Carmel Biblical Garden

A Planting Historically Forty Centuries Old

HOWARD HOFFMAN PHOTOS

COMMUNITY CHURCH brings to its garden the beauty and significance of Bible lands

IN HIS STRUGGLE through the centuries, man has left only a few landmarks in his building, but his first garden has never died. Much of it has moved with him around the world. The very plants which originated in Bible lands and provided shelter, food and raiment for the children of Israel formed the beginnings of the Pacific Coast's agricultural industry—the olive, fig, date palm and pomegranate, the grains, grasses and garden herbs. The Community Church of Carmel, Calif., wished to give expression to this relationship through a garden having plants and trees found only in Palestine and mentioned in the Bible.

In designing this garden, Landscape Architect Butler Sturtevant prepared, from his research, interesting notes on some of the plants used. (The Biblical name of certain plants may not always be that by which the plant is known today.)

PLANTS OF BIBLICAL HISTORY

Carob tree: (Luke 15:16 ". . . and he would fain have filled his belly with the husks that the swine did eat . . .") In Palestine the pods, or husks, are used extensively for forage. In Syria they are ground and made into syrup and fermented drinks. The carob is a handsome evergreen excellent for shade. (It is known also as St. John's bread tree.)

Cedar of Lebanon: (Psalm 92:12 "The righteous shall flourish like the palm tree; he shall grow like a cedar in Lebanon.") On the high ranges north of Palestine the slopes once were green with the cedar. The references in the Bible to this mighty forest tree are many, both as a tree of beauty and glory, and as a useful wood for the building of houses and temples. As specimens, the trees are distinctive and ornamental.

Fig: The Bible refers frequently to the fig's valuable shade and to the excellence of its fruit.

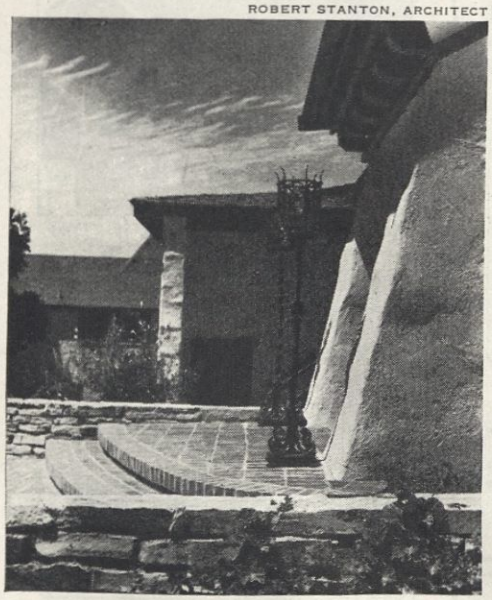
Olive: (Genesis 8:10 ". . . and again he sent forth the dove out of the ark; and the dove came in to him in the evening and lo, in her mouth an olive leaf plucked off; so Noah knew that the waters were abated from off the earth.") The gray-green billowy waves of the olive orchards are one of the familiar sights in Bible land. The Palestinian could not do without his olives, the fruit for food and relish, the oil for cooking and light.

Pomegranate: (Song of Solomon 4:13 "Thy plants are an orchard of pomegranates with pleasant fruits . . .") For centuries the pomegranate has been the symbol of fertility and life and, as such, has a mystical office to perform in native marriages in Palestine.

Grove, or *tamarisk:* (Genesis 21:33 "Abraham planted a grove in Beer-sheba . . .") The tamarisk was considered a sacred tree

BUTLER STURTEVANT
LANDSCAPE ARCHITECT

ROBERT STANTON, ARCHITECT



PICTURESQUE architecture adds interest

and was used to mark burial places, shrines and places of council. Most varieties of tamarisk are shrubs or graceful small trees bearing blossoms. Hedges of *Tamarix articulata* serve as windbreaks.

Box-tree: (Isaiah 60:13) The wood of the box was used by the Syrians for the construction of benches for their galleys and often was inlaid with ivory.

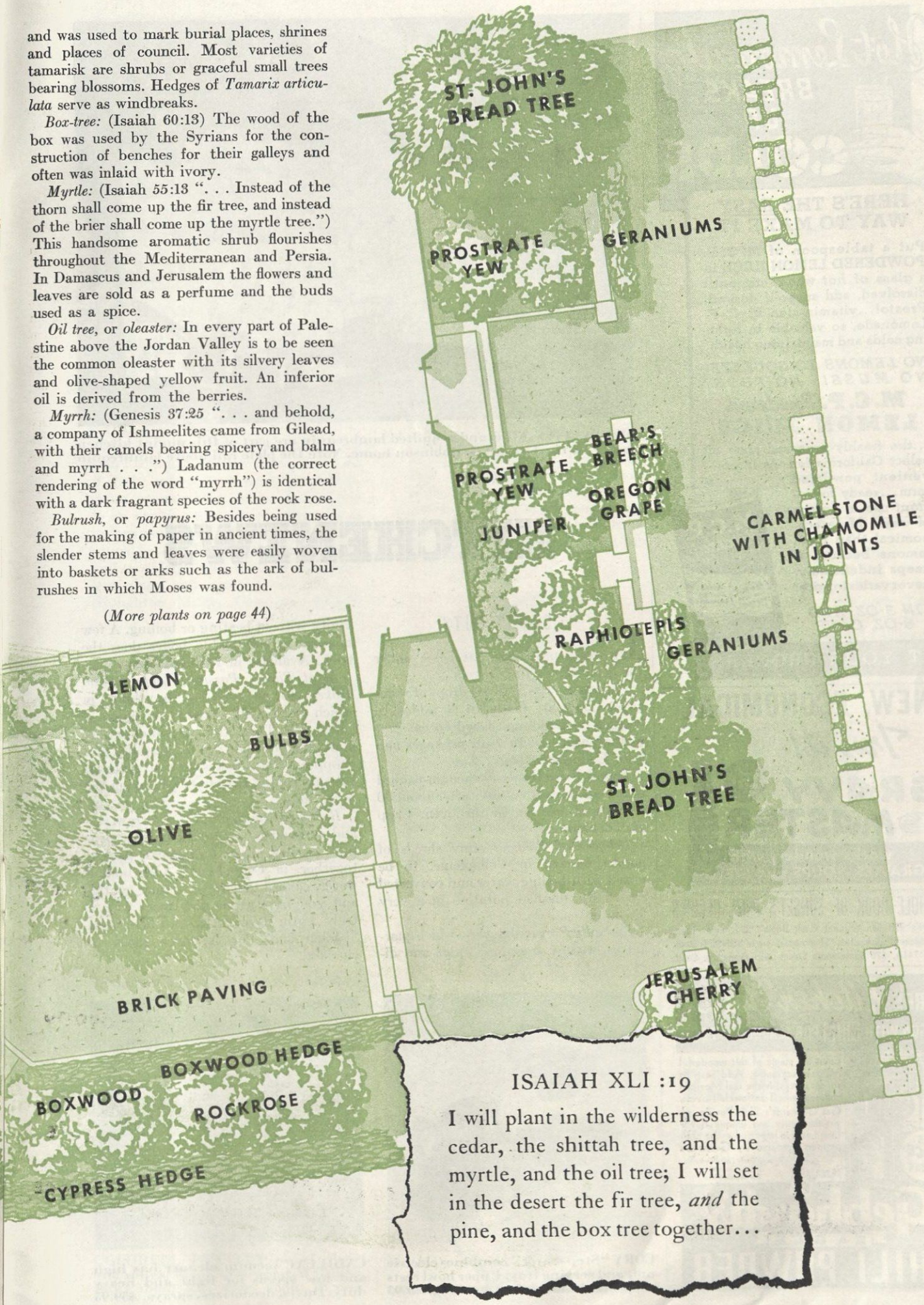
Myrtle: (Isaiah 55:13 ". . . Instead of the thorn shall come up the fir tree, and instead of the brier shall come up the myrtle tree.") This handsome aromatic shrub flourishes throughout the Mediterranean and Persia. In Damascus and Jerusalem the flowers and leaves are sold as a perfume and the buds used as a spice.

Oil tree, or *oleaster:* In every part of Palestine above the Jordan Valley is to be seen the common oleaster with its silvery leaves and olive-shaped yellow fruit. An inferior oil is derived from the berries.

Myrrh: (Genesis 37:25 ". . . and behold, a company of Ishmeelites came from Gilead, with their camels bearing spicery and balm and myrrh . . .") Ladanum (the correct rendering of the word "myrrh") is identical with a dark fragrant species of the rock rose.

Bulrush, or *papyrus:* Besides being used for the making of paper in ancient times, the slender stems and leaves were easily woven into baskets or arks such as the ark of bulrushes in which Moses was found.

(*More plants on page 44*)



ISAIAH XLI :19

I will plant in the wilderness the cedar, the shittah tree, and the myrtle, and the oil tree; I will set in the desert the fir tree, *and* the pine, and the box tree together...