

## The Wisteria at Ball-Sellers House



The wisteria at the Ball-Sellers House was probably planted by Will and Julia Powell who bought the house in 1920 and lived there for the rest of their lives. They first trained the vine over the top of the porch of the two-story section of the house.

The Powells probably found that the wisteria

was too invasive for the porch roof. New growth tendrils from the wisteria work their way between porch shingles and can weaken the roof. So Will Powell built a support for it made of iron pipe and they trained it away from the porch and towards the original house.



When the Powell's adopted daughter, Marion Sellers, donated the house to the Arlington Historical Society in 1975, the Society built a wooden support to help train the wisteria away from the original house. This was later replaced with the sturdy pergola you see today.

The wisteria is a Chinese Wisteria or "Wistaria Sinensis." Seeds from a Chinese Wisteria were first brought to the US from China in 1816.



Items from China were a popular symbol of luxury and were highly sought after. The Mt. Vernon Ladies' Association may have also planted seeds of a Chinese Wisteria at George Washington's home. Wisteria was named in 1818 to honor the scientific contributions of Dr. Caspar Wistar (1761-1818) an American physician who broke new ground in the study of anatomy and taught at the University of Pennsylvania

The wisteria requires significant pruning throughout the growth season and again during the winter. Trimming encourages healthy growth. In late April through May, new shoots bear the beautiful purple flowers.

