

AUTUMN FLOWERS IN WILD GARDEN

Another Interesting Paper on
Horticulture from W. C.
Egan's Papers

Here is another excerpt from the writings of the late W. C. Egan of Highland Park:

The general term Aster is used as a common name to plants of seven distinct genera, having no affinity with the true Aster. The China Aster of our gardens is *Callistephus chinensis*. Starwort is the most common name of our wild Asters. There are about thirty-one species of the true Aster in Lake and Cook counties, Illinois, including *A. Tradescanti*, the Michaelmas Daisy of England. These wild Asters are so abundant and play such an important part in the coloring of our landscape views that they speak for themselves, and many of them are so improved in their form and color that they are worthy of being brought into the borders.

Two Species

There are only two species of *Boltonia* known to the trade, one, the False Chamomile or Foam-flower (*B. asterodes*) a native of Illinois south of Chicago in moist situations; the other, the Pink *Boltonia* (*B. latisquama*) from Kansas and Missouri. I prefer *B. latisquama*, but it does not seem as hardy as the other. There is a variety of this one growing only about two feet tall. They are both fine subjects for bold masses at the rear of the border.

Boltonia asteroides is an admirable tall plant to be used in the wilder parts in connection with its still handsomer Missouri sister. The first named bears numerous white, and the latter, pink aster-like flowers, borne in profusion throughout September.

The Eupatoriums are represented in our native flora by four species, including *E. purpureum*, the Joe-pye-weed, named after an Indian medicine man of old New England, famed for his skill in curing typhoid fever. His cure-all was a tea made from the leaves and stalks of *E. purpureum*. Other species were used in the medicinal arts in the early days. The one species worthy of cultivation is *E. urticifolium*, commonly known as *E. ageratoides*, the White Snake-root, whose white flowers in the autumn remind one of a giant white *Ageratum*. In August and September it is a welcome guest when the yellows run riot. While it prefers a damp situation it seems to do well in any situation and grows about four feet tall. It is a good companion in the border for the Mist-flower (*Conoclinium coelestinum*) which is often classed as an Eupatorium. This grows about two feet tall, appearing like gigantic plants of the blue *Ageratum*. It may be used with the White Snake-root as it blooms before the former is through. This plant is not over hardy and might not live through some winters although it is native to Michigan and Illinois. I take up my plants and cold frame them.

Sneezeweed

Sneezeweed (*Helenium autumnale*) is a native in damp soils all around us, and its forms, *rubrum* and *Riverton Beauty* are worthy of extensive

use either in the border or in the damper parts of the wild planting. *A. pumilum magnificum* does not last long with me.

Heliopsis scabra, the rough-leaved False Sunflower, is one of the most numerous natives we have, and makes a splendid natural border line at the junction of the lawn and weeds. Before its bloom its green foliage is good and its color pleasing (to those who like yellow) when in bloom. There is a semi-double sort from it called *var. zinniaeflora*, worthy of a place in the border.

The only herbaceous member of the extensive genus *Artemisia* is *Artemisia lactiflora*, a recent introduction from China, possessing a dark green, finely lacinated foliage. It is a tall growing species, bearing in August and September large Hawthorn scented panicles of creamy white flowers. It makes a fine show when planted in masses at the back of large borders. I imagine that it could be used to advantage on the borders of streams or swampy areas for distant effect.



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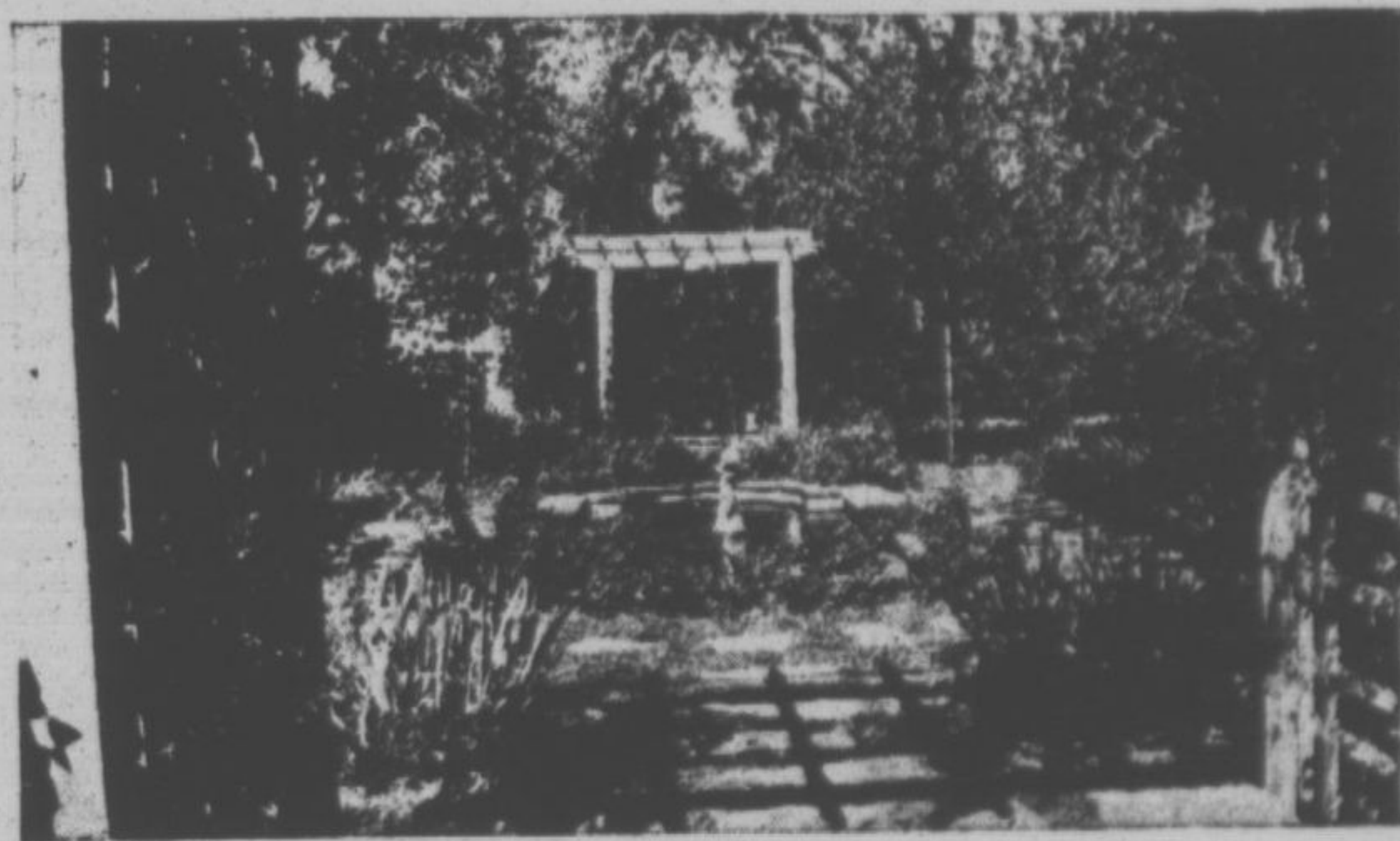
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