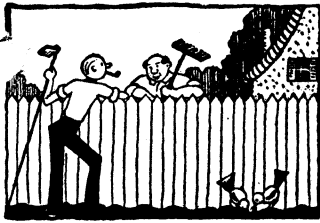


THE GARDEN SPRAY



BULLETIN OF THE MEN'S GARDEN CLUB OF MINNEAPOLIS

MEMBER—MEN'S GARDEN CLUBS OF AMERICA
MINNESOTA STATE HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY

Volume 8
Number 3
Vic Lowrie, Editor

March, 1950
Associate Editors
Jack Cohen, Ed Montgomery

MARCH MEETING

Tuesday March 14 5:30 P.M.
Colonial Room - Hasty-Tasty - Dinner - \$1.50

Officers

Cortis Rice, Jr.
President

G. B. Germain
Vice-President

Rene Dufourd
Secretary

C. F. LaCrosse
Treasurer

William E. Swain
Past-President

Office of the Secretary
and Exchange Editor

5020 Second Ave. South
Minneapolis 19

PROGRAM

6:30 P.M. Business Session

6:45 Elementary Botany
Lesson No. 2, Flower Clusters
Archie Flack

7:15 Excerpts from Exchange Club
Bulletins - Tom Foley

7:30 A Gardener Looks at Europe
Talk and Slides - Jack Cohen

8:00 Iris Review
Talk and slides - Herb Kahlert

8:30 Questions and Answers

Stan Lund and his committee have come up with a lively program - one you won't want to miss. SEND IN YOUR RESERVATION CARD PROMPTLY. And don't forget to bring your garden questions on any subject!

OUR CLUB'S NATIONAL TESTERS FOR 1950 *

Harold R. Kaufmann, Chief Tester

ANNUALS - Ray Edlund
BEGONIAS - Jim Cristman
CHRYSANTHEMUMS - Harold
R. Kaufmann
DAFFODILS - Cortis Rice
DELPHINIUMS - Bob Bryant

FLOWERING SHRUBS - Archie Flack
GLADIOLI - Bill Holmberg
HEMEROCALLIS - Tom Foley
IRIS - Herb Kahlert
LILIES - Morris Lifson

PEONIES - Jack Cohen
PRIMULAS - George T.
ROSES - Stan Lund
VEGETABLES - Len Bi
GADGETS (& SLIDES) -
Rene Dufourd

* These men are also chairmen of our Club's Special Interest Groups

Chief Tester, Harold Kaufmann, has asked all Testers to meet with him directly after our meeting Tuesday, March 14th, to discuss duties, data forms and special information from National. Each Tester should now personally write his National Tester for information, program and suggestions.

THE FEBRUARY MEETING

'Twas a chilly, chilly night, the kind most sane men prefer spending at the fireside with their families, but not we gardeners! Fifty-three braved the cold, the snow and the ice for the opportunity to break bread, chat, listen and daydream out-of-doors with our fellow-gardeners.

It was a good meeting. Curtis Rice presided at his first full meeting as President as though he were an old master at the game - threw out a few challenges and some meaty ideas for serious consideration. One such was the suggestion for a flower show, possibly of roses, in one of the downtown department stores. Another was the establishment of a speakers' bureau in which members would register and volunteer to talk upon invitation before groups about the garden subjects they like most to talk about. An innovation in flower shows was contained in the idea that each member put on a show of his own representing the things he likes to grow, his special interest or his favorite plant and flower groupings - shows within a show, a novel introduction with a world of promise. We're with you, Cort!

Archie Flack, the Club's Horticulturist, gave a fascinating presentation of the processes in the reproduction of plant life - Lesson No. 1 in elementary botany with blackboard diagrams and illustrations. If the intense interest shown during the talk and the discussion that followed is a criteria, everyone is looking forward with much anticipation to Lesson No. 2 which comes up at our March meeting.

Another most interesting talk was given by Dick Miller of Bachman Associates on African Violets. Dick handled his subject in a masterful fashion tracing the history of the plant from its discovery in Tanga, East Africa, in 1890, through the years until the present day where we find, said Dick, "African Violets and Canasta are sweeping the country." (See elsewhere in this issue of The Spray for highlights of his talk.)

Oh, yes, on the program for February you will remember was a dry-sounding feature, "Excerpts from Exchange Club Bulletins," by Rene Dufourd. Well, if you know Rene well enough, you know that nothing "dry" (not that he's a heavy drinker) could come from our Secretary. Did he fish the juicy morsels out of those bulletins! Here's a sample story quite apropos here in Minneapolis:

"C.T.A. (Chicago) recently received the following letter from a disgruntled rider

'Gentlemen: I have been riding your streetcar for the past 18 months, and the service seems to be getting worse every day. The transportation you offer is worse than that enjoyed by the people of a thousand years ago. Very truly yours, Phil McCann.'

Reply from the C.T.A. to Mr. McCann:

'Dear Sir: We received your letter of the first and we believe you are somewhat confused in your history. The only transportation of a thousand years ago was on foot. Sincerely yours, The C.T.A.'

Reply from Mr. McCann: 'Gentlemen: I am in receipt of your letter of the 7th and believe that you are the ones that are confused in your history. If you will read the Bible, Book of David, 9th verse, you will find that Aaron rode into town on his ass, and that, gentlemen, is something I have not been able to do on your streetcars for the past 18 months!' (Taken from "The Wind" of Men's Garden Club of Chicago.)

BE ON YOUR MARK!

It can't be long now, we hope. But in the meantime there's lots to be done if we are to be ready when spring finally does arrive. Better get on the right side of the little lady if you want to get early blooms from your annuals - they are going to need a lot of warmth and light once their seeds germinate - and that means the use of a lot of east windows. Try to keep track of the afternoons your wife has booked for Canasta away from home; then sneak home and get those tables and boxes set up for your flats and saucers. When she returns, you might have a wee offering waiting - you know, window rent.

Begonia tubers can be started into growth any time now by placing them in shallow boxes filled with equal parts of good soil and peat moss. Barely cover the tubers and keep moist without overwatering in a temperature of 55-60 degrees.

For early blooming chrysanthemums, start propagating your young cuttings around the middle of March. Place 2 inches apart in boxes filled with a mixture of equal parts of finely sifted loam and sand. Keep moist and the temperature at between 50 and 55 degrees.

Seeds of tender annuals should be started indoors. They include petunias, ageratum, pinks, nicotiana, snapdragons, verbena and lobelia. For really early blooms, most annuals can be started indoors, although seeds of larkspur, cornflower, poppy and sweet pea prefer to be sown where they are to grow permanently. Sweet peas should be sown just as early as the ground can be worked. Would have better had you prepared the soil and dug the trench for them in the fall.

Vegetable seed sowing indoors gets underway this month too. Cabbages, tomatoes, cauliflower, Brussels sprouts, eggplant, brocolli, squash and celery can be sown in flats and transplanted to pots as soon as they become crowded. Peas, spinach and onion sets should be grown outdoors where they are to grow as soon as the ground can be worked.

Those lucky enough to have space and shekels for greenhouses, cold and hot frames, are already four jumps ahead of the gang with their seeding and propagating.

Now is the time to start keeping a record of your garden growth. Record the dates of sowing seed, planting and transplanting for each variety; note the time of pinching back, disbudding, blooming, fertilizing, spraying, dusting, etc. Make a note of condition, infestation, position in the garden, amount of shade, sun, moisture, etc. With vegetables, keep track of yield, condition of yield, flavor, freezing or canning qualities, etc.

MARK THAT PLANT!

Are you sure you have a plentiful supply of easy-on-your-eyes garden markers? Better check and order your needs from the Club's purchasing agent, Secretary "Rene". He has a limited quantity of dandy aluminum ones - 15" at \$1 a dozen; 24" at \$1.35 a dozen. Hurry with your order.

HOW ABOUT THOSE EXTRA SLIDES FOR LIBRARY

Have you checked over your colored slides yet and set aside the duplicates for our Slide Library? General views of your own garden or of any gardening subject are welcome, and especially valuable are shots of individual plants or specimen blooms.

GARDEN MAGIC

Have you heard about the new chemical, Maleic Hydrazide, which retards the growth of plants without injury? Can you imagine being able to keep down the growth of those tall-growing mums or asters without harming the blooms? Or better still, spray the lawn to keep it short and throw away the lawnmower? The chemical has been used to retard blooming in the early spring to save the blossoms from being nipped by frost. Maleic Hydrazide is not on the market yet, so don't look for any garden miracles in 1950!

* * * *

We were grieved to hear of the passing away of one of our early members, Mr. Z. Z. Savory, and extend our deepest sympathy to his bereaved family.

SUBSCRIBE TO YOUR FAVORITE GARDEN MAGAZINE THROUGH OUR CLUB SECRETARY

Help the Club treasury by renewing your old subscriptions or buying new subscriptions for your gardening magazines through our Club Secretary. These include Flower Grower, The Home Garden, Organic Gardening, Horticulture, Better Homes & Gardens. Send the subscription price to Rene Dufourd, 5020 Second Avenue South.

While you are engrossed with the subject of reading, look over the list of garden books available to you at a discount and published in the January issue of The Spray - and add the dough to your subscription check.

AFRICAN VIOLETS

(Excerpts from talk given by Dick Miller)

Saintpaulia (*S. ionantha*), African or Usambara violet is a native of Africa discovered in the year 1890. Exhibited for the first time in 1893 at the International Flower Exposition in Ghent, it was brought to this country the following year to a nurseryman in New York City.

Little was heard of the plant for the next forty years until 1936, when out of California began to pour new varieties upon new varieties, finally resulting in the American housewife making the African Violet her favorite house plant. Recently no few amateur gardeners have made African Violet culture their indoor hobby, turning many a dining room, kitchen, living room and bedroom into flower conservatories.

Some of the varieties to come out of California included the very popular Blue Boy and the lesser known Admiral, Commodore, Neptune, Norseman and Viking.

Recently Mrs. Dupont of Delaware has developed a strain with a much heavier and quite hairy leaf, somewhat crumpled. It is not as free-blooming as the regular varieties but the blossoms are enormous, about the size of a half dollar. The Dupont varieties run from one to seven. No. 1 is a dark blue, and varying shades of lightness run through to No. 5. Six and Seven are pinks - No. 6 a silver pink and No. 7 a lavender pink.

Today we have many strains of the Saintpaulia and they come in almost every conceivable color and shades of color. They are of easy culture and consequently one finds few homes without them.

A FIELD PRUNING DEMONSTRATION

On Saturday afternoon, March 25, at 2 P.M., in Rene Dufourd's garden at 5020 Second Ave. S., Archie Flack, our Horticulturist, will give a pruning demonstration on dwarf espalier apple trees, stan-

cellaneous shrubs. All members are cordially invited to attend.

M.G.C.A. NATIONAL CONVENTION

Who is going to attend the M.G.C.A. Convention in Oakland, Calif. in April? If

National Convention of the M.G.C.A., won't be sent at this meeting by two delegates; you please give your name to Secretary Rene? The Club is entitled to be represented by two delegates who will be elected from the membership of the M.G.C. of Minneapolis.

PLANT SHOPPING

Shrubs and Trees - Watch for broken or cracked limbs. Avoid scale, canker and sunscald on trunk. Injured bark may invite disease. Small knobs on roots could be from nematode infection. Look at the point of grafting, bark should be growing over the union or be completely covered - swellings above or below are danger signs. Don't take plants with mangled or dried-out roots. Sharp V-crutches on young trees are undesirable - they have a tendency to split.

Evergreens - Foliage on young evergreens should feel cool and moist. Red spider mites can be detected by fine webs in center of trees woven around dead needles. Make sure root system is fresh and moist - dead needles on top of ball may be a sign of damaged roots and drying plant. Inspect the ball for firmness - securely fastened burlap.

Annuals - Watch the foliage for black spots, yellow blotches, brown and curled leaves. Leaves should be a healthy medium to dark green. Soil should be moist with no roots exposed. Select strong bushy plants rather than the spindly ones with temporarily more bloom.

Perennials - Buy perennials with good, compact root systems with foliage not too far advanced, preferably with shoots two or three inches high. Young, vigorous divisions will do better than old clumps which can easily be detected by old flower stems.

Gladiolus - Take only No. 1 bulbs, with high crowns, thick through, firm and with good color. Reject bulbs with soft spots, black streaks, corky and sunken spots and those that are thin and flat.

Dahlias - Don't worry about size and shape. Just be sure that they have a healthy eye where they join last year's stem. See that they feel plump or rubbery - never soft or mushy.

IDENTIFY YOUR GARDEN WITH YOUR GARDEN CLUBS

If you are proud to be a member (no display of hands necessary) of the Men's Garden Club of Minneapolis and affiliated with Men's Garden Clubs of America, then why not affix their emblems onto your garden gate or fence or front door - neat, small, aluminum discs, they are simple to attach and easy on the pocketbook - only a buck apiece. Talk to Rene.

REMEMBER OUR PLANT AUCTION

Our plant auction this year will be held on May 9th.

Tony Koester, our auction chairman, asks all of you who raise annuals or perennials from seed to sow a few extra plants for the auction. Also remember to save your perennial divisions, extra gladioli bulbs, tuberous begonias, dahlia roots and whatever you can spare.

QUIZ MAN - GEORGE GERMAIN

QUESTION: Will water from a water softener be harmful to African Violets and other house plants?

ANSWER: If the soft water is free of salt, it will do no harm, but if the softener is not properly or completely regenerated, the salt left in the water will do the plants no good.

QUESTION: What effect does humidity or lack of it have on violets?

ANSWER: African Violets like a maximum of humidity. They were discovered growing near where a spray was blowing over them. Therefore they can be kept constantly moist but not wet. When you press your finger down on the soil and see no water, then you have it moist - not wet. Bachman's new automatic watering pots afford maximum moisture. African Violets, however, will adjust themselves to a certain amount of dryness in the home.

QUESTION: What is the best size pot for African Violets?

ANSWER: The standard 4-inch pan is the recommended size for two-year-old plants - grade up from there for larger plants or divide the plants.

QUESTION: Since the Saintpaulia was found growing in limestone crevices, why does it now need acid peat?

ANSWER: African Violets are very tolerant. They seem to thrive on both. Ph 6.5 is normal for them and they will stand more acid than lime.

QUESTION: What makes the lower leaves on African Violet turn a yellow-green?

ANSWER: A natural way for the plant to shed its leaves.

QUESTION: Is New Plant Life sufficient for violets?

ANSWER: Nine out of ten homes appear to be using it and their plants are doing very well.

QUESTION: Which is better - glazed or porous pots?

ANSWER: Porcelain or glazed pots will not transfer the moisture too well - porous are to be preferred.

QUESTION: What is the length of the complete rest period for African Violets?

ANSWER: Normal rest period in greenhouse - 4 to 6 weeks; in homes somewhat longer - usually from 6 to 8 weeks. Plants have been reported to have kept in constant bloom up to 3 years without a break. Most unusual, though.

QUESTION: Last fall I buried a pot of tulip bulbs outside. When should I bring them in and how should I handle them immediately after they are brought in?

ANSWER: Bring in any time after January 15th and keep good and moist.

GLADIOLI

Plan now to enrich your garden with a generous representation of the rich and brilliant colors of the gladioli. They are of easy culture, require a minimum of attention, add charm and variety to your border, and are excellent as cut flowers. They prefer a sunny situation, deep, rich soil with good drainage.

Plant the corms four inches deep and nine inches apart. For the border group, in clumps of nine to twelve. Where grown for cutting, plant in rows nine inches apart with additional space between each fourth row.

Stake gladioli well as they reach maturity - each plant individually - or the heavy spikes will be damaged by wind or heavy rains.

For a full season of bloom, try planting two weeks apart keeping the corms in a cool, dark place in the cellar until ready to plant.

Be sure to try some of the miniatures for in front of the borders. They are very dainty, need little management, and are unusually well suited for cut