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*Crescentia*

*Bignoniaceae*

*Crescentia* commemorates an Italian lawyer and writer, Pietro de Crescenzi (1230-1321) who studied medicine, natural history, law and logic. He was a judge in Bologna and in about 1306, he gave up his law practice to write *Ruralia Commoda* about country life based upon his own experience as a landowner combined with the findings of past Romans. It was hand printed but is believed to have been the first book printed on the new German printing press in the 1400s. The work became popular on the European continental mainland and was translated into several European languages. *Ruralia Commoda* embraces agriculture, horticulture and garden design, and covers not only cultivation methods (including grafting) but such matters as farm implements and buildings, and insect control as well. Apparently some of the text on plant growth was extracted from writing by Albertus Magnus (c.1193-1280). Today many authorities view the work as the most significant agricultural medieval treatise, as well as the first ever book on gardening.