North American species, and an offer to supply seeds.
 S383a 1885. Gesnerads in greenhouses. *The garden* **28** (no. 729): 477.
Notes: Request for information on growing temperatures; signed "A. R. W., Godalming."
 S414a 1889. Marsh gentian. *The garden* **36** (no. 929): 233.
Notes: Notes the flowering of this British species in Dorset.
 S438a 1891. A few survivals from the winter. *The garden* **39** (no. 1022): 563.
Notes: Describes the overwintering care he gave to several species, and their hardiness.
 S438b 1891. A vegetable man-trap in Australia. *The garden* **40** (no. 1024): 17–18.
Notes: Introduces two letters about *Bauera rubioides*; signed "A. R. W."
 S439ac 1891. The inheritance of acquired characters. *The garden* **40** (no. 1030): 161.
Notes: Analysis of remarks made in George Henslow's book *The making of flowers* (1891).
 S452a 1892. Hardy Australian plants. *The garden* **42** (no. 1083): 153.
Notes: Discussion of several cold-tolerant species in Australia.
 S454a 1892. Sikkim rhododendrons. *The garden* **42** (no. 1093): 397.
Notes: Request for information on obtaining some; signed "A. R. W."
 S457a 1892. [Description of letter.] *The garden* **42** (no. 1098): 507.
Notes: Wallace's opinions on whether The Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, might be opened to the public at an earlier hour.
 S457b 1892. Terrestrial and small epiphytal orchids. *The garden* **42** (no. 1100): 551.
Notes: Offering to supply some orchids he had received from South Africa and Australia.
 S521a 1896. Peat fibre for orchids. *The garden* **49** (no. 1265): 117.
Notes: Request for information.
 S535a 1897. *Cattleya mendeli* and *C. mossiæ*. *The garden* **52** (no. 1351): 276.
Notes: Request for information on care; signed "A. R. W."
 S551a 1898. The Burmese lily. (*Lilium ochroleucum*.) *The garden* **54** (no. 1402): 259.
Notes: About the plant and its cultivation; includes photograph.

S568a 1899. Is the Swedish red water lily a variety of *Nymphaea alba*? *The garden* **56** (no. 1447): 130.

Notes: Discussion.

S576ac 1900. *Mutisia decurrens*. *The garden* **57** (no. 1476): 169.

Notes: About cultivation of this species; signed "A. R. W., Parkstone, Dorset."

S595b 1902. *Eucalyptus gunnii*. *The garden* **61** (no. 1575): 57–58.

Notes: About the species and its cultivation; includes drawing.

S596 1902. Are plant diseases hereditary? *The garden* **61** (no. 1591): 317.

Notes: Discussion of the possible heritable nature of human, animal and plant diseases.

S597 1902. *Eucalyptus gunnii*. *The garden* **62** (no. 1600): 47.

Notes: About the species and its native habitat.

S608a 1903. Note on *Nymphaea gigantea*. *The garden* **64** (no. 1668): 310.

Notes: About this Australian species and its cultivation.

S688b 1911. Some beautiful flowering shrubs. *The garden* **75** (no. 2071): 362.

Notes: Excerpt from a note accompanying some specimens Wallace sent to the editor.

S696a 1912. *Euphorbia wulfenii*. *The garden* **76** (no. 2120): 339.

Notes: About its cultivation; plant obtained from Gertrude Jekyll.

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