

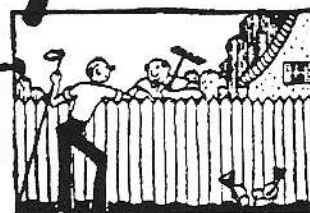


# The Garden Spray

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

Affiliated with Gardeners of America and the Minnesota State Horticultural Society

June 1999, Volume 57, Number 6



## June Dinner Meeting...

## Summer Wildflowers

Speakers: Janice and Janet Robidoux

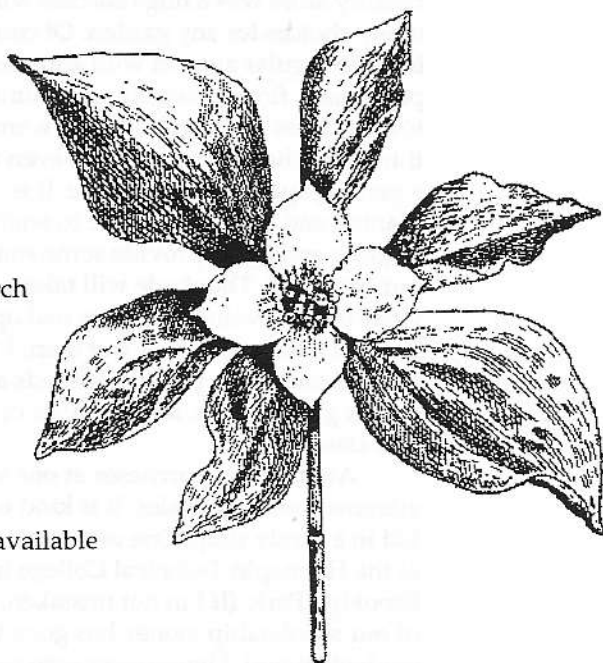
Janice and Janet Robidoux are twin sisters who embarked on a 20 year garden plan after they retired. Their plan included many gardens: from a water garden to a prairie garden and many in between. They live on the bank of the Mississippi, are ham radio operators, and are avid campers (they now have a large RV because they got tired of cooking in the rain). These ladies are active, involved, multifaceted and have a terrific program for us.

Date: Tuesday, June 8, 1999

Place: Lake Harriet United Methodist Church  
49th and Chowen Avenue South

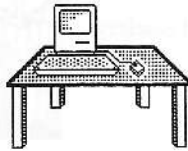
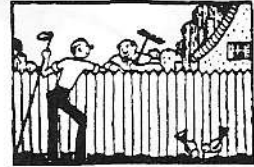
Dinner: 6:30 p.m.  
Business: 7:00 p.m..  
Program: 7:30 p.m.

Cost: \$9.00 if reserved in advance  
\$10.00 at the door if extra meals are available



### Important Note about Reservations

The permanent reservation list will remain in effect for this meeting. Check your mailing label. If it has a "p" or "pp" (one or two reservations) you are on the permanent list. If there is no "p" on your label, you are not on the permanent reservation list and must notify Kay Wolfe by Friday, June 4, to be assured a place at dinner. If you are on the permanent list and will not attend, you must notify Kay by the same deadline or risk being responsible for the cost of your dinner. Kay can be reached at 922-0762. Leave a message on her voice mail if you can't reach her in person or send her an e-mail at [opperwolfe@worldnet.att.net](mailto:opperwolfe@worldnet.att.net). If you have reserved a dinner and on Monday or Tuesday you have an emergency where you find you can't attend, call Howard Berg. If the reservation can be sold to latecomers or drop-ins, you will not be billed.



### The Editor's Desk

Chuck Carlson  
Managing Editor

May was the month of plant sales. I personally attended two others in addition to our Men's Garden Club auction and sale. I think ours is the most unique with three ways to obtain plants. Plus, it has always been a success for the club.

The silent auction had some real choice material. It provided a way to have some fun, spend a little money and obtain a plant you just couldn't pass up. The country store was a huge success with many choices for any garden. Of course we had the regular auction with annuals, perennials, flower baskets, geranium towers, trees and shrubs. There were many things to whet your appetite. I even found a gem, a Japanese Katsura tree. It is planted and now I only have to wait for it to grow and again provide some shade in our backyard. The shade will take many years to be of value. It takes a real optimist to plant a three foot tree. But then, I think all gardeners who plant little seeds and expect great results, are optimists of the first class.

After all my purchases at our sale, I attended two more sales. It is kind of like a kid in a candy shop. One of the sales was at the Hennepin Technical College in Brooklyn Park. (If I'm not mistaken, some of our scholarship money has gone to students there). I have never seen so many people acting like gardeners. I stood in line at least 30 minutes just to get inside the three greenhouses full of garden delights. Now all I have to do is plant all those little jewels.

(continued on page 5)

## Coming Attractions

**Tuesday, June 1, 7:30 p.m.**  
Board of Directors meeting  
Chuck Carlson's house

**Saturday, June 5, 8:30 AM**  
Perennial Garden work day

**Tuesday, June 8, 6:30 p.m.**  
MGCM Dinner Meeting  
Lake Harriet United Methodist Church  
49th & Chowen Avenue South

**Tuesday, July 6, 7:30 p.m.**  
Board of Directors meeting  
Dave Johnson's house

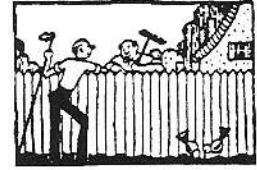
**Tuesday, July 13**  
MGCM Club Tour

**Sunday August 8**  
MGCM Club Tour

**Saturday & Sunday, August 14 & 15**  
MGCM Flower, Food and Foto Show  
Minnesota Landscape Arboretum

*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  
The committee.....H. Berg, M. Brummer, S. Curry, C. Cutter, D. Hendel, M. Maynard, R. Olson, and R. Van Sickle

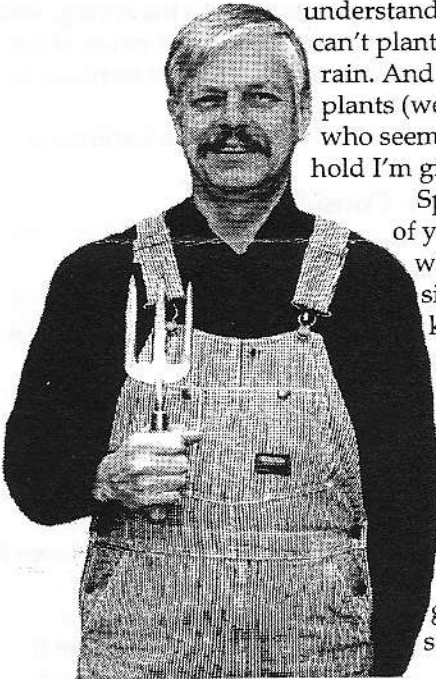


# Overall In The Garden

by Eldon Hugelen, President MGCM

If you're like me, you hardly have time to read these words. I will respect your time and make it short.

Garden needs are everywhere this spring. All those special plants I procured at the auction seem to be asking, "Where should I grow?" They don't seem to understand gardeners think they can't plant during torrents of rain. And then there are those plants (weeds) in the garden who seem to relish the foothold I'm giving them. Help!



Speaking of help, some of you live with someone who gardens side by side with you. Any kind of support in the garden gives the effort so much more meaning. Helen, my wife, prefers maintaining "picking rights". My charge each year is to try to impress her in the garden, (At my age, I still try).

I want to bring to your attention this spring of the passing of *support gardeners* of members of this club. As I look for the late leaf budding of the hardy perennial Hibiscus this spring, my thoughts are with Bill Hull, and the loss of his wife, Carol, Bill is my mentor for growing these Hibiscus.

Also as the vibrant leaves of *Hosta* 'Marion Bachman' unfurl, thoughts are with Lloyd who is gardening this spring without his soulmate.

I was pleased to hear that the William W. Jepson Day Treatment Program was dedicated May 20th at Hennepin County Medical Center. It seems a fitting memorial to Bill, a gardener and friend at our club.

In this pause of spring gardening, I am reminded of a quote departed MGCM member Charlie Proctor gave to the newspaper as an answer to what kept his interest in the club for over 36 years. Charlie said "Most of all, it was the companionship and gardeners are a hell of a lot nicer than most people".

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## Places To Go

**May 17 - June 29**

Monday through Thursday

The Old Log Theater

A comedy called *Old Herbaceous*  
About Bert, the head gardener at an English country house.

**June 5 -6**

Noon to 5 p.m.

Mid-season Iris Show  
Northtown Mall

**July 14 -17**

MGCA/TGOA National Convention

Beauty on the Bay '99

\$20 Discount until June 14

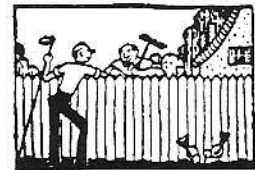
Green Bay, Wisconsin

**July 29**

Benefit Garden Tour  
for Edina Garden Council

\$10 in advance

See Phyllis Gulde



# April Program Report

by Chuck Carlson

Because of timing and space issues, the May issue of the *Spray* didn't allow the April program on lawn care to be summarized for those not attending the meeting. It is being included in this issue.

Catherine Schleicher presented an excellent program and provided a good handout. The handout gave month by month suggestions on lawn care and timing for these tasks. I can provide a copy of this to anyone who desires one.

I took a few notes and have summarized them as follows:

## Sodding

- Sod is mostly Kentucky blue grass but if sodding, ask about 'Elite' versus the regular blue grass.
- Sod can be applied anytime but it is best not to sod after October first.
- Soil testing, fertilizing and tilling are recommended before sodding.
- If the existing soil is mostly sand or clay, a six to ten inch layer of black dirt will do wonders for the lawn.

## Seeding

- Fall is best for seeding a lawn. If seeding a large area, get a soil test to determine fertilizer requirements before seeding.
- The best preparation is to till six to eight inches deep, allow the weeds to grow, apply Round Up, and then wait seven to ten days before seeding. Keep the area damp until sprouting occurs.
- Don't seed in dead grass. Seeds need contact with soil to germinate.

- For sun, seed with 60% blue grass and 40% fescue.
- For shade, seed with 60 to 70 % fescues.
- Perennial Rye grass is usually good for two to three years.

## Fertilizing

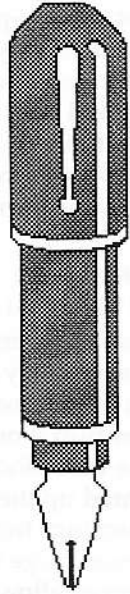
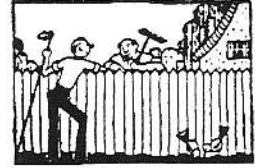
- Fall fertilizing is the most important. Fertilize twice, once in early September and once in mid to late October. If fertilizing only once, October is the most important.
- Forget spring fertilizing. If you feel you must fertilize in the spring, wait until you have mowed twice. If the grass isn't growing, the fertilizer is wasted.
- 30 to 50% slow release fertilizer is good.

## Other Considerations

- To counteract street salt, flush area with water.
- Corn gluten can be used as a weed seed germination preventative, but is costly for lawns.
- Spot spray for broadleaves. Food color can be added to show where you have sprayed.
- Crab grass seed germination preventative treatment should be applied about the time lilac bloom is in the bud stage.
- Spray Creeping Charlie with a broadleaf spray, but make sure it contains *Trimec*. Give it a second application after two weeks.

If you are going to get old, you might as well get as old as you can.

Also remember you are not aging, you just need repotting



## Board Meeting Summary

Margaret Hibberd, Secretary

April 27, 1999

Present: Howard Berg, Chuck Carlson, Margaret Hibberd, Eldon Hugelen, Mary Maynard, Tim McCauley, Ritchie Miller, and Kay Wolfe.  
Absent: Dave Johnson (Fridley)

Secretary's and Treasurer's reports were submitted and approved.

Vice President Ritchie Miller reported that the June program will be Janet and Janice Robidoux on Wild Flowers. Some tentative programs are: October - Harold Pellett on tree breeding; January - Bob Stepan and Jackie Overum on indoor plant propagation by cuttings and seed production. We may have two meetings in November, a regular Tuesday evening meeting on some aspect of a member's garden travel and, later in the month on a Saturday, a trip to Bachman's to see poinsettia production.

### Old Business

Maury Lindblom presented a report on committee definitions and duties. They have now gone through a couple of reviews. Maury suggests that committee descriptions become part of the by-laws. They still need some final revisions, so the Board will continue working on them toward presentation at the October meeting and a vote at the November meeting.

### New Business

Ruth Bannerman asked if other clubs could visit our meetings. Board approved her request. Ruth will act as liaison for her club members, make meal reservations, and be responsible for them.

### New Members

The Board voted to accept new member, Jean Johnson.

### Next Board meeting

Tuesday, June 1, 1999 at 7:30 p.m. at Chuck Carlson's

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## New Member

We welcome new member Jean Johnson. Jean lives very close to Kay Wolfe and we hope she finds the club to her liking. Please add her name and address to your directory.

Jean Johnson  
2852 Edgewood Ave. S.  
St. Louis Park, MN 55426-3324  
Phone: 612-926-4345.

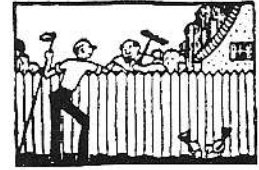
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## Editor's Column

*(continued from page 2)*

By the time you read this, I hope you have completed all your planting and are now ridding your garden of pesky weeds and sprucing everything up so we can tour your garden this year. We have club tours in July and August, so give it some thought. Also, bring some of those great specimens to the MGCM Flower, Food and Foto Show in August.

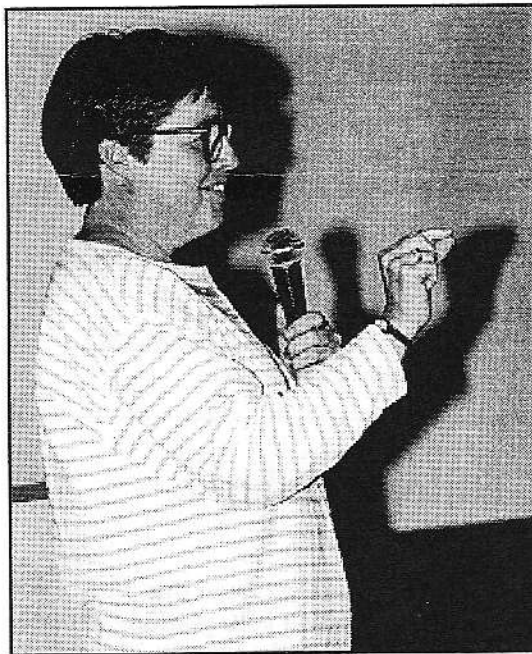
Just remember: keep your hands dirty and you will end up with a green thumb.



# Confessions of a Lazy Gardener

By Mary Maynard

Have you ever seen Dave and Delores Johnson's place in the early spring? Where the annuals and vegetables will be going in, they have beds of perfectly-prepared soil. No wonder they get results.



Lazy Gardener  
Mary Maynard  
Photo by Lloyd Wittstock

If this sort of perfection intimidates you, please stop by my place at about the same time. You will see—no sign of any activity at all. It would be embarrassing to anyone with a gardening conscience. I have learned to live with

it. I'm probably lucky, since I have pretty good soil to start with – light, a little sandy – and I can get away with not doing a lot as long as I avoid plants that require "evenly moist conditions". No Trollius or bog plants on Dart Avenue!

But I do some soil preparation. Since most of my gardens are stuffed with perennials, I end up doing a lot of top dressing. I rarely dig anything into the

soil with a fork or spade—partly because there isn't room, but mostly because I'm lazy. If I feel really ambitious, I might scratch things around with a little hoe. (I rarely feel really ambitious.) Once, I actually got my husband to dig in some amendments. The amendments I use are:

## Compost—homemade

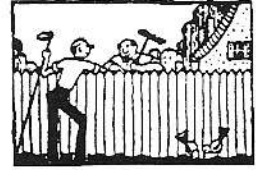
It is a good thing that "compost happens", because I do very little to make it happen any faster or any better. I utilize a "FILO" system of composting: "First In, Last Out". I never turn it or aerate it or anything else like that. Since I got my shredder, I do shred up the big stuff, like stems from the saplings from the hedge, verbena bonariensis, large weeds, cannas, etc. Shredding things allows compost to happen at all, although slowly. Does it end up looking like that great compost we saw at Archie Caple's garden on tour last year? No. Is it better than nothing? I think so.

In the spring, I take out all the compost from my bins and spread it on the part of the garden that seems to need it most. The compost is usually still filled with noticeable sticks and stems, but I can live with it. I compost vegetable scraps from the kitchen—and sometimes the "scraps" are things like half a watermelon. It is **not** a good idea to put partially decayed fruit and vegetable items through the shredder. Don't ask why. Take my word for it. It's not pretty.

## Compost from recycling sites

Always seems like a good idea. Those piles of rich black compost look great as I drive past them on the way to the golf course. I have almost never used them, even though I understand the compost is a lot better than it used to be, and you're much less likely to grow a big stand of thistles, nettles, purslane or quack

*(continued on page 9)*



## Snapshot

By Lloyd Wittstock

It is never too early to start picking photos for the annual competition. When I complimented Lloyd Weber on his slides of irises after he spoke at the February meeting, he replied he is planning on entering some in the club contest. And, I'm sure Chuck Carlson, Henry Orfield and a few others are already selecting their best shots.

Last year's competition attracted some great prints and slides. However, the slide portion saw a real drop in the number of participants, probably reflecting the decline in taking slides for home use.

Preparing your prints and slides for the annual photo show is quite easy. You can enter as few as one or a many as twenty in each of the two classes. We have kept print sizes at no more than 5 x 7 inches to reduce cost. ( 4 x 6 and 3 x 5 prints are acceptable and we added the popular panorama format. ) We require that prints are not mounted and that special electronic enhancements are not used.

The cost of preparing slides is the initial film and processing cost. One must learn to be effective with slide film, particularly exposure settings, since processing will not correct this like it does for prints

Now, if you want to get into this competition and have good photos of plants, either close-ups, mid-range, or garden views, pay special attention that the plants are in good shape, that the photo colors are true, that the focal point is in focus and that there are no serious detracting factors such as a sidewalk, heavy shadows over the object or dead plant materials to take away from the

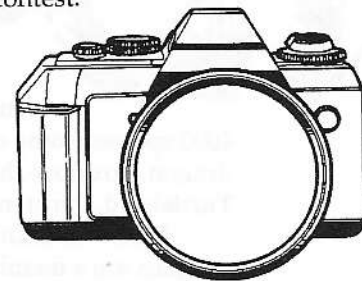
focus of your composition.

If you want to have an even better chance for a winning photo, try slides in just about any of the 13 categories, or prints in the following categories.

- Vegetables
- Club Activities
- Natural Landscapes
- Wildflowers (in their native habitat)

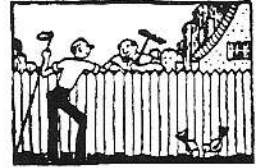
Most importantly, this is a friendly competition and a chance to show your best work and some of your favorite plants or scenes. We have even attracted a few nonmembers to compete. While some participants are very accomplished photographers, there are also us weekend dabblers who turn in good and interesting photos. You can too, so give it a try. New participants are welcome and encouraged. There is plenty of time before the July 22 submission deadline.

The rules for the contest are in process and will be available at the June dinner meeting. Start clicking those shutters now and have some fun entering the contest.



## Perennial Garden

They're here. Yes the University says they will have hundreds of plants for the trial garden. We are scheduling a planting day on Saturday, June 5 at 8:30 a.m. We hope you will be there.



# National Flower and Vegetable

The National Flower and Vegetable are two special awards in our Flower, Food and Foto Show. Each year our club designates a flower and a vegetable eligible to win this award. This year they are the Snapdragon and the onion. Here's some information on these plants:

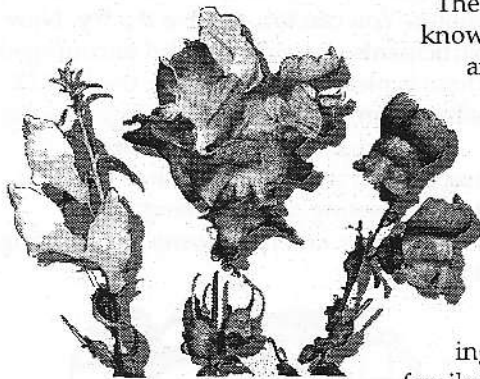
## Snapdragon

By Sher Curry

Family: Scrophulariaceae – Figwort

Species: *Antirrhinum majus*

Snapdragons have many good characteristics. They provide lavish color, have a long blooming period, come in a multitude of colors and sizes, carry a spicy scent, and are among the finest of all cut flowers.



The Figwort Family is known by its irregular and usually two lipped flower, the petals being joined, its four stamens and its two chambered ovary which becomes a pod usually containing many seeds. The family includes perhaps

4000 species, some of which are Snapdragon, Foxglove, Monkey Flower, Turtlehead, Penstemon and others.

Native to Southern Europe, Snapdragons are a member of the Scrophulariaceae family. The Scientific name is derived from the Greek word *anti* meaning like and *rhin* meaning a snout due to the flower's appearance. In some circles the flower is called Toad's Mouth. Flower spikes are composed of individual florets that are up to one and a half inches long. They are available in white, pink, yellow, orange, red, purple, and bicolors.

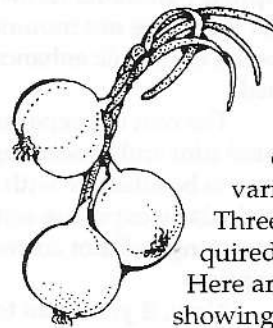
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## Onion

By Mary Maynard

This year's national vegetable at the Flower, Food and Foto Show is the onion (the edible kind—ornamental alliums are excluded). There are several classifications of onions, all of which are eligible for consideration:

- Winter storage onions (*Allium cepa*) example 'Copra'
- Short-term storage Onions (*A. cepa*) example 'Walla Walla'
- Summer mini onions (*A. cepa*) example 'Snow Baby'
- Bunching onions (*A. cepa* or *A. fistulosum*)
- Leeks (*A. porrum*)
- Shallots (*A. cepa*)
- Garlic (*A. tuberosum*)



If you have others, they are also acceptable, as long as the are edible. The Show catalog will list the various categories.

Three onions are required in each category.

Here are some tips for showing onions from

MSHS's *Exhibiting and Judging Handbook* (1998):

*Dry Onions.* Specimens should be mature and thoroughly cured, and the neck should be small. They should not be peeled to give a slick appearance; only broken or discolored outer scales should be removed. Leave basal roots intact, and

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## Confessions

(continued from page 6)

grass. (I had to move after one experience with Minneapolis city compost.)

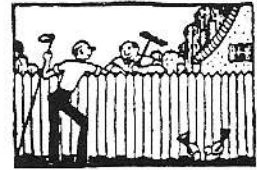
### Bags of stuff from garden stores

Having grown up on a farm, it seems very odd to buy manure. As a young girl, I never imagined that people in the city actually spent money for stuff that was — er — readily available. But so it is. I have to admit that I once picked up a few bags of manure when there was a sale on, but I'd never tell my cousins and uncles back in South Dakota. I'd never hear the end of it.

### Depleted seed starting mix

I save all the used seed starting mix that accumulates during the transplanting/growing on process in the spring and spread it out in the gardens or put it into the compost. Although, come to think of it, I think I still have a bucket of used mix in the basement from last spring. Maybe it's time to get that out there. Since it has a lot of peat in it, I try to spread it around acid-loving plants like azaleas and roses. So far, I have not spread any horrible disease this way. Maybe this year will be the year.

I was going to go into how I don't do much when planting bulbs in the fall (I know it's a good time to add some bone meal); and how I miss a lot of opportunities to improve the soil when I transplant things (maybe a little peat moss now and then, but that's about it); and how I get night crawlers to do my composting and aerating, but this is long enough already, and I'll bore you with that another time.



## Plant Sale Recap and Thanks

All indications are that this year's sale was a success. My impression was that all enjoyed the evening and brought home some excellent plants. I know I did. Congratulations are in order to the whole committee for a job well done. Take a bow. We will print a financial report next month when all the figures are available.

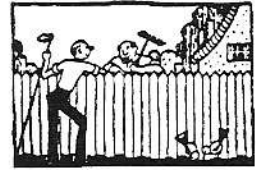
Thanks from the club to the committee, all members who brought plant material and anyone who helped make the night a success. Below are those businesses who donated things for the raffle and those who made donations or gave us discounts for plant material. When you see them say thanks, and by all means give them your business.

### Donations to the raffle

Edina Hardware, Guse Hardware, Klier's Nursery and Garden Center, Lyndale Garden Center, and Robbinsdale Farm and Garden.

### Donated or Discounted Plants

Bachman's, Bailey's Nursery, Borbeletta's, Landscape Development Center (Harold Pellett), Tom Tennant's Outback Nursery, Linder's, Malmborg's, Earl Holasek and Son Greenhouse Inc., Botanical Gardens Inc., Landscape Alternative Inc., Dooley Gardens, BlueBird Nursery Inc., Nor'East Miniature Roses Inc., Savory's, Minnesota Gladiolus Society, and Shady Oaks Nursery.



## What Makes An Onion Sweet?

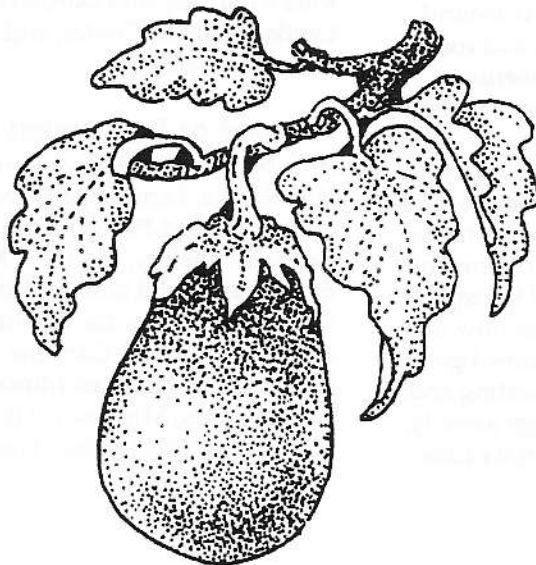
Sweetness in onions is more accurately termed "lack of pungency or mildness". Sugar levels really don't determine if an onion will be sweet. "Some pungent onions actually have more sugar in them than 'sweet onions', but the sugar is masked by a high amount of sulfur compounds", explains Bill Randle, onion expert at the University of Georgia in Athens. "The low amount of sulfur compounds in sweet onions allows the sugar flavor to come through."

Though there's no national standard for what constitutes a sweet onion, researchers at New Mexico State University have developed a test to compare the sweetness of different onion varieties. "An acid test combined with a sensory rating scale gives us an idea of onion pungency",

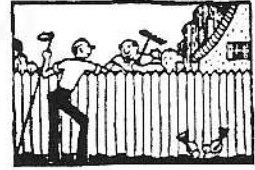
explains Randle. The rating scale is 1 to 18. An onion that scores 1 has very little pungency when eaten raw. At 4 the onion taster begins to feel some heat, and anything above 6 can't comfortably be eaten raw, he says. "Most sweet onions, such as Vidalias and Texas Supersweets, score between 2.5 and 4.0.

"It's primarily the genetics of onions that make them pungent or sweet, but the sulfur content of the soil and poor growing conditions can add to the pungency", adds Randle. The higher the soil sulfur content, the more pungent the onion. That's one reason areas of the country with naturally low sulfur levels, such as Vidalia, Georgia, are known for proper plant growth, but keeping sulfur levels low so the onion stays mild. Any stress while the onion is growing also tends to make it more pungent. There is a natural variation of sweetness in onions from year to year, depending on the weather, fertility, and any insect and disease damage to the crop.

(Reprinted from the newsletter *The Germinator*.)



Here is a quote from Dag Hammerskjold,  
"He who keeps his garden tidy  
doesn't reserve a plot for weeds."



## The Snapdragon

(continued from page 8)

The Victorian language of flowers states that Snapdragons symbolize presumption.

Snapdragon is named for the flower jaws that can be pinched open. The plants form colorful spikes of flowers that will provide color over a long blooming period. They do best in sun or very light shade. Grow in rich, well drained soil. Cutting the flower spikes will encourage more bushy plants and encourage flower production. They bloom in late spring and summer. The plants will bloom again in the fall if the flower spikes are cut. Modern Snaps come in many sizes. They are used for bedding, edging, borders, background plantings, and cut flowers.

Snapdragons are a good vertical line flower in design work. They work well when incorporated into a natural garden type vase arrangement or design. Cut flowers will last three to four days longer if bleach is added to the water.

The most common disease of the Snapdragon is rust, *Puccinia antirrhini*. It affects almost all plants in late summer. Some resistant plants have been introduced recently.

This flower attracts several different types of butterflies. The plant size varies from six inches or more in the dwarf snap, to intermediate heights in the 12 to 24 inch range, reaching 30-36 inches with the tall Rocket hybrids.

Make sure you try some in your gardens this year and enter them in the Flower, Food and Foto Show. Maybe you can win the ribbon for the National Flower.

## Onion

(continued from page 8)

trim them to a uniform 1/2" length. Wipe or brush clean, but do not wash. Trim dried tops to uniform length of 1-2".

*Table Onions.* Exhibit these as green onions. Trim tops to 3", overall length should be 6-8". Trim roots to 1/2". If you chose to remove the wrapper skin to expose long white shank, do so just before showing. Table onions should be about 1/2" in diameter, straight with a white stem and dark green leaves. Bulbs should not be enlarged.

Sound confusing? Don't worry! When in doubt, bring it in! See you at the August show!

## "Why" Questions

You have heard children ask "why" questions? Here are a few adults can ask:

If infants don't enjoy infancy, why do adults enjoy adultery?

Why do women wear evening gowns to nightclubs? Shouldn't they be wearing nightgowns?

If love is blind—why is lingerie so popular?

If "I am" is the shortest sentence in the English language, why isn't "I do" the longest?

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## MEN'S GARDEN CLUB OF MINNEAPOLIS, INC.

### CLUB OFFICERS:

**President:** Eldon Hugelen  
7473 West 142nd Street, Apple Valley, MN 55124  
**Vice-President:** Ritchie Miller  
4249 Twin Oak Lane, Robbinsdale, MN 55422  
**Secretary:** Margaret Hibberd  
1850 Roselawn Ave., Falcon Heights, MN 55113  
**Treasurer:** Howard H. Berg  
10107 Lakeview Dr., Minnetonka, MN 55305  
**Past President:** Mary J. Maynard  
4375 Dart Ave. So., St. Louis Park, MN 55424

### DIRECTORS:

Charles J. Carlson  
1001 Hackman Circle, Fridley, MN 55432  
Dave W Johnson  
5291 Matterhorn Dr., Minneapolis, MN 55419  
Tim McCauley  
325 West 82nd Street, Chaska, MN 55318  
Kay Wolfe  
2740 Florida Ave. So., Minneapolis, MN 55426

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Men's Garden Club of Minneapolis, Inc.  
Charles J. Carlson, Managing Editor  
1001 Hackman Circle  
Fridley, MN 55432-0463

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