

I love fall in the garden. The crisp air, the riot of colors, and the subdued light that permeate the atmosphere, all render themselves to a contemplative mood, and when in a contemplative mood, I like to read and study. Probably the garden designer and writer who has had the greatest influence on me is Russell Page. In



*case you are not familiar with him, the best description of his work comes from the El Paso Times in 1983 about his book, *The Education of a Gardener*. It says, “There are many books to tell you how, when and what to plant, **but only one goes beyond the technical aspects to reveal the art in the creation of good gardens.**” (emphasis is mine).*

*My most favorite of Page’s quotes is “given a choice. I want to look up at a garden and see each feature unfolding as it comes into view.” Each time I walk up my garden stairs, having followed my waterfall and rill to the bottom, I think of this quote and enjoy the garden anew. So, instead of writing a practical column, this time, I’d like to take you on a pleasurable stroll through the writings of Russell Page. **Shahla***

“A discerning eye needs only a hint, and understatement leaves the imagination free to build its elaborations.”

“To plant trees is to give body and life to one's dreams of a better world.”

“I consider that the site must control the design of a garden, just as it will, with the climate factors involved, inevitably control the planting.”

“Green fingers' are a fact, and a mystery only to the unpracticed. But green fingers are the extensions of a verdant heart. A good garden cannot be made by somebody who has not developed the capacity to know and love growing things.”

“A garden lives only insofar as it is an expression of faith, the embodiment of a hope and a song of praise.”

“Garden making, like gardening itself, concerns the relationship of the human being to his natural surroundings.”

“There are few gardens that can be left alone. A few years of neglect and only the skeleton of a garden can be traced ... Japanese artists working with a few stones and sand four hundred years ago achieved strangely lasting compositions.

However, there, too, but for the hands that have piously raked the white sand into patterns and controlled the spread of moss and lichens, little would remain.”

“My preoccupation is with the relationship between objects, whether I am dealing with woods, fields or water, rocks or trees, shrubs and plants, or groups of plants.”

“A handful of men working within the Zen sect of Buddhism created gardens in fifteenth-century Japan which were, and still are, far more than merely an aesthetic expression. And what is left of the earlier Mogul gardens in India suggests that their makers were acquainted with what lay behind the flowering of the Sufi movement in Iran and so sought to add further dimensions to their garden scenes.”