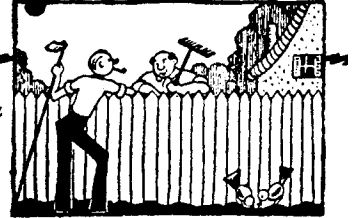


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The Garden Spray

BULLETIN OF THE MEN'S GARDEN CLUB OF MINNEAPOLIS



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CONGRATULATIONS. YOU DID IT. MGC MINNEAPOLIS WITH THE HELP OF THE OTHER CLUBS IN THE NORTH STAR REGION (RICHFIELD AND MINNETONKA) PUT ON WHAT HAS BEEN ACCLAIMED AS ONE OF THE BEST CONVENTIONS OF ALL TIME. POSITIVELY PROVED AS THE BIGGEST SINCE 1962 (and figures not totalled yet), IT WAS BIGGER THAN THE PAST TWO COMBINED.

And it was a good convention. Hats off to each of you. And thanks, thanks, thanks.

THE AUGUST MEETING

August 8 at 6 p.m. a garden tour starting at Frank Vixo's, 6204 Ashcroft Lane, Edina. Please bring card tables and chairs if convenient. A delicious dinner for all the fellows at only \$2.00. The tour is being set up to include different gardens not toured recently and not on the convention tour. Don't miss seeing those of Frank, Dale Durst, Bud Christenson and Al Hubbard. Great yards!

Flower Show participants note that the meeting this month will determine the QUEEN OF THE SHOW WINNER. See President Frank Vixo's column inside -- but do come and enter the show again. Les and Evald want YOU!

Convention a Financial Success

Yes, you will receive your guarantee back! The money you advanced to provide the committee with working capital or with additional funds, if needed, will be returned to each of you paid in full. The convention was a financial success in that expenditures did not exceed income. Details when finalized.

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OVER THE GARDEN GATE

by Bill Hull
Convention Vice-Chairman

Of course this issue of THE GARDEN SPRAY is largely post-convention! What else? What has dominated our garden lives for so many months? We have had a good one and congratulations to Dwight Stone, and all, are in order. I am personally proud to have been an assistant to Dwight to make this convention successful.

Vignettes: The busload of people I conducted to the NK-Arboretum tour, breaking into spontaneous applause when they first saw the Northrup King trial gardens. The parade of turkey carvers from all over the USA being taught our MGC Mpls. tradition. The look on Frank Leech's face when he received the Silver Medal of MGCA. The way Dale Durst stepped in and handled the sale of surplus souvenir glasses, which greatly reduced our per glass cost. The way Bill Cowcil assisted the young photographer get out of a landslide business. These were quick assignments as opposed to the great jobs done by dozens of others of whom we all know. Then there was the tremendous speech by Dr. Ott; the excellent ones by our own Dr. Snyder; the really bang-up job done by all on the morning seminars. So many things which should be recorded for future reference that we can't get them down or even attempt to "credit" people. As someone said, "My credit was in working more closely with fellows in MGCs -- fellows I've really got to know so much better."

And as someone else said, "That Saturday morning at Bachman's when people left, I felt as if I had sustained a great loss when all those new friends of mine left."

The only answer -- go to Pittsburgh and see them next year.

From Larry Grove, Des Moines: "Congratulations to all of you who worked so hard to make a most successful convention. And didn't the weather smile on it all!"

From F.A.C. McCulla, Houston: "Thank you for a fine convention and genuine hospitality...I did not believe one club could offer so many home gardens worth looking at. In fact I think this convention compared with the second Portland convention which I thought was the best."

From Horace Colby, Memphis: (Thanks men and ladies of all three clubs.) "The gardens were especially wonderful considering the weather difficulties you had. I still don't know how Otto Nelson keeps from falling out of his steep hillside garden. The workshop programs were of outstanding quality. Those I heard on vegetables, annuals and flower borders also included beautiful color slides."

From Ed Moyer, North Hollywood, Calif.: "The convention came off in fine shape, we thought. Thanks to you and Carol and to Dwight Stone, Bob Smith, Charlie Proctor and all who entertained us so royally."

And of course, fellows, you proved a few things to the world. Such as: the carelessly tossed-out proposal to have workshops of the nature we provided would be successful - and how it was. That a photographer could be had and pay his own way. We have learned much there to benefit future conventions.

To help future conventions, will you do the following: jot down on pieces of scrap paper and slip them into your pocket when you think we did well or where we could have improved. Then push them to me and I'll pass them on to the next

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YOUR PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

by Frank P. Vixo
(also Convention Treasurer)

I must start with a big THANK YOU for such a great convention. It was your hard work that made it possible and Dwight's and his committee's leadership were superb. You all deserve a pat on the back from your President and you have his suggestions that it is appropriate that you pat one another on the back.

As your convention treasurer, I am anxious to have all of our bills paid as soon as possible. If you had any expense at all in connection with your work on the convention, please submit a bill at once. For your information, we can afford to pay all our bills and we will have money left over after refunding your advances - which I know you expected all along.

Don't forget that the August meeting includes a flower show and the Johnsons (Les and Evald) will be ready to accept your entries when you come to the Vixo's to start your August tour. Last year the September meeting produced the winner for the "Queen of the Show Award." This year August has been chosen as the month, so bring your best.

I received a letter from Raymond B. Crawford, director of the lily study program for MGCA, requesting we canvas our membership to see if someone would be available to serve as a Lily Specialist. If you are interested, please let me know.

The other day I received a notice from the First District Minnesota State Horticultural Society announcing their annual Holiday Panorama at Austin, Minn., 1-9 p.m. on September 30 and 9-4:30 on October 1. This is a display of "unique arrangements and holiday ideas, flower and plant specimens" of southern Minnesota and northern Iowa. You may wish to attend for holiday ideas. Admission 50¢.

You will recall that at the convention, Mr. Ott talked about lighting and its affects on plants and animals. Our own Phil Smith, whom you know is always a student as well as a doer, called the other day suggesting that a new fluorescent tube of which he is aware, approaches the standards which Mr. Ott believes appropriate. The name and address is: Optima Fluorescent Tubes, Duro-Test Corp., 2321 Kennedy Boulevard, North Bergen, New Jersey.

Just received a brochure announcing the Twelfth Winnipeg International Flower Show on August 24 and 25. If you're planning a trip that way, you may be interested.

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Many of us would be delighted to pay as we go, if we could only catch up from paying for where we've gone.

A man isn't complete until he gets a wife -- then he's finished.

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PROUD! YOU SHOULD BE

by Dwight Stone
Convention Chairman

The 35th Anniversary Convention of MGCA is now history. Thanks to each and everyone of you who worked on some phase of the convention for your help in staging what has been acclaimed to be one of the best in the history of MGCA.

A few quotes:

Ray Cheetham - via telephone call from Kent, Ohio. "Dwight, I have attended many national conventions and the Minneapolis convention must be rated with the best."

Dr. Joseph Howland - via air-mail letter from flight home. "I am overjoyed. It didn't seem likely that the Portland spirit could be reached in this decade. Certainly no one there, except possibly Bill Hull who knew you all from experience, could have believed you would be able to go so far beyond Portland. Do convey my special thanks to your many helpers."

George and Ethel Spader - letter from the Pick-Nicollet. "Your convention was a huge success and to us there wasn't one flaw or mistake. A marvelous job - well done - by so many able members. To the club and the convention committee, many thanks for the room, the roses and courtesies extended to us."

Maybe I missed some of you, but in checking our roster I counted 58 members that worked during the convention. It is these people that really gained an experience that they will not forget. It is these people that made the convention pleasant and memorable for our guests.

Some of you I have thanked in person; some of you I have called to thank. To the rest of you, thanks for your excellent assistance in helping the Men's Garden Club of Minneapolis to host a successful convention. This "thank you" is not only to you, but also to the many wives who pitched in and did such an excellent job and made us men look good. And to our many friends in the MGCs of Minnetonka and Richfield who supported and assisted us, thank you much.

* * * * *

The recently divorced man told his lawyer that he planned to remarry the next week. "You can't do that," the lawyer advised. "In this state you have to wait six months before remarrying." "But I can't wait that long," the man cried. "the house is a mess already!"

A wife who hadn't been invited to attend a banquet questioned her husband all about it, and finally got around to asking what the women present had worn. Exasperated, he told her, "They didn't wear anything so far as I know." "Do you mean," she demanded, "that women came there with no clothes on at all?" "They didn't have on any clothes above the table," he said, "and I didn't dare look under it."

HATS OFF TO SHERM PINKHAM

We didn't realize that another honor has come to Sherm. He is president of the "Old Guard" a group of five-hundred men who meet twice monthly for entertainment and social contact. Consisting of a cross-section of men from all over the city, we understand the "Old Guard" is an outstanding organization and we pay honor to them for being so wise as to elect our Sherm to head them up. Congratulations!

One Reason Why

people become quieter when older -- they know no one is listening anyway.

Tests Show Pheasants Avoid Harmful Fertilizers

An experiment by the Indiana game and fish department indicates that pheasants will avoid feeding on pelletized ammonium nitrate fertilizer. This is contrary to the opinion of some people who have claimed that it causes mortality among wild birds.

At a recent meeting of the Midwest Pheasant Council, Indiana submitted results of an experiment which tested pheasant reaction to the fertilizer and its effect on the bird. The tests showed that birds avoided taking the fertilizer and were poisoned by it only when it was taken in solution with water, when they were suffering from prolonged thirst and had no other water available. Even then, half of the birds preferred to die of thirst rather than take water saturated with fertilizer.

Birds that were fed mixed feed and fertilizer, but were provided clean water, avoided swallowing the fertilizer and maintained their health and vigor. The Indiana experiment confirms the findings of a similar test made by Minnesota biologists several years ago. (from Minnesota Department of Conservation)

I was born in the country

where I worked like a dog, so I could live in the city where I work like a dog so I could live in the country.

Good going, Al Hubbard

One of the gardens featured on the August tour will be Al's estate overlooking the Minnesota river valley. There you will see the sculpture so excellently pictured and described in the feature article about Al in the Sunday, July 23, issue of our paper. A good article. Did you see it?

Letter to Congress

I hear you fellows can't agree
On what our national flower should be.
Some for the rose do staunchly hold
While others want the marigold.
And yet, dear sirs, the answer's clear
Along our highways far and near.
So do, my friends, please end the issue
Our national flower? The facial tissue!

.....(Laura Arion) Wall St. Journal

Buying a "Yard" of Manure or Top Soil

A "yard" of manure or top soil or even that mixture called black dirt means a cubic yard of the substance. Even gravel, sand and rock are usually sold by this common term. I have long found it helpful to visualize this as a cube of the substance measuring a yard in all three directions which is, obviously twenty-seven cubic feet in size, since three times three times three is twenty-seven.

As surprising as it may be, even a lot of professional nursery people don't know how far a yard of their product will go so it is a good idea to do your own measuring quite carefully to avoid either an overage or underage of your needs. And a lot of extra rock to move, or store, or haul away, can constitute quite a problem.

You can visualize in several ways how much a yard of black dirt, topsoil or manure will cover. You can picture that cube as being thirty-six inches in each of its three measuring directions. You can figure it out to be 46,656 cubic inches of material. You can visualize that cube as being sliced into thirty-six pieces, each 3 feet x 3 feet x 1 inch, so you know the yard of material will cover 324 square feet of area to a depth of one inch.

It has been my experience that reputable landscape people and nurseries give ample or even lavish measurements of these items. Recently, along with other items, we ordered a yard of rotted manure. We had occasion to measure it for a reason which isn't important here, but it measured exactly 75 cubic feet, which is almost three times the 27 cubic feet we should have received. So that "yard" of manure which was priced at \$9 a yard, in actuality cost about \$3 a yard. And, of course, any gardener can use extra rotted manure.

Perhaps this would be an opportune time to warn against buying "black dirt" or manure from itinerant dealers or unknown people. Not only can you introduce noxious weeds into your garden, but you can also be sold some worthless material. One of the worst rackets in existence is the itinerant trucker who rings your bell and offers to spread the remaining part of a load of "black dirt" over your yard at a very reasonable cost. When asked how much, he may say, "Oh, fifty cents a bushel," which seems low to you. While you are busy elsewhere, he and his crew quickly distribute an unknown number of bushels over your yard and you are presented with an outrageous bill. How can you prove him wrong? You didn't count the bushels, you didn't get a maximum dollar agreement in advance. You are in trouble and you probably have had some worthless muck spread over your lawn. Of course this itinerant dealer could be the exception, but I don't recommend taking that chance. Even a large wheelbarrow filled to overflowing with soil or manure can practically disappear when spread out on a small area of a lawn. It doesn't go far!

So measure your needs carefully, order as exactly as possible the amount you need, and deal with established, reputable firms.

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SMALL FRUITS IN THE HOME GARDEN

by Bob Smith

Small fruits are easy to grow and, when grown to perfection in the home garden, are far superior to those that can be purchased in the supermarket. Growing and harvesting them in your own garden will provide a lot of satisfaction and healthful eating pleasure from a very limited space. Small fruits can be grown in the vegetable garden, in the flower border or used in landscaping. Some can even be grown in containers and used as patio plants.

Small fruits include all "berries" such as strawberries, raspberries, blackberries, dewberries, gooseberries, elderberries, blueberries and cranberries. They also include currants and grapes. Most of these can be grown in Minnesota although some require special soil conditions and are usually grown as novelty plants and others that are not completely hardy will require rather extensive winter protection. The Minnesota Horticultural Society and the University of Minnesota Department of Horticultural Science jointly prepare a list of recommended fruits for Minnesota each year which appears in "The Minnesota Horticulturist." This list includes recommendations on many of the small fruits and should be consulted in selecting varieties for your garden.

In general, small fruits do best in well-drained, acid soil that is rich in organic matter. The soil acidity should range from a pH of 4.0 to 5.0 for blueberries to about 5.0 to 6.0 for most others. Organic matter is very important in holding moisture and nutrients so they will be available when needed by the plant. Organic matter can be supplied by mulching. Such materials as leaves, hay, sawdust, compost and rotted manure all make excellent mulches. Additional nitrogen may have to be added, especially with sawdust, to replace the nitrogen taken from the soil in its decomposition. Most small fruits are heavy feeders and require the application of a balanced fertilizer each year for maximum production. In Minnesota, care should be taken to fertilize early enough so as not to stimulate tender growth late in the season which cannot be hardened off before winter.

In small plantings, disease and pest control are not too difficult. A lightweight, durable netting, produced by Bemis Bag Company, is available at a reasonable price for controlling bird damage. Proper sanitation, selection of disease-resistant varieties, purchasing certified nursery stock and rotation of plantings will all help to minimize disease problems and may even eliminate the need for spraying in the home garden.

Winter hardiness is a problem in Minnesota. Plant breeders are developing hardier varieties but many of the small fruits require protection. Strawberries should be covered in late fall to prevent damage to the fruit buds by cold weather and other detrimental effects from alternate thawing and freezing in the spring. While raspberries may sometimes produce a good crop without winter protection, laying the canes down and covering with soil or a mulch is the only way to be 100% sure of no winter injury. Other small fruits may require a covering of soil, leaves, hay, etc., or a combination of these, depending on their susceptibility to winter injury. Covering with leaves or hay should be done quite late in the fall after the mice have found a nesting place and even then precautions should be taken to guard against mouse damage. I have never had any mouse damage, however, when covering with soil.

.....continued

Small Fruits in the Home Garden
(continued)

The last part of this article is devoted to listing a few varieties of small fruits that I have particularly enjoyed growing and comments on my experiences with them.

Ogallala Everbearing Strawberry is my favorite strawberry. It has a glistening deep red color, a wonderful distinctive flavor and a permeating wild strawberry aroma. It is very dependable, disease resistant, hardy and excellent for freezing. Use of the hill system in which plants are spaced about 18 inches apart in each direction, all runners pinched and mulched with sawdust makes growing everbearing varieties very easy and enjoyable.

Latham Raspberry is a very dependable and hardy variety of fair quality that was developed in Minnesota and is widely grown. A mulch of leaves and hay, along with the required nutrients, provides good moisture retention and always produces a large crop of delicious berries even in dry years. A netting canopy does a fine job of protecting from birds. Laying the canes down and covering with soil and hay gives 100% winter protection. There are many other good varieties. If everbearing varieties are to be grown, choose varieties that mature early in the fall.

Alfred Blackberry is one of the hardiest blackberries and has good quality. When fruit is allowed to completely ripen on the vine, it is one of the most beautiful and delicious of all berries. The birds like them, too, so a netting canopy is necessary. They are not hardy so good winter protection is needed. Bending down the canes as much as possible and covering with leaves and hay has worked very satisfactorily. At one time I covered them with soil and, while this worked fine, it required a lot more effort. The effort, however, has been well worth the results that I have achieved.

Grapes. I have grown a number of varieties and they have all required winter protection in my garden. My favorite blue variety is Steuben. It has a much better flavor than Concord and is an exceptionally good keeper. I have found Himrod to be the hardiest and best of the green seedless varieties. The Fact Sheet on Growing Grapes by the Agricultural Extension Service is very helpful in showing how to prune and grow the non-hardy varieties. Pruning to a main trunk that is trained parallel to and about a foot above the ground with fruiting canes growing vertically makes it very easy to grow the non-hardy varieties and provide winter protection. A covering of soil with leaves and hay over it has worked very well for me. Early-maturing varieties are the most satisfactory in Minnesota.

Blueberries. I still am experimenting with blueberries. The early varieties such as Earliblue, Blueray and Bluecrop developed by the USDA have performed the best for me. Soil acidity has been maintained with the use of spagnum peat moss and fertilizer with an acid reaction. A heavy sawdust mulch has been maintained and a netting canopy provided to protect from birds. Some winter injury has been experienced. I have used leaves for winter protection when time has permitted but I think that proper hardening off of the new growth should be sufficient if the hardiest varieties are chosen.

I consider growing small fruits to be one of the most enjoyable and rewarding phases of my gardening activities. By growing recommended varieties and utilizing the information that is available in the many agricultural extension service bulletins, small fruits can be grown very successfully in the home garden.