

The Digital Age Brings Beatrix Farrand's Plants Back to Maine



Image courtesy of the Herbarium of the University of California via The Beatrix Farrand Society

Bar Harbor, ME—The Beatrix Farrand Society (BFS) invites you to view its first exhibition of Beatrix Farrand's herbarium specimens at Garland Farm in Bar Harbor. The exhibition's opening will be held from 2:00-5:00 pm on Saturday, June 29, 2013, and will remain open to the public from 1:00-5:00 pm on Thursdays and Saturdays, from July 4 through September 14, 2013.

This exhibition is the result of BFS's unique partnership with the University and Jepson Herbaria of the University of California, Berkeley. Both partners are excited that this project makes a previously inaccessible plant collection available to the public on both coasts of the US.

Beatrix Farrand (1872-1959) was a noted landscape architect who spent many summers at Reef Point, her home in Bar Harbor ME.

From 1949-1954, Farrand's associates, Marion Spaulding and Kenneth Beckett, collected about 2000 samples of cultivated plants at Reef Point. The samples were dried, pressed, mounted on heavy paper, and preserved as an herbarium. This collection of carefully preserved plant materials was intended to be a resource for year-round study by landscape students.

When Farrand dismantled Reef Point in 1955, she donated her herbarium, along with her books, prints, papers and other collections, to the University of California, Berkeley. Now, the herbarium specimens are being catalogued and digitally imaged at Berkeley, and a set of the beautiful, high-quality prints is being sent to Garland Farm.

This is a noteworthy project for the Herbarium, as the Farrand collection is the first group of cultivated plants to be digitized. It's an important project for BFS because the pressed plants represent an accurate resource of what was actually planted at Reef Point, rather than a list of plants on a landscape plan that might not have been installed.

In addition to this summer's herbarium exhibition, BFS hosts lectures, workshops and other events at Garland Farm. The herbarium collection will be an integral part of many future events. Imagine attending a workshop about native plants in the landscape, and then studying the native plants used by one of the country's most important landscape architects in her own Maine garden. Farrand was a very knowledgeable plantswoman, and through this collection she continues to teach us much that we can incorporate into our own landscapes. Because Spaulding and Beckett noted specific locations of each plant when they collected the specimens, we can even learn how Farrand combined plants to create gardens.

For more information about the Beatrix Farrand Society and Garland Farm, visit www.beatrixfarrandsociety.org. To learn more about the herbarium exhibition and other 2013 programs, click on "Programs".