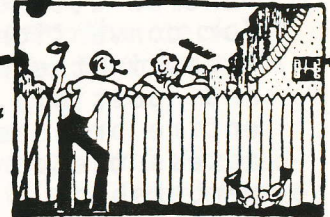




The Garden Spray

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

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



March 1979, Volume 37, Number 3

NEXT MEETING, TUESDAY, MARCH 13th
MOUNT OLIVET LUTHERAN CHURCH, 50th Street at Knox Avenue South.
Dinner 6:00 P.M. (\$3.50) Program 7:00 P.M.

GET THAT RESERVATION FORM BACK TO ARCHIE CAPLE

Mini-Program: (1) Slides of Members 1978 Gardens; (2) Master Gardening.

Main Program: ANNUALS AND PERENNIALS IN THE YARD LANDSCAPE
Presented by ROBERT MUGAS, Associate County Extension Agent.

SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENT:

GARDEN CLINIC Tomatoes--Cucurbits--Cole Crops
Hennepin County Library--Southdale (7001 York Av. S.)
Saturday March 10, 1979 1:00-4:00 P.M.

Sponsored by the Agricultural Extension Service, University of Minnesota
NO CHARGE Call 478-4285 for Registration

OVER THE GARDEN FENCE

About this time last year, Archie Caple approached the Board of Directors with an idea for a club directory which would have in it a picture of each member, his address, the name and place of employment along with his garden interests and specialties. The idea was immediately adopted and Archie began taking pictures and gathering information. It has been a lot of work but finally the task was completed and members attending the February meeting saw the fruit of Archie's labor. I think it is an excellent book. For those who did not attend the February meeting, photo directories will be brought to each meeting. You can get them from me or Archie.

This is the time of year when winter begins to weigh heavily on my shoulders. It seems like it will never end. As I am writing this we are under storm warnings with 4" of snow predicted. Maybe there is something happening we don't know about. Whatever, I am doing something positive about it. My kids are on year round school and they break in March, so it's off to Florida and Disney World.

See you at the April meeting. The weather should be warmer then. (I hope.)
--Bob Gage

MARCH CHORES Sow those vegetable and flower seeds you intend to transplant about six weeks before they will go out to the garden. Plant the quick germinators (3 to 5 days) in one set of flats and the slow ones (10 to 20 days) in others. Check to see if they should be pressed into the surface of the germinating medium because they need light to germinate or if they should be covered because they need or prefer darkness.

THE FEBRUARY MEETING

Business: 1979 MGCM budget. Ed Culbert noting that now one delegate to the national convention may cast all the votes of the club; that delegate attendance at MGCA business meetings takes hours that could be more profitably and pleasurably spent gardenwise; that \$25 doesn't encourage convention attendance, anyway, proposed that MGCM either drop the budget item for convention and return to the former no-subsidy plan or put all our votes in the hands of one person and pay that person's registration fee and, possibly, a flat sum toward other costs. Following discussion the entire proposed budget was adopted with the proviso that the Board reassess the convention procedure and bring a recommendation back to the membership.

Mini-Panel (Charles King, Edgar Lehman, Robert Smith, Archie Caple, moderator) Responses to some of the questions from the floor were: Plexiglass panes expand so one must adjust for this in a greenhouse.... Interplanting with radishes helps solve the vegetable root maggot problem (or use diazinon)...mulch and open cultivation both offer good garden weed-control...Indoors a fan to move the air, outdoors a drench of Benlate (1 tbs. to 4 gal. water) helps control mildew.

Dr. de Vos description of and slides showing various horticultural gardens in Europe and the U.S. made us want to sign up for a trip right away.

THE MESSAGE IS, RECYCLE WHEN STARTING SEEDS INDOORS (Abridged from an article by Neal Weaver in the COMPOST PIT for March, 1977)

Years ago, housewives as well as professional nurserymen salvaged tin cans for use as plant containers. With our thoughts on ecology as well as economy, we are rediscovering the need to utilize recycled materials. The availability of plastics and aluminum foil has opened all kinds of possibilities. Home gardeners can find something to fill practically every planting need and every item salvaged is a plus for the cause of ecology. For plants started from large seeds such as marigolds, tomatoes, geraniums, almost anything will serve as a seed flat: old cake pans, coffee cans, plastic refrigerator dishes and aluminum foil food trays. Remember to poke drainage holes in the bottoms with an old ice pick made red hot to penetrate plastic.

My seed starting medium is vermiculite with a thin layer of milled sphagnum moss over the top. Put it through an old flour sifter for extra fineness. Heavy seeds are sown on top. I put the seed flat in a pan of water to soak up moisture before I plant.

My plan is to START MARCH 1 (or earlier) ageratum, dianthus, geraniums, lobelia, petunias, snapdragons; to START MARCH 15 browallia, calendula, coleus, hollyhock, impatiens, nicotiana, salvia, broccoli, brussels sprouts, cabbage; to START APRIL 1 marigolds, zinnias, eggplant, lettuce (head), peppers, tomatoes.

Once the seedlings have germinated and started to develop, they need to be transplanted to a soil mix. My preference is a mixture of equal parts: vermiculite, perlite, sterilized potting soil and milled sphagnum moss.

(concluded on page 5)

A PLAN FOR AN UNDER THE DECK GARDEN

by Robert Haley

We all have garden areas that have been successful and pleasing which we are willing to repeat. This is good, but perhaps we should think back about areas which need improvement. Often one of these is the problem space below the deck of a home. Extending the lawn under the deck is seldom successful. Too often this results in an eyesore--sparse grass punctuated with weeds. What can we do?

One answer is to blanket the area with appropriate foliage and flowering plants if the deck is at least 3½ feet from the ground. The flowers should be the kinds which bloom continuously from early June until after the first hard frost. The deck will protect plants from the first light frosts. In 1978, my plants were blooming under my deck until the last of October.

Heretofore unless you did your own tree trimming you may not have needed a hard hat for your gardening--but now you will! Don't attempt to get under the deck to work without one. Besides bumping your head, there may be danger of exposed nails. Safety is very important for this and many other aspects of gardening, for example when using power tools.

Now that you have your hard hat on, the only hard work you will have to do is to prepare the soil. At a new home the builder will have left you only the poorest dirt and a pile of rocks. Even if you first tried to grow a lawn the soil must be prepared to a good depth before planting a flower garden. Remove any sod, weeds, rocks and clods of poor dirt. Make a good, fertile soil bed at least 1 to 1½ feet deep using a top grade garden soil with about a third of well rotted barnyard manure or mulch. Each spring free mulch is available from Hennepin County at one north and one south location. I use a small trailer load of this mulch each year in my under the deck garden to maintain a good soil. To the soil and manure add a 10-10-10 fertilizer; then till the soil to a powdery stage. A tiller does a beautiful job but the tilling can also be done fairly easily with a spade and rake. After you've watered the soil for a few weeks it would be wise to have the soil tested. Then make any adjustments necessary.

Once the hard work is over the fun begins with the selection and planting of the flowers. By this time you should have a plan in mind based on the amount of light available in the various areas under the deck. Remember that some of this garden will have plenty of sun whereas other parts of the garden will get little. You will get some filtered sun through the cracks in the deck. Even this small amount is a help. Outer, exposed areas get a fairly high level of sun. Areas next to the house or to any solid wall get very little. Don't plan on a lot of sun in the center area or in areas shaded by steps.

We probably all have deck areas that are in different sizes and shapes but you may find some of the things I've done to mine in the last five years helpful. My area is about 12 x 12 feet and slopes away from the house slightly. This makes the bottom of the deck about 3½ feet from the ground adjacent to the house and 4½ feet from the ground at the south end away from the house.

Next to the house in the shadiest area are ferns with sedums at the end
(continued over)

where better light is available. Ferns look lovely all summer, shield the foundation and are a welcome addition to bouquets. Working out from the ferns and sedums I plant two circles of impatiens, approximately 12 plants in each 4 foot circle. Here is where you and your wife can have the fun of selecting pleasing color combinations. Don't neglect to have a variety of types also. I find the doubles seem to require more sun than the singles. An occasional white plant highlights the colors.

In front of the circles of impatiens I put 12 tuberous begonias of various colors. I find it best to leave them in buried pots so they can be switched around occasionally to benefit from the light. Next year to make this easier to do, I will bury cylinders or large pots to accommodate the potted begonias. Unless this switching is done, I find some plants do not flourish at the center of the bed.

Because there is more light as I work away from the house, I can next put in wax begonias, placing shorter varieties at the fronts and sides. Plant them in groups of 3 to 5 and, as with all flowers, allow room for growth. Your wife can again be a great help in selecting colors. For my garden I aim for an intricate pattern of colors--in my mind similar to an oriental rug.

Working toward the front and edges I fill in with colorful coleus planted directly into the soil since these areas get fairly good light. In more shady areas near the edges I plant browallia and a few fancy leaved caladium. Intersperse a few dusty miller plants near the front. To carry out the oriental rug effect I put a border of white alyssum around the three open sides. This will look sparse when planted, but, as in the center of the garden, growth of the plants will fill it in. The border will get to be 8 to 12 inches wide for this is the sunniest area.

Just as in the rest of your yard you must fertilize and spray when necessary. I do it about every two weeks as a general rule. Be sure to use sprays and fertilizers appropriate to the specific types of plants you use. While a shady under the deck garden may not need quite as much watering as others, it should be watched so as to be watered when needed.

Over the years I have found that I can enhance my "oriental rug" garden by bringing the eye upward to hanging baskets hung from the deck and on up to the potted plants on the deck itself. About one foot in from the front of the deck I hang 4 or 5 hanging baskets of fuchsia, browallia, wandering Jew, begonia and purple passion flower. I use a double hook so I can easily revolve the baskets.

To complete the total landscaping of the deck area I place huge pots of geraniums on each corner of the deck itself, with smaller pots of flowers and herbs on the tables and around the edge of the deck. The birds love this area. We have a bird feeder attached to the deck and in the fall I always leave the hanging baskets to serve, after removing the plants, as winter feeders.

There is no one way to make an under the deck garden. I have done a lot of different things and have used many different varieties of plants. The preceding description is that of my 1978 garden. I found Dr. Snyder's book, GARDENING IN THE UPPER MIDWEST, a great help as a reference. I wish all of you in MGCM who want to try a garden of this type the best luck. Remember the importance of the hard hat!

WEAVER (continued from page 2)

For starting tiny dustlike seeds, such as begonias, African violets or gloxinias, a valuable acquisition is a cast-off plastic box, the kind used for sweaters, shoes, or refrigerator dishes. If the box has a plastic lid fine; however, a piece of clear vinyl from a dry-cleaning bag or a piece of kitchen wrap will serve if fastened with a rubber band. Clear plastic containers provide ideal growing conditions. They don't shut out the light plants need and they retain moisture to keep the growing media from drying out. Seeds need high humidity to germinate.

These same boxes are ideal to root house plant cuttings, too. For a single small cutting, I use an ordinary disposable plastic tumbler with a fruit jar inverted over the cutting to provide its own private greenhouse. For larger cuttings, a clear plastic bag fills the bill. The ones used for packaging bread are just the right size and shape. Place the tumbler or pot in which the cutting is set in the bottom of the bag. Blow it up like a balloon and tie it shut with a twist tie. (Plastic bags from the cleaners are useful at vacation time, too. A properly bagged house plant will survive for many weeks without further attention.)

When seedlings are large enough to handle, or cuttings are rooted, find recycled containers. Pots for first transplanting of tiny seedlings can be made from the white plastic one-ounce containers for cream and salad dressing. Just wash them and punch drainage holes in the bottom with a hot awl.

For the second transplanting, or first for larger seedlings, plastic cups made for bathroom dispensers serve well. Plastic tops of spray cans make attractive containers for African violet seedlings and other small plants. Plastic margarine tubs can be used.

To find large pots for larger plants look farther afield. Many fast food restaurants use opaque hard plastic containers for soft drinks. The "jumbo" size corresponds roughly to a standard five-inch pot in volume. For really large containers, check a restaurant or delicatessen. They receive potato salad, chicken salad and other ready-mixed items in white plastic tubs ranging in size from roughly a quart to several gallons. These containers are tough, easy to clean, reasonably sturdy and are fairly attractive in their simplicity. I have used the large sizes for tomatoes, young spruces and young pines.

There are other resources in the trash can. Accessories and implements abound. Wooden coffee stirrers make excellent plant labels, especially with a coat of flat white enamel to prevent discoloration. Cider jugs and wine bottles make handsome terrariums. Empty spray window cleaner and cleaning material bottles can be pressed into service as misters. The possibilities are unlimited.

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The green leaf governs the economy of nature. Every living creature, with minor exceptions is utterly dependent upon plants and photosynthesis. Powered by sunlight, the chlorophyll in leaves turns carbon dioxide and water into the sugar that ultimately sustains all life.

BRING A VISITOR.

MORE ON WHITEFLY

"Thought I should reinforce your quote on whitefly in December Garden Spray and be more specific.

I came across this information several years ago and have used it fairly successfully for that length of time. I only occasionally now have a plant with whitefly and easily solve the problem with one spray of I-bomb perhaps once a month - one plant only.

I use Rust-oleum Yellow #659 painted on both sides of a piece of formica and covered with "Tack Trap" from "Animal Repellants, Inc.", Griffin, Georgia (no zip code on label). When full of bugs, I scrape it off and apply fresh "Tick Tack" -- no odor, either. Just hang it up -- the bugs love it and stick to it."

--Ralph Papermaster

"Apparently greenhouse whiteflies, which also attack outdoor tomatoes and some other crops are light-oriented. So, to take advantage of this knowledge, simply apply ordinary household aluminum foil as a reflective mulch over the ground under plants. Research has proved that under many light conditions the reflected light causes the flies to turn upside down and fly away from the plants instead of toward them."

--Edwin F. Stafford in FLOWER AND GARDEN magazine for September 1978

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..In the April SPRAY, an article on "On the Deck Gardening" by Phil Smith.

Return to
THE GARDEN SPRAY of MGCM, INC.
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FIRST CLASS

To

William H. Hull
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**A HAPPENING
MIAMI MAY 4-7**