

RITUAL FOR INITIATION CEREMONY
PI ALPHA XI
February, 2012

Suggested Preparations:

1. For each initiate, a copy of the constitution, chapter by-laws, histories of the chapter and society, a pin and certificate (framing optional), and a lotus pod (if available). Pins and certificates may be obtained from ASHS. The gift of a flower or plant to each initiate is also suggested.



2. An oversized copy of the Key (insignia), illuminated if possible, of the society, with pointer available.
3. A sufficient number of Ritual scripts for each official/member participating.
4. Room decorations (the Society's colors are cerulean blue and Nile green – see –Pi Alpha Xi website at www.ashs.org), which may include ornamental materials, plants, flower arrangements and/or candles.
5. Gavel or bell.
6. Seating for current members and guests.

Script for the Initiation Ceremony

Assembly

Marshall or Advisor: (addressing candidates)

We have the permission of the President of the Society to enter for the initiation.

(Marshall ushers in candidates and arranges them in the front of the room facing the President in alphabetical order from left to right.)

Calling the Meeting to Order

President: The meeting will please come to order (strike gavel or ring bell).

We are assembled today for the purpose of initiating into the _____ Chapter of Pi Alpha Xi _____ (number) of duly elected candidate(s). Candidates, please remain standing.

President: (optional)

Welcome to all family and friends that are with us on this special occasion. Today as we gather together to recognize and reward the accomplishments of our newest members, let us remember our role, not just as horticulturists, but as purveyors of beauty and stewards of the earth.

Inquiry

Advisor or Marshall: I wish to present for initiation into Pi Alpha Xi the following candidates: (identify each by name in alphabetical order).

President: (addressing candidates)

Candidates, do you come before the members of Pi Alpha Xi with earnest desire that we receive you into our Society and grant you its benefits? If so, answer, "I do."

Candidates: I do.

President: Before proceeding with the initiation, it becomes my duty to explain to you the aims and purposes of the Pi Alpha Xi National Honor Society for Horticulture. The purpose of this Society is to promote high scholarship, foster good fellowship among its members, raise the visibility of the profession and promote the exchange of ideas, and to establish cordial relations among students, educators, and professional horticulturists. Moreover, we hold fast to the ideal that has come down to us through the ages: the enrichment of human life through plants.

Pledge

President: Do you hereby pledge yourself to uphold and promote the ideals of this Society and take upon yourself the responsibility incumbent upon membership therein? Please respond with "I do."

Candidates: I do.

President: It is therefore my duty to charge you. Are you willing to seek further knowledge of Pi Alpha Xi and to be loyal to the ideals of this Society, and are you willing to render unto it such service as it may require? Please respond with "I am."

Candidates: I am.

President: Candidates, please be seated.

Formation of the Society and Chapter

Advisor/officer/
other member: The idea of an honor floriculture and ornamental horticulture society emerged from an impromptu after-dinner discussion among representatives of several universities attending the 1923 International Flower Show in New York City. The first formal installation of the Alpha Chapter was shortly thereafter, at

Cornell University, under the direction of Arno Nehrling. Today the Society has 39 chapters at four-year institutions with horticulture programs and over 14,000 members.. It has also expanded its mission to include all specializations within horticulture.

Our chapter, the _____ Chapter, was the (number) chapter to be established. The _____ Chapter was founded in _____(year) through the efforts of _____(name of founders). Since that time, we have initiated _____(number) members.

You are now part of a long and storied history of horticulture in the United States, and members of a Society to which some of the most illustrious horticulturists and plants people of our time have pledged their loyalty.

The first ritual initiation, written in the early 20th century, describes the importance of the Greek name and symbols of the Society to our founders, and we share their words and reflections with you.

Motto or Name of the Society

(Presented by the Secretary, or if desired, by member of chapter with ability for this part. Some chapters utilize different speakers for each Greek word.)

Secretary/or other officer /member: (Some member of the Society may point to the characters on the key as they are described.)

The name of our Society, Pi Alpha Xi, represents four Greek words: Pi, the first letter of *polymathia*, or scholarship; Alpha, from the word *Anthokomos*, meaning to take care of flowers; and *Zo* and *Omonoia*, meaning “to live” and “unity,” respectively, signifying the bond among gardeners, educators, and professional horticulturists. This is the basis for our continued and future success in horticulture

Explanatory

Secretary/officer/
member:

Polymathia (poly-MATH-ē-uh), which means learned and can be translated as scholarship. This symbolizes the knowledge and achievement which Pi Alpha Xi is organized to foster. It is represented on our key by the ancient writing instrument, the stylus. Our founders were scholars themselves, and echoed their contemporary, William DeWitt Hyde, when they spelled out the vision and aspirations for the members of our Society: “To be at home in all lands and all ages; to count Nature a familiar

acquaintance, and Art an intimate friend; to carry the keys of the world's library in your pocket, and feel its resources behind you in whatever task you undertake; to make hosts of friends...who are to be leaders in all walks of life; to lose yourself in generous enthusiasms and cooperate with others for common ends." Almost one hundred years later those ideals still resonate for us, as we encourage intellectual challenge and personal growth, and which we may sum up in three short words: "*Always to excel.*"

Alpha, the second word of our name, refers to the Greek word *Anthokomos* (antho-KŌ-mos), which describes one who takes care of flowers and refers to our Society's roots in floriculture.

From seeds and cuttings to display and use, the *Nymphaea caerulea*, or Blue Lotus, symbolizes the art and science associated with working with plants, a blossom gradually unfolding. On our key and seal, the Blue Lotus is depicted as a fully blown flower accompanied by two buds. These buds are a promise of good things to come from the propagation of our ideals. The Lotus flower is legendary, and almost every culture, civilization, and religion in the world has used the Lotus to teach about genesis, rejuvenation and the oneness of all life.

Also appearing on our key is a word signifying the Lotus flower, rendered in three ancient scripts. The colors adopted by our Society have come from the pure cerulean blue of this noble flower and from the shimmering green of the tropical waters with which it is associated.

Cultivation and design are symbolized by two other characters on our key. The Egyptian hoe represents cultivation, while the ancient vase represents the use of ornamental plants and decorative material. Not only were Lotus flowers grown for their beauty, but they were also woven into garlands. Thus, flowers have wreathed the cradle, the marriage altar, and the tomb.

Xi, the third letter, represents the Greek words *Zo* and *Omonoia* (omo-NE-u), meaning "to live" and "unity," respectively, and refers to the fellowship which exists among true plant lovers. Indeed, there exists a tie of kindred among all gardeners.

Lecture – Option 1

President (or other officer/member):

The interest in and love of plants and the environment unites all of us in the horticulture industry. Much has changed in our industry since Pi Alpha Xi began in 1923. As horticulturists, we have moved from a segmented and commodity-based industry to one on the frontiers of plant science. In fact, it is not only our love of plants that binds us, but now all the new and exciting

technologies bind us to a larger world that embraces new uses for tissue culture, biotechnology, and plant pathology.

Throughout history, the cultivation of plants and flowers has exerted an elevating influence upon humankind. Plants embody legends and are part of our most ancient traditions and myths. People learned to garden with plants almost as soon as they learned crop culture. Gardeners, botanists and physicians worked together to feed as well as cure their neighbors and friends using plants. Philosophers, scientists, legislators, and soldiers, from Plato and Aristotle to Washington and Jefferson, have praised the virtues of gardening and proclaimed the glories of plants. Poets and writers, from Homer to Shakespeare, in novels or in science fiction, have also paid their tributes. Throughout the ages, though peoples and empires have come and gone, still the urge has persisted for these good things which grow out of the ground. Horticulture, and the understanding of plants and the environment, has constantly enriched the world and ennobled those who practiced it.

Our work is essential. Our practitioners plan cities and parks, feed the hungry, heal the sick, help our environment, bring beauty to our lives, and establish a better, richer life for all upon this earth. We are artists as well as scientists, practitioners in an ancient and honorable calling.

Lecture – Option 2

President (or split up among officers/members):

From time immemorial flowers and ornamental plants have been associated with human activities. When primitive humans abandoned the life of roving savages and settled down to cultivate the soil, a garden seems to have been their first dwelling place. Here they could find food, shelter, peace and beauty - the main ingredients of a civilized life. It was in such a place, amid the green and flowering plants, that our pursuit of a cultured and urban civilization had its beginning. Ancients called it Paradise; today a garden is still the epitome (e-PIT-ome) of peace, plenty, and security for the finer instincts of humanity.

Throughout all history, the cultivation of plants and flowers has exerted an elevating influence upon humankind. People learned to garden with ornamental plants almost as soon as they learned crop culture. The historical record reveals the early use of flowers and plant materials for festive, ceremonial and religious purposes. Landscape design was practiced as early as the very dawn of written history. Florists, gardeners, botanists and their associates, the physicians, worked

throughout the ancient empires of the east - in the Orient, in Egypt, Mesopotamia and India - as well as in the later classical countries- down through the Dark Ages and finally into the civilization of modern times. This is one of the oldest professions, and one which has constantly enriched the world and ennobled those who practiced it.

We cannot imagine the Garden of Eden or any of the enchanted gardens of history without their flowers and their groves. The ancient Egyptians used flowers to honor the mighty pharaohs, to present to guests, to adorn houses, and to pay tribute to the dead. We discover pictures, thousands of years old, and see the image of a powerful Assyrian warrior who dines beneath a leafy arbor, and we read about Nebuchadnezzar's Hanging Gardens, the glory of old Babylon. In Greece and Rome people linked their flowers and trees with the gods and held them in highest respect. In sacred groves, trees were dedicated to the deities. Flowers were offered in religious festivals, dancing maidens carried garlands of them, and victors were crowned with them. People in Rome had pleasure gardens around their villas, and commercial florists practiced their art. From ancient to modern times, flowers and gardens have continued to be associated with the lives of people, from the simple and lowly to the grandeur of royalty. They have been transplanted from country to country, wherever humans have gone, often carried in the vanguard of civilization.

The great and strong of all ages have lauded the beauty of plants. Cyrus, the great king of Ancient Persia, planted tree parks with his own hands. Philosophers, scientists, statesmen, and soldiers, from Plato to Aristotle to Washington and Jefferson, have praised the virtues of gardening and proclaimed the glories of ornamental plants. Poets and writers, from Homer to Shakespeare and down to the moderns, have also paid their tributes. Legends have grown up around these plants. Throughout all ages, though peoples and empires have come and gone, still the urge has persisted for these good things which grow out of the ground. This is enduring evidence of the fundamental need of humankind for the products of our horticulture industries.

Our work is essential. There is a special dignity in our profession because it was an early precursor of art, science and the craft of healing. Its practitioners have

also been responsible for the planning of cities and parks, the adornment of temples, the discovery of natural laws and the introduction of many things which have helped to establish a better, richer life upon this earth. Their flowers have expressed deepest sentiment at times when no words could convey this quite so fully. Their trees and gardens have adorned people's homes, from the humblest dooryard to the noblest palace. Such are some of the accomplishments and deeper meanings underlying our ancient and honorable calling.

Conclusion

President:

Today, the only way in which we may fittingly discharge the trust received from our predecessors is by living up to their expectations for us. As custodians of the knowledge and scholarship which we are privileged to possess, it is our solemn obligation to conserve the earth, to make it more productive and to make it more beautiful, so that all people might benefit. We, who are members of Pi Alpha Xi, by reason of our learning and special attainments in the art and science of horticulture, are entrusted with the particular responsibility of employing our skills and knowledge for the betterment of the world and unselfish advancement of our professions. This is a sort of "Hippocratic oath" which we must accept out of respect for the traditions of our calling. To this, Pi Alpha Xi is dedicated.

Oath of Pi Alpha Xi

President:

Candidates, please stand. It now becomes my duty and privilege to administer the oath of Pi Alpha Xi, the National Honor Society for Horticulture. You will pronounce your name and repeat after me:

I, _____ (state full name), /

Do hereby promise /

To faithfully adhere to the ideals /

For which Pi Alpha Xi stands /

And I will strive with diligence /

Towards the realization /

Of the highest attainments /

Of which I may be capable. /

I will at all times /

Try to foster good fellowship /

Among members of Pi Alpha Xi /

And I will ever be alert /

To find other persons /
With worthy achievements in horticulture. /

- President: This concludes the formal initiation and now as President of the _____ Chapter of Pi Alpha Xi, I take great pleasure in welcoming you into our Society as members. After receiving your materials and signing the Secretary's roll, the rest of the members will welcome you.

(President shakes hands with newly initiated members and presents materials.)
- Chapter: (Each member follows the President in shaking hands and offering congratulations.)
- Secretary: Please note that each initiate is to be assigned a permanent number which will appear on the initiate's certificate and the records of the Society. Some chapters alphabetize the order of number assignment or even place special emphasis on number.

Please collect addresses (including email) so that the Society may continue to be in contact with the initiates.

This ritual was revised in 2012 by a committee chaired by Ellen Paparozzi (University of Nebraska) with Doug Needham (Longwood Gardens). This ritual was submitted to the membership in August 2012.

*A previous revision was written by a committee, appointed by President James Klett (Epsilon 395) during 1983-1985, consisting of Kenneth C. Sanderson (Alpha 305), chair; Elwood W. Kallin (Delta 48) and R. Kent Kimmins (Iota 35). Rituals from over 9 chapters (ranging in length from one to several pages) were used to produce the earlier version, which retained some of the original language chosen by the founders (Clement G. Bowers, Alpha 10; Richard B. Farham, Alpha 9; and Arno H. Nehrling, Alpha 4). Chapter rituals "...did not reflect the society's membership or times." That version was submitted to the membership for acceptance by Chair Sanderson on March 28, 1985. It was accepted (from *The Lotus Leaf*, 1988, page 86).*