

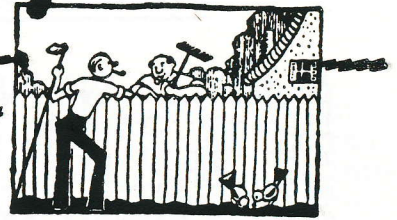


The Garden Spray

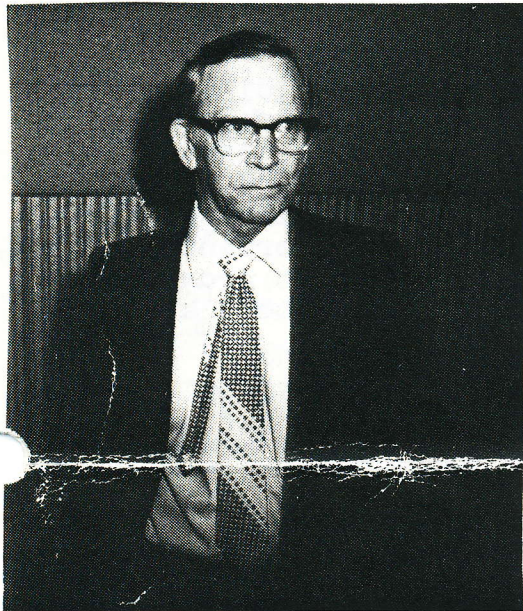
BULLETIN OF THE MEN'S GARDEN CLUB OF MINNEAPOLIS, INC.

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

November 1981, Volume 39, Number 11



NEW IN 1981 MEMBERS



Raymond D. Campbell



Albert J. Rahlenbeck

NEXT MGCM MEETING TUESDAY NOVEMBER 10th

We've found a new place!
LAKE HARRIET UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
49th Street and Chowen Avenue South.

We've rolled back the price to \$5.00

There'll be an election of officers for 1982
and a talk on the

HISTORY OF THE LAKE HARRIET ROSE GARDENS-PARK
by

MARY LERMAN, Coordinator of Horticultural Programs
for the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board.
Ms. Lerman is a graduate in horticulture from
the University of Minnesota.

* * * *

WE ARE INVITED TO KLIER'S

MGCM member Howard Klier extends his annual invitation to all MGCM members to gather for an informal evening at his place of business, Klier's Nursery, 5901 Nicollet Avenue, on Friday November 27th (The day after Thanksgiving). Come any time after 6 P.M. Wives and friends are included in the invitation.

We will spend the evening making Christmas wreaths, centerpieces, etc. for our own use. Help will be available for neophytes so inexperience need not keep you away. Bring your own materials or purchase there as needed. Howard even promises refreshments.

GARDENING HELP. Have you wasted time visiting garden centers or thumbing through catalogs looking for a particular plant? The answer could be a new guide bringing together sources for more than 300 plants, seeds and accessories. Send a self-addressed business-size envelope, with two 20-cent stamps, to Mailorder Association of Nurserymen, Dept. MA, 210 Cartwright Blvd., Massapequa Park, N.Y. 11762

Have you read page 1? Did you miss the reminder to send in your reservation card? It wasn't there, of course. Here it is.

GET YOUR RESERVATION CARD IN AT ONCE. NOW!
Also, DON'T BE A "NO SHOW".

MERVIN EISEL'S TALK AT THE OCTOBER MEETING WAS STIMULATING
by Andy Marlow

If you have ever wondered how craftsmen have fitted magnificent ship models into tiny bottles, the arrival of the bottle terrarium in the early 1970's must have been an equal mystery. At the October meeting of MGCM, Mervin Eisel cleared away the mystery as far as the terrarium is concerned. Describing himself as "an old perennial from the Arboretum", Eisel provided listeners with just one of his qualifications for speaking about bottle terrariums. He is also the author of the University of Minnesota's Agricultural Extension Service fact sheet on the subject.

Actually, the 1970's marked the rebirth of the terrarium according to Eisel. In the 1850's an English doctor, Nathaniel Ward, discovered a fern growing in a covered container. After he proved that plants actually thrived in an enclosed environment, "Wardian cases", as they were called, were used to bring all manner of tropical plants suited for the indoor environment back to England on the long sailing voyages of that era. The Victorians, in fact, created all sorts of fancy jars, bottles and cases in which to grow their plants. Then, for some reason, the practice died out until about a decade ago.

Eisel cited several good reasons for planting and maintaining a bottle terrarium. Among them were:

- They require a minimum of care, needing only moderate light, some water every few months and an occasional pruning.
- Plants are protected from dust.
- The natural condensation cycle in the bottle helps maintain humidity in our dry, winter homes.
- They are practically child proof and cat proof.
- They make a nice gift. (In fact, Eisel planned on taking his demonstration model from our meeting to a friend in the hospital.)
- It's the best use he can think of for old gallon jugs.

Eisel soon proceeded to demonstrate how simple it is to get all those plants, soil, moss and other necessities into a gallon jug. He prefers a container with some height since plants do have a tendency to grow upward. A somewhat loose-fitting cork is also required so that gases may pass in and out of the bottle.

Good tools are essential, but Eisel says the best ones are those you make yourself. He suggested a funnel with a hose attached, to pour soil onto the exact spot it's needed; a digger, basically a small spoon bent to fit in the bottle and attached to a dowel long enough to reach the bottom of the jug; a grabber on a dowel; and a pruning device. Also handy are a rod with a circular loop at one end and pieces of scrap metal bent to the bottle's shape for cleaning it.

A clean, dry bottle is essential. Pieces of moss, which Eisel collected himself, were rolled, put in the bottle, and then unrolled and arranged to make a nest for the drainage material and soil. Next Eisel used the funnel with hose to carefully place small chunks of charcoal in the bottom for

(continued on page 3)

drainage. Soil covered that. (Also carefully placed to keep the inside of the bottle clean.) Finally, the plants were placed and planted. Eisel recommends no more than 2 or 3 plants in a one gallon jug. He chose a box-wood and a dwarf leatherleaf fern, but many kinds of plants are adaptable to a bottle terrarium. A fairly complete list is included with U of M fact sheet #29, written by our speaker. The fact sheet is available from the Agricultural Extension Service or from a county agent.

Eisel encouraged those who build their own terrariums to plant the larger plants toward the center of the bottle, the medium sized plants further out and the low plants near the edge. He said the plantings should look natural and present a different scene from each viewing angle. He also urged following a theme, such as woodland, bog, etc. And, oh yes, the moss forming the soil nest should be folded over the soil after planting and additional pieces of moss positioned to cover all the soil for a nice green, growing look.

Finally, Eisel says, add a scant amount of water, no more than a quarter cup. If no condensation begins to show in a few days, add a little more water. But, too much water initially can be fatal to your efforts, so be careful. Then all that remains is to cork the bottle loosely, put it in moderate light such as an east window, and get ready for friends to admire your work.

Mervin Eisel made the job look easy for us, but he has built more than 50 terrariums. He admitted that his first required the inspiration of men landing on the moon and took him some six hours to do. However, two 5 gallon terrariums built as many as five years ago and brought to the meeting by Eisel are still flourishing; evidence that even a few hours spent will be rewarded for many years to come.

1982 MGCA CALENDAR SALES

Our first annual calendar sale was an overwhelming success, thanks to the fine support and cooperation of almost every member of our club. Top honors go to Sherm Pinkham, who sold 600 to persons outside the club. That equals our original goal of 5 per member in the club.

Our total sales were 1602 calendars, which included 8 orders from members for printed calendars for a total of 410. The remaining 592 calendars were bought by members in quantities from 1 to 20. Our order may well be the largest club order in the country and averages 13.23 per member. Total sales were \$3,250.00.

As a result of our fine response, our treasury is richer by \$480.60. This is about half as much as we make on a spring plant sale with less work. It amounts to \$4.60 per member on the average and points up the fact that, when a member buys 5 calendars (our national goal), he is contributing \$1.50 to the club. The original aim of the calendar sales program was to produce a regular annual income for both clubs and MGCA in an effort to hold down or even reduce annual dues. It seems to be working, both in our club and on a national scale and next year should show even larger profits.

I thank all of you for your fine cooperation in ordering your share and for sending your checks. It has been a rewarding experience and a good occasion to visit with each of you by phone.

--Chet Groger

NEW MEMBER

William G. Haddeland 929-9560
5404 Abbott Place, Edina, MN. 55410

RED DELPHINIUMS
by Phil Smith

(Having seen the spectacular red delphiniums in his townhouse garden on a 1980 summer garden tour, we asked Phil to write some comments on these unusual specimens for The GARDEN SPRAY.)

I have grown the "red" delphs from seed at various times in the last 8 to 10 years. The color and quality of the plants have consistently improved over that period. In the Delphinium Society, they are referred to as "University Hybrids" or, more usually, as simply red delphiniums. The colors range through deep blood red, geranium red, dark plum, orange-scarlet and shades of pink. However, each group of seeds produces a good number of deep or bright red colors.

The University Hybrids are the creation of Dr. R. A. H. "Bob" Legro, a well-known plant breeder and horticulturist at Wageningen University in Holland. He usually provides excess seed each year to the Delphinium Society for sale to members. Some years it is scarce and other years plenty is available. Directions for ordering the seed appear in the Yearbook published by the Society.

Dr. Legro has been working on this project since 1953. His goal has been to produce delphiniums in a good red color with a form and quality equal to the elatum hybrids (regular perennial delphiniums), and which could be easily grown or propagated for the popular cut flower market in Holland and Europe. He has achieved outstanding success, but because of propagation problems, trade introduction is still perhaps 5 years away.

There are two species of wild delphiniums with bright red florets; *D. cardinale* (deep scarlet) and *D. nudicaule* (orange-red). They are both native to the mountains of California. Their color is great, but, like many wild flowers, the florets are small and sparse and the species do not propagate well in cultivation.

Dr. Legro originally crossed these two species, and their hybrid (D.N.C., for short) had features of both parents. To work toward the better form and quality he sought, he crossed the D.N.C. hybrid, containing 16 chromosomes, with an elatum hybrid, containing 32 chromosomes, by doubling the chromosomes in the D.N.C. seedlings using colchicine treatment. The first breakthrough came in 1958, with a seedling having some of the good form of an elatum. The work has continued with progress on genetic variability, plant and floret form, and constitution. At least some further work needs to be done on propagation, although there has been considerable recent progress. The plants grown from Dr. Legro's seed are generally sterile, permitting him to control the source. Those that do set seed generally produce nothing of interest. A good nurseryman can propagate choice plants from cuttings, but this is generally not done in Europe. It is more common in the United Kingdom.

Funding for Dr. Legro's red delphinium project, one of several he supervises, has come from the University, government and trade sources, but he has been in danger of losing financial support several times because of the many years involved in the project. However, recent information is that Dr. Legro believes the project can be completed in the next five years.

I have had generally good luck germinating the University Hybrid seed. Most delphinium seed gives a 90% germination rate. Dr. Legro says his
(continued on page 5)

Christmas Party

Thursday Evening, December 10, 1981
Mount Olivet Lutheran Church

Social Hour - 6:15 p.m.
Dinner - 6:45 p.m.

You will be pleased to know that once again our Christmas Party is going to be held at Mount Olivet.

Punch will be served at 6:15, giving you a half hour before dinner is served, to reminisce with old friends and get acquainted with new friends.

The dinner will feature our traditional PARADE OF TURKEYS, with one turkey for each table. Please indicate on the reservation form whether or not you would like to be a turkey carver.

Entertainment will be provided by the Spring Lake Park High School Chorus.

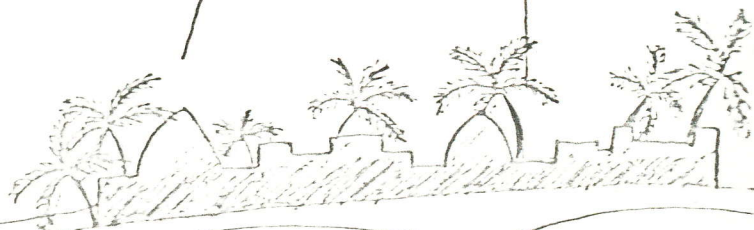
There will be a number of door prizes awarded. In addition, each lady present will be given a poinsettia to take home.

Wives are always invited, but you may also bring other guests as well.

The cost will be \$8.50 per person.

In order to facilitate planning, it would be very helpful if you would make your reservation as soon as possible, but in no case later than December 3rd.

Please detach the reservation form below and mail it promptly, with your check.



seed usually germinates only about 50%, but I have always had 50% or more. This year, however, I only got 2 seedlings from a packet of 30 seeds.

The form of the better U.H. plants compares favorably with regular elatum hybrids. The florets are generally well-spaced on a full spike and about 2" in size compared to 3" or more for good elatums. The U.H. plants tend to be somewhat shorter, about 3', which is great for staking. The spikes have a strong, wiry stem with good foliage. It is said the U.H. plants do not have as strong a constitution nor are they as long-lived as the English strains. This seemed true 5 or 6 years ago, but of 10 plants I had last year, 9 came through the winter with no cover and virtually no snow.

Several MGCM members have asked about obtaining plants or seeds of the red delphinium. My seed simply is limited each year. As U. S. Vice-President of the Delphinium Society, I usually can get only 1 packet (25 or 30 seeds), as can other members of the Society. Accordingly, I recommend that those interested join the Delphinium Society and order seed when noted in the Yearbook. A membership check for \$5.00 may be sent to: C. R. Edwards, 11 Long Grove, Seer Green, Beaconsfield, Bucks., England, HP9 2YN. Airmail postage for seed once 40¢ per 1/2 ounce is now higher.

Incidentally, membership in the Society is very worthwhile for anyone interested in the genus. Either the Yearbook of 100 pages or the free packet of regular delphinium seed is easily worth the membership fee. The opportunity to purchase the U.H. seed and seed of other hand-made crosses is a bonus.

I have planned on propagating some of my plants by cuttings to provide to MGCM members. I have successfully propagated them when I had a desirable place and exposure at my previous home. However, I do not have a very good set-up for doing so at my townhouse. I do plan to work on asexual propagation this fall.

It should be noted that the propagation of red delphiniums by seed or asexual means for any commercial purposes is prohibited. When the variety is introduced to the trade, Dr. Legro expects to obtain proprietary rights. The seed obtained through the Society is for trial or test purposes only.

The red delphiniums have given me a great deal of pleasure, and I suggest interested members give them a try. The quality is now much superior to that of even 5 years ago. If anyone reading this needs more information or assistance in germinating U.H. seed they may obtain, feel free to contact me. I feel I have a proven germination method and would even be willing to germinate seed for you.

YOU CAN'T KEEP A GOOD MAN DOWN

Bill Hull is the author of a new book, just published. It is "Aunt Zettie's Wonderful Salve". (Garden Publishing Company, 6833 Creston Road, Edina, 55435...\$12.95, plus \$1 handling and 65¢ Minn. sales tax.) His last major work was "Public Relations for the Pharmacist", published by J. B. Lippincott.

In this book are stories of people who cleared and settled the land in Cooper county, Missouri, who participated in the Cherokee Strip Run in Oklahoma, who helped build a virgin county a century ago. Here is the story of Richard B. Hull and his wife who left North Carolina for Missouri, but it also concerns at least eighteen other families.

Eighteen vignettes punctuate the book with descriptions of period events
(continued on page 6)

in early America. "Why I Hate War" is the poignant story of a young boy following an uncle's footsteps; "Uncle Neil and the Alky" concerns an old gentleman's confusion over the smell of whiskey in the front seat of a car and the radiator's alcohol boiling over. "Aunt Zettie's Wonderful Salve", from which the book's title came, tells of a home remedy which cured almost anything - and provides the recipe.

"Wild Persimmon Pudding" describes the gourmet dessert made from this native fruit, a recipe passed down a hundred years in the family and said to have come originally from an Indian friend. There are fourteen more of these vignettes throughout the book as well as 200 photos, many of which are anti-ques.

You can read about Uncle Arth whose three center fingers had been accidentally chopped off as an infant, yet who lived normally and became "The Man Who Built Fires Under Model T Fords" or about the tree upon which the giant urinated and how it fascinated the children. Also of Uncle Walter's mad dash from California to Missouri to attend a sibling's funeral.

Hull says, "I made my first family tree forty-five years ago on brown wrapping paper. Then I started interviewing a dying generation - my grandfather's. This led me to Hulls in Indiana, Michigan, Florida and North Carolina. It led me to the deck of Old Ironsides where I thrilled at the plaque certifying its captain had been an earlier William Hull.

Bill, who has recently retired from McGraw-Hill Publications company, after thirty-three years, started as a printer's devil on a small weekly newspaper. He's a charter member of the Minnesota Press Club and has received many professional awards.

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

MR. W. H. HULL
6833 CRESTON ROAD
EDINA, MN 55435

IT'S TOLEDO, OHIO FOR 1982 -
August 7-11 at University of Toledo
Help us celebrate OUR 50TH!