



Series: You might not care, but it's a good thing somebody did!

Episode 2 - Annabelle Hydrangea

It was a summer's day in 1910. Harriet was riding her horse in what is now the Shawnee National Forest in Southern Illinois. She saw a shrub with spectacular blooms. Harriet recognized this native plant, but had never seen one quite like this. She rode home to show her sister Amy her discovery. Together they dug up the specimen and brought it to their home on Chestnut Street.



Fifty years later Joseph McDaniel, plantsman and University of Illinois faculty member, was driving down the streets of Urbana, Illinois where he rediscovered Harriet's shrub. It had huge white corymbs nearly a foot across. The form of this native had the largest blooms and was the most symmetrical he had ever seen. McDaniel traced the shrub to one Hubbard Kirkpatrick, Harriet's son. Hubbard's grandfather, Cornwall, related the entire story of Harriet's find to McDaniel. Cornwall Kirkpatrick owned a stoneware pottery named for the town where they lived and thus after the city founder's wife, Anna Davie.

That same year Joseph McDaniel registered this new form as *Hydrangea arborescens* 'Annabelle' to the glory of Anna, Illinois and to the honor of the "Belles of Anna," Harriet and Amy Kirkpatrick, who wrested it from nature and brought it into our landscapes.

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Jeff Good

Christensen's Plant Center
6282 Gotfredson Road
Plymouth, Michigan 48170

(734) 454-1400 voice

(734) 454-1414 fax

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