

During Walter Hill's tenure, several commercial nurseries were established and some thrived. The first recorded nursery was set up in 1854 by **Edward Way (c.1825-1881)** in South Brisbane. Trained as a gardener in England with various commercial nurseries, Way arrived at Moreton Bay from Sydney. His initial stock was sourced from Shepherd's Darling Nursery, Sydney with seeds imported English companies. Way was another active member of the Moreton Bay Horticultural Society and became the first curator of the Toowoomba Botanic gardens called Queen's Park in 1874.¹

A.J. Hockings (1826-1890)² established one of the earliest commercial nurseries in Queensland at South Brisbane in 1858 and this business continued (managed by his son, Albert Thomas Hockings) until at least 1897.³ Hockings was also a founding member of the Queensland Acclimatisation Society (1862), a trustee for the Mechanics' Institute and for Musgrave Park (South Brisbane), a Brisbane City Council alderman and mayor twice (1865, 1867), and member for Wickham in the Qld Legislative Assembly (1877-78). Hockings introduced, acclimatised, and hybridised plants suitable for Queensland, especially fruit trees.

In 1863, Hockings published the pioneering local gardening work, his *Queensland Garden Manual*. This is the first warm-climate manual in Australia. This had reached its third edition by 1888, and was regularly advertised in the local Press during this period.⁴ His next work was *The Flower Garden in Queensland* published in 1875. His guides seem to have dominated the local scene from the 1860s to at least the 1880s.

¹ Aitken, Richard, 'Way, Edward', p.633. In Aitken, Richard and Looker, Michael (2002). *Oxford Companion to Australian Gardens*. Melbourne: Oxford University Press.

² Generally refer to Sim, Jeannie, 'Hockings, Albert John', pp.305-6. In Aitken, Richard and Looker, Michael (2002). *Oxford Companion to Australian Gardens*. Melbourne: Oxford University Press.

³ Sim, Jeannie and Jan Seto (1996), *Inventory of Historic Cultural Landscapes in Queensland, Final Report for Stage 1*. Manly West, Qld: AGHS, Queensland Branch, pg. 27: Advertisement in PA 1866 locates the nursery at Montague Road, South Brisbane and the seed warehouse at Queen Street, North Brisbane. Advertisements for Hockings were still running in the 1897 issues of *Queenslander*, with addresses as Albert St and Eagle Junction, Brisbane. In *Queenslander*, 3 Mar 1888, pg. 351, Hockings establishment is reported as "the oldest nursery in the colony". However, the *Queensland Post Office Directory* (1863) describes Edward Hay's nursery at South Brisbane being established in 1854. However, Hockings business began as a general store in 1848 which he took over from Petersen who began trading in 1842. [Source: Advertisements in *Moreton Bay Courier*, 2 (103), 3 June 1848, pg. 3, c. 5; and, 3 (113) 12 August 1848, pg. 1, c. 4].

⁴ Hockings, Albert John (1888). *Queensland Garden Manual*. Brisbane: A. Cleghorn. Advertisements for these works appeared in both *Pugh's Almanac* and the *Queenslander*. Copies of the 1875 and 1888 publications only were found in the John Oxley Library, within the State Library of Queensland.

His first newspaper advert in 1848 stated:

Stockton Store, South Brisbane. The undersigned having commenced business as above, invite the attention of the Settlers in the surrounding districts to the advantages they would derive by purchasing from them, as all their goods are brought for cash in Sydney, and their motto being "small profits and quick returns", they are enabled to defy competition. A.J. & H. Hockings.⁵

Hockings' numerous nursery catalogues were advertised regularly in *The Queenslander*, *Pugh's Almanac* and other trade journals, but to my knowledge not one has survived to the present day in Queensland.⁶ Hockings' many contributions (usually writing as 'A.J.H.') to *Pugh's Almanac* include various articles such as 'Useful Table for Agriculturalists', 'First Principles of Cultivation', 'Irrigation', and 'The Orchard'.⁷ Hockings published garden manuals offered a cheaper source of information than the 'standard' works from Britain and provided descriptions of what could and could not be done in the unfamiliar climates and localities of Queensland. He wrote:

The different papers [in this book] have been written with especial regard to Amateurs residing in the Brisbane district ; but a slight modification, to suit the seasons in the various districts, will render nearly all the instructions equally applicable, not only to every part of Queensland, but to New South Wales and Victoria. The Author acknowledges his obligations to Messrs. Loudon, George Glenly, John Cranston, and other standard authorities, whom he has consulted on points beyond his own experience ; and to whose more elaborate and expensive works he refers those who may find his directions insufficient.⁸

Useful lists of plants recommended for local conditions can be obtained from both of Hockings gardening manuals.⁹ Hockings was an avid advertiser (his first was in 1848): he used the local newspapers and other publications to announce sales and goods. This first business was a general store selling: 'Ale, Pickles, Potatoes, Flour, Tar, Hay, Wine, Pickled Herrings, Rosin, Corn, Salt, Parlour Stoves, Bran, &c., &c.'¹⁰ When he added seeds and plants to his stores, by 1859, he thus became possibly only the second commercial nursery in Queensland:

⁵ *MBC*, 27 May 1848, p.3, c.5.; the H. is presumably Henry Hockings, who advertised in *Pugh's Almanac* in 1862 as an auctioneer, appraiser, broker &c.

⁶ One 1865 *Queensland Garden Manual* held by an unknown library has bound in with it a copy of a catalogue for 1865-6. See Crittenden, Victor. (2002). *Yesterday's Gardens: A history and bibliography of Australian Gardening Books*. 2nd edition. Canberra: Mulini Press. p. 198.

⁷ *Pugh's Almanac*, 1865, pp. 169-172.

⁸ Hockings, Albert John (1875). *The Flower Garden in Queensland. Containing concise and practical instructions on the cultivation of the flower garden, and the management of pot plants, in Australia*. Brisbane: Geo. Slater & Co. Preface.

⁹ See Appendix D ~ Plants in Early Queensland, in Sim, J.C.R. (1999). 'Designed Landscapes in Queensland, 1859-1939: experimentation – adaptation – innovation', unpublished PhD thesis, Brisbane: Queensland University of Technology.

¹⁰ *MBC*, 3 June 1848, p.3, c.5.

A.J. Hockings, Nursery and Seedsman, Rosaville, South Brisbane, and Queen-Street, North Brisbane. A large stock of superior and acclimated [*sic*] Fruit Trees, consisting of about 20,000 of all the most approved varieties in general cultivation; besides a large number imported by the Advertiser at considerable expense from Calcutta and other places...¹¹

Other early and leading nursery operators who were either plant collectors, horticultural experimenters or plant and/or seed importers include Eaves, Hartmann, Rigby and Summerlin.

S.H. Eaves (1842-1927) operated the Breakfast Creek Nursery, Albion (Brisbane) from 1864 until his death when his family continued the business into the 1940s. His nursery is probably the third to be established in Queensland. One of his later annual publications survives: *General Catalogue of 1897*.¹²

Carl Hartmann (d.1891) operated the Range Nursery in Toowoomba from about 1865 until his death. No record of his catalogues has survived although he advertised regularly in the local newspaper, the *Toowoomba Chronicle*.¹³

Matthew Rigby (d. 1896) began as a fruiterer from the late 1860s and then operated his nursery from New Farm from the 1870s until his death when his son took over. The 1881 edition of his annual publication *Rigby's Queensland Gardener's Guide and Catalogue*, is one of only a few Queensland catalogues to have survived into the 21st century.¹⁴

Lawrence Summerlin (1851-1938) began as a seed merchant in 1885 and operated seed nurseries at Mount Gravatt and Toowoomba. He did some experimental horticulture, but today his lasting memorial is a surviving copy of *Summerlin's Seed Catalogue and Amateur's Guide for 1891*.¹⁵

Further work is needed on the history of commercial nurseries in Queensland to fully appreciate their wide distribution and contribution to Queensland development, until World War I which brought much of commercial horticulture to its knees.¹⁶

¹¹ Two-page advertisement in *Pugh's Almanac for 1859*; Also see Sim, Jeannie 'Hockings, A.J.' pp.305-306. In Aitken and Looker (2002).

¹² Sim, Jeannie. 'Eaves, Samuel Hinder', pp.193-194. In Aitken and Looker (2002).

¹³ Aitken, Richard. 'Hartmann, Carl Heinrich', p.290. In Aitken and Looker (2002).

¹⁴ Aitken, Richard. 'Rigby, Matthew', p.508. In Aitken and Looker (2002).

¹⁵ Aitken, Richard. 'Summerlin, Lawrence', p.580. In Aitken and Looker (2002).

¹⁶ Sim, Jeannie 2001, "A Golden Age of Gardening in the Subtropics", In Whitehead, Georgina (ed), *Planting the Nation*, Melbourne: Australian Garden History Society, pp. 115-135.



'Scholar's Banyan' (tree #0327)
Ficus benghalensis, near QUT border
with the Gardens (December 2004).

Cultivating Queensland in the Old Brisbane Botanic Gardens, from the Dreamtime to the 1880s

*Old Brisbane Botanic Gardens
History Series*

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