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## **Bleeding Heart A Garden Favorite**

I have created a number of gardens containing favorites, each move brought a new opportunity to plan, create and watch it grow. Somewhere in each new landscape I always had a shade garden that contained at least one of my childhood favorite perennials. This was my first favorite perennial.

Bleeding Heart, *Dicentra spectabilis*. although its botanical name is from the Greek, it was actually smuggled out of China by a botanist named Robert Fortune in the mid 1800's. The 1 ½ inch flowers of red and white, side by side on a stem actually looked like a series of bleeding hearts. Or, if turned upside down and pulled slightly apart, others say like a lady in a bathtub!

Where I first saw this interesting flower was in a garden created by my great-grandmother, and after her death tended by my grandmother. I was about four years old, visiting my grandmother when I made the discovery in a mostly shaded section of the side garden, protected by a low garden wall and an over-hanging, old fashion lilac (another one of my favorites!). Sadly, as my grandmother's health declined and my mother had limited time to tend the garden, it eventually disappeared. Yet, it held in my memory, growing in intrinsic value.

Having favorites in our garden to bring us joy in times like these, to call us to memories of past times, to give us a moment of stillness and reflection, is like being amongst friends and loved ones . . . finding contentment.



Bleeding Heart, *Dicentra spectabilis*