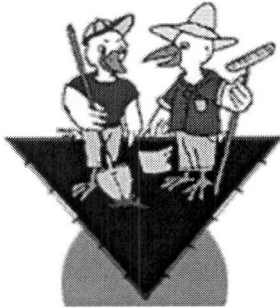


Gay Gardener



Early Gardening History - New York

Connecticut	Maryland	New Jersey	Rhode Island
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New York

The first gardeners of New York were the Indians, particularly the Iroquois, who planted and cultivated both fruits, vegetables, and some of them are believed to have cultivated the wild flowers of their particular regions. They are said to have developed their own corn culture and that it had a strong influence on their social and economic life.

The early settlers of New York were the Dutch and the French Huguenots, they brought with them the love of gardening and ability to cultivate the soil. They settled New Amsterdam and journeyed up the Hudson as far as Albany.

New Amsterdam was laid out in "bouweries" from the Dutch word *bouwerij* meaning farm. Seeds and cuttings from Peter Stuyvesant farm were raised and distributed to the settlers on Long Island and along the Hudson.

Some of the flowers growing in New Amsterdam in 1655: red and white roses, gillyflowers, tulips, crown imperials, violets, marigolds, sunflowers, bellflowers, anemones, and martagon lilies were all mentioned by Adrian van der Donck.

He also said the gardens had clipped evergreens, sundials, decorative iron sculptures, and that a beehive was considered a necessary feature of the garden.

In 1679, Jasper Dankers and Peter Shuyter who were both Labadist monks, visited New York and from them we quote: "As we walked along we were astonished by the abundance and variety of its food supplies, its crops of wheat, apples, and pears, and still more wonderful peaches."

The first hybrid grape was developed by Dr. William Valk at Flushing, Long Island, by making a genuine cross between a

native grape and an Old World variety. He crossed a Black Hamburg and a Isabella. The resulting cross was named Ada.

One of the botanist in the eighteenth century was Cadwallader Colden. He came to New York in 1715 and had a large estate "Coldenham" near Newburgh. He collected and described many of the plants native to his area.

He wrote a paper entitled *Plantae Coldenhamiae* which was published in Upsala in 1742, and it was one of the earliest contributions to the knowledge of the botany of New York. His paper was highly praised by Linnaeus.

His daughter, Jane Colden was also a well known botanist. She exchanged many seeds and plants with European and American botanists and gardeners. Peter Collinson wrote a letter to Linnaeus in 1756 stating that "Jane Colden was the first lady who is scientifically skilled in the Linnaean system."

The first commercial nursery in the country was established at Flushing, by Robert Prince in 1737. The nursery was carried on by four generations of Princes.

William Prince, the son enlarged the nursery and had the first extensive collection of fruit trees in the country.

William Prince II, renamed the nursery to The Linnaean Botanic Garden. He imported trees, shrubs, and many herbaceous plants from Europe, and also collected many American species. Most of these were grown from his love of horticulture and botany, not for their perspective commercial value. His personal collection grew to over 4,000 species and varieties.

William Robert Prince III was a botanist of wide experiences, and worked with Professor Torrey and Professor Nuttall. In 1839 he wrote *Treatise on the Vine*, in 1840 he wrote *Pomological Manual*, and in 1846 *Manual of Roses*, all of which were important horticultural books. Their catalogues were among the standard horticultural publications of the country.

Anna Lee established a settlement of Shakers at New Lebanon in 1766. It was from here and other Shaker settlements that vegetable seeds and fruits were distributed. Their seeds were considered to be the best in America. The Shakers were the first ones to put seeds into packets. They sent wagons from village to village leaving their seeds to be sold on commission.

In 1805 the first important nursery west of the Hudson was established in Aurora, by David Thomas. His son John was an

even more famous horticulturist. The work that the two of them did has made western New York a region of fine orchards, and made possible its highly developed horticultural industries.

In 1818 the first organized horticultural society was started in New York

Samuel and Robert Parsons started a nursery in Flushing in 1832. They were distributors of many unusual plants and were the first to bring Japanese trees and shrubs for propagation, to this country. Among these plants was the first importation of the Japanese maples.

Dr. David Hosack was the professor of Botany at Columbia University. He is the founder of the Elgin Botanic Garden in New York City. Asa Gray and John Torrey were both students of Dr. Hosack's.

All of the great botanist of the time, Michaux, Bartram, Pursh, and Le Conte met in his gardens to discuss their botanical problems.

Another important nurseryman and horticulturists was Thomas Hogg and his son James. They called their nursery the New York Botanic Garden. In 1862 James went to Japan as a US marshal, and was able to send home to New York many Japanese plants that are commonly grown today. Many of these plants were grown here before they were sent to Europe. Their collection of oriental plants quickly became the best in the country.

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