



Acacia Steedmani in bloom at the Arboretum.

GROWING NOTES

GEORGE H. SPALDING

Acacia Steedmani

The Steedman Acacia, at least in its younger stages, is one of the loveliest species this writer has observed. The plants in the Arboretum collection are only two years old and at this writing (January, 1953) are in full bloom. The new growth has a purplish cast during the cooler months, which is one of this plant's good features. This purple coloring seems to become less noticeable with age. The stems have a pink color that adds considerable interest to the plant. The flowers are one-half inch balls of

pure golden yellow and practically smother the plant. It is a shrubby Acacia with a rounded form.

Seed planted in December, 1950, germinated in nine days with no special treatment. The plants were set in the field in April, 1951. According to information in Australian nursery catalogs this species is only supposed to reach, in height, a maximum of three feet. Two of the three plants in our collection, have made double this growth. One plant has only reached three feet. This is not unusual as many plants when grown out of their native habitat often

act completely different. They are now six feet tall with a spread of four to five feet.

A word of caution should be recorded here by reminding our readers that many plants are most attractive when young, but require judicious pruning when older to keep them attractive.

Solanum macranthum

If you are looking for a quick growing, large, rangy, plant to give a tropical effect, try *Solanum macranthum*. It is larged leaved, somewhat spiny, and rather succulent in appearance. The leaves resemble those of the pin oak in shape but are four to five times as large. Mature leaves often measure twelve inches long by seven inches wide. The large, one to two

inch flowers are a good lavender color with a bright bundle of yellow stamens forming a column in the center. They are borne in axillary clusters of ten to fifteen.

Solanum macranthum is not winter hardy at the Arboretum, but this is a minor factor as young plants six inches tall received in December 1950, transferred into gallon cans on receipt and planted out in permanent positions in April reached a height of over eight feet with a spread of six feet before they were killed by frost. It bloomed sparsely but the size and beauty of the flowers made up for their scarcity.

Many people will say, "We can't be bothered with such temporary plants." They won't be interested in this item. For those who are striving for a tropical effect it is very worthwhile.

THE SONG OF THE EXHIBITOR

S. REYNOLDS HOLE

"Oh, give me air, and syringe me with waters of Cologne!
Dry as a *Hortus siccus*, run to seed, and overblown,
I try to keep my head up, but down it goes again,
Just like those drooping, stooping flowers, well named the 'sickly men.'
I'm a poor, used-up exhibitor,
Knocked out of present time.

"I've been to all the flower shows, north, south, and east, and west,
By rails and road, with huge van loads of plants I love the best;—
From dusk to dawn, through night to morn, I've dozed 'mid clank and din,
And woke, with cramp in both my legs, and bristles on my chin.
I'm a poor, used-up exhibitor,
Knocked out of present time.

"Oh, my orchids look most awk'wardly—stove plants are stoved-in quite—
Like my Melon, cut up by the judge, a melancholy sight!
They've broke my *Cissus* all to bits, as though I had a pair;
And they've brushed in all directions my pretty Maiden's Hair.
I'm a poor, used-up exhibitor,
Knocked out of present time.

"Look at *Erica depressa*—depressa, yes, indeed,
As though an alderman sat there, after a heavy feed;
And as for poor *Propendens*—'tis enough to make one say
Bad words 'upon this blasted heath,' like Macbeth in the play.
I'm a poor, used-up exhibitor,
Knocked out of present time.

"There's my *Lillium auratum*, shrivelled up, and torn, and tanned,—
They may well call it 'Japonicum,' for it looks as though jappanned;
And they've stole my pet new *Tricolor*, with gold and crimson ribbed;
I meant it for a 'bedder,' but I didn't want it *cribbed*.
I'm a poor, used-up exhibitor,
Knocked out of present time.

"Here comes my wife! Now, on my life, of Hebes she be queen;
My big prize cup she's filling up with 'Bass' of golden sheen—
Delicious! I'm myself once more; and all I want to know,
Is where and when we show again? — hurrah for that next show!
I'm a fine, revived exhibitor,
Quite up to present times."

NOTE: Just before the turn of the present century, the Dean of Rochester (S. Reynolds Hole), in England was constrained to include the above in his collection of articles for the *London Guardian*. It was ultimately printed in book form, titled "A Book About the Garden and the Gardener," as pleasant a bit of enchantment as one could find in any age or era.



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