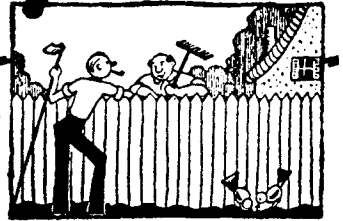




The Garden Spray

BULLETIN OF THE MEN'S GARDEN CLUB OF MINNEAPOLIS



Member--Men's Garden Clubs of America • Minnesota State Horticultural Society

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7017 Dublin Road
Edina, Minnesota 55424

Associate Editors:
G. Victor Lowrie, J. Robert Kelly
Charles R. Proctor, Harold R. Kaufmann

March Meeting

March 8, 1966

Mount Olivet Lutheran Church
50th Street and Knox Ave. So.

5:45 p.m.

\$1.75

Officers

R. E. Smith (Bob)	Pres.
G. R. Christenson (Bud)	V.P.
S. F. Pinkham (Sherm)	Sec.
Frank P. Vixo	Treas.

PROGRAM

"Dahlia Culture" and "Planning and Planting in the Border" Jim Bezat,
Men's Garden Club of Richfield

Jim, as many of us know, is an excellent gardener and one of his specialties is dahlias. He has a number of very good slides, including our tour of his garden last year, to accompany his presentation.

"Panel Discussion" moderated by Archie Flack. Come prepared to ask your garden questions of this panel of experts:

Archie Flack - Fruit trees and general
 Glen Cerney - Perennials
 Eng Hoyme - Lillies and photography
 Lloyd Bachman - General
 Roger Koopmans - Chrysanthemums and clematis
 Bruce Johnstone - Annuals
 Leon Snyder - General
 Bob Smith - Vegetables
 Jerry Olson - Roses

OVER THE GARDEN GATE

by Bill Hull

A very interesting February meeting. Archie Flack urged us to enter the contest for the Lehman Gardens trophy. Don Berne led a discussion about the Fulton School garden program (hope he works with Dale Durst who discussed the Big Pumpkin contest). Dwight Stone talked of the formation of a steering committee for the 1967 convention. (Separate article herein.) Bill Brooks passed around information slips for the Special Interest groups.

Newer members Cal Calendine and Jim Lowrie spoke most interestingly of their gardens, which we hope to see this summer. Dr. Weisner, the featured speaker, showed slides of his round-the-world trip to study plant hardiness and promises to return to tell of his work locally.

It was a very foggy night and kept some of the members away. We imagine this was the reason Otto Erickson didn't make the long drive from his home. Otto is currently refinishing furniture as a winter hobby. Much better than a trip, Otto.

Received a Christmas card today (February 9) from Hungary. From a gardener to whom we sent lily seeds a year or two ago. His address is now lost and his signature undecipherable. Maybe he'll write again.

The perfect marriage is based on compromise. This past Christmas my friend's wife wanted a mink coat and he wanted a new Cadillac.. They compromised. They bought her the mink coat but they keep it in the garage. (Credit: Allan Drake.)

P. W. Young is visiting his son in North Hollywood, Calif., but should be back for the March meeting, aiming at arrival here about March 1.

The Dozen Best....

SPRAY will carry a number of articles during coming months, all written by our own members. We asked Harold Kaufmann to help us obtain these articles and Harold has gone at the project with his usual ambition. He has formed a committee consisting of Archie Flack, Glen Cerney, Phil Smith, Edsall Beery and Joe Witmer. Great plans are afoot and developing. Several articles have already been prepared and will be used as the timing seems best. Some will deal with the best in a dozen of various species. Thanks, fellows, for this wonderful help.

HOPS for beer

Have you ever seen hops growing? These vines grow on poles nearly the size of telegraph poles and tied together with heavy wire strung across the top, across which the vines also grow. Recently in Yakima, Wash., where hops is a major crop, I read a brochure and talked to an expert. Hops is a lucrative crop but expensive to grow with its thousands of poles set every 10 feet or so apart in the field, and the picking and drying machinery are expensive. What is used is only the "cone" which appears to be a seed pod, although they are now seedless. They are about the size of brussels sprouts and picked while green. They are then dried, usually in the farmer's own drying kiln, highly compressed into 200 lb. bales and sold. I was told that only about three pounds of hops is used to make 200 gallons of beer. They are very pungent when fresh, an odor described as pleasant by one man and unbearable by another. They lose their freshness rapidly and thus has developed the hops extract business in Yakima. One 200 lb. bale makes seven small cans of extract. Fresh hops market price has fluctuated from a base of 100% in 1949 to a high of 165%

PRESIDENT BOB SAYS

by Bob Smith

In spite of the rain and fog we had an attendance of 50 members at our February meeting, the exact number needed to meet our dinner guarantee. Our editor has covered most of the events of the meeting in Over the Garden Gate, but I should add that we were all very pleased to hear Dr. Leon Snyder is to be the new editor of the garden column in the Minneapolis Sunday Tribune. Our thanks go to Joe Witmer for his efforts during the past three years to make this column a success. Joe became editor of this column following the death of George Luxton but is unable to continue it. There is a real need of this practical column for amateur gardeners. It is very gratifying to us that all three of these men have been members of our club. Our congratulations are extended to Dr. Snyder for taking over and we know he will do a fine job.

Henry Bachman stopped in for a visit with P. W. Young on his recent trip to California. P. W. is really enjoying himself. Paul Kroeger is also in California. We hope that they will both be back soon and bring spring with them.

Paul Burt is coming along fine and is at home resting, having returned from the hospital February 1. We are looking forward to having Paul back with us soon.

Let's have a good turn-out for our March meeting. Bring a gardening friend along with you. There are openings for several new members.

GETTING TO KNOW YOU: ST. CLAIR BEEMAN

St. Clair Beeman is a man of many interests. Active in labor affairs in the Twin Cities area for many years he formally "retired" in 1961 and has since acted as a labor consultant. He chaired the Minneapolis City Council hunt for Dutch Elm Disease funds and is a member of CLIC and chairman of its Parks Task Force. Glen Cerney has long served with this group and thru St. Clair's efforts Lloyd Bachman was recently appointed to this body which screens the financial requests and the concomitant programs for the parks system.

Long-time apartment dwellers, the Beeman family was prepared to visit Europe in 1958 when they voted instead to buy a home at 4342 First Avenue South. The 40-foot lot has three elm trees in the back that shade the garden area, but this has proved more a challenge than a problem. St. Clair is rebuilding his basically clay soil by first screening the top soil and then working in good quantities of sand, humus and fertilizer.

Gardening is a solo act at the Beeman residence with the rest of the family understanding if not sympathizing with his efforts. Principally a flower grower who enjoys starting plants from seed, St. Clair has nursed cyclamen seed from January germination to December blooms. Favorites, if he has such a thing, might be 4 o'clocks, caladium and coleus. The lites are currently on in the basement where a combination of cool white and Gro-lux tubes have given the best results.

St. Clair Beeman is, as you can see, a year-round gardener and a relatively new member you should visit with soon.

A Tale of a Gardener's Experience with Fur Bearing and Winged Garden Pests.

by A. W. Hubbard

It all dates back to the acquisition of a spate of property on the Minnesota river, with which there was elbow room to garden. One of the prime projects was to be a field of sweet corn so that it could be savored on the table within minutes of picking. The river-bottom land was tried first. The corn grew bounteously. But when time came for harvesting, so did other help come. There were deer tracks and chewed-off corn stalks showing this. Husks and cobs beneath a large tree nearby attested to help from raccoons. And the fluttering dispersal of pheasants, crows, and blackbirds whenever the field was approached, indicated that the feathered population was doing its share to help the harvesting. There was even a woodchuck seen waddling off from the field. Pest control in this location was definitely contraindicated. Retreat was in order.

For the next year, the corn plot was established at the next level up the bluff from the river bottoms. For some reason or another only the pheasants bothered this crop. They did it so meticulously and thoroughly that hardly an edible ear was left unmolested. The pheasants would peel back the husk, then carefully pick out several rows of kernels from top to bottom of the ear, and then tackle the next ear. Retreat was again indicated.

The next move was made to the top of the bluff very near the house. The first year there were few, if any, pests - not even the corn ear worm. The corn was deliciously sweet and juicy; there was a bumper crop. This year started the tradition of our "corn roast." Two parties were held with 50 or more in each to enjoy the freshly picked and roasted corn. This tradition has now been maintained for 11 years with the parties growing to about 100 persons. There has been pressure to produce the corn crop.

Along with this pressure came the pressure of worms and the pests as competition for the harvest. The deer, somehow or another, changed their tastes from corn to the flower blossoms in the flower border at the rear terrace. They would daintily nip off the poppies and the phlox. A control for this turned out to be blood meal dusted on the plants while still wet with dew. However, while the deer stayed away from the corn, the raccoons did not. They descended on the corn plot with a vengeance. They'd wait until it reached its peak of perfection and then in just one night could make a shambles of the field. In fact, the destruction could be heard from the house. I went to see what was going on and with a flashlight walked to within easy kicking distance of the biggest, fattest raccoon I'd ever seen. I hauled off to kick it but my foot got caught on a corn stalk. I fell down, dropped the flashlight and the "coon" took off.

The next morning I set up a tape recorder with a small closed loop section of tape for continuous playing. I then recorded the banging on a tin bucket at a very high decibel level. A wire was run out to the corn plot for a loud speaker. The tape recorder was hooked up to a time clock which turned the recorder on at dusk and off at daybreak. All night long the sound of "boom, boom, bang, bang" played through the loud speaker. It kept the raccoons away but made me quite unpopular with the neighbors. We did harvest one-third of the crop for listening to the noise at night.

The next season I approached Jim Wilkie, a rather famous naturalist living upstream from us. I asked for some advice on trapping the reccoon and the loan

A. W. Hubbard's article continues

of some traps. His advice was "You'll never catch them with traps in this season. In fact, those raccons are probably smarter than you, so they'll be able to avoid any trap you attempt to set for them. Your best bet would be to take some fresh eggs, drill a small hole in them and either insert some crystals of strychnine or hypo them with a liquid solution. Your coons will eat the eggs, then go away and die. You won't even have to bury them."

This sounded like stern measures but when it came to the corn it was either the coons or us; the poisoned egg routine was started. Each evening the neighbors had to be called to call in their dog. And each morning the uneaten eggs had to be gathered before the dog was let out. Sure enough, the raccoons did eat the eggs. They did go away to die. However, not knowing how many were in the family, the eggs were set out each night until the catch turned out to be skunks. These animals didn't bother the corn. They did like the eggs which were lethal. But they weren't so cooperative. They'd just die in their tracks and would have to be buried. The odor could hardly be classified as eau de cologne. Anyhow it did tell when the prevailing raccoon family was disposed of. We managed to harvest all the corn that the birds didn't ruin. Blackbirds were the principal winged pests. The crows wouldn't approach this close to the house but a pheasant occasionally would do so.

The egg routine was followed for three years and then a new form of pressure came to pass. Some neighbors down the road a bit had taken to taming and feeding a family of raccoons and were strenuously lobbying for a discontinuance of the poison kill of their pets. The next control measure tried was the electric fence. A 12-inch wide piece of chicken wire was hung about two inches clear of the ground around the entire plot. An electric fence charger used to confine cattle was hooked into this fence. It worked beautifully the first year and kept the raccoons out. The second year the intelligence of these animals was evidenced. By taking hold of the fence and getting their feet off the ground quickly, the shock was either avoided or minimal because they managed to get over the fence into the corn. The counter measure was to hang another strip of chicken wire above the hot strip and ground this. Now, if a coon tried to crawl over he'd be grounded in such a way that he couldn't avoid the shock. This worked and ever since, whenever the corn arrived near its harvesting stage, the fence has gone up. Result, no depredation from raccoons.

The birds still are a factor and manage to spoil a significant proportion of the crop. One year a plastic owl was hung up to scare them away. The birds became very chummy with this dummy and sat on the same pole with it. Hanging clappers, aluminum foil streamers, and windmilling foil paddles likewise proved a failure. I'd like to tie out a live owl in the corn plot but this would mean that I'd have to maintain it as a pet and feed it the year around. Does anyone have a live owl I could borrow or rent from August 1 to September 15?

Oh yes, if you're having trouble with rabbits in your garden, you might try the blood meal. An alternative to the blood meal dusted around is powdered aloes, applied in the same manner. Each of these would have to be replaced after a rain. Or you might try the more heroic control measure of using chopped alfalfa hay soaked in water, then sprinkled with strychnine or white arsenic. This is effective. If you have neighbors who make pets of the furry rabbit pests, they are fond of soybeans. Plant a couple of rows of these around your garden; they'll eat the soybeans any day in preference to your flowers.

THE FLOWER BORDER ... in twelve points

by Archie Flack

Location. In the average home garden the best location for the flower border is along the property line and readily visible from the house.

Background and Design. The border is enhanced by a background of flowering shrubs, or a hedge, but a fence is also advantageous. The foreground should be as large an expanse of lawn as is possible. In designing the border, give it all the depth you can in proportion to space available. Far superior effects will result if long narrow borders are avoided; these should be reserved for bedding plants. If following a fence line, avoid sinuous curves, both for appearance and maintenance. Curves should be reserved chiefly for corners.

Preparation. The border deserves to be and should be properly prepared before planting. It should be trenched from one end to the other, and a liberal quantity of compost or manure added in the following manner. Take out a trench across one end of the border at least the depth of the spade and twelve inches wide. Wheel this soil to the far end of the border for later use. Place a liberal quantity of manure or compost in the bottom of the trench and dig this in. This will tend to increase the depth of good soil and will encourage plants to be deep rooted. Then add another liberal dressing of manure or compost to the trench. Turn over an adjoining trench a foot wide filling in the open one. Clean this out to at least the spade's depth and continue the operation the length of the border, filling in the last trench with soil wheeled from the initial one. Because this will temporarily raise the level of the border, it is recommended this operation be performed in the fall. When ready for planting, the edge can be thrown back, giving you a well defined edge and a slightly raised border, which is desirable. If each fall a top dressing of compost is forked into the border between the perennials, the soil will be changed to a desirable friable one, regardless of whether it was originally clay or sand. This may take two or three seasons.

The General Planting Plan utilizing both annuals and perennials has proven to give the longest display of color, from late May until freezeup. Generally, perennials are at their best from June to mid-August when annuals take over. There are exceptions such as hemerocallis, which will flower later, and delphiniums which, seeded in January, will give excellent bloom late in August.

Planting Perennials. This program is different from the orthodox plan of planting perennials and is particularly suited to the small garden. It is versatile, and gives color throughout the border, rather than having areas without color, sometimes for the major part of the season. In order to achieve this, perennials are not planted in groups, but as individual plants spaced approximately equidistant throughout the border. The distance from the front is determined by the height the plant will attain. This is a very informal planting and forms the foundation of the border with perennials about four feet apart. Use the perennials you prefer. Mine would include aquilegia, coreopsis, campanula species, delphinium, heuchera, lythrum, lychnis, Shasta daisy and platycodon. These examples are predicated on Minnesota weather.

Planting Annuals. The spaces between the perennials are filled with annuals either planted or seeded. Here again avoid big clumps, confining planting to three of one kind planted in a triangle, the plants being about eight inches apart. For instance, twenty-four yellow snapdragons would make eight small clumps of three each. These would be planted about equal distances throughout the border, between the perennials, the distance from the front being determined by the plant's mature height. If you had only twelve plants you would make four clumps of three each. This method of

THE FLOWER BORDER

(continued)

planting would be continued using the annuals of your choice until the border was completely filled. You would naturally leave room around the perennials, but it is surprising how closely you can plant to most of them. Many annuals can be seeded directly into the border, a list of which will be included in a forthcoming article on annuals. In order to harmonize with the planting plan, these seeded patches should not exceed twelve inches in diameter, and spaced similarly to the planted ones.

Color Arrangement.... is quite simple. Your colors are actually selected before planting and will embrace reds, whites, blues and yellows of various shades. Planted in the manner outlined, the colors are mixed throughout the border and evenly distributed, and they will thus blend in harmony.

Staking and Tying. The writer learned his lesson many years ago. The border was at its best when a sudden storm struck. It took several evenings to try to straighten out the mess, but the damage was severe. From that time on staking is commenced almost as planting proceeds. This is perhaps a little unsightly while the plants are small but in a few weeks the stakes are not visible and the border is safe. There are a few annuals that do not require staking, such as stocks, dwarf snaps, berbera and phlox drummondi. The most effective and simplest manner is to use three stakes to each clump of three plants on the outside of the plants in a triangle, the length varying from eighteen inches to three feet according to the plant height. Make a tie eight to ten inches from the ground around the tree stakes, looping around one so the tie will not slip. For taller plants, another tie about a foot higher is needed, and occasionally a third tie is advisable. The writer prefers the old gardener's raffia. Your annuals will grow up inside this arrangement and will need no further tying, being fully protected. As they grow you may need to ease a plant under the tie. The same principle can be used on perennials, with heavier stakes.

Feeding. Although a liberal supply of humus or manure has been previously incorporated in the border, the addition of a well balanced commercial fertilizer pays high dividends. Use one high in phosphates such as 5-10-5. From planting time until about mid-June apply about every ten days as a light side dressing, keeping it away from plants. Several light feedings at intervals are preferred to one heavy application. Cultivate after each feeding.

Watering and Cultivation. During the planting season the border should not be allowed to dry out. Soon after each watering, cultivate to maintain a tilth that will act as a mulch to check drying out and to control weeds. This operation cannot be continued after the plants cover the ground, by about mid-June.

Maintenance. Up until mid-June the border requires continual attention, chiefly in feeding, cultivating and staking. For the balance of the season, you cannot get in to cultivate. Maintenance is largely restricted to removing dead flowers, watering, occasional tying, and maintaining the edge. A weed may have to be pulled, but weeds have little chance if the whole program is followed.

Period of Color. Many of our hardy annuals can be planted in the border early in May, or on rare occasions late in April. If you raise your own plants you can have them hardened off and available. For some kinds, particularly stocks, it is important that they be planted out early before the plants are very large. Snapdragons, phlox, carnations and dianthus will withstand considerable frost, and the early planting help to extend the color period. This border will change almost weekly as some plants and colors take over from others which have passed their first bloom, but which will

CONVENTION CAPERS

"It won't be long now" said the squirrel after he got his tail caught in the power lawn mower. The same is true for the MGCA convention which will be held in Minneapolis, July 12-14, 1967.

Early in 1965 a group of past presidents appointed 'yours truly' as general chairman of the convention. Bud Christenson is the secretary and Bob Kelly is the treasurer.

As many hands make work light, the convention activities will be broken into three areas with a vice chairman over each area. The vice chairmen and the sub-committees assigned to them are listed below:

<u>Bill Hull</u>	<u>Charlie Proctor</u>	<u>Bob Smith</u>
Finance	Registration	Decorations
Publicity	Information	Entertainment
Promotion	Housing	Properties
Ladies Day	Transportation	Tours
	Reception	
	Tickets	

If you are interested in working on a certain phase of the convention, call the vice chairman in charge of the particular sub-committee.

Are you planning to attend the 1966 convention in Portland, Oregon, this June? If you are, please contact me as we will have material to be handed out advertising our convention in 1967.

Dwight Stone, General Chairman

TIME TO PRACTICE NEGLECTED ART OF PRUNING

Late winter--by the middle of February or first of March--is a suitable time to prune shade trees. Actually, they may be pruned any time during the winter when the snow isn't too deep or the weather too frigid for the person doing the pruning.

Leon Snyder says pruning is necessary to good tree care; yet, it has become a neglected art. Some home owners wait until a tree is in real trouble before they prune. But Leon points out that a little judicious pruning every year from the time a tree is planted can do much to shape a tree and prevent future weaknesses.

Young trees need to be pruned to prevent a weak framework from developing, to provide balance to the growing crown and to remove branches that may cross and rub each other or that may interfere with traffic. If young trees are properly pruned, the mature tree will require a minimum of pruning. Then pruning of mature trees may often be limited to the removal of dead or broken branches or to the thinning out of an overly dense crown.

Leon recommends removing a few branches at a time over a period of several years rather than cutting out an excessive amount of wood at one time. He gives these further tips on pruning:

- (1) Always use sharp tools. (2) Make all cuts clean. Never leave unsightly stubs that may become focal points for disease organism to enter.
 - (3) Paint all wounds over 1 inch in diameter with an antiseptic tree wound paint.
 - (4) Always keep the natural form of the tree in mind when pruning.
- If you do a good job of pruning, it should not be evident that the tree has been freshly pruned.

Inst. of Agriculture,
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