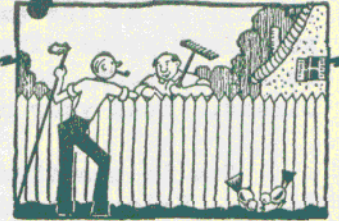




# The Garden Spray

BULLETIN OF THE MEN'S GARDEN CLUB OF MINNEAPOLIS

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



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G. "Vic" Lowrie, Editor

Associate Editors  
Wm. H. Hull, Otto Nelson,  
Neil Barry

## November Meeting

Date: Tuesday, November 14, 1961  
Place: Mt. Olivet Lutheran Church  
Knox Ave. So. at W. 50th  
Time: 5:45 P.M., Sharp  
Price: \$1.75

## Officers

Les Johnson	President
N.W. Christopherson	Vice-Pres.
Dwight Stone	Secretary
Ev Haedecke	Treasurer

Office of the Secretary  
4620 Hampton Road

Office of the Exchange Editor  
G. Victor Lowrie  
401 Essex Building

## PROGRAM

1. Report by Nominating Committee and election of 1962 Officers.
2. Talk on birds - Dr. Fred Rodda
3. Fourteen minute color sound film on community beautification entitled, "Colorful Tonawandas."
4. Report by club Photographic Committee. Slides will be shown and discussed by Eng Hoyme.

Notice to Past Presidents - will you please remain after the November meeting to review pictures of candidates for industrial awards and select those plants to receive awards at the Christmas Party.

## OVER THE GARDEN GATE

by Bill Hull

Our Christmas Party - will be held the regular Tuesday in December, the 12th. It will be at the American Hardware Mutual building and will feature those succulent prime ribs that drew so much praise last year. Reservation forms will be mailed soon, but you may place your reservations now with Otto Nelson, 5409 Girard. Send your check for \$3.50 per person.

Now is the time to give P. W. Young your garden slides for the Christmas Party. Select the best of your 1961 slides and get them to P. W. as soon as possible, preferably at the November meeting, which would save packing and shipping. Remember to put your name on each slide.

While speaking of the party, keep up your attendance for Green Thumb awards. We were looking at the potentials the other night and were surprised to see how the number has trebled in the three years we've been giving this award. Les Johnson says he's going to get a whole handful of "green thumbs" yet. Others can do it too.

A board meeting at Les Johnson's - October 17. A bunch of the boys were whooping it up over Mrs. J's wonderful punkin' pie when Les revealed the day was their 46th anniversary. Best wishes to these fine friends.

The club project of judging gardens for the Robert Fulton School PTA contest went off well this summer with several members serving as judges. Prexy J. made a presentation of pics taken by our members, showing children in their gardens. A good dozen or so fine letters back from the children expressing their thanks. Also a scroll from the school. We thank those representing us: Messrs: Christopherson, Day, Flack, Lifson, Proctor, Don Young, your humble servant and the eighth: your President, who sponsored this fine project.

The nominating committee is working overtime and has a report about ready to submit at the next meeting, which is election night. But do be there to vote for the slate of officers - all capable men.

Do you read the Chicago Tribune? It contains a column which beseeches, "Help! Help!", asking its readers to send in information. Well, we need help too. Call or drop us a line, tipping us off to personal achievements, unusual garden plants in other members gardens or houses, human foibles, recognitions, human interest, etc. We would like this type of information about all of our members.

How long has it been since you held a week old baby and marvelled at the physical and mental potential in that tiny body? Or split open a tulip bulb and discovered a complete tulip therein awaiting the spring? Or thoughtfully examined one of the thousands of seed you handle each year. Those are the things that should dominate our thinking - the tomorrows - not the sickness, the death, the depressions of today. I suspect that mental health is not much of a problem among gardeners.

## DESCANSO GARDENS

by H. H. Stevens

For much of the past year, urgent business has kept me far from the garden, which is so much a part of me. When possible, I did the very natural thing of searching out other gardens to enjoy. During this time I saw many fine displays but never have I encountered anything so indescribably lovely as the Descanso Gardens on the outskirts of LaCanada, California.

Tucked away in the foothills of the San Rafael Mountains, only a few miles north of Los Angeles and just west of Pasadena, this 465 acre beauty spot almost defies description. It is well named, since in Spanish the word "descanso" signifies a resting place, usually at the foot of a hill. In 1784 the Gardens were included as a part of the famous Rancho San Rafael, a Spanish land grant from Governor Pedro Fages of California to Jose Maria Verdugo.

Through the years it has been privately and semi-privately owned. In July, 1958 it was given to the Los Angeles County Department of Arboreta and Botanic Gardens. The county supervisors, aided by a few club groups - chiefly the Descanso Garden Guild and the Los Angeles Camellia Council, have done well in it's management. Admittance is free and the gardens are open every day of the year. The only restriction is that anyone under eighteen years of age must be accompanied by an adult. Even so, a fairly large section is given over to gardens tended entirely by children.

Much of the area is left completely natural. A running stream courses the entire length of the live oak-tree groves. Growing in a natural leaf mould soil in the sunlight, filtered by thirty acres of the live oaks are the Camellias - more than 130,000 specimens of upward of 600 varieties. These have been assembled over a long period from China, Japan, England and the Southern United States. Many of the shrubs are as high as twenty feet and make a truly spectacular sight. Each variety is clearly identified by label.

Beyond the Camellia groves leads a delightful path through a heavily shaded valley of possibly two acres extent. This area is the Cymbidium Orchid Garden; almost a fairyland.

Depending on the season, one can see an almost endless variety of flowers, shrubs, trees and so forth. One could call the roll by a list such as Camellias, early and late Annuals, early and late Bulbs, Iris, Orchids, Rhodendrum, Ceanothus, Begonias, Fuchsias, Azaleas, Sasanqua Camellias, deciduous flowering trees and shrubs. No month of the year is without some feature.

One large planting of several acres is given over to a California native plant section. This is to show the best use of California native plants for the home garden, for erosion control and for general landscape values.

## DESCANSO GARDENS (cont'd)

The only part of the garden planted in even semi-formal style is divided into two sections, one for the modern roses and the other to display a real floral treat called the History of the Rose. In the modern garden are planted the roses, which have been given the A.A.R.S. award. These are arranged in chronological order beginning with the first variety given an award in 1940. It is a beautiful display. The History of the Rose garden, featuring some 8,000 bushes, includes species and varieties from all over the world, brought together and planted according to a definite plan. Beginning with the Christian Era, the leading varieties of each period are planted in plainly labeled groups. Around wide oval pathways one sees authentic rose varieties of the centuries arranged in order of their appearance.

There is one bed of the Red Gallica, an unstriped form of Rosa Mundi, known to have been grown in Persian gardens prior to 1200 B.C. These plants bear little resemblance to the fine hybrids we take almost for granted. To me, the most unusual color among the old roses is the Austrian Copper, first prominent in 1583. It's name is accurately descriptive and 300 years ago, it was widely used for breeding purposes.

It is difficult to know where and how to stop any consideration of Descanso. Mere words are just not adequate. If possible, see for yourself. When you are in the neighborhood, listen well and see if, out of the past, you do not hear the voice of the good Jose Maria Verdugo say, "Descanson Ustedes, Senores. Rest yourselves, gentlemen and share with me some of these real beauties of nature."

### JUST PLAIN HARD LUCK

by Edwin C. Culbert

In all my years of delving in the dirt since grandpa led me, a two year old, by the hand to his potato patch in the woods, the experience of greatest interest was the one I failed most miserably to follow up.

Several years ago rabbits and pheasants were driving me crazy. Small wonder then that one morning I spied a candytuft umbel florets partially open on the ground. "Blasted birds: picked that off, too," thought I. When next day and the day after that the flower head was still there, more completely open, fresh and unwilted, I stooped to investigate. It wasn't chewed off! It was a normal umbellatum candytuft flower on a stem so short the flower practically rested on the ground, so I put a little fence around it and went on vacation.

When I returned it was gone, but I was to miff another chance for next year another appeared in the same spot. I asked Archie Flack about propagating it. Made great plans to save seed from my find, but while planning I failed to protect and a roving dog rooted up that part of my garden. Haven't wanted to plant candytuft since.

## WHAT ARE YOU DOING FOR COMPOST?

by Bill Swanson

Have you ever planted a garden, using a carefully designed layout, only to find upon completion that you omitted one of the major items?

This is the experience I had when I planned, in detail, my landscaping program. Yes, I had my trees, shrubs, annuals and perennials pretty much where I felt I wanted them, but when everything was in place, I didn't have any space available for a compost box.

I can't say I had overlooked it completely, but the logical places to put it had been used already.

To remedy this situation for this season I decided to use an area on my back lot line for compost. My neighbors to the rear had lilac bushes all along the lot line so I felt it would not present an unpleasant view for them. I used pieces of sod to cover all I placed there and planted tall growing annuals to hide the view. By having this area used for compost, I was able to keep my soil from washing onto my neighbors yard, which is lower than mine. Also, the compost is in a good position to be used after it has decayed. This will eliminate having to wheel it throughout the garden. By having my compost pile in a long low row, I am able to keep it soaked while sprinkling my garden, which helps it to decay.

## ARBORETUM NOTES

by Leon Snyder

### Atlantic Leatherwood (Dirca palustris)

The Atlantic Leatherwood is native in open woodlands and at the edges of swamps throughout the wooded areas of the state, but more common in the north-eastern part of the state. Although shade tolerant, this plant does best where it receives ample light. In the woods it is rather open and sparsely branched. In the open, it forms a compact, symmetrical plant that requires little restrictive pruning. It is especially good for foundation plants or for an informal hedge.

The plant grows to a height of about five feet. The stems appear jointed and are very limber because of the tough inner bark and the soft inner wood. The Indians used the bark for binding pieces of leather together - hence the name, leatherwood. The flowers are small yellow trumpets produced very early in the spring, often by mid-April. The fruits, which resemble tiny plums, are at first green, turning red as they mature. The only known means of propagating this shrub is from seeds. Since the fruits drop to the ground as soon as ripe, seed collection is somewhat difficult. This fact may account for the scarcity of this desirable ornamental in the nursery trade.

## MULCHING FALL-PLANTED NURSERY STOCK

### Why Mulch?

Most shrubs and trees planted in the fall don't have sufficient time to become rooted before winter and as a result are more subject to winter injury. This is especially true when planted as late as October.

Since most winter injury results from rapid temperature changes rather than extreme temperatures, it seems advisable to modify this condition in order to avoid possible injury. Mulching in the fall will maintain a more uniform soil temperature throughout the winter. The mulch will keep the soil warm longer and allow further root development before the ground freezes in fall.

### How Deep to Apply Mulch

For best results the mulch should be at least 2 to 3 inches deep. For shade trees, it is advisable to mulch 4 to 6 feet in diameter around each tree or well beyond the root zone.

The USDA suggests that 1/2 to 1 pound of ammonium nitrate be added to each bushel of mulch to reduce chance of nitrogen deficiency due to the breakdown of organic matter. Fertilizer may be applied at the same time as the mulch.

### Mulch Materials

1. Crushed corncobs are a good, inexpensive mulch. It does not detract from the appearance of the planting.
2. Whole corncobs can be used where the appearance is not a consideration.
3. Hay is a good mulch and easy to transport if handled in baled form. Some farmers may have some partially decomposed hay which is no longer good for livestock feed.
4. Hops (spent) can be obtained from local breweries.
5. Leaves are an inexpensive mulch.
6. Sawdust or wood shavings can be obtained from saw mills or planing mills. When used as a mulch, shavings should be free of treated materials such as creosote or other preservatives.
7. Pine needles make a good mulch for landscape plantings because of their color and natural appearance. Pine needles do not decompose readily and are weed free. They are especially good where an acid soil reaction is to be maintained.
8. Wood chips can often be obtained from a tree-trimming service which uses a brush pulverizer for removal of brush.

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