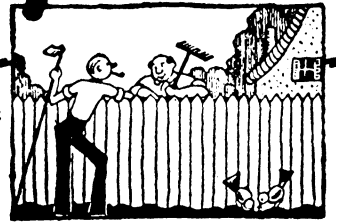




The Garden Spray

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

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MGCM MEETING TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 13TH, MT. OLIVET LUTHERAN CHURCH, 6 PM

Russell V. Stansfield, Administrator of Warm Water Utilization at NSP, will speak on Warm Water Uses for Horticulture. He will tell us about the research going on at Northern States Power Company into the beneficial uses of warm water from power plant cooling systems.

Richard J. Zelinka, President of Forjay's Magic Gardens, Lino Lakes, Minnesota will tell us about Growing Tomatoes Hydroponically (in a nutrient solution with an inert medium to provide mechanical root support).

Both of these slide illustrated talks will be informative and very timely. Don't miss this one!!!

GARDEN CLIPPINGS

I hope that you all enjoyed our January meeting as much as I did. Mr. Anderson of Tonkadale Greenhouses gave a very interesting and informative talk about growing African Violets. He had suggestions for anyone who grows plants under lights, and more and more gardeners are doing this. Thank you Henry Halvorson for a good program and our calling committee for a good attendance. It was especially nice to see so many men from Richfield.

This year the garden catalogs were coming along with the Christmas cards. They make pleasant January reading. The illustrations are colorful and the description are a study in optimism. Before you do any ordering be sure to check where the nursery is located and whether this particular prize can be grown in our area. In fact I firmly suggest that you buy from local nurseries. They carry only what will grow here and they guarantee what they sell. Then, too, local nurseries have been very good to local garden clubs.

It is a good time to draw a garden plan and decide what you will add and what you will discard. Why not a few plants of something that you have never grown? If you are not too experienced the problem is being too ambitious. After all your wife can only take care of some more than she did last year.

I have been enjoying a catalog put out by Tillotson's Roses of Waterville, California. They feature both old and modern roses. They are exclusive dealers for a new strain of shrub roses that Dr. Griffith Buck of Iowa State University has been working on. I have talked to Dr. Buck about these roses and I have seen slides. Many of them are six feet tall, everblooming, and hardy without any winter protection. Doesn't that sound great? One of these called Prairie Prince is especially recommended by the rose hybridizer, Walter Lammerts. Others are Apple Jack, Country Dancer, Music Maker, and Square Dancer. Some of these will be my "something new" in 1973.

NOTES FROM THE BERRY PATCH
by Bob Smith

Blueberries A blueberry breeding program has been in progress during the past few years under the direction of Dr. Cecil Stushnoff of the U. of Minn. Horticulture Department to develop varieties suitable for commercial growing in Minnesota. Dr. Stushnoff indicates that the results of last year's (1972) trials looked promising. The breeding efforts have been directed toward the development of low bush varieties that will receive sufficient snow cover to produce dependable crops rather than toward increasing the hardiness of the high bush types to enable them to withstand the severe Minnesota winters. The former alternative was chosen when examination of plant tissue of the hardier high bush varieties revealed an insufficient hardiness factor to pursue the latter alternative.

Selections are being made and plant stock will be propagated for commercial introduction in about four years. The breeding work will continue along with the development of high density planting methods that will be necessary to make commercial blueberry growing profitable with the low bush varieties. The new varieties should be well suited to the southern half of the state where natural soil conditions exist. Trial plantings have been doing well on the acid soils of the Elk River and Forest Lake areas where the soil Ph is about 5.2 although a Ph of 4.5 is considered to be optimum for blueberries.

My own experience with the high bush blueberries began in 1961. I set out 20 plants that year and 10 more in 1964. It was strictly an experiment to see what could be done under Minnesota conditions using natural gardening methods.

To lower the soil Ph I used sphagnum moss and a natural soil acidifier derived from tree bark rather than ammonium sulphate. A mulch of sawdust and oak leaves was maintained the year around and cottonseed meal was applied in May to provide the required nitrogen in an acid form. No additional nitrogen was applied that might stimulate fall growth which could not be hardened off before winter. I found that the sawdust and oak leaves used as a mulch had little effect in reducing the soil Ph even over a long period of time. Therefore, additional soil acidification had to be provided for expanding root growth. Where chlorosis occurred iron chelate cleared it up very well.

The two biggest problems were winter injury and bird depredation. I never did achieve the desired plant growth because of winter dieback. Some plants reached a height of 3 feet and yielded well for that size but didn't come anywhere near their potential when grown in a more temperate climate. When protection was provided it helped but I was unable to adequately protect above the three foot level. Pruning to promote maximum fruiting at lower levels proved to be more worthwhile than attempting to harden off and winter over the upper growth.

The birds were extremely fond of my blueberries. A complete enclosure of netting was necessary to save any fruit for myself and even then an occasional brown thrush or bluejay would find its way under the netting. At that time Protect-O-Net was the best long life netting I could find on the market. Dr. Stushnoff is presently using a polyethylene netting that he finds excellent for all types of berries.

I grew Concord, Stanley and Rancocas, three standard commercial varieties; also Blueray, Earliblue, Bluecrop and Herbert newer large fruiting USDA varieties. Although all of them fruited Blueray, an early bearing variety with spreading growth habit, and Earliblue were the most dependable.

(OVER)

While growing blueberries turned out to be very interesting and a lot of fun it was cheaper for me to buy Michigan berries at 25¢ to 35¢ per pint than to grow my own. In 1968, after growing blueberries for seven years, I decided to give them up. It was amazing to see the change in the soil texture where the blueberries had been grown with the continuous mulch of sawdust and leaves. This is the soil in which the long Imperator carrots were grown in my 1972 carrot trials which produced uniform well shaped carrots up to 14 inches in length.

With the present progress in developing low bush blueberries for Minnesota I would suggest waiting until these are introduced (along with recommendations on cultural practices for these new varieties) before venturing into blueberry growing on either a commercial or home garden basis.

OVER THE GARDEN GATE
by Bill Hull

Now that Christmas and New Year have come and gone, we can think again of gardening and turn our thoughts to spring.

A lot of you have started growing annuals and perhaps some perennials under fluorescent lights. If you haven't, I can only urge this as the most satisfying and financially rewarding part of gardening. Growing under lights can fill in the void of the long winter months and get you "in the mood" for spring. If you need help and counsel there are at least a dozen of us who have grown flowers under lights for years and we'd be glad to talk with you about it. I'll never forget the winter I grew and gave away over 200 blooming African violets.

There are more African violets starting under lights this year--from leaf cuttings just planted. Our new home has very little room but we have put to use the waste space in a former well room. It's all been painted brilliant white to reflect light. Lights have been installed and one shelf to start with. A fan will provide air circulation to fight any dampness. Bottom heat can be added when and if needed either by a heating coil or incandescent tubes. Anyway, it's a bit of memorabilia of the days when I grew a lot of things under lights. There will be some other seeds added quickly, but not as many as some of you will have.

I'm thrilled about some of the new roses coming out, some of which I've seen. Armstrong has three new hybrid teas that are good and I'd like to place an order for them. "Kentucky Derby" is a rich, dark red, tall and vigorous rose with long graceful urn-shaped buds. The large flowers are produced on long stems, singly and in clusters. "Taj Mahal" is a deep pink which has a definite and pleasing tea-rose aroma. It's vigorous and may well have the largest blooms of any rose. I know they are huge. "El Dorado" is a yellow blend with long-pointed buds that open into largely yellow flowers, somewhat resembling "Sutter's Gold" in the bud, but it is more fragrant than that good rose. H. C. Swim says it's a blend of damask and spice in scent. All three are hybridized by David L. Armstrong.

As I said at the Christmas party, I get rapturous about Hibiscus "Southern Belle". I get my seeds from Sakata in Japan, but they are undoubtedly available many places here. I have raised this fine hibiscus for about four years with splendid results. Two winters ago, or is it three, I ran a test of about thirty blooming plants. Half were winter protected with a two-foot packed pile of leaves contained in a chicken wire fence. The other half, growing in the same row running north and south, were left entirely unprotected. There was so little difference in results that I determined extensive mulching with all it's work wasn't worth it. In both cases, I had only from 5% to 10% kill. Of course all plants died down to the earth

MINIATURE DWARF BEARDED IRIS

by Julius Wadekamper

This year I would like to bring you a series of articles on iris starting with the earliest and smallest iris the Miniature Dwarf Bearded Iris or the MDB's as they are known to iris fanciers.

What is a Miniature Dwarf Bearded Iris? It is an early blooming bearded iris that does not grow beyond 10 inches tall and has one to two flower buds in a terminal cluster with no lateral branching. Advanced generation hybrids now exist but the species from which they developed include I. chamaeiris, I. attica, I. pumila, I. mellita, I. reichenbachii, I. arenaria, I. balkana, I. cretica, and I. subbiflora.

These species, interbred, give us a wide variation in color and form in this class. Today you can choose the color of dwarf iris that your landscape plan calls for. A good knowledge of the use of dwarf bearded iris is essential. Considering variations in micro-climates and weather the peak blooming season in the Twin Cities area is May 10th. Bloom has been recorded from April 25th and extends to May 25th. There is also a cultivar variation in bloom time. Any single cultivar will bloom over a period of 6-7 days depending on the weather, which can be so variable in spring in Minnesota.

Dwarf bearded iris are not single specimen plants. They should be used in a carpe or pattern situation and as such add striking color patches to the early spring garden. The small size of dwarf iris makes them ideal for use in raised beds or on hillsides. It should not be forgotten that with these plants we are looking down at the flowers. The new cultivars with bright colors and wide petals are, therefore, very much appreciated.

Dwarf iris are not readily susceptible to disease and insects and they are extremely hardy.

Dwarf iris multiply rapidly but they remain effective in one locality for 3-4 years without transplanting. They should be planted from 4 to 6 inches apart and the top of the rhizome should be ground level.

Some companion plants that go well with dwarf iris include Sedums and sempervivums potentilla verna nana, artemisia, dwarf hostas (in shaded areas), Dahlborg daisy, anchusa caespitosa, dwarf columbine, dwarf scabiosa, alyssum.

Dwarf yews and junipers provide attractive backgrounds and frames. Few things are more beautiful in springtime than a patch of sky blue BLUE FROST iris or an area of brilliant yellow SUN SPARKLE bordering short red tulips in front of soft deep-green yews.

We are fortunate to have one of the largest commercial growers of Dwarf Iris right here in Minneapolis--Mr. and Mrs. G. F. Hanson of 7124 Riverdale Road. They welcome visitors to their garden in May where almost 1,000 cultivars of dwarf and median irises are grown.

Anyone interested in becoming further involved in dwarf iris may join the Dwarf Iris Society by writing to Adda E. Ayres, 624 East Arch Street, Portland, Indiana 47371.

Some of the best dwarf iris cultivars listed recently in the Iris Yearbook are:

RECOMMENDED MINIATURE DWARF BEARDED IRIS

Whites BRIGHT WHITE, *WHITE MITE, CRISPY, ALASKAN ICE

Blues *BLUE FROST, CLAIRE, *ATOMIC BLUE, BLUE DOLL, DROP O' BLUE

Orchid-Lavender *PROMISE, ORCHID FLARE, DREAM STUFF, ORCHID CHERUB

Violet NAVY FLIRT, MUMBRO, SULINA, VIOLET GEM, VIOLET NIGHT

Blue-Bearded Yellow APRIL ACCENT, *BLUE WHISKERS, GAY JEWEL, LITTLE SHAVER

Purples *PERKY, BUTCH, ATROVIOLACEA, BLAZON, LITTLE SMOOTHIE

Reds RED GEM, FRENCH WINE, GARNET GLEAM, ALREADY, GARNETTE

Blacks *BLACK BABY, *LITTLE JOE, BLACK TOP, JET PETITE

Cream-Lemons LEMON PUFF, *PASTEL DAWN, CREAMETTE, LEMON DOLL, CREAM SUPREME

Brown-Yellow Blend BUSTER BROWN, HONEY BEAR, LITTLE MOHEE, FIOR DEL MONDO

Yellows SUN SPARKLE, BUTTERBALL, *FASHION LADY, LITTLE SUNBEAM, BUTTERCUP CHARM

Oranges GOLDEN CUPID, GOLDEN EARRINGS, GOLDEN LOCKET, MAGIC FLUTE

Green Blend DIZZY DAME, DIRTY FACE, DOLL DANCE, DREAM CHILD

Rose-Red Blend JASPER GEM, CUP & SAUCER, APRIL ROSE, LITTLE JEWEL

Yellow-Green Amoena IRISH DOLL, *GAY LASSIE, APRIL CHARM, TONI LYNN

Halo on White or Yellow ANGEL EYES, BEE WINGS, BUMBLE WINGS, CHERRY HALO

(*)These popularity proven dwarf iris have appeared on the symposium of the Dwarf Iris Society for 10 years and were still there in 1971. Others are:

ABLAZE, CHERRY SPOT, GRANDMA'S HAT, HEART'S CONTENT, SPARKLING EYES, VERI-GAY

GARDEN WRITER SEEKS PICTURES

Just as final copy was being assembled for the typist we received a telephone call from Mr. Richard Davids of Bagley, Minnesota, seeking MGCM help in the form of illustrations for a book on gardens and gardening. He had secured some fine pictures of annuals from Northrup King but still needed illustrations of kitchen gardens, flower borders, inexpensive garden pools (and plantings), novelties, etc. He was encouraged to attend our February meeting.

Mr. Davids is a former associate editor of Better Homes and Gardens. His most recent publication "How to Talk to Birds" came out in May, 1972.

BACKWARD, TURN BACKWARD, OH TIME.....

"A DRINK--Boil in a gallon of water two ounces of sarsaparilla and two ounces of Spanish liquorice, until the water is reduced to three pints. This decoction may be taken at any time, three or four times a day, in a glass of water or wine."

LILIES--PART 4--GROW LILIES FROM SEED

by Les Johnson

In the previous article I spoke of the two different ways in which lily seeds germinate and discussed the fast or epigeal type, which germinates within a couple of weeks after planting and pushes up the long cotyledon often lifting the seed up with it. This article will deal with the slow germinating type of seed.

The slow, or hypogeal, type after planting first forms a tiny bulb below ground before anything appears above the surface. Usually a cold period is needed before a true leaf appears above ground. Planting can be done in two ways. First disinfect the seed with Captan and mix the seed with a handful of moist sphagnum moss or vermiculite, put in plastic bag and fasten tightly with a label. Store this in a warm place for two or three months. Check once in a while and after the second month or so you will see little bulblets forming. When most of the seeds have formed little bulbs and roots, place the bag still tightly closed in the refrigerator for two or three months more. After this cold period the tiny bulbs may be planted into boxes and the first true leaf should appear in a week or two. Take good care of these as this may be all you will see the first year.

Another way to handle these seeds is to plant them in the fall as soon as available in a flat or directly into your cold frame. This is the simplest way and while it is slower and your losses may be a little greater it is still effective. Using this method you should see the first leaves above ground in May or June and the little bulbs should be ready to transplant by fall.

It will probably be four years before you see your first bloom, but these slow kinds are some of the most beautiful of all. The lovely speciosum and auratum hybrids are so lovely that you will be well repaid for your effort and waiting. Remember, too, that you will have produced a disease free bulb and, who knows, you may have come up with a new lily the world has not seen before.

I have been propagandizing in these articles about lilies because I think they are so useful in any border and offer so much satisfaction to any gardener. Now I would like to propose a "special interest" group to do some hybridizing and try to create some new and better plants. I would not limit this to lilies but would also include other plants that are not too difficult. Memerocallis, iris, hosta all are easy to work with and we could learn a lot. Think about it.

THE JANUARY MEETING

Despite the 10 below zero weather 12 of the 23 new members signed up since December 1 were out to receive copies of Garden Lessons We Have Learned. (Total attendance 64 members, 1 guest.)

Among the comments made by our speaker, Bob Anderson, were these: "Future greenhouses will go underground to save heat loss."..."The guy that has the green thumb is the guy that learns how to water."..."90% of the plants that die in the house die of too much water."..."Aeration is the most forgotten and most important requisite for plants."..."African violets are long lived and can be continuous bloomers if grown properly. We know of plants 20 years old and have one which bloomed continuously for 8 years."

Mr. Anderson then distributed a four page folder covering his topic and presented five gorgeously floriferous specimen plants to the club which Dwight Stone immediately