

A NEW WORDSWORTH WORD SQUARE

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My word-square computer program is a general-purpose one designed to search for words to create squares of order 4 to 14. The word typed in for the top row triggers the size to be processed; the program then fills in words for successive rows as far as possible. From thousands of such runs, I have noted that most full searches for ten-squares fail to progress further than the fifth row. Sometimes (see square on left) the leading five letters of the last five rows seem to offer possibilities of completion.

D I S C U S S I N G	D I S C U S S I N G
I N C A N T A T O R	I N C A N T A T O R
S C A R L A T I N A	S C A R L A T I N A
C A R N I T I N E S	C A R N I T I N E S
U N L I K E N E S S	U N L I K E N E S S
S T A T E ? ? ? ? ?	S T A T E S W R E N
S A T I N ? ? ? ? ?	S A T I N W E A V E
I T I N E ? ? ? ? ?	I T I N E R A T E S
N O N E S ? ? ? ? ?	N O N E S E V E N T
G R A S S ? ? ? ? ?	G R A S S N E S T S

I sought to complete this square by hand. The Wordsworth database yielded only ITINerancy ITINerants ITINerates for the eighth word in the square; I chose the third of these. I next found SATIN weAve, a two-word phrase in Webster's Third and the Compact Oxford English Dictionary--so not too bad! I felt that GRASS nESTs ought to be an acceptable non-dictionary phrase--weaver birds, for example, do make them. I next filled in the non-dictionary phrase STATE's WRen, encouraged by the discovery that the wren is the state bird of South Carolina. (Jeff Grant wrote "A pity there isn't a Staten Wren on Staten Island" and I was pleased by his comment "I have nothing against apostrophes.") This left me using an N to form the calendrical phrase NONES EVEnt, a plausible festival of the ancient Romans.

A perfect word-square would contain words only to be found in standard dictionaries and reference works, preferably non-capitalized, non-hyphenated, without punctuation and existing as solid (single) words. Although not meeting this ideal, every single word used in this ten-square can be found in a reputable standard English-language dictionary--I know of no other able to make such a claim!