



**Finding aid to the  
Carl Purdy collection,  
1900-1950, undated**

**California Botanic Garden  
1500 North College Avenue  
Claremont, California 91711  
909-625-8767  
<https://www.calbg.org>**

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## Descriptive Summary

**Title:** Carl Purdy collection

**Dates:** 1900-1950, undated

**Collection Identifier:** MS.3

**Creator:** Purdy, Carl

**Extent:** 1.0 linear foot (2 boxes)

**Abstract:** The collection consists of about ninety sales catalogs for Carl Purdy's nursery in Ukiah, California, which specialized in the cultivation of native California plants and bulbs. The collection also includes a small amount of correspondence between Purdy and his customers, catalogs from other nurseries, and other materials about Purdy and his nursery.

**Finding aid author:** Rachel Poutasse

**Languages:** Collection material is in English.

**Repository:** California Botanic Garden, 1500 N. College Ave., Claremont, CA 91711; 909-625-8767; <https://www.calbg.org>.

## **Administrative Information**

**Access restrictions:** The collection is open to research. Contact the repository for access.

**Preferred Citation:** Carl Purdy collection 1900-1950, MS.3, California Botanic Garden, Claremont, California, 91711.

**Publication rights:** Copyright of some materials in this collection are held by the creator and some are in public domain. Consult the Librarian for details.

**Processing Information:** The collection was initially processed by a California Botanic Garden Library volunteer and continued by Kathy Hacker in 2021. Rachel Poutasse wrote the finding aid in 2021.

## **Indexing Terms**

### **Contributors**

Purdy, Carl

### **Subjects – Topics**

Bulb industry--California

Native plant industry--California

Nurseries (Horticulture)--California

### **Genres and Forms of Materials**

Sales catalogs

Correspondence

## Biographical Note

Carl Purdy was born in Michigan in 1861. In 1870, his family moved to El Robles, California and purchased a ranch, where Purdy began collecting and selling native plants and bulbs to nurseries and herbaria on the east coast and abroad while studying to be a teacher. He began his own business in the 1880s in Ukiah, where he specialized in the sale of native California bulbs and plants, with a particular interest in lilies. He issued his first catalog in 1896. Purdy was also involved in landscaping work and gardening expositions, and published widely in horticultural journals.

Purdy died in 1945. His nursery business was continued by his children.

### Sources:

Butterfield, H. M. "Early Horticulture in Northern and Central California." *Journal of the California Horticultural Society* 29, no. 1 (January 1968): 30-32.

Mahurin, Carl. "Carl Purdy." *Journal of the California Horticultural Society* 2, no. 4 (October 1941): 196-207.

## **Scope and Content of the Collection**

The collection consists of about ninety sales catalogs for native California bulbs and plants from Carl Purdy's nursery in Ukiah from 1900 to 1950. The collection also includes a small amount of Purdy's business correspondence with Susanna Bixby Bryant (founder of California Botanic Garden [Rancho Santa Ana Botanic Garden]) and the owners of other nurseries, catalogs from other nurseries, announcements to customers from Purdy's son Elmer, a partial manuscript about Purdy, and a photograph of Purdy.

## **Arrangement**

The collection is arranged in two series.

Series I. Carl Purdy sales catalogs, 1900-1950, undated

Series II. Correspondence and other materials about Purdy, 1925-1950, undated

## Container List

### Series I. Carl Purdy sales catalogs, 1900-1950, undated

**Arrangement:** Catalogs are organized by date, with undated catalogs at the end of the series.

Box 1, Folder 1, 3, 5-7, 11: *Retail Price List of Californian Bulbs, 1900-1909*

Scope and contents note: Catalogs for 1900, 1903, 1905, 1907, and 1909 only.

Box 1, Folder 2: *Wholesale Price List: Californian Bulbs, 1902*

Box 1, Folder 4, 9: *Wholesale Price List of Californian Bulbs & Burbank's Hybrid Lilies, 1905, 1907*

Box 1, Folder 8, 10, 12, 17, 20: *Purdy's Bulbs for Fall Planting, 1907-1911*

Box 1, Folder 13: *Some Wild Flower Seeds, 1909*

Box 1, Folder 14: *Carl Purdy's Preliminary Catalogue of Bedding Plants Fine and New Perennials, 1910*

Box 1, Folder 15, 19: *Hardy Perennial Plants, 1910-1911*

Box 1, Folder 16: *Lilies for Fall and Winter Planting Especially in California, 1910*

Box 1, Folder 18, 22: *Bulbs and Wild Flower Seeds of California, 1911, 1913*

Box 1, Folder 21: *My Flowering Hardy Perennials, 1912*

Box 1, Folder 23, 25, 31-32: *Hardy Perennials for California Gardens, 1913-1917*

Scope and contents note: No catalog for 1916.

Box 1, Folder 24, 26, 28: *Purdy's Fall Bulbs, 1913-1915*

Box 1, Folder 27, 29-30: *Bulbs, Hardy Plants, Shrubs, Trees and Wild Flower Seeds of California, 1915-1916*

Box 1, Folder 33: *Purdy's Novelties and Specialties, 1917*

Box 1, Folder 34, 36: *Hardy Perennial Plants from All Over the World, 1918-1919*

Box 1, Folder 35, 37, 39, 41: *California's Choicest Bulbs, Hardy Plants, Ferns and Shrubs, 1919-1922*

Box 1, Folder 38, 40, 42, 44; Box 2, Folder 2-3, 6, 8, 10, 12, 14, 16, 18: *Perennial Plants from All Over the World, Rock Plants and Floral Novelties, 1920-1932*

Box 1, Folder 43; Box 2, Folder 1, 4-5, 7, 9, 11, 13, 15: *California's Choicest Bulbs, 1923-1931*

Box 2, Folder 17: *Californian and Other West American Bulbs and Plants, 1932*

Box 2, Folder 19-20, 22: *Combined Offerings of California and Other West American Bulbs and Plants, Rock Garden and Alpine Plants, Unusual Perennials, 1933-1935*

Box 2, Folder 23-25, 27, 29: *California and Other West American Bulbs and Plants, Hardy Perennials and Rock Garden Plants and Seeds, 1936-1940*

Box 2, Folder 26: *For Your 1939 Garden, 1939 All-America Selections and Other Novelties, 1939*

Box 2, Folder 28: *Superb Flowers for Your 1940 Garden, All-American Selections and Other Novelties, 1940*

Box 2, Folder 30: *Californian and Other West American Bulbs and Plants, Specialties, 1941*

Box 2, Folder 31-36, 38-39, 41: *Californian and Other West American Bulbs and Plants, Rare Shrubs, 1942-1950*

Box 2, Folder 37, 40: *Net Wholesale Pricelist of California Bulbs, 1948, 1950*

Box 2, Folder 42-43: *Trees and Shrubs for Bay Region Homes, undated*

Box 2, Folder 44: *Dahlias and Gladioli from Sunny California, undated*

Box 2, Folder 45: *Fall Planting Suggestions from a Specialist*, undated  
Box 2, Folder 46: *Important Message Concerning My Catalog*, undated  
Box 2, Folder 47: *Trade Price List Seeds for Florists and Nurserymen*, undated

**Series II. Correspondence and other materials about Purdy, 1925-1950, undated**

**Arrangement:** Organized by date, with undated material at the end of the series.

Box 2, Folder 49-50: **Correspondence with Susanna Bixby Bryant, 1925-1927**  
Box 2, Folder 51: **Correspondence and catalog from Gordon Ainsley, 1935**  
Box 2, Folder 21: **E. B. Drake catalog: *Alpine Gardens (Lakebay, Wash.)*, *Hardy, Native and Imported Alpines and Perennials*, 1935**  
Box 2, Folder 52: **Correspondence with Carlton Yerex, 1935**  
Box 2, Folder 53: **Correspondence and catalog from John McDonnell, 1944**  
Box 2, Folder 54-55: **Announcement on contract pricelist from Elmer Purdy to customers and friends, 1948, 1950**  
Box 2, Folder 48: **Roderick M. Crocket & Co. catalog: *Crocket's Hardy Alpine Plants*, undated**  
Box 2, Folder 56: **Partial manuscript by unknown author about Carl Purdy, undated**  
Box 2, Folder 57: **Photograph of Carl Purdy, undated**