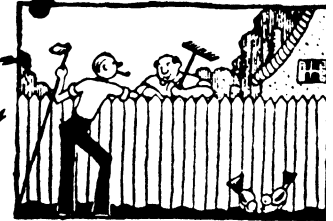




The Garden Spray

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

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



MARCH 1975, Volume 33, Number 3

Men's Garden Club of Minneapolis
Regular Monthly Meeting
Tuesday, MARCH 11, 1975

MOUNT OLIVET LUTHERAN CHURCH, 50th Street at Knox Avenue South
Dinner \$2.50 at 5:45 P.M. Bill Cowcill's Mystery Plant's First

The program for our March meeting should take our minds off the snow and cold and turn them to indoor gardening and that final look at seed catalogs. DON WILSON, who returned from Arizona and Mexico February 15 just in time to catch your editor scraping snow from the roof, will talk about DESERT GARDENING. Don plans to have slides and movies of Sun City and its environs--Also pictures and exhibits from Mexico including a Mexican "mystery plant" secured, we imagine, on his train trip into the wilds of Mexico. (Remember the READER'S DIGEST feature article?)

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THE PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

I was very happy at our last meeting to see our members volunteer to help Dick Hulbert enrich the lives of South High young folks thru gardening.

It almost seemed prearranged when Fred Glasoe gave us his enthusiastic presentation on what the St. Paul school system is already doing to give elementary school children experience in gardening. Fred's presentation was a great tonic for the winter doldrums.

Another way to involve people of all ages in gardening and civic beautification is thru sponsorship and observance of Arbor Day. Nate Siegel, a representative of CUE (Committee on Urban Environment) told members at the February MGCM Board meeting of plans to promote Arbor Day in Minneapolis on Saturday, April 26th. To succeed this program needs volunteers with gardening skills. Our Board supports Arbor Day and asks members to call Nate and support him in this needed program.

All of this prompted me to learn more about the origins of the observance. Arbor Day is the result of the dedication and work of one man, J. Sterling Morton of Nebraska. He settled on the treeless prairie of Nebraska in 1854. Morton loved trees and planted his land with many varieties. Over 18 years he actively promoted the concept of Arbor Day and on April 10, 1872, Arbor Day for the first time was celebrated in Nebraska. More than one million trees were planted in Nebraska that day.

The Arbor Day idea spread to other states and within twenty years pract

WHO HAS THE CLUB OFFICER PHOTO BOOK?

There were two books of photos of the four officers of our club each year. Book II I have, which runs from 1955 to date, but Book I, which runs from 1942 to 1955, is missing. Do you have it, or can you help trace it?

Many years ago the tradition was started to photograph the club officers each year and put them in a scrapbook. When I was our club president, I personally took photos and brought Book II to date, and shortly thereafter passed on both books to the secretary. Someone along the line, I stored the first one away and has forgotten it. It is the only source of nearly 15 years of officers, all probably now deceased, and is a valuable bit of history for our club.

Won't everyone who could have possibly ever had it, please check their files to help locate it. Please! We need it. As historian, I'll guarantee you it will be kept in permanent files and available to future generations.

--Bill Hull

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THE FEBRUARY MEETING

Fred Glasoe's slides of school youngsters gardening activities brought suggestions that we schedule a trip to observe the St. Paul program which looks every bit as good as the much touted Cleveland school gardening program. A few notes on the equally fine second half of his talk follow.

A dark basement is a good place for fluorescent gardening. It's cool and you can have controlled light 12 months a year. A combination of one 40 watt cool white tube and one 40 watt warm white tube with an incandescent bulb for red light and heat is about as good as any advertised. Use a light meter and place your plants according to their light needs: high, 18-24 foot candles; medium, 14-17 foot candles; low, 10-13 foot candles. Use foil on side of carts for light reflection, plastic tents for humidity control in dry areas.

Soil-less growing media have advantages: light weight for transporting, sterile, provide better control of food and p.H., good aeration, good moisture retention (especially in plastic pots), good capillary action, faster and more lateral root growth, more turgid plants. Use fertilizer (1/4 the amount directed) each time you water. Use 20-20-20 for general use, 9-45-15 for flowering, 30-10-10 for vegetative growth. Change brands often. Flush plants every 3 months.

Finally, hardening off tomato plants is not necessary. Those not hardened off produce 26-63% more fruit. They need protection when transplanted, however.

Walter Menzel telephoned (February 19) to report that Cortis Rice has had a stroke and also surgery and is now in intensive care at a Sarasota Florida hospital.

The good news at our February meeting was that honorary member Walter Quist is up and around and his old self again.

POTATOES ARE VALUABLE IN THE HOME GARDEN

by Bob Smith

I can recall hearing in past years remarks like, "You're foolish to use good garden space to grow potatoes when you can buy them for \$2 a hundr Those remarks made little impression on me because I knew those \$2 spud didn't taste like the ones from my garden nor did I believe they had th same nutritional value. Besides, I could go out in my garden any time during the summer for delicious new potatoes to have creamed with new peas and onions or just plain boiled with their jackets on and served with butter and parsley. What a treat!

With today's prices, it's a different game and even those gardeners who didn't appreciate good spuds then can raise them with profit now. Like wise, potatoes are a lot of fun to grow and you will be pleasantly surprised how tasty your own will be. If you plan to grow your entire sup figure on yields of up to 100 pounds per 50 feet of row under ideal con ditions. If space limitations or ambition preclude this you still owe to yourself and your family to plant a few somewhere in your garden.

VARIETIES TO PLANT I have had good success with Anoka, Kennebec, Norla (Red), Red Pontiac, Norchip, Early Ohio, Cherokee, Irish Cobbler, Norgo Russet and others. New varieties should not be overlooked particularly if they provide greater disease resistance, uniformity and shallow eyes Disease resistance is an important consideration for the home gardener along with quality and yield.

WHERE TO GROW Potatoes should be grown in full sunlight and free from root competition to produce good yields. (Vegetables such as beets, ca bage, carrots, lettuce, green onions, parsley, radishes, Swiss chard, a turnips will tolerate some shade.)

HOW AND THEN TO PLANT Some gardeners put them way down deep but I feel they will start to grow quicker and will develop faster if not planted deep in the early spring before the soil has warmed up. Potatoes don't have to be planted below the surface. Some gardeners lay them on the surface and put a hay mulch over them. Even better is to spread a laye of leaves, hay or any type of mulch in the fall on the area where they will be planted. The next spring lay the seed potatoes on top of the mulch which has partially decomposed by planting time and cover with ad itional leaves and hay. This system has the advantage of producing nic clean potatoes that can be easily robbed during the season and requires little supplemental moisture even in dry seasons.

TWO PROBLEMS encountered when using this method: 1) If slugs are prese in the garden the tubers are very vulnerable to slug damage unless har- vested very early. 2) The potatoes will green unless care is exercised to maintain a sufficiently deep mulch to shield out the light during th entire growing season. If you can adequately handle these two situatio this is an easy and productive way to grow potatoes.

I have grown potatoes both in and on top of the soil with good success but my personal preference is to plant them about 3 to 4 inches deep, hill and mulch with hay and leaves just before the plants begin to spra and then sit back and take it easy, except for a few robberies until th harvest.

SPACING It appears to me that single eyes closely spaced (7-10 inches)

vigorous varieties and in both cases in rows 3 feet apart will produce the best yields of uniform average size potatoes. For larger tubers if uniformity is desired use single eyes with wider spacing. If high production is desired without regard to size or shape, plant multiple eyes at the spacing producing the greatest yield. If you enjoy little new potatoes, rather than discard the multiple eye ends of the seed potatoes, plant them in a separate spot closely spaced and you will get loads of little golden nuggets throughout the summer without disturbing your main patch.

POTATO SEED Each eye or sprout on a potato will produce a plant. Ready cut eyes can be purchased from a seed store or nursery. This is the easiest but most expensive way to grow your spuds. Certified seed potatoes (certified free of disease) from which to cut eyes are also available at a much more reasonable price. Although in 1974 certified seed potatoes sold for \$15 to \$20 per hundred pounds, it takes only a peck to plant 2 to 300 feet of row depending upon how carefully the eyes are cut. In cutting eyes, retain a good sized piece of flesh with each eye. Dry the pieces for a day before planting.

Cheaper, of course, are your own potatoes but in the long run they may be more costly if the yield is reduced because of disease introduced from them. Don't use potatoes purchased from the grocery store because most of them have been treated to prevent sprouting. Likewise, if shipped in from another part of the U.S., they may not be the most suitable variety for growing in your garden.

INSECT AND DISEASE PROBLEMS Potato bugs no longer seem to be much of a problem in the home garden where vegetable plantings are widely diversified. I haven't seen a potato bug in years. Of more concern is the susceptibility of a variety to scab, blight and hollow heart.

Leaf hoppers are quite a nuisance and if allowed to build up can reduce yields from hopper burn (browning and curling of leaves) and the introduction of diseases (the latter more likely in succeeding seasons when using your own potatoes for seed). In Minnesota where leaf hoppers do not winter over but move up from the South each year with the warmer weather, early varieties will usually mature before the leaf hoppers can do much damage. The yield from midseason and late varieties is more readily affected by hopper burn and blight. With control measures (release of lady bugs and an application of Rotenone and Pyrethrum spray) my potato vines are still growing vigorously at harvest time in September with no hopper burn.

Scab can be a problem although many varieties available today are scab resistant. Potatoes should not be planted in newly limed soil. They grow best in soil with a pH range of 5.0 to 6.5. The lower the pH the more likely they are to be scab free. Most soils are in the 6.5 range so if you experience scab in your potatoes, look for a more resistant variety.

Hollow heart, a brown cavity in the center of the potato, usually found in the larger potatoes is caused by uneven moisture conditions. We can control the rain, which sometimes contributes to the problem by providing too much moisture, except by planting in well drained soil but we can provide supplemental moisture in dry periods to provide an even supply during the period of tuber growth. Mulching is a good means of helping to maintain this condition.

FEED FORTY-NINE HUNGRY MEN FOR FORTY-THREE DOLLARS

by Bill Hull - Historian

It was June 1956 when Rene Dufourd and others on the Grill 'n Grub committee prepared a deluxe meal consisting of ham, potato salad, baked beans, pickles and scallions, lots of hot coffee, fresh bread and a fine dessert of lemon creme pie.

The meeting was outdoors at George Germain's home on Natchez avenue and 49 members were present. Just for comparison's sake, and to make our billfolds scream, let's look at the menu, what it cost then and what it might cost today to duplicate the feast. The reason: to point out that, although it is more expensive today, it could still be done, if a few aggressive guys would just re-form the old Grill 'n Grub committee.

From the records Rene has kept all these years, and sent to us recently, we have the actual costs. Today's costs were determined by doing some comparison shopping in the stores and by telephone. Please don't call me to say today's prices are wrong. They are right. If you can do better, that's your prerogative. You may also do worse.

	<u>1956</u>	<u>1975</u>
21 3/4 pounds of pre-cooked ham	\$12.62	\$41.11
2 gallons of potato salad	4.50	6.32
2 gallons of baked beans	2.90	6.32
12 lemon creme pies	7.57	24.60
6 loaves of bread	1.50	3.50
7 gallons of coffee (140 cups)	7.70	15.05
1 jar mustard	.12	.21
Ice	.50	est.: 1.00
Sugar, cream, 1/2 gallon of milk,		
2 bottles catsup, pickles, scallions	6.38	est.:12.00
	<u>\$43.19</u>	<u>\$110.11</u>

The final group of items contains so many indefinites, we had to simply estimate the amount on today's market. How many pickles? What kind and quality?

In any event, the club committee served 49 members @ \$1.50 and had a surplus revenue of \$30. To do the same thing today and still to have the \$30 surplus, individual tickets would need to be priced at \$2.85.

On the other hand, \$2.25 each would just about break even today and that's not too far from what we are paying for our regular meals. So, who's going to volunteer for this committee? If the pies are good and the ham plentiful (we had darned nearly one-half pound of ham per person back in 1956) what a happy group of guys we'd be.

JANUARY 1975 WEATHER SUMMARY

(For those who file weather records with their garden notes)

January average temperature was 14.5 degrees, 2.3 degrees above the normal of 12.2 degrees. The highest temperature was 35 degrees on the 22nd and the lowest -14 on the 22nd. On 6 days the high was above freezing.

Precipitation for the month was 2.82 inches, 2.09 inches above the normal of 0.73 inches. About three quarters of an inch of rain fell on the afternoon of the 10th. On this day the lowest barometer reading of record at the airport weather station occurred--28.62 inches, sea level. Some precipitation was recorded on 26 of the 31 days.

Snowfall for the month was 27.4 inches. Normal is 8.6 inches. This was the third greatest January snowfall of record. The greatest was 35.2 inches in 1967, the second 28.8 inches in 1917.

There were 5 clear, 8 partly cloudy and 18 cloudy days.

Dr. Ancel Keyes, a physiologist at the University of Minnesota says that there is one apple ingredient that helps to lower cholesterol levels in the blood. That ingredient is pectin. To keep the doctor away, Dr. Keyes suggests a 15-gram daily dose of pectin. This corresponds, roughly, to the amount of pectin found in two ripe apples.

Return to
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