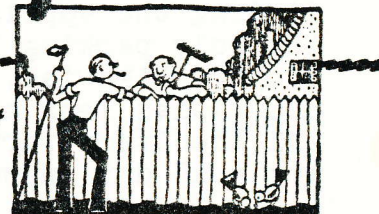




The Garden Spray

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

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



August 1984, Volume 42, Number 8

TWO EVENTS THIS MONTH. PLAN TO ATTEND BOTH.

1- THIRD GARDEN TOUR THIS YEAR

(Wives, Sweethearts & Other Guests Invited)

PROGRAM

Bus Tour of Members & Friends Gardens
(Shannon, Van Vorst, LeBoutillier, King)

Salad Buffet Luncheon at Van Vorst Home at end of Tour

SPECIFICS

DATE: Sunday August 12, 1984

LOCATION: Meet at Lake Harriet United
Methodist Church Parking Lot
4901 Chowen Ave. So. - Mpls.

TIME: Tour starts 1:00 p.m. - return to
church parking lot 5:00 - 5:30 p.m.

PRICE: \$6.00 per person

-BY RESERVATION ONLY-

Reservations must be received by Wednesday Aug. 8, 1984!

AUTOMATIC RESERVATION LIST NOT IN EFFECT

Reservation Form Page 2

2- OUR ANNUAL FLOWER AND VEGETABLE SHOW

ATTENTION ALL COACHES, TRAINERS, MANAGERS and COMPETITORS: The 1984 Olympic contests for the best vegetables, flowers and plants are just around the corner. Actually, the big dates are Saturday, August 18th and Sunday, August 19th. The location--The Arboretum. All competition to be supervised by the Men's Garden Club of Minneapolis.

You coaches who have been working your entrants to the utmost will now have the opportunity to display the strength and beauty of your favorites to the rest of us. All other cities and towns have refused to compete. The reputation of our teams has discouraged all other teams.

In the short time before the contests work your entries in a daily program. Use steroids. Use anything. Be ready.

At the August 12th Garden Tour we will distribute a bulletin outlining the program for the big weekend.

--Your Committee

ED CULBERT REACTS TO THE JULY TOUR

We've got to have more detailed directions! I had a heck of a time finding the appointed meeting place after my daughter dropped me off at the only parking lot she could find anywhere near 9700 France Avenue South. Likewise, an earlier start or fewer gardens to visit would make our visits less hurried. We move too fast or I see too slowly to identify all the items worth noting but, then, many of my notes are undecipherable the next day anyway.

All 45 on the tour agreed that the NORMANDALE JAPANESE GARDEN is, indeed, beautiful. However, the personable young female guide for the sub-group of which I was a member spent most of her/our time telling us the background history: That, though on the college grounds, it was a Bloomington city project; That it received no tax support; That a Japanese architect designed it; That it was dedicated in 1976 but the idea had its genesis in the 1960's. She had little to say about the plantings and checked with Dr. Snyder for confirmation. Up to this point all was a repeat of an MGCM visit some years back.

Much has been added to the garden since then. Trees and shrubs have grown apace. Gorgeous weeping willows offset the pagoda on the tiny island formerly a barren spot. The new umbrella-like shelter on a hill gives a new perspective over the garden. There are many dogwoods including, appropriately, the pagoda variety, many viburnum. There are Japanese lilacs and evergreens in variety--but no sand and rock garden:

CARLETON NELSON has eased up on marigolds--only 3000 as against 5000 the last time we visited--but they were there in oblong, square and triangular beds, in borders, in hanging baskets. They were in the center of beds. There was ageratum backed by marigolds. There were cannas and salvia backing marigolds. One big garden spot bordered by flowers, including marigolds, was given over to vegetables. Flowers in the vegetable garden? Vegetables in the flower garden? Which?

Carleton has a rose bed, a grape arbor, a netting covered raspberry patch, a dahlia plot between out buildings, compost ankle deep. He has dianthus, hemerocallis, vinca, snapdragons, delphinium, coleus, gaillardias, hostas, lupines, calendulas, petunias, coral bells, daisies, veronicas. I hear he took Memorial Day week off from work to do his transplanting.

FRED LANG'S house fronts a sylvan glade. Around glade and patio under
----- Continued on Page 4 -----

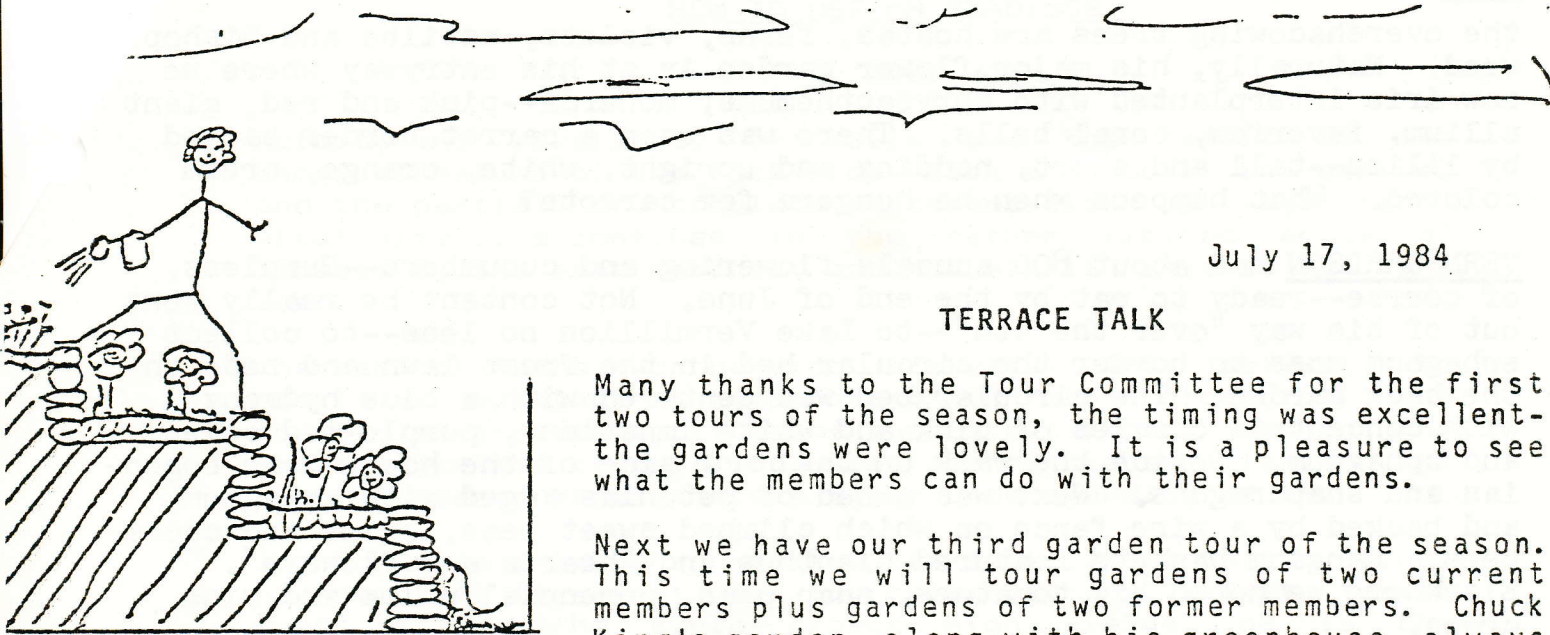
For reservation(s) for MGCM Garden Tour August 12, 1984, return this form to George H. McCullough - 8812 Tretbaugh Dr., Bloomington, Minnesota 55431.

I plan to attend. Please reserve _____ place(s) for me and my guest(s) (\$6.00 each including bus and buffet).

My check for \$ _____ is enclosed.

Your Signature _____

My Guest(s) will be _____



July 17, 1984

TERRACE TALK

Many thanks to the Tour Committee for the first two tours of the season, the timing was excellent--the gardens were lovely. It is a pleasure to see what the members can do with their gardens.

Next we have our third garden tour of the season. This time we will tour gardens of two current members plus gardens of two former members. Chuck King's garden, along with his greenhouse, always covers a broad variety of flowers and vegetables.

Ted LeBoutillier indicated that he has reduced the number of full sized roses down to only 600 in his yard, but he does have 4,000 miniatures so that there should be quite an array of blooms for our tour. He is now in the business of propagating miniature roses. At my request, he said that he would have some miniatures available for the purchase by any club member or guest who would like them while we are at the tour.

Jerry Shannon has re-done his gardens with land added--this should be exciting. The last home on the tour will be Stan Van Vorst. He and Dorice have graciously agreed to cater (with the help of other Committee members) a light salad buffet.

Weather cooperating, this should be a grand tour. We would like to have all members attend and bring guests. We can order many buses.

Up and coming is the flower and vegetable show at the Arboretum. Please note the time and date. I think in this year of the Olympics, we as gardeners should also be Olympic contenders. You will note that it is permissible to feed your plants anything you wish--including steroids--to gain the biggest and best blossoms and quality. Please enter and win!!! Rules and instructions will be available at the tour.

The drought appears to be over in our area--the gardens are looking fine, keep harvesting!
--Russ

Elsie Cowcill, wife of William "Bill" Cowcill, member of the Garden Club since 1961, died Sunday, July 22, 1984. Bill and Elsie resided at 4265 Zenith Avenue North in Robbinsdale; however, she has been in a nursing home in Robbinsdale for several years. Elsie was a native of England. The funeral was Thursday, July 26th.

CHANGE OF ADDRESS

Johnson, David W.
220 Cutacross Road
Golden Valley, MN 55422

CORRECT YOUR ROSTER

Harwell, Gary
5007 - 28 Ave S.
Mpls., MN 55417

TOUR from page 2

the overshadowing trees are hostas, ferns, violets, astilbe and Bishop weed. Naturally, his major flower garden is at his entryway where we saw iris interplanted with chrysanthemums, monarda--pink and red, giant allium, feverfew, coral bells. There was even a carrot border backed by lilies--tall and short, nodding and upright, white, orange, cream colored. What happens when he hungers for carrots?

VERN CARLSON had about 800 annuals flowering and cucumbers--Burpless, of course--ready to eat by the end of June. Not content he really went out of his way "over the 4th"--to Lake Vermillion no less--to collect sphagnum moss to border the circular bed in the front lawn and beds in the back garden. The circular bed was centered with a blue hydrangea with concentric circles of pink and white impatiens, purple-red coleus and sphagnum. Beside the walk on the north side of the house were begonias and snapdragons. Next was a bed of petunias edged with sphagnum and backed by a wire fence on which climbed sweet peas, beans and cucumbers. Hanging baskets featured dianthus and "hearts and flowers". Elsewhere we noted big tomatoes, snap peas, perennial phlox and vine crops.

ALBERT RAHLENBECK wasn't home but we visited anyway. His place is different! He has high timbered beds with wood chips between the widely spaced plantings. He has sizeable black plastic pots of flowers sunken in grey crushed rock. Woodbine grows over the arch leading to the rear lot where we saw lobelia, marigolds, petunias, calendula and nicotiana.

THOR SOLEM stood at the entry to his back yard to shake hands with and to welcome us as we entered past the well clipped yew hedge. Thor has plenty of privacy--tall trees on three sides of a lush green lawn, the house on the other. A sunny spot featured a rose bed backed by delphiniums. The border in front of the trees had daylilies in variety and topiary worked arbor vitae. Thor likes pie-plant as attested by a long bed of it.

ART JOHNSON has a garden to complement that of his next door neighbor. Near his house were big pots of beautiful red geraniums. In the border around the yard were plants appropriate for that shady area: ferns, hosta, Bishops-weed. A restful spot.

ARCHIE CAPLE stood, handcuffs hanging from one wrist, on a retaining wall to warn us that a heart attack had delayed his planting (still unfinished) and garden care. Lest we doubt, a sign WEEDS stood over quack-grass near his potatoes. Was that sign put there to help us locate the minimum number of weeds we saw? Archie had onions and celery in alternate rows; cucurbits and cole plants mulched in grass clippings, peppers standing all alone.

An eye-catching bed of tall seed stalks turned out not to be an intentional planting but a bed of parsnips undug this spring. The chrysanthemums in plastic pots were to stay where located (in mulch) until fall. A row of Peruvian daffodils in bloom was the best I have seen in a long time. Variegated hosta in flower fronted with snapdragons, calendula fronted with marigolds, plantings around the sides of his greenhouse similarly attracted attention. Here and there we spotted delphiniums, salvia, balsams as darkness deepened and we sought our buses.

HOW TO USE pH READINGS

by Bill Hull

Acidity and alkalinity of soils are the result of the chemical nature of the rock from which the soil is derived and the partial or complete decomposition of vegetation. Alkalinity...is confined to the rather limited areas of limestone, the salt marshes, and the alkali deserts of the West.

The term pH means hydrogen-ion activity. This activity is nearly as important as temperature in many biological and industrial processes. It is of such great importance in the vital processes of soil organisms and of higher plants that every gardener should have a clear understanding of pH.

In old times a gardener tasted his soil. If it tasted sour, he knew that it wasn't good for raising crops...if it tasted sweet he knew he could expect high yields...pH is the chemists' shorthand method of expressing the amount of acidity or alkalinity.

The pH scale runs from zero to 14. The zero end is the acid end, while the 14 end is the alkaline end....7.0 - the midpoint - is the neutral point. A soil testing any number higher than 7.0 is alkaline; less than 7.0 is acid soil.

In general, most common vegetables and flowers do best on soils that have a pH of 6.5 to 7.0...But, if plenty of organic matter is present in the soil, this range of tolerance is increased, permitting plants to do fairly well on soils with a lower or higher pH. A few plants, such as azaleas, camellias, and gardenias do best on a quite acid soil. Others, such as clematis, scillas and campanulas do best on a quite alkaline soil...For general use, and for being best suited to raising the majority of common plants, a soil having a pH of 6.5 to 7.0 is needed. A soil of this pH range offers the most favorable environment for the microorganisms that convert the nitrogen of the air to a form available to plants. It also offers the best environment for the bacteria that decompose plant tissue and form humus. In this pH range, all of the essential mineral nutrients are available to plants in sufficient quantities and generally in a much greater amount than at any other pH.

A simple test which anyone can do is with litmus paper. Neutral litmus paper works fine....obtain this from the local drug store....simply take a piece and press it with the thumb down into the moist soil after a rain. If the test paper doesn't change color, other than getting wet, your soil's pH is approximately 7.0. If the paper turns blue, your soil is alkaline; if it turns pink, it is acid. Also test the water that you use for watering or irrigation.

If soil is too acid, it can be brought back to a favorable pH by the addition of crushed limestone or dolomite limestone...Next to crushed limestone, wood ashes are best. All of these may be added to compost. Slaked lime or

(over)

quicklime must never be used, since they are so strongly alkaline that they very easily injure a soil. In liming, it is best not to add all of the required limestone at one time...it is easier to add a little more later than to try to take out any excess. Limestone of about 60 mesh is the grade generally considered best..About a ton per acre is required to raise a clay loam soil containing a medium amount of organic matter up one unit on the pH scale, say from a pH of 5.5 to a pH of 6.5.

Kramer says that to raise the pH of soil add ground limestone at the rate of 10 pounds per 150 square feet. Scatter the limestone on the soil and water.

Fred Rockwell, a past MGCA president, says that other bases could be used, but lime has its advantages in that it is cheap; it is an essential element; it is easily handled; an excess is not detrimental; and it is an agent which aids in maintaining other nutrients in available form. When lime is applied, it neutralizes the free acids; and the toxic aluminum. iron and manganese are rendered inactive. Lime is usually applied when the seedbed is being prepared but in the dry season in the fall the lime is more easily worked into the soil and will be more beneficial to the next year's crop....additions of lime should be made only when absolutely necessary. However, calcium is an important element to plant growth, and it may be lacking in the soil. In such cases, in order to avoid changing the soil reaction (acidity), gypsum (calcium sulfate) is recommended at the rate of 2 to 4 pounds to 100 square feet.

Soils which are too alkaline may be brought back to a favorable pH range by the addition of organic matter. Organic matter contains natural acid-forming material and produces acids directly on decomposition. These acids combine with any excess alkali thus neutralizing it....The nice thing about using organic matter is that a lot of it can be used. And it doesn't hurt the soil...This is one of the reasons why gardeners get such good results by following the organic method. Soils which are too alkaline (above pH 7) usually have to be acidified, as otherwise many of the elements of plant growth may become unavailable. To be effective over a long period, sulfur is the best acidifying agent. It is applied - in the fall preferably since it is slow acting - at the rate of 2 to 4 pounds per 100 square feet. Aluminium sulfate may be substituted at the rate of 1 pound per 100 square feet. It is quick acting but is dangerous if the soil lacks phosphorus. In such a case free aluminum may be formed, and this is injurious. If phosphorus is present in sufficient quantity, the excess aluminum combines with it to form an insoluble and harmless aluminum phosphate. Iron sulfate likewise may be useful as an acidifier: it is used at the same rate as aluminum sulfate. Ammonium sulfate is a particularly useful acidifying agent, since it supplies nitrogen as well as acidity. When used in proper amounts to supply needed nitrogen, each pound of ammonium sulfate develops more than enough acidity to neutralize a pound of limestone. Pound for pound, ammonium sulfate develops more than twice as much acid in a soil as does iron sulfate or

(concluded on page 7)

aluminum sulfate.

To apply ground sulfur spread it on top of the soil and apply water: this lowers the pH symbol about one point.

ACID SOIL PLANTS: (Thrive best at pH 4 to 6): Andromeda, azalea, baptisia, bayberry, blackberry, blueberry, butterfly-weed, cardinal flower, chrysanthemum, cranberry, Dutchman's breeches, fir, flax, galax, ground pine, heath, heather, hemlock spruce, hickory, huckleberry, lady slipper, leather leaf, ledum, lupine, lily, lily-of-the-valley, magnolia, marigold, mountain laurel, New Jersey tea, oak, orchid, pecan, pine, platycodon, radish, raspberry, rhododendron, sourwood, sweet fern, sweet pepperbush, spicebush, spruce, swamp ferns, sweet potato, trailing arbutus, wintergreen, yew.

ALKALINE SOIL PLANTS (Certain alkaline-soil plants as peas, clovers, alfalfa may become stunted or even sickly in acid soil): Alyssum, asparagus, bean, beet, cabbage, carnation, cantaloupe, cauliflower, celery, cucumber, iris, lettuce, mignonette, nasturtium, onion, parsnip, pea, phlox, rhubarb, salsify, squash and sweet pea.

REFERENCES:

- (1) The Encyclopedia of Organic Gardening, J.I. Rodale, editor-in-chief, Rodale Books, Emmaus, PA., 1959.
- (2) The Suburban Farmer's Handbook, Jack Kramer, Doubleday & Company, Inc., Garden City, NY, 1977.
- (3) 10,000 GARDEN QUESTIONS Fred F. Rockwell, Doubleday & Company, Inc., Garden City, NY, 1959.
- (4) THE WISE GARDEN ENCYCLOPEDIA, E.L.D. Seymour, B.S.A., Wm. H. Wise & Co. Inc., New York, NY, 1956.

The man who wants a garden fair,
Or small or very big,
With flowers growing here and there,
Must bend his back and dig.
The things are mighty few on earth,
That wishes can attain.
Whate'er we want of any worth,
We've got to work to gain.
It matters not what goal you seek,
It's secret here reposes:
You've got to dig from week to week
To get Results or Roses.

--Edgar Guest

The wise home gardener will water his fruit trees well in July, August and September. Long, slow soakings are far superior to frequent short waterings. Fruit tree root systems, especially those in shallow or clay type soils, may suffer drought damage in July, August and September if water is not received. Remember, the fruit tree root system is usually twice the size of the limb spread. Water accordingly.

Michael Denesuk gave your editor some special rutabaga seeds this spring. I like rutabagas, have purchased many waxed ones in produce departments over the years but have never grown them. I'm sure grandfather Goldsworthy grew them in his "potato patch" at Soudan but I was too young to remember what the plants looked like. So, I planted one short row between rows of carrots and parsnips and carefully marked that row. Then I planted a few radish seeds in the row just as I regularly do in beet, carrot and parsnip rows as a device for marking the rows and getting double duty from the space.

The radishes grew quickly as expected. Most were O.K. but a few, all in one row, developed no bulbous base. "The leaves look a bit different, too," I thought as I discarded them. Then, "Oh! Oh! The 'bagies." The few left I coaxed along. Little did I realize they would grow to be like Gulliver among the Lilliputians. Those leaves now have a spread of over three feet. I fear some carrots and parsnips are doomed.

Visit the Fragrance Garden. See the sunbathers.



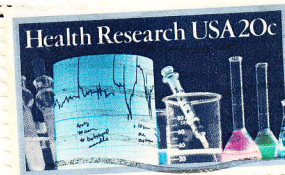
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