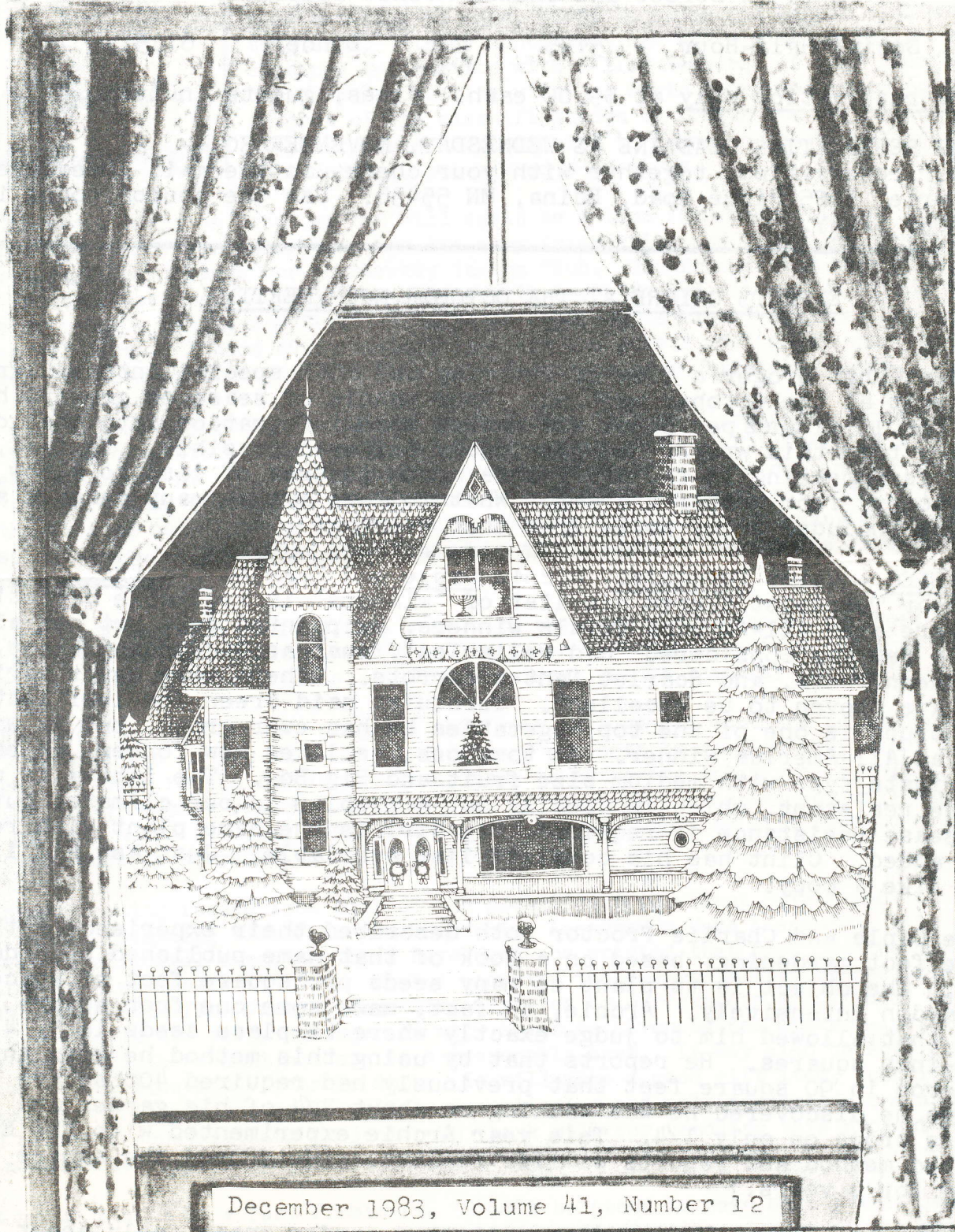


The Garden Spray



December 1983, Volume 41, Number 12

IT'S JUST AROUND THE CORNER

THE MEN'S GARDEN CLUB OF MINNEAPOLIS ANNUAL CHRISTMAS PARTY
- Continuing our fine traditions but at our new location -

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 6, 1983 -- LAKE HARRIET UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
(49th Street and Chowen Avenue South)

Social Half-Hour 5:45 Dinner 6:15

By reservation only at \$9.00 each. Wives, guests invited.

HURRY, THE RESERVATION DEADLINE IS WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 30 --
so get your reservation, together with your check, in the mail immediately
to Vic Lowrie, 5025 Ridge Road, Edina, MN 55436. Use the coupon found in
the November SPRAY.

EXPERTS GALORE AT THE OCTOBER MGCM MEETING

by Andy Marlow

President Chet Groger's idea of reviving the MGCM special interest groups bore fruit at the October meeting. Four panels of seasoned growers held forth for 15 minutes per panel and packed more information into that quarter-hour than this writer had previously believed possible. In fact, this report is appearing in the SPRAY this month instead of last to allow time for recovery from writer's cramp. What follows are as many details as could be included in my notes from that evening:

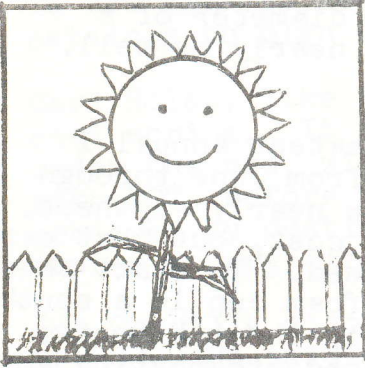
VEGETABLES - Clint Turnquist, Archie Caple and Charlie Proctor
Professor Turnquist shared his list of "winners" in vegetable varieties. Many were also All-America Trials winners, he pointed out, but not all. Quite a few are considered "old reliables", such as Tendercrop beans, Ruby Queen beets, and Scarlet Nantes carrots. Others were newer varieties that have proven to be excellent. Turnquist said Green Ice leaf lettuce from Burpee is one of the top vegetables he has ever grown, but it was never an All-America winner. In tomatoes, he likes New Yorker, an early, determinate type with medium size fruit and Big Boy. The latter is not disease resistant, which is usually not a problem in our climate, but if disease resistance is required, Big Girl is the same plant with resistance added. Clint has his complete list available. Just ask him if you'd like a copy.

Archie Caple and Charlie Proctor both described their experience with square foot gardening, based on a book of that name published by Rodale Press. The object is to plant so many seeds per square foot of space and garden intensively. Archie, in fact, made some one foot square lattices that allowed him to judge exactly where to place seeds in 3, 4, 5, and 6-inch squares. He reports that by using this method he grew the same crop in 90 square feet that previously had required 400 square feet. He says he discovered he was walking on about 3/4 of his garden and raising crops on only 1/4. This year Archie experimented with the European bed method and reports similar results. (He's used the square foot system for 2 years.)

Charlie recently has moved and has limited garden space--only about 120 square feet. He used the square foot method to get as much out of this area as possible. Most crops were reasonably successful, he said,

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JUST AMONG US GARDENERS



Another holiday season is upon us and our outdoor gardening season is ended. The Minnesota Theater of Seasons is still functioning, but gardeners seem to find a way to be involved in gardening activities in all seasons. Even though they may not garden indoors, there are plans to make for next year, seed catalogs to scan, seeds to order and garden club meetings to attend. Winter month meetings are a time to learn and to exchange information with fellow members. A good example is our November meeting with Dr. Orrin Turnquist covering the subject of the classifications of fruits and vegetables and the many surprises when compared to common opinion. If you missed that meeting, you missed a good one.

Our Christmas Party on December 6th will again be a time for celebration of the conclusion of another gardening year and the many friendships and rewarding experiences we have realized through our membership in the Club. The friendships made within the Club are long lasting and very special for both husbands and wives. We have a real sense of being a family and Christmas time is a chance to experience that feeling at our annual party. I hope every member, his wife and guests will enjoy sharing in that feeling on December 6th. It will be a good start for your Christmas season.

I am sure that every President of the Men's Garden Club of Minneapolis since 1942 has felt a sense of satisfaction at the conclusion of the club year. Starting with committee volunteers at the January meeting and whenever help is needed in any area, members are more than willing to serve whenever and wherever they are needed. Projects are the life of our Club and members enjoy joining together in our many gardening programs. An incoming President soon finds his job is made easier by the fine cooperation of the Board and the members.

Some new programs were started this year with the help and advice of our Past Presidents. This group of men is invaluable to the Club in an advisory capacity, but they are also key men in many club activities. A Club President can be thankful for their support.

We may have started more new programs this year than we can continue to support. However, my idea was to try some new or different projects to see how they might be accepted. It will remain for future Presidents to determine which programs will work best for the Club. Member response is the key. If you like a program, you will support it. If a project needs funding, the Board and the Budget Committee will need to evaluate the need for funds as compared to other programs.

One project being funded from part of the proceeds of our Plant Sale & Auction this year is the reissuing of our former "Gardening Lessons We Have Learned". Bill Hull headed the editorial committee that developed and printed that book for the MGCA convention in Minneapolis in 1968. He has accepted the responsibility of reediting and republishing this fine book of gardening articles by our members and it will be ready for Club use in the early spring. It will again be given to new members and will be made available to present members at a reasonable cost. It may also be sold at such events as our Flower & Vegetable Show. It will make a good gift item, much like our calendars. This project could well be a continuing and self-supporting one and might even become a money-raising project. We thank Bill for handling this project and ask all members to support him in his quest for material for the book.

Next month I will be a Past President. I will be proud to have been a President of the Men's Garden Club of Minneapolis. It is a fine organization of some of the best men and the best gardeners in the Minneapolis area. To be associated with them is a privilege. I am very grateful for that privilege.

—Chet Groger

EXPERTS from page 2

except the root crops, which were wiped out by standing water during our unusually wet spring. Charlie also grew Burpless cucumbers up the side of his house. They yielded many 8"-9" fruits about the diameter of a silver dollar. Those growing in the garden did not do nearly as well.

ANNUALS - Dave Johnson, Stan Crist and Leon Snyder

Dave Johnson called the fibrous rooted begonia the "greatest annual I grow". He cited as reasons the fact that they flower from June through frost, they are disease and bug resistant and will grow nearly anywhere, in sun or shade. He says the main drawback to them is cost, but that can be cut somewhat by growing your own from cuttings or seed. To start them from cuttings, put a leaf and stem in water in a styrofoam cup in a south window with full sun. They should begin to get roots in about a month. Transplant them to Jiffy Mix and, when firmly established, to potting soil. In December, take enough cuttings again for your summer plants and get them going under lights. Seeds should be started the last week in January also under lights. Dave puts the lights practically on top of the flats, which are filled with Jiffy Mix. He grows about 1000 begonias a year using this method. Dave also pointed out that winter is a good time to plan next year's garden. He cautions against just going out to buy plants in the spring and trying to see where they'll fit in.

Stan Crist put in a good word for the Nicki Red hybrid nicotiana. It's an All-America winner that comes in lime green, white, pink and rose in addition to red. It stands 18"-24" high and blooms from July through frost, giving excellent color to the garden. Stan's only regret is that hybridizing has bred the fragrance out of the plant. He also said, "I had excellent experience with Small World Cherry zinnias. They grow very uniform in height, about 14", are in constant bloom, and make a compact, dense, showy bed. I started spraying them about once a week beginning August 1st to prevent mildew, but I am not sure this is necessary. In the fall, when other flowers often have seen their best days, these zinnias continue to be just as nice as ever, right up to the first frost."

This year Leon Snyder started some 4000 annual seedlings of 100 different varieties. He shared his experiences with some lesser known plants. Hunnemannia is the Mexican Poppy. It is a yellow flower and has dark green, divided leaves. Snyder reported that it began blooming in July and was still in full bloom at the time of his report. It makes an excellent cut flower, too. Polygenum Capitatus has a little round bell of a head that's very showy. It stands only about 4" high. In warmer climates it's a perennial, but it's best grown as an annual here. Browallia is a shade-loving annual that's grown by florists usually for window boxes and hanging pots. It is mostly blue-flowered, but there are white varieties. Leon suggests growing it instead of impatiens.

ROSES - Jerry Olson, Carl Holst and Bob Churilla

Jerry Olson was in the process of tipping his 550 roses at the time of the October MGCM meeting. He warned against bringing them up before April 15th. The prospect of an early spring got him started last year just in time for all his plants to get caught in the April snowstorm. He said this caused him problems all season long, but he fed them alfalfa meal in June, July and August and used an alfalfa alcohol spray twice a month. The latter, he said, "worked miracles". He said a stem came up from the root union with 25 buds on it. The alcohol is called Triacantanol and can be ordered from William R. Collier Orchids, 7107 Arlington Avenue, Riverside, CA 92503. The cool, wet, windy spring and hot late summer all brought their problems. Then a wet fall brought black spot. Jerry says Phalthan is still the best for black spot, but Funginex

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can be used. He says October is the time to dormant spray the roses and use the Minnesota tip method of wintering. Winter, according to Jerry, is the time to read books to see what you did wrong this year and to read catalogs to plan for next year.

Carl Holst, like Jerry, was plagued by the rose midge during the wet, cool spring. It is a greenhouse pest that escaped. It sticks the stem under the bud, withering the bud. Carl said it used to be controlled with DDT, before that chemical was banned. Now the best control is achieved by dusting the ground with diazanon to get the larva. He says that's a very effective method.

Bob Churilla also put in a strong pitch for using the Minnesota tip method. He said to make sure the plants were well watered before tipping. He also suggested using a poly twine, which will not rot away over the winter.

PERENNIALS - Fred Glasoe and Jerry Shannon

Fred Glasoe offered a couple of ideas on what he likes to do with perennials: mix tulips, perennials and annuals; make some old fashioned flower beds out in the middle of the yard; don't just tuck the border up against a building; make sure to time your perennials so that you have some bloom through the entire season; and, plant in bunches so that people can see the color. Fred likes a lot of the old standbys. Peonies, he says, belong in the garden not off by themselves somewhere. Use irises, but don't get them from friends. There are too many great new varieties, plus you can avoid iris borers, too. Daylilies can be timed to bloom from May through September. Fred emphasized that lilies should be planted with pockets of several bulbs in one location. Phlox, with all its disease problems, still delivers great color in late summer. Make sure to cut off the seed pods, though. Fred says chrysanthemums should be grown only one or two years in the garden before you take cuttings, rip them out and replant from the cuttings.

Jerry Shannon prefers to winter mums in a cold cellar. In December he forces them out of dormancy and takes cuttings for spring. He says many varieties will winter well enough in the garden, but it's important to get the cover off them right away. Mums do have trouble surviving spring. Jerry also suggests mulching all perennials with oak leaves after the ground has a little crust on it from the frost. This keeps the mice from burrowing in to get your prize specimens. In spring, get that mulch off as early as possible--about April 1. Also in the fall, cut off lily tops; cut iris back to about 3 inches and mulch lightly; and, cut all dead material from peonies and remove completely from the garden to prevent disease carry-over. Jerry suggested surveying your yard for micro-climates. Areas with a canopy of leaves, for instance, will be protected from the frost. That means some things will grow in one part of the yard, but not another. Experiment to find the right match of plant and location.

One of the principal reasons for the existence of MGCM is to share gardening knowledge, usually on an informal basis before and after meetings. October's special interest panels not only gave the panelists a chance to share their knowledge in a more structured way, but allowed everyone else to ask questions and make comments, too. It was a very productive evening.

Our emblem shows neighbors conversing over the back yard fence. Are you neighborly? And, have you invited your gardening neighbor to an MGCM meeting?

THIS AND THAT

The SPRAY is early this month for several reasons:

1. The December meeting is a week early.
2. The printshop is usually closed Thanksgiving weekend.
3. And, (Maybe the best reason) the editor will be out of town until December 1.

SO, This gives us another chance to remind you:

1. To make Christmas Party reservations, and to look around for a door prize to bring along to go under the tree.
2. To remember Howard Klier's invitation to make wreaths, etc. at his place of business, 5901 Nicollet Avenue, on Friday evening November 25.
3. To send your dues together with the information sheet from the November SPRAY to treasurer George McCollough.

When Dave Johnson was MGCM president his column FROM THE TERRACES regaled us regularly with accounts of his never ending war against racoons and his (and their) monthly tally. The editor of the CORT-LAND SOD BUSTERS equally outraged fought back less successfully. We quote:

"When last we "discussed" those hungry critters, they had left the immature ears of our Kandy Corn. Not to be outdone (??), we ground up plenty of hot peppers in our blender, mixed it with strong, soapy water and sprayed the remaining ears thoroughly. When the corn was ready to eat, we again discovered that they had beat us to it. We saw many ears pulled down, slightly broken into (too hot?) and left to the bugs. They were persistent, however, and got some that had been washed off by rain. We ended up with about 18 ears, and maybe 6 ears of Silver Queen. From now on we will raid Mel Tinkers corn patch."

THE HOUSTON MGC now has a bulletin board available at each meeting. Their bulletin advises members, "If you want to sell, trade, buy, or give away, or receive plants etc., get your notice on the bulletin board and/or look at it for bargains. If you have any show ribbons that you no longer want, bring them to the meeting. Don't forget the magazine exchange or the seed exchange for the next meeting."

The Houston, Texas MGC sells plants at their garden show. At other meetings they have a "Show and Tell" time, but this time it is "Show and Sell".

NEW MEMBERS

Michael A. Ross 535-7247
3809 Xenia Ave. N.
Crystal, MN 55422

Dr. Charles Thiesenhusen 489-8061
1764 Simpson Ave.
St. Paul, MN 55113

Hermann H. Strachauer 835-0611
4575 W. 80 Circle #105
Bloomington, MN 55437

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**REMEMBER
DUES are DUE**



ATTRACT BIRDS AND HAVE FUN IN YOUR BACK YARD



FOOD

BIRDS ATTRACTED

Sun Flower Seeds and
Sun Flower Screenings

Cardinal, Purple Finch, Goldfinch, Tufted Titmouse, Chickadee, White-Breasted Nuthatch, Red-breasted Nuthatch, Evening Grosbeak, Blackbirds (Winter & Summer Feeding), Pine Siskin, Junco, Blue Jay. Also the following migratory birds - Towhee, Harris's Sparrow, White-Throated Sparrow, Fox Sparrow, White-Crowned Sparrow, Rose-Breasted Grosbeak.

Chick Scratch

All the above sparrows and Tree Sparrow, Junco, Cardinal, Chickadee, Titmouse, Red-Breasted and White-Breasted Nuthatch, Redpoll. (Brown Thrasher & Song Sparrow in summer only.)

Corn (Cracked, Whole, or on Cob)

Cardinal, Pheasant, Blue Jay, (Brown Thrasher & Mourning Dove in summer only.) Blackbirds also like corn.

Peanut Butter

Golden-Crowned Kinglet, Woodpeckers, Chickadee, Junco, Titmouse, Red-Breasted & White-Breasted Nuthatch, Cardinal, Brown Creeper. (Oriole & Brown Thrasher in summer only.)

Suet

Golden-Crowned Kinglet, Chickadee, Brown Creeper, Junco, Red & White-Breasted Nuthatch, Cardinal, Woodpeckers. (Catbird, Oriole, Brown Thrasher, & Red-Headed Woodpecker, summer only.)

Bacon Drippings

Woodpeckers, Chickadee, Red-Breasted & White-Breasted Nuthatch.

Raisins

Robin, Thrasher, Catbird, Waxwings, Cardinal.

Oranges (Summer Only)

Oriole & Rose-Breasted Grosbeak.

Honey or Sugar Water (Summer Only)

Oriole, Rose-Breasted Grosbeak, Catbird, Hummingbird, some Warblers in late summer.

Grit

All the above birds

Winter feeding, once started, should never be stopped. The birds form a "pattern", and a discontinuation would cause them to starve. Melon, squash, pumpkin seeds, and table scraps are eagerly gobbled up, no matter what the season.

NESTING MATERIAL

Horse hair, string, yarn, hemp rope, separated & fluffed up. Length 4 to 5 inches to prevent entangling & strangling. Cotton, narrow strands of tissue packing paper.

MORE ABOUT SEEDS

(excerpts from THE SECATEUR by John Mansnerus)

Seeds are marvelous things. In each seed there resides the substance for making a complete plant. Even more marvelous is that each seed started with a single, microscopic cell resulting from the union of a pollen grain and an egg, and within that one cell is all the genetic information for making the plant that makes the seed, and the precise directions for doing so.

For most plants, seeds are the only reliable means for reproduction, the goal of all plants. Hence seeds are designed and programmed to germinate when place and time are favorable. Some plants have tiny seeds (2 million begonia seeds per ounce) which are easily scattered by reason of small size, and there are many, so that at least a few will survive. At the other extreme is a kind of coconut that weighs 50 lbs. and contains enough substance to insure seedling survival under extreme competitive conditions.

Fortunately, the seeds of most of our common vegetables and annual flowers as purchased have been bred and treated so as to require no special germinating procedures beyond planting warm season species such as melons and beans in warm soil. Exceptional requirements are usually noted on the seed packet.

Seed packets state the percentage of seed that is supposed to germinate, and sometimes we get little or no germination. How come? Germination tests show which seeds will sprout under favorable conditions.

Nature is quite prolific in producing seed because seed is a fragile thing. Seed in the soil is destroyed by insects, fungi and bacteria. A dry spell during germination can cause death of the sprout, or heavy rains which flood the soil, can smother the seed. A cold spell can delay germination until something better happens. Germination tests describe the condition of the seed at the time it was packaged. Seed stored under warm humid conditions tends to deteriorate, and improperly stored seed will show poor germination.

There are several things a gardener can do to get a good stand of seedlings. The most common method is to sow a lot of seed, hope for the best, and thin out the seedlings before they get too big. A better method is to sow thinly the seed indoors in flats of sterile soil or peat-lite mix. Most seeds will sprout well at indoor temperatures, watering can be controlled, and the ravages of seed enemies is greatly reduced. Lacking indoor facilities, or if the crop isn't suited to indoor planting, the gardener should use a well prepared outdoor seedbed, treating seed with a protectant against fungi and insects, and delay the planting until the weather is fit for the crop. Space the seeds so that the seedlings can be thinned without disturbing the survivors.

Will seeds keep from one year to the next? Yes, if they are kept dry and cool. Place in a closed plastic bag or sealed jar, most seeds will keep for several years in a refrigerator. Onion and parsnip seed is ordinarily short lived, but these can be stored indefinitely in the freezer.

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Return to
THE GARDEN SPRAY of MGCM, INC.
Edwin C. Culbert, Editor
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* * * * *



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