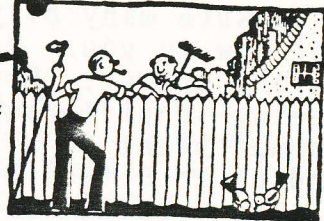




The Garden Spray

BULLETIN OF THE MEN'S GARDEN CLUB OF MINNEAPOLIS, INC.



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

April 1979, Volume 37, Number 4

The MEN'S GARDEN CLUB of MINNEAPOLIS WILL MEET TUESDAY, APRIL 10th

For It's Regular 6:P.M. Monthly Dinner Meeting. (Cost \$3.50) at

MOUNT OLIVET LUTHERAN CHURCH, 50th Street at Knox Avenue South

Mini Program: (1) Slides of Members' 1978 Gardens.
(2) Seed Propagation Under Lights and In Cold Frames

GET YOUR RESERVATION CARD BACK PROMPTLY

* * * * *

REPORT ON THE MEETING JUST PAST (March)

What a display greeted us as we arrived! A long table crowded with, mostly potted, orchids, primulas, snapdragons, cinerarias, sweet peas produced in the home greenhouses of Vern Carlson, Chuck King, Fred Glasoe, Dick Lehman, and Jerry Shannon. In addition a potted plant, either a calceolaria or a cineraria, supplied by Bachmans graced each dining table. It's a shame our shut-ins (Bill Cowcill, broken hip; Paul Denn, auto accident; Carl Johnson, knee replacement; Milt Thomas, hip replacement; Charley Proctor, broken ankle) couldn't have seen and enjoyed this promise of spring.

Archie Caple did double duty. He sold dinner tickets, checked the reservation list, presided, presented a Board recommendation and was the mini-program speaker. The recommendation was to appoint (only) two members as convention delegates and to give each \$100 (in advance) toward registration fee and expenses. There were a number of questions, re interpretation and concerns, from the floor. Finally, a motion to continue the present procedure prevailed. Unfortunately, the present procedure is appoint delegates as an afterthought; make no commitment to them; and, give them \$25, if anything, at some future date.

The program started with slides of members 1978 gardens by Chet Groger. Following came a description of the Master Gardener program (requirements, training offered, responsibilities incurred) by Archie Caple. Archie was one of the 76 chosen, from 130 applicants, to be included in the program. The major talk was Robert Mugas' slide illustrated lecture on yard landscaping. His thesis: Garden free from problems by knowing the answers or where to get the answers. Phone 473-4285, the Hennepin County Agricultural Extension office; or, get bulletins from the University, 373-1615; or, check your telephone book for other places.

SPEAKING APR. 10: MERVIN EISEL ON "TREES AND SHRUBS"

OVER THE FENCE FROM FLORIDA

I didn't write my article for the SPRAY before leaving on vacation as I ran out of time. Now that I am on vacation, I find it hard to get up the energy to do it.

I am sure many of you have been to Florida so the wonders of the state are not new to you. Most homes have poor landscaping as most of it burns out in the summer. However, quite a few homes have some and I can't get over seeing scheffleras 12 feet tall and used as landscape shrubs. Another common plant in a lot of yards is the croton. I have seen it in all colors and up to 5 feet high. It really is different to see what we call house plants growing in people's yards. Another thing I notice is the total lack of common deciduous trees. It's funny not to see elm, maple and oak which are so common to us.

Keeping in mind that this was written on March 12 the following cartoon (which has been copied from a postcard by my daughter) pretty well sums it up.



In case the reproduction is a bit poor, the cartoon says, "Hi! We're having fun shoveling in Florida! What are you doing?"

Got to run now, dinner is ready. Fish we caught this morning, corn on the cob, vine ripened tomatoes and strawberries for dessert.

See you in April.....maybe.

--Bob Gage

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COMPOST FROM LEAF RECYCLING CENTERS may be available before the May SPRAY comes out. Watch the papers from April 1 on for the announcement.

GARDENING ON THE DECK

- Phil Smith -

Deck or patio gardening is somewhat similar to the use of houseplants in the potential effect on one's home environment. The addition of container-grown plants to a deck or patio can completely change the appearance or character of the outdoor living area.

My lake home has several open decks, and I have used pot plants there for several years. In addition, I moved to a townhouse in Golden Valley a couple of years ago and this city home has several decks but only one is open above or uncovered. In townhouse living little can be done to change the exterior appearance or landscape for a single unit (the overall appearance of the complex being controlled), but a considerable amount of gardening can be enjoyed on a deck space to vary the individual character or charm of one's own property.

The following points note some of the thoughts and ideas I have developed over several years of growing plants in containers. There is of course much room for variation and design of a patio or deck garden, just as in the layout and arrangement of gardens and planting in the outlying yard.

Containers

There are many items available for container usage. Planter boxes of wood or masonry are often used, as are the traditional long flower boxes and all types of pots. An important point is size, the larger the better, because of the watering problem. However, virtually any type of large container which will hold soil can be used if it fits the character of the surroundings. Interesting plantings can be made using wood tubs or half barrels, as well as various sizes and shapes of chimney flue tiles or drainage tiles stood on end, or even concrete blocks in larger sizes. Ordinary clay flower pots in the larger sizes (12" to 20") and with matching saucers make very nice containers, but they should usually be lined with plastic (trash bags will do) because they dry out quickly.

Plastic hanging pots can be hung in various groupings from a side wall or even from posts, and the newer half-circular plastic pots look nice also on a side wall or fence. Decks often are constructed with a side barrier or railing, and these will usually hold a long and narrow planter box, preferably made of cedar or redwood. Many nice ground boxes may also be made from two-inch lumber, and Sunset publishes a good book on patio gardens and decks with numerous designs.

(continued over)

Arrangement

The grouping of containers on the deck or patio will, of course, vary with the construction or design of the structure and the personal ideas of the owner. However, containers generally look best in uneven groupings rather than lined up in a row or placed singly.

One might try a Fall plant (patio rose, tree geranium or upright houseplant) in a corner, with smaller pots of uneven heights placed in front. Or, consider an arrangement of various heights and sizes of flue tiles, which are available at brick suppliers. These can be cut by scoring with a masonry blade in a circular saw and then cracked with a chisel. If they are going to be moved, a bottom should be made by fitting a piece of wood inside or pouring in a couple inches of concrete.

When placing hanging pots or half pots on a wall or fence, it is generally best to arrange them in uneven groupings, such as three, five or seven containers at uneven spacings, depending on the plants to be used.

Soil

Care should be taken in mixing a good potting soil similar to that which one would use for house plants. I use 3/5 to 2/3 of good garden soil, lightened with 2/5 to 1/3 of sand or perlite and peat moss or vermiculite, and usually some slow-release fertilizer. One can often use the same soil for many years if a liquid fertilizer is used in subsequent years. Simply break up last year's roots with a trowel and replant. I have used the same soil in a container for as long as five years.

It is a good idea to place some coarse gravel or rock in the container bottom to provide drainage. In larger pots which stand in saucers, I use about three inches of 3/4" rock.

Watering

This is probably the most difficult part of container gardening. In our climate, decks are often located to take advantage of the sun, and are therefore hot and dry. Watering is often a daily chore, sometimes even twice daily. One should therefore plan for moisture retention. Choice of containers is important, the larger the better. Use of a soil mixture with good humus content will help, as will mulching the containers (crushed rock or flat stones work well). Plastic pots do not dry out

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nearly so fast as clay pots, and the latter can be lined with plastic film. I have seen a drip irrigation system made with plastic tubing which worked well on a patio and eliminated hand watering.

Choice Of Plants

All of the common annuals grown in Minnesota work well in containers, plus some perennials. House plants may also be used effectively, and often house plants may be moved directly outdoors without repotting.

Annuals which I have found useful in container gardening include petunias, pansies, alyssium, ageratum, dwarf zinnias and snapdragons, the shorter dahlias, lobelia, begonias, salvia, coleus, impatiens, and geraniums. Some of these of course require shade. I have used the shorter lilies in pots, as well as perennial sedums. Several other perennials could undoubtedly be used, although all perennial plants need to be covered well with straw or the entire pot buried for winter. The latter technique is necessary also with patio roses in pots. Mums make nice pot plants also.

Many vegetables of the smaller varieties may be grown in containers quite successfully, including tomatoes, squash, cucumbers and lettuce. I have also seen carrots and beets grown quite well in pots.

There are in essence few plants unsuitable for container gardening.

Storage

In the Fall I prefer to cut off the annuals at soil level, leaving the roots for humus. The containers can be moved to a nearby storage area or under a wide eaves to prevent moisture entry and frost damage. Or, they may be easily covered with plastic tied around the top or other covers. Pots with saucers may sometimes be covered by the inverted saucers if they fit properly. Hanging pots and smaller pots may be moved to storage, and house plants moved indoors for the winter after being inspected and treated for possible pests.

In the Spring, it is an easy matter to cultivate the soil in the containers, add a little fertilizer and replant.

Gardening on the deck or patio can provide considerable growing space and enjoyment for the gardener with or without a regular garden area.

HERE'S HOW TO GET YOUR GREEN THUMB AWARD

Because there was some confusion this last year over who should receive Green Thumb awards, the board of directors has reviewed its procedures and recently approved the following technique. Currently, the club secretary keeps the records and turns them over to the Green Thumb chairman. The changes for the future, basically are simplifications.

To qualify for the perfect attendance award, you must have attended all twelve meetings of the club during the calendar year. There are no make-up meetings at other clubs. All you have to do is to be there. If you have made a reservation and buy a dinner or tour ticket, you will be counted. If you come and don't eat, it is your responsibility to tell the secretary or treasurer to put you down as being in attendance. At the flower show, for example, be sure that someone gets you down on an attendance list. The basic rule will be that if you pay your meal ticket, you are counted.

"We will stand with what was done in 1978", says President Bob Gage. While someone might have been given credit mistakenly, we cannot try to change it now." So, fellows, be sure the secretary or treasurer knows you are there if you haven't bought a ticket.

--Bill Hull

INNOVATION: Consumer publications of all types are contributing more and more to the gardening trend. Editorial support for gardening has grown by leaps and bounds. Family Circle Magazine has gone one step further. Their March 13th issue included a gift packet of Northrup King's RED CHERRY tomato seed. The special gift packet of Cherry tomatoes was bound into the Family Circle Editorial by attaching it to a card that included instructions, "10 Easy Growing Tips from Tomato Experts", for starting the seed.

Return to
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To

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**A HAPPENING
MIAMI MAY 4-7**