

The double bloodroot, *Sanguinaria canadensis* 'Flore Pleno', is a very rare form. It occurs in nature and is thus a natural rather than a human cultivar. But like many hybrids, it is sterile, producing no fertile seed. It can, however, be reproduced by division. The double form was first found by Guido von Webern in the woods on his property in Dayton, Ohio, around 1915. He gave a division of the plant to E.H. Wilson, curator of the Arnold Arboretum at Harvard University, and to Henry Teuscher. All surviving plants are thought to be descendants of Teuscher's specimen, as both the original plant and the division at the Arnold Arboretum died. *Flore Pleno* is a Latin phrase that denotes double flowers. The plant is sometimes identified as *Sanguinaria canadensis* 'Plena' and as *Sanguinaria canadensis* 'Multiplex'. In fact, there is a semi-double form which is properly *Sanguinaria canadensis* var. 'Flore Pleno' and a fully double form carries the rather unwieldy name, *Sanguinaria canadensis* forma *multiplex* (Wilson) Weatherby. Nomenclature aside, the double form is generally credited with being less evanescent and blooms for a week or more longer than the single-flowered variety.

The modest donation of several plants that Teuscher made to Elsie Reford in 1941 is at the root of a collection that today numbers more than 300. They are displayed in what Elsie Reford called "the Mound Garden," a modest rockery in the Stream Garden. They emerge every spring without fail, invading the otherwise barren parterre and bursting forth with their large white double flowers. After they bloom, they disappear, although their stringy, bloody roots are visible and remain so for the entire summer. Some are also grown in the Reserve, a part of the Gardens that serves as a nursery, where they are being propagated for sale. On occasion we bring them to the annual rare plant sale at the Montreal Botanical Garden – the *Rendez-vous horticole* – where they are snapped up by eager collectors and gardeners.

That the bloodroot found a happy home in Grand-Metis is evident. Elsie's diaries allow us to track her contentment: "May 20<sup>th</sup>, 1942. Double Bloodroot. 5 buds showing on plant given me by Dr. Teuscher of the Botanical Gardens." "June 13<sup>th</sup>, 1943. Double Bloodroot an unforgettable picture." "May 26<sup>th</sup>, 1944. 16 exquisite flowers from 2 small plants given me by Dr. Teuscher M.B.G. 2 years ago." And finally in 1957, she wrote: "May 19<sup>th</sup>. A perfect day with temperature about 57 and ending with great glory in the set of the sun. In Maryon's Garden the double primroses in their pale moonlight yellow are almost fully out and enchanting. Opposite on the slope of Boris' Garden the John Evelyn Daffodils open up most beautifully while on the Lily Bank some double Bloodroot opened in the morning sun. This never fails to move one to the mysterious marvels of flowers... All gifts from God."

A few years after his first visit and gift, Teuscher wrote Elsie Reford, begging her to take some cuttings of the progeny of his original donation for the botanical garden. His own had died. He blamed the gardener, who had smothered them with hops. She happily sent some to him in Montreal. She could not have known that their exchanges would have such importance to her gardens. But it is somehow fitting that it was the love of plants that brought two gardeners together and played a pivotal role in preserving her own garden and legacy.