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Jo Ann Gardner ef\* Heirloom Gardens From a Conversation with Jo Ann Gardner of Alba, Inverness County (What distinguishes a heritage plant?) Jo Ann Gardner: I'm not talking so much about vegetables. I'm frankly talking about ornamentals. I'm talking first of all about useful herbs, and also about gardens that people made. These were mainly ornamental gardens. And I got involved in it because my husband and I were doing the landscaping at the Nova Scotia Highland Village (in Inverness). And it was very bare-- nothing had ever been planted. So I started filling up blank spaces, putting in herb gardens and stuff like that. And then I thought, well, if this is an authentic, recreated Highland Scottish village, I'd better find out whether these were authentic plants. Because I'd just taken things that were growing in my garden, that grew well for me, and I plunked them in there. So then I began to research and I began to find out where plants came from. I gradually realized that they did have gardens. They had ornamental gardens.... When I started to research this subject, I got all my neighbours involved, because we don't have a vehicle. So, the way I would find out about things was, people would come in the house--like a man would come to buy eggs. Maybe he'd be in his 70's, so I'd ask him about the plants in his mother's garden. And you'd be amazed at what these people remember; even people who say they're not interested in flowers. See, there's a connection between the plants and their family, so they remember them. Anyway, this man was thinking that the (1876) house was going to fall down, or he was going to bulldoze it, and he knew of my interest. So he said, "You'd better come over and see it." He came over and he picked me up, and we went to his place--in Whycocomagh, on the Trans-Canada. He just let me go. He went back to his house, his modern house, and he said, "It's over there." And I had my camera with me. I'm not a really very good photographer, but I have taken some pictures that are all right. And I had no tripod to steady the thing, and it was the kind of camera that needed a tripod, otherwise the picture didn't come out very well. So I had with me this kitchen stool, this long kitchen stool. So just imagine me walking through the field--this was in August--with a camera around my neck, heavy camera, and the kitchen stool--and walking through the fields to find this place. I saw the wreck of the house there. And I saw this big blackberry patch. There was a big rose patch. You often see this at the site of an old house. And there was a rough path, and I followed it. And there I Gardner Farm at Alba, where so many heirloom plants have a home