

Charter member of the Arkansas Daffodil Society dies:

Carl Amason

## Reclusive gardener devoted to flowers

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ARKANSAS DEMOCRAT-GAZETTE

On his 40-acre property outside Calion, Carl Amason lived alone, spurning human companionship while nurturing a relationship with Mother Nature.

Surrounded by a majestic garden that was populated with leafy magnolias, vibrant daffodils and other exotic flora, Amason honed his green thumb and indulged his fascination with plants until he died Saturday from congestive heart failure and lymphoma at age 81.

"He was married to his plants," said Thera Lou Adams, a Camden resident who developed a friendship with Amason after they retired. "He was what is called a 'plants man'."

Born on July 22, 1924, Amason developed a passion for gardening at an early age. With his mother, Versa Clara Murphy Amason, actively supporting his interest in plants, a young Carl learned the tricks of the trade relatively quickly.

"He was born with a love of plants," said his older brother, Alton Virgil. "He would come home at 5 years old with a handful of daisies that he picked up on the side of road. He had a love of flowers."

Amason also had an affinity for his hometown.

After serving in Italy during World War II and graduating from Ouachita Baptist College in 1947, Amason spent much of his life in Union County. He worked as a chemist for American Oil in El Dorado and moved to the company's plant outside Chicago for one year before deciding to return home and watch over his family's estate. In the process, he channeled his energy into maintaining a garden and going to the local Baptist Church, where he would supply the flowers for the congre-

gation. Never married, Amason maintained a reclusive lifestyle dedicated to his garden.

"He probably is one of the most devoted people to his garden I have known," said Randle Tomlinson, a resident of Calion who used to have coffee with Amason every week. "He shared it with anyone who had an interest — from young people to older people."

Television networks took advantage of the opportunity to see his botanical accomplishments. The Home and Garden Television cable network traveled to Calion to feature Amason's plants on one of its shows. Eric Sundell took his University of Arkansas-Monticello botany students there as well.

As one of the founders of the Arkansas Native Plants Society and a charter member of the Arkansas Daffodil Society, Amason became widely known in the gardening community around the region.

"He was one of the most knowledgeable plant people in Arkansas and the South," said Janet Carson, a horticulture specialist for the University of Arkansas Co-operative Extension Service. "He was glad to share his knowledge with anyone."

Amason stored in his memory a long catalogue of plant species but saved space for soaking up information on birds and geography — his other interests. His vast and detailed collection of tidbits and trivia on a variety of topics made him the subject of awe among his peers.

"He is probably one of the most intelligent people I have ever known, although he wouldn't admit to it," Tomlinson said.

Adams summed it up better.

"You didn't question Carl. He was always right," she said. "He was something else."