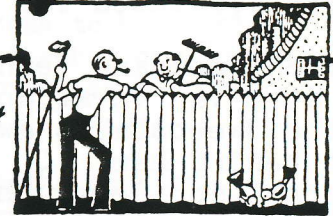




The Garden Spray

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



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

October 1983, Volume 41, Number 10

NEXT MGCM Meeting October 11th, 1983

Lake Harriet United Methodist Church, 49th St. & Chowen Ave. S.
Dinner 6 P.M. Price \$5.00 Program 7 P.M.

ROUND TABLE DISCUSSION: THE PAST SUMMER; PREPARATION FOR WINTER

VEGETABLES: Archie Caple, Charles Proctor, Orrin Turnquist

ANNUALS: Stan Crist, Dave Johnson, Leon Snyder

PERENNIALS (Including dahlias, iris, lilies, peonies): Fred Glasoe, Jerry Shannon

ROSES: Bob Churilla, Carl Holst, Jerry Olson

The meeting will be open for discussion and questions following the panel.

GET YOUR RESERVATION CARD BACK TO BOB CHURILLA PROMPTLY!

* * * * *

DO YOU WANT TO BE INCLUDED IN OUR NEW MGCM BOOK?

At its September meeting, our Board requested and authorized we re-edit and re-publish GARDENING LESSONS WE'VE LEARNED, the book of about 80 pages which we published 17 years ago for the Minneapolis MGCA convention.

Every article in the original is being considered for inclusion in the new volume after being updated and perhaps completely rewritten; other original articles have been requested from a few members as ideas have occurred to us. But, the point is, the door is open to you as much as to anyone else.

So - here is your invitation - don't say you weren't asked: Every member is invited to submit an article within the next few weeks. It can be on any gardening subject you wish, although it would be wise to call me first to alert me of your subject, so two people don't cover the same area. Your article, if typed, should be about one page long, single-spaced, and somewhat of a "how to do" type. After they are received we will have to make some decisions as to which are most appropriate and how fat a book we can afford to produce but chances are good that your article would be included if you have anything to say.

We're committed. We are going to publish the book again - and here is your chance to be included. We used the last one for 17 years! Don't worry about style or anything like that. Just sit down and write from your heart and we'll do the rest. This is an offer you can't refuse, we hope.

-Bill Hull

Every Member Sponsors A New Member

REPORT ON MGCM FLOWER and VEGETABLE SHOW of AUGUST 20, 21

Chairman Bob Smith reports that 25 exhibitors made a total of exactly 400 entries; 261 individual flowers, 84 vegetables, 43 hanging baskets and potted plants, and 12 exhibits. Big exhibitors were Carleton Nelson (54) Jerry Shannon (42), Vern Carlson (41) and Bob Smith (31). Those four MGCM members accounted for 42% of the total entries.

Jerry Shannon and Vern Carlson each had 8 blue ribbons in the flower section, with Stan Van Vorst and Carleton Nelson accounting for 7 each. Jerry Shannon won the Sweepstakes award in the flower division with Vern Carlson only a point behind him. On the vegetable side Bob Smith had 13 blue ribbons, Vern Carlson 5 and Jerry Shannon 4. Bob Smith repeated as the Sweepstakes winner in the vegetable division.

COURT OF HONOR

FLOWERS

Henry Halvorson - delphinium
Vern Carlson - gladiolus
Darwin Price - zinnia
Robert L. Smith - celosia
George McCollough - rose
Stan Van Vorst - vinca basket
Vern Carlson - fern
Vern Carlson - gladiolus
Burton Deane - petunia
Jerry Shannon

GRAND CHAMPION
NATIONAL AWARD
SWEEPSTAKES

VEGETABLES

Bob Smith - leek
Bob Smith - potatoes
Walt Schmidt - onions
Carleton Nelson - peppers
Bob Smith - plums

Bob Smith - potatoes
Ralph Calloway - tomatoes
Bob Smith

FOUR GLORIOUS GUYS PROVIDE PERENNIAL INFORMATION. 126 DON'T!

Boy, am I persuasive. I'm proud of my powers to motivate people to action. But I sure hit rock bottom in asking you fellows to tell me of your recommended perennial. Please do it now. We really want a large response to this and will probably include the answers in our republished book on gardening.

All you need do is think of your 1983 garden, or go walk through it, remembering your great perennials. Then write me a brief note saying: "I think everyone should have a _____ (perennial) in his garden because it _____." Finish the sentence, maybe make it two sentences with such thoughts as It's "easy to grow", "dependable and bug free", "takes minimum winter protection", "doesn't spread all over the place", "has a long blooming period", "has a pleasant scent", "its unusual blossom is truly unique", "it always stops visitors", "it has a perfect height", "it provides good cut flowers" or -- oh, well, you get the picture.

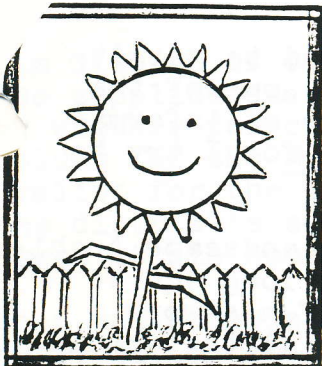
Think how you would say this to a friend who is just starting a new perennial bed and doesn't know what to put in it. Soon, pretty please?

-Bill Hull, 6833 Creston Road, Edina, MN 55435

ADVANCE NOTICE

"Dues shall be payable in advance on December 1, and shall become delinquent if not paid by January 1, ... A delinquent member shall not be entitled to receive the publications of this club or of affiliated societies."
-- By-Laws, Art. VIII, Sec. 2

JUST AMONG US GARDENERS



Based on the information forwarded to us from the Weather Bureau by Special Jim Gilbert Delivery, we could have our first frost on the night of our October meeting. With October 12th as the average first frost date and October 20th as the date when we start putting our gardens to bed, this is a busy month for gardeners. Even with the hot dry summer, I hope that all of us can say that we enjoyed the summer in our gardens.

In working with MGCA calendar sales across the country, I have the chance to talk with many gardeners around the country.

MGCA members in lower Texas got some help from Hurricane Alicia in the form of rain to ease the drouth. Upper Texas was hurting. Alabama was awfully dry and hot and gardens were in trouble. As late as September 9th, Raleigh, North Carolina, hadn't had rain for over 60 days and gardens were burned from the heat and dried up. We are fortunate to have the temperate climate we enjoy here in Minnesota. Even though we had about 26 days in the 90's instead of the average 13, our gardens survived and even thrived with extra watering to offset the lack of rain for about 30 days. It could have been a lot worse.

With the advent of autumn and the return of our regular meetings in the church, we will get back to the educational meetings expected of our club. Our September meeting was a relaxed "get together again" event with a guest speaker covering such light topics as the winter predictions of the wooly bear caterpillar, the first signs of autumn and the winter migration of the Monarch butterfly. This was just the right tone for our first fall meeting.

Now, we will continue with a learning session at our October meeting where we can exchange information and learn from the members of our Special Interest Groups. Come prepared to ask questions on any gardening subject and bring a notebook to record the many ideas and bits of information you will find expressed at this meeting. It has been some time since we have had panel and floor discussion and this entire meeting will be devoted to it. Join in the discussion with your questions and any information you have that will help with the other fellows question.

We appreciate the cooperation from members again this year in the sale of MGCA calendars. Almost 100% of the membership participated and we should again make almost \$500. This helps hold our dues down to their present level and allows a little extra for club projects. There are still a few calendars available and, if extras are needed at Christmas time, we will try to provide them.

It is good to know that the four members who were on the disabled list last month are now "on the mend". Dale Durst and Fred Glasoe were at the September meeting and Dave Johnson is back to work and feeling fine. Sherm Pinkham is home and doing well after surgery. We all wish them a speedy return to good health.

Chet Groger

Mention MOBILE.....

MGCA 1984 CONVENTION

April 1-4

YOU SHOULD HAVE BEEN THERE

by Andy Marlow

The title above is the one-line review this writer was tempted to submit as his review of the presentation at the June MGCM meeting by one of the club's most noted members, Dr. Leon Snyder. The sheer volume of information shared by Dr. Snyder that evening weighed heavily on me for I try to make these little articles as complete as possible.

Dr. Snyder, Professor Emeritus of Horticultural Science and Landscape Architecture at the University of Minnesota, retired not all that long ago as Director of the University's Landscape Arboretum. As part of his work there, he was involved in developing and testing plant material that could withstand the rigors of our peculiar climate. In the last several years he's been translating the knowledge gained in that pursuit into a series of books on plants, trees, shrubs and, now, flowers especially suited for Northern gardens. His latest book, Flowers for Northern Gardens, was the theme for his presentation.

Dr. Snyder began by suggesting that while it's entirely possible to plan and plant a flower border using only perennials, he likes to use annuals to fill in those inevitable blank spots that develop as some early bloomers fade away. He proceeded to show us a small sampling of the many beautiful slides that make up the colored picture section of his book beginning, appropriately enough, with the earliest blooming perennial. The small, white SNOW DROP made it's appearance in his garden in February this year. It gets its name, of course, from the fact that it frequently pops up right through late snowfalls.

The first flower of May is usually the RUE ANEMONE, a lovely pink wildflower that may also be cultivated. The double flowering variety blooms a bit longer than the single type--up to six weeks. It doesn't produce any seed, though, and must be propagated vegetatively.

Another wildflower that blooms in May is the YELLOW LADY'S-SLIPPER. Unlike its cousin and our state flower, the PINK LADY'S-SLIPPER, it is easy to grow in almost any shady woods. Dr. Snyder noted that the PINK LADY'S-SLIPPER has grown well at the Arboretum and that a clump of over 50 blooms can be found at the end of the Arboretum bog trail each spring.

Toward the end of May and beginning in June, PEONIES come into bloom. There are hundreds of named cultivars and by choosing several with different blooming times, the show can be sustained for up to six weeks. The Japanese types and other single flowered varieties bloom earliest.

To the surprise of many, GOLDENROD was among the slides shown by Dr. Snyder. He said that, contrary to popular belief, goldenrod pollen does not cause hay fever. It is a very heavy pollen carried away by bees and other pollinating insects. It does catch RAGWEED pollen, however, and should only be grown in a garden where ragweed does not grow.

Those are just a few of the highlights. We spent an hour or so listening and watching as Dr. Snyder went through an entire carousel of slides. The only thing I can say about all that I'm not able to include here is, "You should have been there!"

The best place to seek God is in a garden. You can dig for Him there.
-- George Bernard Shaw

NATURALIST JIM GILBERT SPEAKS AT SEPTEMBER MGCM MEETING

by Andy Marlow

Jim Gilbert is familiar to many people in the Upper Midwest as the naturalist who supplies seasonal information to Bud Kraehling on WCCO-TV and the assortment of weather personalities on WCCO radio. He also writes the Nature's Calendar column for the Minnesota Horticulturist. In his spare time, Jim is the Naturalist for the Hopkins school district, working with students in all 11 of the district's schools. He's also a vegetable gardener and tends 16 fruit trees at his home on Lake Waconia in Carver county.

What was surprising is that Jim actually needed help of sorts to make his presentation on "Autumn Phenological Happenings in the Twin Cities Area" at the September MGCM meeting. The help arrived in a converted milk carton. Jim had promised to predict the first frost date and the severity of the winter to come during his talk, a task for which the banded woolly bear caterpillar is supposed to be ideally equipped. If the central band on the caterpillar takes up more than 50% of its body length, the winter will be warm. If it takes up less than 50%, a colder than usual winter is ahead. This critter hedged. It was exactly 50% brown and 50% black. Gilbert suggested looking for a few more to arrive at a consensus. This is the time of year when they're found crossing roads, apparently looking for a warm place to hibernate away the winter.

Since the caterpillar wasn't ready to commit himself to a forecast, Jim also talked with consulting meteorologist Bruce Watson. Watson and his computer report that temperatures will be near normal until the end of September, but colder than normal during October. That means the average first frost date, October 12, should be about right this year. Watson added that November should be mild with quite a few Indian Summer days, but the rest of the winter will be colder than normal with near normal precipitation.

Gilbert practices the ancient science, or craft, or whatever, of phenology. It's the study of how plants, animals and people react to seasonal changes. People have been keeping track of such things since before the time of Christ according to Gilbert but the term itself was coined only about a century ago. He says gardeners should keep such records so as to compare the timing of events from year to year.

September is the first of the three fall months, but Gilbert reminded his audience that it is a transitional month between summer and autumn and can be quite unpredictable. Among this month's notable events are the reddening of rose hips, the blooming of goldenrod and the first fall color showing up in sugar maples near the end of the month. Sumac and virginia creeper also start changing to bright red this month. Bur marigolds, found in marshy spots, are in full bloom early in the month. Later in fall they'll fill your socks with pitchfork-like burs if you brush too close.

In October the fall color reaches its peak in the Twin Cities area. Jim pointed out that our most colorful tree, the sugar maple, looks orange when it's standing by itself in the distance, but looks bright yellow when viewed from inside a large stand of trees. In late October, the apple harvest reaches its peak.

Gilbert stated that signs of fall actually begin much earlier than the months he was discussing. The first indication that cold weather is ahead occurs in July as shore birds begin their long migration back from the arctic.

(continued over)

He also mentioned that he's frequently asked about the berries of the mountain ash and if they're edible. He says they are, but the taste takes some getting used to. The fact that some 75 different bird species make meals from these berries he said proved his point.

Gilbert said November is another transition month--from autumn to winter. It's a very cloudy month, a good time to try for pictures of spectacular sunsets. During November whistling swans pass through the Twin Cities on their way south. Many stop at Weaver Bottoms near Winona, stay until freeze up and then head east for open water. Geese, on the other hand, will stick around all winter if people continue to feed them. But, Gilbert said, don't worry if you stop feeding them. They'll leave right away and can fly up to 100 miles a day. They'll reach open water before they get too hungry.

Jim suggests that October or November is a good time to start feeding birds. He reminded MGCM members that if you plan to feed birds, expect to be operating a cafeteria for shrews, squirrels, raccoons and some of the less desirable birds. He says that's not a bad thing to do, just expect it.

November is also the time most Minnesota lakes freeze over. A few big ones, like Minnetonka, wait until December or sometimes January. At the time of his talk lake temperatures were still about 70 degrees and giving off lots of steam on 45 degree mornings.

Finally, Jim related the life story of the Monarch butterfly, one of this area's best known insects (along with the mosquito and house fly). Two generations of monarchs are born, mature, reproduce and die in Minnesota each summer. The last generation of the year, finding the days too short for breeding, takes off on an epic journey to wintering grounds near Mexico City. They make the trip flying between 3 and 1000 feet above the earth at only 12 miles an hour. Most of them are on their way by September 12. The last depart by October 12. During their trip they stop when they find flowers from which to sip the nectar, marigolds being one of their favorites. They also must stop if the temperature falls below 50 degrees. At that temperature their wing muscles cease to work.

Their destination is an area in the Mexican mountains only about 20 acres in size. There they are so concentrated they cover all the trees and are often found 5 deep on the ground. When the weather warms in the spring, they reverse direction until they find suitable spots for starting a new generation and a new seasonal cycle. They stop where lilacs are in bloom and lay their eggs in these shrubs. Lilac is the favorite food of the monarch caterpillar.

Two of Gilbert's students played a major part in establishing the migratory pattern just described. They spent a Saturday helping Jim tag migrating monarchs at the University of Minnesota Landscape Arboretum, something Jim has been doing for many years. When the wintering site of the monarchs was finally discovered one of the butterflies the boys tagged was found - firmly establishing that the rather fragile looking creature had, indeed, flown all the way from the northern United States.

When you have done your best for a flower, and it fails, you have some reason to be aggrieved. --Frank Swinnerton

Garden failures are of interest, too. Share yours with your fellow gardeners both verbally and through the SPRAY.

DRIFT FROM THE SPRAYER

by Ed Culbert

Even the growers share our misery. I thought my marigolds would never flower. Chet Smith in the CORT-LAND SOD BUSTERS reports: "On our annual trip to Harris Seed Farm August 16th (we found) they had suffered through the same conditions we have had this summer so they had the same ups and downs. The marigolds had beautiful foliage but were just starting to bloom. Many plants were shorter than usual but, all in all, there was lots of color... The melon crop was practically a failure this year."

My Sweet Mama squash was a failure, too. Oh, it did overcome the borer; it climbed the 8 foot Sugar Snap pea fence; it swung over 3 feet to the grapes where it climbed another 2 feet; it again stretched--to my neighbor's tall lilacs and climbed over them; but it set no fruit. When last I looked it was eyeing the big white pine the grapevines climb.

Smith continues anent Harris, "We found that raccoons are also a shared problem. They, too, had their early crop destroyed by these villians. We lost ours completely to them but hoped we could manage to save the "Kandy Korn." Picked one ear on Saturday... Monday afternoon the field looked like an army had been through it."

Stan Crist in GARDENING IN MINNETONKA writes, "Years ago we gave up trying to raise sweet corn, for the raccoons would always destroy it just a few days before it was ready to pick. But this year they're eating everything in sight. I set out late plantings of cabbge and brocolli, intending them for use late this fall. These little tender plants were exactly to the raccoon's liking and they have nibbled them off numberless times. Some plants still survive, not much bigger then when I set them out.

The carrot tops have been trimmed several times but hopefully we'll still have some kind of a carrot harvest. They also trimmed the snap beans, but left some for us. I planted both California Wonder (green) and Gypsy (yellow) peppers. The raccoons seem to eat the Cal. Wonder constantly, but leave the Gypsy for us. They are nibbling at both the summer and winter squash; usually it's still usable after they've tasted it. We're thankful they don't go near the tomatoes."

STAN CRIST REPORTS ON NICOTIANA NICKI RED

I first saw the Nicki hybrids used extensively as bedding plants three years ago in Toronto. I thought they were so attractive that I would try them here. My experience with them has been excellent and I feel they should be used more extensively here. In my opinion, they are in several respects, better than petunias for bedding.

In the fall, petunias often tend to become sprawly and "ratty" in appearance. But the nicotiana continue to bloom, the same as ever. It does not appear to have any disease problems or pests, and requires no special care. The seedlings are not difficult to handle or transplant.

Before the hybridists started working with nicotiana, it was a very tall, gangly plant with a delightful fragrance. In developing the Nicki hybrids, they produced a much nicer sized plant, but they have lost their fragrance. The Nicki series comes in white, pink, red, rose and lime. I do not like the pink--it looks "washed out". I think the white, rose and red are excellent. I have not grown the lime.

REMEMBER OUR FEARED FRIENDS

Help keep the birds alive this winter by erecting bird feeders. Once bird feeding is started, it should be continued well into the spring when natural food is available, because the birds will become dependent on the food.

By varying the kinds of food, it is possible to attract preferred species of birds. Grease or bacon drippings mixed with seeds or suet attracts nuthatches, woodpeckers and other birds that feed on insects and insect grubs during the winter. Nut meats are choice foods for cardinals, catbirds, chickadees, crossbills, goldfinches, grosbeaks, nuthatches, titmice, jays and juncos.

Dry seed such as corn, grasses and weeds are eaten by bobwhites, cardinals, goldfinches, doves, grackles, jays, juncos, pheasants, redpols, siskins, sparrows, thrashers and towhees. Berries and fruits are important foods to bluebirds, catbirds, flickers, mockingbirds, robins, thrashers and thrushes.

Birds also eat many foods that humans eat. Apples are widely used by fruit eaters and many other species while American cheese is a favorite of chickadees, mockingbirds and brown thrashers. Corn is an excellent source of energy during severe cold weather. Cornbread is another favorite of most feeder visitors. Dried currants and raisins are important to all the fruit eaters, especially bluebirds, robins, catbirds, and mockingbirds. Doughnuts are well-liked by many feeder visitors and peanuts and peanut butter are both widely used as an excellent source of energy.

Of course, none of us sees anywhere near all of these birds in winter. Perhaps most of us in the city see only a half dozen. We don't really expect some of them to "winter over" here; but the January Audubon bird count turns up some amazing strays each year. So, let's set a table for them.

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Return to
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