

# A History

**T**he Main Display Garden is situated on the first 100 acres donated in 1931 by Mrs. Roberta Bole, the sister of the founder of the Arboretum, Mr. Albert Fairchild Holden.

When The Holden Arboretum was established in 1931, a special Board of Control, administered by the Cleveland Museum of Natural History, turned to the task of deciding what type of collections and gardens to create. Upon the advice of Dr. E. D. Merrill, Director of the Arnold Arboretum, high appeal plants, sure to attract visitors, such as rhododendrons, crabapples and lilacs, were planted. 279 lilac plants representing 233 species and cultivars made up the backbone of the Main Display Garden in the early 1940's. The Hedge Garden, added in 1968, was the first landscaped garden for the Arboretum.

The early 1970's saw further diversification of the Main Display Garden when viburnums from the old viburnum collection were transplanted to a new area south and east of Lotus Pond in order to compliment the lilacs and extend the ornamental interest.

As envisioned by Holden's Master Plan, developed in 1977 and 1978, the Main Display Garden's purpose is to be a place of year round beauty and interest where the general public, gardening enthusiasts, and horticultural professionals can come to observe, study, and enjoy the collection. It was also the intent to expose people to plants from the moment they stepped out of their cars. To fulfill this vision, the parking lots with plantings of urban area trees also became a component of the Main Display Garden. The plan allows visitors to see the relationship of plants to one another in terms of function, design and ideal form. Most of the plants in this area can

be obtained from nurseries. Hopefully visitors will find plants new to them which they will want to include in their home landscape.

## The Garden Today

The Main Display Garden houses the lilac and viburnum collections, the hedge garden, parking lots, and other minor collections. It is the center of attraction at Holden for its spectacular show of color from mid-spring through mid-summer.

The progression of bloom begins with early spring bulbs. In April the cherries and forsythias come into their own. Crabapples, lilacs and viburnums burst forth in May followed by the tree lilacs in June. Summer blooming perennials and water lilies splash the garden with their color through fall.

**Main Display total woody taxa : 778 different kinds**  
**Viburnums - 24 species and 60 different kinds**  
**Lilacs - 14 species and 203 different kinds**  
**Herbaceous perennials - 440 different kinds**

