

GARDEN SPRAY

DECEMBER, 1964 • VOL. 22 • NO.



MEN'S GARDEN CLUB
OF MINNEAPOLIS

Annual Christmas Party

DECEMBER 8, 1964

Place — Thunderbird Motel
2201 East 78th Street

Dinner — 6:45 P.M. Sharp

Price — \$4.00 per person

*Wives and friends are welcome
to the Christmas Party.*

OVER THE GARDEN GATE

by Bill Hull

Am pleased that we have a permanent chairman for our 1967 convention and that Dwight Stone has accepted the position. I know you will want to offer your support and help as I have done to Dwight. Let's get going with the plans for our convention.

One of the first "musts" is to get some people to our MGCA conventions from Minneapolis in order to determine what other cities are doing and to show other cities we support them, as we expect them to support us in 1967.

If you haven't made it an annual practice to visit the two Twin City chrysanthemum shows, you're missing something worthwhile. We recently visited the Como Park 'mum show in St. Paul, and came away breathless with praise. In addition to the huge 'mums, the likes of which I feel we'll never see in our gardens, the tropical plants are well worth the trip. Take the children and see dates, bananas, tangerines, many unusual things. This show is supervised by Bob Schwietz, past president of the MGC of St. Paul, whom many of you know.

The Minneapolis Park Board 'mum show is under the supervision of our own Greg Lucking. I just now called to verify future dates of this show, and discover I've missed it for the first time in years. It was, I'm sure, another outstanding show.

A lot of fun with our Big Pumpkin Contest. The winner won't be from our state, which shouldn't surprise us, but we should have a local child in the top ten.

Speaking of youth, Les Johnson was over the other night, and we talked about his fine program with the Fulton Elementary school children. From 30 children in 1961, this activity has grown to 105 in 1964, and has required an increase in manpower from 5 in 1961 to 25 this year. Les deserves a lot of credit for a job well done here, and I say three hurrahs for him. A few of us have worked with Les since this started, and if you aren't in his group, you just don't know what you're missing.

The Green Thumb awards are coming up at the Christmas party. It will be the largest group to date. This has been a good attendance-builder for our club. If Eng Hoyme is present at the party, he'll receive an award for six years' perfect attendance, the only one in our club and a perfect record since we started this program six years ago. Good going, Eng.

SPROUTS FROM THE COMPOST HEAP

by Dwight Stone

Another year is about to face into history. It has been a joyous year for me as president of this club. A year when new things have taken place - some of which will be continued and some of which we would just as soon forget. It has been a year when everyone has pulled together for the good of gardening everywhere. Thank you for the assistance you have given me and the other officers.

On October 26, eight of our members attended the Richfield Men's Garden Club. They were Don Berne, Dale Durst, Bill Hull, Otto Nelson, Sherm Pinkham, Vern Roufs, Phil Smith and Dwight Stone. We were greeted there by familiar faces - Al Nelson, Carl Holst, Jerry Olson and Ron Twite, who are also members of the Richfield Club. The speaker of the evening was our good friend and member, Leon Snyder. At times it was difficult to realize we were visitors.

It was a happy sight to see Tom Krumm, Joe Witmer and Don Young at the November meeting. These three were reported sick at the October meeting. Chris Mosberg was also ill but is reported on the mend. Bill Cowsill returned also, but it was reported he was playing hookie and not sick.

We saw other familiar faces at the November meeting, and it was nice to have such a good attendance. How about some of our other good members who haven't been around lately. What is keeping you away?

Thanks to Louis Fischer for the fine presentation on apples. Louis seems to be living a good life. He hasn't changed a bit since the first time I met him. The rest of us seem to be getting a little older. Come again when you can, Louis. It is always nice to have you with us. Louie had many varieties of apples with him. He donated these to the Club.

Bob Smith proved he 'knows his onions' by bringing a bushel of sweet Spanish to the November meeting. These, along with Louie's apples, were auctioned off and the proceeds of approximately \$20 added to the Convention Treasury. Thanks, fellows - both donors and customers. By the way, who got Sherm Pinkham's onions?

Our Club showed up well at the annual executive board meeting of the Minnesota State Horticultural Society. Carl Holst was elected president; Bruce Johnstone, vice president; Vic Lowrie, distinguished service certificate; and Joe Witmer, honorary life member. Congratulations to all of them.

A motion was made, seconded and carried at the November meeting to record the Men's Garden Club of Minneapolis in favor of the City of Minneapolis joining the Hennepin County Park System.

Glen Cerney had as his guest at the November meeting St. Clair Beeman, member of CLIC and Secretary of the Task Force, park section for CLIO.

SPROUTS FROM THE COMPOST HEAP

Continued

Mr. Beeman encouraged all of us to do whatever possible to promote the name of Felix Dhainin as Superintendent of the Minneapolis Park System. Our friend and member, Howard Moore, is resigning as Park Superintendent. Mr. Beeman is also an avid gardener and Glen has turned in a membership card for him. It was nice to have Mr. Beeman with us.

Hurry and get your reservation in for the Christmas party. The new location - The Thunderbird Motel - should be very inviting. Vern Roufs assures me we will have an excellent dinner.

Almost the last call for new members if you want them listed on the 1965 roster.

A quote to remember -

"Only a mediocre performer is always at his best."

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PLANS AVAILABLE FOR HOTBED AND PROPAGATING FRAME

Home gardeners who are interested in building an inexpensive hotbed and propagating frame may find that a design by scientists of the U. S. Department of Agriculture (Plan No. 5971) will meet their needs.

Construction is of wood with three arch frames of thin-wall electrical conduit. The two removable covers of 4-mil polyethylene plastic film can be rolled down from the ridge or up from the sides to provide easily adjustable ventilation. A 36-watt electric soil heating cable with a 70-degree thermostat will provide any supplementary heating needed.

One other requirement is a well-drained site. In some cases, you may need a 3-inch layer of gravel under the prepared soil mixture. You can easily change the hotbed over to a propagating frame by replacing the polyethylene with cheesecloth and adding two mist sprayers.

Working drawings for Plan No. 5971 may be obtained for 25 cents from Blueprint Room Department of Agricultural Engineering, Institute of Agriculture, University of Minnesota, St. Paul, Minnesota 55101. Money must accompany the order for the drawings.

Bulletin, Institute of
Agriculture, U. of Minn.

CONUNDRUM:

Question: What is a cultivator, triturator, chemist and distributor for the gardener? It has life but requires no care. Although eating voraciously, it costs nothing to feed it.

Answer: The domesticated hybrid earthworm, which is a cross between the manure worm and the large orchard worm. Its chief features are:

1. They are prolific breeders.
2. They are not a slave to one environment. They will thrive anywhere.
3. They are not an extensive traveler or migrator. In other words, when they are once established in your soil, they do not leave readily.
4. They leave all their castings underneath the soil near the root zones.

They assist the gardener by their tireless burrowing. These burrows form channels through which the soil obtains its supply of oxygen from the atmosphere and also expels the foul air. The roots can go through these tunnels down into the subsoil for minerals and moisture. They also store rainwater instead of allowing it to run off, carrying away the valuable topsoil.

Earthworms make available to the plants the food which is needed. This is done by means of their castings. The worm eats and digests dead and decaying vegetable and animal wastes in the soil, expelling them in the form of castings. These castings are rich in plant food value, are water soluble and are immediately available to plant roots. These castings contain everything the crop needs - nitrates, phosphates and potash in abundance. Investigations have shown the fresh castings of earthworms are five times richer in available nitrogen, seven times richer in available phosphates, and eleven times richer in available potash than any other known fertilizer.

The chemist can analyze your soil and tell you the exact composition of the soil, but he cannot tell you how much of these different elements are available for plant food. All of the elements in the soil which are hidden and unavailable to the plant roots are broken down by the earthworm and made available. As yet man has not invented any machine, any solid or liquid fertilizer, as efficient as the earthworm, an invertebrate animal, acting as Nature's perpetual soil builder. It is a four-in-one creature acting upon the soil as chemist, triturator, cultivator and distributor.

An experience on our farm proved the value of worms. On one-fourth acre of ground we put two million worms. We let them work the soil for three years. We put humus in the soil. After three years the worms had enriched the soil to the extent it did not require any kind of fertilizer for five years. The production on this quarter-acre was very great. As a control plot to check the production, we used another quarter-acre without worms but used synthetic fertilizer. The crops averaged one-third less on the same area of soil, and the quality seemed better, especially in the taste, from the plot where we used the worms.

Men's Garden Club of
Webster Groves, Missouri

VALUABLE PEAT RESOURCES SHOWN IN NORTHEASTERN MINNESOTA STUDY

A thorough inventory of more than 1,300 acres of good quality peat, worthy of commercial development, has been completed in northeastern Minnesota's St. Louis County.

The inventory is the first of a series of studies on peat deposits which may have economic potential for production of baled and bagged peat and peat products.

The inventory was done by the Iron Range Resources and Rehabilitation Commission, in cooperation with the Department of Soil Science in the University of Minnesota's Institute of Agriculture. Leader of the inventory was R. S. Farnham, soils scientist at the University.

The area covered in the inventory lies just south of the Mesabi Iron Range, and is about 50 miles north of Duluth.

Peat types having the most economic potential include sphagnum moss peat and the reed-sedge types, which are relatively undecomposed. These types are in greatest market demand. And because of their fibrous nature, they are more easily drained and readily adaptable to harvesting techniques.

The St. Louis County bog contains a considerable amount of sphagnum moss peat. The deposit of sphagnum varies from a few inches thick near the margins of the bog area to about 10 feet in thickness.

Underlying the sphagnum strata in the bog is a rather thick layer of partly decomposed and completely decomposed peat formed largely from reeds, sedges and grasses. This peat has little or no commercial value because of harvesting difficulty.

From the standpoint of commercial development, the West Central Lakes Bog has several advantages, Farnham's report indicates. The moss peat stratum is very porous and easily drained. The peat, quite uniform in quality, will dry easily and can be harvested economically. This type of peat adapts well to the milled peat process.

The report indicates that the bog contains more than 12 million cubic yards or about 24 million bales. These reserves would last about 48 years at an annual production rate of about 500,000 bales annually. A bale contains 6 cubic feet of peat.

The report also points out that the state lands and reserved peat available for peat lease in the West Central Lakes Bog are subject to leasing agreements between the State Department of Conservation and any individual or corporation interested in commercial development of the land.

Conditions for leasing include an annual rent of 50 cents per acre for the first, second and third years of the lease and, after that, a dollar per acre annually.

VALUABLE PEAT RESOURCES SHOWN IN NORTHEASTERN MINNESOTA STUDY

(Continued)

Royalties charged by the state on peat removal amount to 2 cents per compressed 6 cubic foot bale averaging up to 80 pounds at an average moisture content of 28 percent, or one percent of the gross price of peat, whichever is greater.

Leases may be issued for a term not exceeding 25 years, for the removal of peat from tax forfeited lands upon such terms and conditions as local county boards may prescribe.

The report also reminds persons interested in development that the State has a law governing sale of state-owned land containing peat in commercial quantities. The law states that land owned by the state, chiefly valuable because of commercial deposits of peat, are withdrawn from sale.

The IRRRC estimates that there are some five billion tons of peat reserves in Minnesota, which is about half the total supply in the U. S. More than half the United States annual consumption of one million tons of peat is imported.

The U. S. produced slightly less than 600,000 short tons of peat in 1962, of which Minnesota's production was only 12,934 tons.

About 80 percent of all peat purchased in the U. S. is used by home gardeners. Uses of peat for horticultural purposes is expected to increase considerably during the next decade.

A major intent of the peat inventories is to make it possible for industries to increase their investments in production machinery and expand their present operations.

In 1962, about 13 firms were engaged in some form of peat industry in Minnesota.

A copy of this inventory report may be obtained from the Office of Iron Range Resources and Rehabilitation, 60 State Office Building, St. Paul, Minnesota.

Bulletin, Institute of Agriculture
University of Minnesota

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A POTPOURRI FROM OTHER CLUB BULLETINS

"Your wife will probably hit the ceiling when you get home tonight," said a man to his drinking companion.

"I wouldn't doubt it," was the reply. "She's a lousy shot!"

The Staten Island Cold Frame

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Psychiatrist: "Congratulations, you're cured."

Patient: "Phooey. Some cure. Before I came to you I was Napoleon. Now I'm just another nobody."

Don't tell people your troubles. Half of them aren't interested and the other half are glad you're getting what's coming to you.

... both from The Staten Island
Cold Frame

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A gentleman farmer is one who tips his hat every time he passes a likely looking tomato.

Vacation: two weeks in the mountains and the rest of the year on the rocks.

A taxpayer is a person who has the government on his payroll.

And middle age is when your idea of getting ahead is just to stay even.

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Committees of twenty
Deliberate plenty;
Committees of ten
Act now and then.
But most jobs are done
By committees of one.

... from the Houston Yardner

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A collection of "Swifties" for gardeners:

"That planter needs water," said Tom dryly.

"We should photograph that dahlia blossom," says Tom candidly.

"That frost last night nipped my petunias," said Tom icily.

"Don't forget to ventilate the greenhouse," said Tom stuffily.

"It appears your Ph is off," said Tom acidly.

"A rose between two thorns," he retorted pointedly.

"I was slow in getting my garden started," he said belatedly.

... from The Spokane Night Crawler

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And then there's the story of the young lady who climbed the ladder of success wrong by wrong.