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## GEDDY GARDEN NEWS

*"The man that has planted a  
garden feels that he has done  
something good for the world."*

*Charles Dudley Warner*

On November 28<sup>th</sup> the celebration of the lighting of the Christmas tree in Rockefeller Center, New York City, took place for the 67<sup>th</sup> time. It was especially meaningful this year due to the recent terrorists' attack in the city. For the first time ever the lights on the tree were all red, white, and blue, all 30,000 of them! The tree this is year is an 81-foot tall, 80-year old Norway Spruce from Wayne, New Jersey. The most common tree used as a Christmas tree in America is the Scotch Pine, but there are other excellent trees that you can use to help you celebrate the holidays: Fir trees, Spruce trees, Cypress, and Red Cedar all do nicely. The President has chosen an 18-foot white fir tree that was grown in Pennsylvania as the Christmas tree displayed in the Blue Room of the White House.

On my recent trip to Florida for the annual symposium of the Garden Writer's Association of America, I had the opportunity to visit a number of beautiful gardens in central Florida.

The Leu Garden had a botanical collection of over 8,000 different plants and at Walt Disney World I was given the opportunity to see behind the scenes or, as they say there, "back stage." I saw the horticultural exhibits and practices in both Epcot and Disney's Animal Kingdom. I was also taken behind the scenes at Cypress Gardens to see all the preparations for the mum and poinsettia festivals. In their butterfly conservatory, which they call the Wings of Wonder, over 1,000 free-flying butterflies surrounded me.

Although I enjoyed all of these gardens, the garden that impressed me the most was the Bok Tower Garden. This National Historic Landmark consists of 200 acres of grounds and gardens. It is named for its founder, Edward W. Bok, who was a Dutch immigrant. His goal was to make America more beautiful because he lived in it. That was advice given to him by his grandmother.

He was an interesting man who had come to this country at the age of seven in 1870. At ten years of age he was earning fifty cents a week in a Brooklyn, New York, bakery. From there he began climbing the ladder of success. After serving for a time as a stenographer at Scribner's, he

eventually became the editor of the *Ladies Home Journal* and a successful author of over a half dozen books. In 1929 he donated Bok Gardens to the American people to provide them with a place of beauty and peace.

This plant and wildlife sanctuary also includes a 205-foot pink and gray marble bell tower. It is surrounded by a moat and has 60 bronze carillon bells that play daily recitals. The original carillon was built in 1928 by the Taylor Bellfounders in England. I learned there are more than 200 carillons in North America.

Arthur A. Shurcliff, the first landscape architect for Colonial Williamsburg, had worked under Frederick Lows Olmsted. Olmsted was the designer of Bok Gardens, so naturally the landscape design was of great interest to me. Of course, gardens are ephemeral, but the Olmsted plan is still in place due to the efforts of Rudy Favrotti, who restored it to its original design in the 1970s.

There is a great interest in planting conservation and endangered species at Bok Gardens. There are plans for a new plant garden dedicated to that idea to be opened next spring. The aim is to encourage school children and others to appreciate their role as stewards of nature - an idea that Edward Bok would support. In 1923 he created the American Peace Award for the best practical plan by which the United States might co-operate with other nations to achieve and preserve the peace of the world.

I have been recently studying peace gardens in our country and I was so delighted to be able to visit this one. It made me grateful to Bok and other visionaries like him who, before I was born, provided our country with parks and garden places like Bok Tower Gardens for the purpose of meditation, quietness, inspiration, and peace.

*Janet Guthrie*