

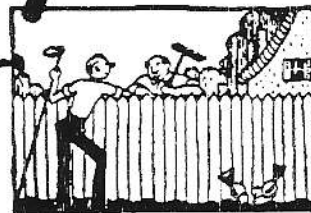


The Garden Spray

Bulletin of the Men's Garden Club of Minneapolis, Inc.

Affiliated with Gardeners of America and the Minnesota State Horticultural Society

December 1998, Volume 56, Number 12

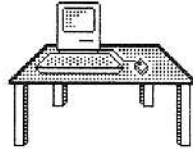


Seasons Greetings and Happy Holidays

Remember the Reason for the Season



**A reminder for those of you who have made reservations:
The holiday party is on December 8
Gathering at 6:00 PM**



The Editor's Desk

Chuck Carlson
Managing Editor

The survey was finally digested by the Board and a summary is provided on page 7 of this issue of *The Spray*. I appreciate the suggestions given by some of you for features that could be included in *The Spray*.

The first three suggestions fit into a similar category:

- More back to the basics articles.
- More articles like the Flower of the Month and the blackspot paragraph.
- More how to articles.

Comment: I like this type of article and I will print any that you submit or I find. The way to assure seeing them is to sit down and write one.

Two other suggestions were to have articles relating to garden successes (or failures) and articles about garden experiments.

Comment: These suggestions were the inspiration for my request to you to share. Some of what you supplied has been in the last two issues as "Ideas from the Garden". If you want them to continue, you must supply me with the information.

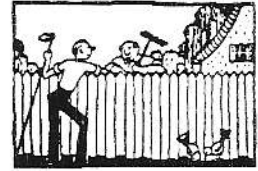
There was a suggestion to delete the board meeting minutes.

Comment: Since this is the only way to communicate the Board's actions inexpensively to the membership, it is hard to eliminate it from *The Spray*. But we have started to summarize them. If the membership wants to eliminate them, I would be most happy to comply.

There were suggestions for new columns:

- A gossip column.

(continued on page 11)



Coming Attractions

Tuesday, December 1, 7:30 p.m.

Board of Directors meeting
Walt Muehlegger's house

Tuesday, December 8

Holiday Party
Gathering 6:00 p.m.
Dinner 6:30 p.m.
Lake Harriet United Methodist Church
49th & Chowen Avenue South

Tuesday, January 5 – 7:30 p.m.

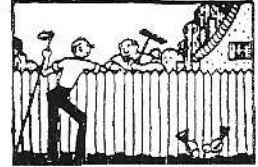
Board of Directors meeting
Eldon Hugelen's house

Tuesday, January 12 – 6:30 p.m.

MGCM Dinner Meeting
Lake Harriet United Methodist Church
49th & Chowen Avenue South

The Garden Spray is published monthly by the Men's Garden Club of Minneapolis, Inc., for its members and friends. The Men's Garden Club of Minneapolis is a not-for-profit, equal opportunity organization.

Managing Editor Chuck Carlson
Production Manager ... Andy Marlow
Staff Tim McCauley,
Mary Maynard, Margaret Hibberd
Howard Berg, and Bob Stepan.



Mary's Meanderings

by Mary Maynard, President MGCM

It's hard to believe that this is my last column as President. 1998 has flown by, and we can look back at a successful year. Chuck has asked me to keep this column short, so I won't try to list all the high points. But it has been an honor and a privilege to serve the Club this year. As I have said many times, I will never be able to give as much to this Club as I have gotten from it, and I am grateful for the opportunity to be of service.



Photo by Lloyd Wittstock

I'm looking forward to the Holiday Party. Duane Johnson and crew have been working hard to make this another special event. For my husband Phil, the Parade of Turkeys is one of the highlights of the holiday season — "one of the Seven Wonders of the Unnatural World", I believe he called it last year.

Pretty soon, we'll be getting the first seed catalogs. Then January comes and the New Year's Resolutions fly thick and fast. And before long it's time to start seeds and get the lawn mower ready and — whoa! Wait! It's still only November. Never mind!

Thanks again to all of you who have made this such a good year. Best Wishes for a very happy holiday season!

Annual Meeting

The Mens Garden Club of Minneapolis

Items were acted on or presented during the November Annual meeting:

Budget

The 1999 budget as stated on page 10 of the November *Spray* was approved.

Election of officers for 1999

The following officers were nominated and elected:

- | | |
|----------------|------------------------|
| President | Eldon Hugelen |
| Vice-President | Ritchie Miller |
| Secretary | Margaret Hibberd |
| Treasurer | Howard Berg |
| Director | Chuck Carlson |
| Director | Dave Johnson (Fridley) |
| Director | Tim McCauley |
| Director | Kay Wolfe |
| Past President | Mary Maynard |

Proposal to Disaffiliate

A proposal was presented to disaffiliate from the Gardeners of America. A vote by the member of MGCM on this proposal will take place at the January meeting.

Make Your Voice Heard

Any editorials on the proposal to disaffiliate are encouraged. Any received by December 15 will be printed in the January *Spray*. Send them to Chuck Carlson.

If you are unable to attend the January meeting and want your opinion heard at the meeting, please send a signed opinion to any Board member

Monthly Program Report

by Maury Lindblom

Todd Bachman gave a most interesting presentation on the popular Christmas Holiday flower, the Poinsettia. His talk was divided into three sections: history, commercial production and varieties.

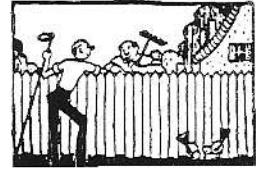
History

Poinsettias are of the genus *Euphorbia* and its species name is *pulcherrima*. Plants of the genus *euphorbia* have a white sap that has been used by native peoples in several countries as a medicine. Contrary to popular opinion, poinsettias are not poisonous. The red flowers (actually bracts or modified leaves) have been used as a source of red dye. Although most people take the red poinsettia for granted, Todd said that great progress has been made in hybridization in the past two years.

Joel Poinsett, United States ambassador to Mexico in 1825, was the first to send Poinsettias to various botanical gardens. Although they were first used as landscape plants, Ecke in Encenidas, California, cultivated them and made selections to be used as potted plants. Commercial sales started in 1930 when he developed several sports of other colors,—white, pink, etc. Considerable hybridization has been done, especially in Europe where they became quite popular in the 1960s. In addition to different colors, hybrids have been developed to hold their leaves better.

Commercial Production

Plants come to Bachman's from commercial growers in February. Since it is a short day plant that needs 12 hours of



darkness to flower, the plants are kept under lights 15–16 hours a day to promote leaf and stem growth. The tops are pinched to encourage branching. When the plants reach 18" in height, about mid June, cuttings are harvested. Three to four inch cuttings are planted in trays in a soilless rooting medium called *Oasis*. Nutrients are supplied and rooting hormone applied. High humidity, warmth and decreased light are needed during the 14–21 days it takes to develop good roots. Then the plants are put in their final container for continued growth. All stages of growth are carried out in computer controlled environments.

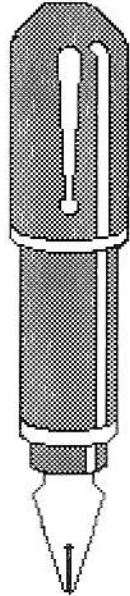
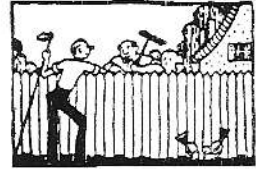
Varieties

From 1930 to 1960 there were very few new varieties developed, but since 1960, and especially in the 1990s, many new varieties have emerged. They are also popular in Europe, but they tend to paint the white varieties various colors.

A number of slides were shown of the various varieties.

- Glory – Red, pink and white.
- Success and Celebrate – More upright and *perky*. Comes in red, pink, white, coral and light pink.
- Freedom – Has a darker leaf than others and withstands poor care.
- Jingle Bells, Candy Cane and Monet are marbled varieties.
- Snowcap – a pure white.
- Lemon Drop – Light yellow.
- Silver Bells – Variegated foliage and flowers.
- Winter Rose – The most unusual variety. The brackets are curled or twisted into a shape that resembles a rose.

Todd brought ten beauties to display and ten lucky members went home with plants not available to the general public.



Board Meeting Summary

Walt Muehlegger, Secretary

November 3, 1998

Board members present: Howard Berg,, Chuck Carlson, Eldon Hugelen, Mary Maynard, Tim McCauley, Ritchie Miller, Walt Muehlegger and Kay Wolfe.

• Secretary's and Treasurer's reports were presented and approved.

- Russ Smith and Clyde Thompson gave a report on the Mid-American Region.
- Howard Berg reported membership renewal going slowly and procedure needs updating.
- There was much discussion on the survey. A summary should be part of the December *Spray* and all results provided at the November dinner meeting.
- New member applications reviewed and accepted.

Next board meeting :Tuesday, January 5 1999.

Arboretum News

by Marilyn Brummer, Liaison

The Education Committee of the Minnesota Landscape Arboretum sponsored the Annual Meeting of Plant and Garden Societies at the Arboretum. Howard Berg and Russ Smith represented the Men's Garden Club of Minneapolis (MGCM). The purpose of this meeting is to talk about garden club activities and ongoing relationships with the Arboretum. The last Plant Information Fair held at the Arboretum was considered a success.

An education cart is available to garden clubs to be used for educational and demonstration purposes. Any club is allowed to put out membership and promotional information about themselves while using the cart.

We are allowed to put a notice in the Arboretum newsletter for any of our upcoming events. The deadline is two months before publication, but please notify our club's liaison three months in advance because space is at a premium.

MGCM's history of participation in starting the Minnesota Landscape Arboretum is something for our club to be proud of and we should consider putting this history in writing.

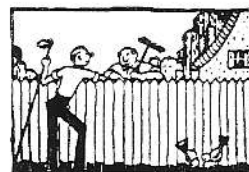
New Members

Brenda J. Reeves
4700 Upton Avenue South
Minneapolis, MN
55410-1838

Trudy L Thompson
3916 Sunset Road
Brooklyn Park, MN
55443-1221

Betty J. Tobin
4034 Raleigh Avenue So
St. Louis Park, MN
55416-2922

Twas the Night...



Twass the night before Christmas,
and all through the yard,
the branches were bare, and the
ground frozen hard.

The roses were dormant and
mulched all around,
to protect them from damage,
if frost leaves the ground.

The perennials were nestled
all snug in their beds,
while visions of 5-10-15
danced in their heads.

The new planted shrubs
had been soaked by the hose,
to settle their roots
from the long winter snows.

and out on the lawn,
the new fallen snow
protected the roots
of the grasses below.

When what to my wondering
eyes should appear,
but a truck full of gifts
of gardening gear.

Saint Nick was the Driver,
the jolly ol' elf,
and he winked as he said,
"I'm a gardener myself."

I've brought Rotenone,
6-12 and a cultivator, too.
Father can try them,
and see what they do

To eliminate weedings,
I've brought 2,4-D
and pruning shears for
the ol' apple tree.

To seed your new lawn,
I've a patented sower,
In case it should grow,
here's a new power mower.

For seed-planting days,
I've a trowel and a dibble,
and a big roll of wire
if the rabbits should nibble.

For the famine gardener,
some gadgets she'll love:
plant stakes, a sprinkler,
and waterproof gloves.

A chemical agent
for her compost pit,
and for pH detecting
a soil testing kit

With these colored flagstones,
lay a garden path.
for the kids to enjoy,
a bird feeder and bath.

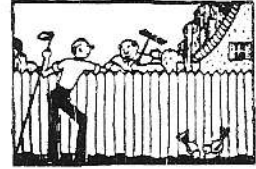
And last but not least,
some well rotted manure.
A green Christmas year round
these gifts will insure."

Jolly St. Nick,
having emptied his load,
started his truck,
and took to the road.

And I heard him exclaim,
o'er the motor's loud hum
"Merry Christmas to all,
and to all a 'Green Thumb'!"

*By Mary Elizabeth Kalbfleish
Heritage Garden Club
Mansfield, Ohio*





Survey Report

From the MGCM Board of Directors

The Men's Garden Club of Minneapolis (MGCM) Board of Directors distributed a survey to all members this spring. The purpose of the survey was to obtain information to be used to improve our club. We would like to thank the 36 percent of the members who took part in the survey. We appreciate your time and your thoughtful responses.

Survey Results

Committee Participation

Ninety percent of all respondents participate on committees. Thank you!

Dinner meetings

Most of the members like the monthly meeting format (74%). The largest number of concerns were that the business portion of the meeting should be kept short. There were a few other individual concerns but no trends were noted.

Dayton's-Bachman's Show

Response to the questions on the Dayton's-Bachman's Show event were inconclusive but showed that 60% did not want a very expensive dinner. But 49% did not want to replace it with a normal dinner program.

Dues

There were few comments on dues, but most of those comments were negative about the dues required for TGOA/MGCA (The Gardeners of America/Men's Garden Clubs of America).

TGOA/MGCA

A dissatisfaction with TGOA/MGCA membership and its lack of benefits were mentioned on many surveys. Twenty-four negative comments were received, with only four that were positive. Though there was not a specific

question in the survey about TGOA/MGCM membership, 39% questioned it, 63% have not participated in any TGOA/MGCA function, 43% disliked *The Gardener* magazine, 56% dislike the TGOA/MGCA newsletter. Despite this, a surprising 73% said they would help with the convention in 2001 and 71% said they would attend. It should be pointed out that MGCM is chartered by TGOA/MGCA. Not to pay dues would require us to disaffiliate.

Programs

Members made good suggestions for future programs, and expressed their preferences for various kinds of programs.

Spray Suggestions

Members give the *Spray* very high marks, but there were also some suggestions for improvements or new features.

Comments About MGCM

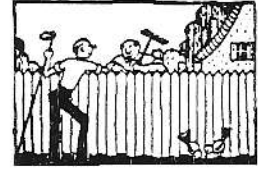
Ten positive comments were made about MGCM in general. There were five comments on the club's name, including change the name and don't change the name. There were eleven comments about things members liked, and six comments that could be classified as negative. Under Needs and Changes there were multiple comments about coming up with new ideas for the club. Several suggestions had to do with doing a better job of welcoming and orienting our new members.

Board Actions

Dinner Meetings:

The suggestions for improvements in MGCM meeting format will continue to be considered by the Board, and action will be taken as necessary.

(continued on page 10)



Ideas From the Garden

Big and Tall

I purchased some Castor Bean (*Ricinus, communis*) seeds from the Burpee Heirlooms catalog. The seeds were started under lights about the last week in March. The seedlings were transplanted outdoors in the rear corner of my flower garden, one on each side of a dogwood bush. The dogwood is about six feet and the Castor Bean plants outgrew the dogwood and reached a height of about nine feet. The three made a nice background for the rest of the flower bed. Neighbors all asked the name of the tree. It turned out to be a nice conversation piece.
Lloyd Mikkelsen

Swiss Chard

I have grown Swiss chard for a number of years in my front yard as an ornamental. The brilliant red stems with crinkly green leaves, and now the pastel stems topped with various shades of large leaves, makes a nice ornamental effect tucked between flowers in bunches, or even in a row set off from the other plants. It is also a plant that will outlast many others, even taking a certain amount of frost. This year (in October) we made use of it as the main ingredient in a delicious creamy soup. This vegetable can be used through out the year; in the spring small leaves in salads and as a cooked vegetable anytime. Both stems and leaves can be used, although the stems need a little more cooking time to become tender. Harvest the outer stems to allow the plant to continue to grow from the center. Swiss Chard is a plant for the whole season.
Chuck Carlson

A Winner and a Dud

Salvia pratensis hematodes—What a dud! Its relative – plain old *Salvia pratensis* – is a winner in my garden, but *hematodes* had ugly foliage, not very significant flowers, and died off early in the season. My apologies to everyone who bought this at the Country Store this spring!

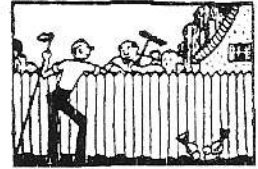
Salvia coccinea 'Coral Nymph' has great, delicate peachy/pink spikes. The plant can get pretty large, and cutting it back just encourages it – both in flowers and new growth – so give it some space! It has always been a winner at the State Fair Flower Show.

Mary Maynard

Representative Wanted

For the Minnesota State Horticultural Society

Duane Johnson has decided to step down as MGCM representative on the Minnesota State Horticultural Society (MSHS) Board of Directors. Thus, the Men's Garden Club of Minneapolis Board of Directors is looking for someone who is interested in serving in this capacity. Responsibilities include; attending regular MSHS board meetings (quarterly), reporting back to MGCM on major news items, and participating on MSHS subcommittees as needed. If you are interested in representing MGCM in this capacity, please get in touch with a MGCM board member before the January Board of Directors' Meeting.



Put Plant Supports on Your Holiday List

By Margaret Hibberd

As you think back to your garden, there must have been some plants that fell or sprawled over everything. If this happened to you, maybe you should put plant supports on your holiday list. Unless you are like Mary Maynard and rip out all the plants that can't stand on their own, you probably have a few favorites that would stand tall with only a little help. I am kind of a plant support queen because I'm always willing to try a new style—thinking it will save some plant that won't stand upright because it's growing in too much shade. But I was also lucky to get a critical mass of two kinds of supports from my Uncle Dick Thompson's auction.

The first was two semicircles, each of which has two 18 inch legs that hook together to encircle a plant. It is about 18 inches in diameter. These work well to pick up a plant flopping all over. Sometimes I just use a semicircle to lift plants off the grass, sidewalk or other plants if they are growing annoyingly in one direction. The second supports appear to be homemade out of 3/32nds inch galvanized wire. Visualize two 15 inch sticks between which the remaining wire is bent into 300 degrees of a seven inch circle with 60 degrees open. These are good for picking up and pulling back medium sized plants like daisies and Achillea. If you did not get plant supports from your Uncle Dick, here are some types to consider:

L-Shaped Linking Stakes

These vary in size from 7 to 12 inches in width and 12 to 40 inches in length. Often they are used three or four at a time to encircle plants, but sometimes up to twice that number is used for a plant that does not fit any other standard size support. I have these in two sizes 7 x 12 and 12 x 40 inches. The tall ones work well for monkshood, although it's still somewhat too tall and floppy and needs the stems to be tied together inside the support.

Straight Stakes

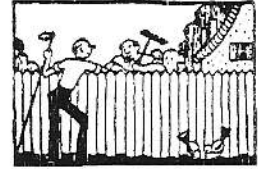
I have a lot of these, either bamboo or plastic clad metal, which I use a lot for plants like cosmos and dahlias. Harold Gulde and the Shannon's use painted rebar for the same purpose. A modification of the straight stake is the bulb stake, which has an open metal circle at the top that slips around the plant stem. Shorter ones are for plants like tulips, and taller ones are good for quickly propping up a lily growing sideways or for other tall plants with a heavy flower head. The Y-stake is another variation. It has two, three inch flexible wire pieces at the stake top to surround the plant stem. Finally, somewhere I saw a green plastic, telescoping stake that you pull up as the plant grows.

My favorite tie material is green plastic coated wire that comes on a roll with a cutter, so you can cut the length you need. But you must take care not to bind the stem too tightly or the growth will be restricted. Multiple strands of raffia tied in a bow offer somewhat decorative treatment for plants that can be gathered together no other way.

Round Plant Support Stakes

These are peony and tomato cages that offer little in way of size flexibility

(continued on page 11)



Survey Report

(continued from page 7)

Dayton's-Bachman's Flower

Show:

The board decided that in 1999 we will try to have dinner and a short program at church then take a bus to the show. If too few participate we will reconsider the situation.

Dues:

The Board has decided to hold local dues at the current level for 1999.

TGOA/MGCA:

While the Board did not take a position, the preponderance of negative comments about TGOA/MGCA has led to a proposal to disaffiliate. Members will vote on the proposal in January.

Programs:

All suggestions and preferences for programs were given to the 1998 Vice President, who is also the Program Chair. They have also been relayed to the 1999 Vice President, who will take them into consideration when arranging programs.

Spray Suggestions:

All suggestions have been forwarded to the *Spray* editor and will be considered seriously.

General Comments:

We will be formalizing a process to improve the experience of new members in 1999. The Past President is also the Membership Chair, and will be looking for additional things we can do to get members involved as quickly as possible.

There were a lot of great ideas that came out of the survey. The Board encourages everyone to step forward and make an idea come to life. Also, if there is anything you disagree with, step forward and do something about it.

Thanks again for your participation. If you would like to have a copy of the

survey results, including all the comments, please get in touch with Chuck Carlson.

Mid-America Region News

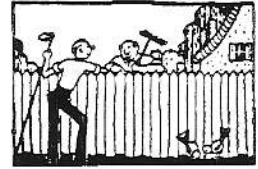
By Russ Smith, Regional Director

The Mid-America region of TGOA/MGCA became active as of October 14, 1998. The regional directors, Jerome Framton and Russ Smith, together with interim officers met in Clear Lake, Iowa. The Interim Officers are: President, Jerry Miller (Des Moines); Vice President, Clyde Thompson (Minneapolis); and Treasurer, David Moody (Fort Dodge). At this meeting, two major decisions were made:

- Hold a meeting of directors and officers in mid February 1999.
- Hold a Spring Seminar and Regional meeting in April 1999.

As of January 1, 1998, the region has 611 members. There are six clubs from Iowa, Minnesota and Nebraska. They are as follows;

- Arthur Peters Memorial Club of Freemont, Nebraska (25 members).
- MGC of Indianola, Iowa (38 member)
- Fort Dodge Area Gardeners, Fort Dodge, Iowa (67 member)
- MGC of Des Moines, Iowa (151 members)
- MGC of Minneapolis, Minnesota (107 members)
- MGC of North Iowa, Clear Lake, Mason City etc. (49 members)
- At Large Members (30)



Editor's Column

(continued from page 2)

- A column called "Ask the Master Gardener".
- A members biography column.

Comment: The gossip column was started and will continue if enough information is forthcoming. Tell me at the meetings, by phone, E-mail or whatever. I will pass them on to Flavius.

Send any questions to be answered by the Master Gardeners to me; and they will get answered and published. Master Gardeners in the club are invited to send questions you received from anyone and your answers.

A members biography column would take a volunteer to seek out the information and write it up. It sounds like a good idea—any takers?

The last suggestion was dear to my heart. It just said "Every member should be required to write on article."

Comment: This would be fantastic!! Anyone game to organize this? I think I could get the Board to make this a requirement for membership.

Again I say "Send in anything you may deem relevant to publish in *The Spray*, and remember "Have Computer Will Edit".

One year's seeding of garden
weeds equals seven years weeding.
from *The Greenhorn*

A man of words and not deeds
is like a garden full of weeds.

Plant Supports

(continued from page 9)

relative to the plant, but have the great advantage of being cheap and readily available, even at garage sales.

My problem with these is timing; set them in place too early and you see a lot of hardware; too late and you damage the plant trying to cram it inside. The expensive variation of round supports is a circle with three inch squares of crosshatched wire and legs that come in varying heights. The plant is allowed to grow through the squares and hide the wire. If my delphiniums had not died the year I got these, I think the 20 inch ones would have been excellent for them. There are smaller diameters that would be good for plants with multiple floppy stems such as foxglove. (*Editors Comment: For you do-it-yourselfers, a square version can be made from cement screen. It is cut into the required size and bent to form the legs.*)

Zigzag Supports

These have been a Garden Way catalog exclusive and consist of two 18 inch wire stakes connected by 20 inches of wire bent in a 1 inch zigzag. They are used to push back plants that lie over lower ones in front of them. They look very interesting, but may be a bit pricey.

Sources

There are many but ones I know about and had a good supply are; Otten Brothers Nursery and Landscape in Long Lake and Gerten Greenhouse in Inver Grove Heights. Garden Way has the biggest catalog selection.

A nice follow up article would be on trellises. If someone has special knowledge of these, put it down on paper for publication in the *Spray*.

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