



Mary Mcmurtrie's Country Garden Flowers

Timothy Clark

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- The life and gardening of one of Scotland's most original artists and gardeners.

This book, using the paintings that Mary McMurtrie left to illustrate an unpublished book on cottage garden flowers, records how she created the garden at Balbithan and used her nursery to distribute the double primroses and cottage garden plants which her husband, John McMurtrie, bequeathed to her. Mary McMurtrie belonged to the small band of enthusiasts, which included Margery Fish and Gladys Emerson, who grew double primroses during the period after the Second World War. At a time when every fifth day a house of some architectural importance was being demolished, these enthusiasts, along with fellow gardeners, preserved many of the plants from our gardening heritage of the previous centuries. Her flower paintings have been published in *Growing Old Fashioned Flowers* and *Wild Flowers of Scotland* and have been widely exhibited in Scotland, England and Europe. The publication of this book symbolises the tradition that she and her small circle maintained for many years as the only keepers of garden plants until the foundation of the National Council for the Conservation of Plants and Gardens. Gently proud of her Scots ancestry, Mary would have been delighted to know that one of her paintings was chosen as a gift for Prince Charles during a visit to The Gordon Highlander Regiment in 2006. *'The exquisite watercolor drawings of an accomplished botanical artist, Mary McMurtrie, fill the pages of this retrospective of the life and work of this dedicated collector and grower of precious flora. Born in Scotland in 1902, she died at age 101. During her lifetime, she became an ardent advocate for saving the historic garden plants of Britain. Author Timothy Clark recalls in the narrative the influences on her career, her gardening friends, her restoration of an historic garden, and her favorite plants. His literary style is reminiscent of a cozy chat with a gardening friend as he tells of the heritage of plants and how to grow the rare beauties featured on the pages of this book.'*

Marilyn K. Alaimo, garden writer and volunteer, Chicago Botanic Garden.