

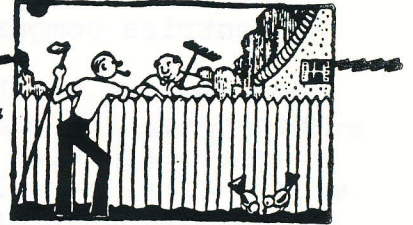


The Garden Spray

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

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

October 1984, Volume 42, Number 10



NEXT MGCM MEETING

TUESDAY EVENING OCTOBER 9, 1984

LAKE HARRIET UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
CHOWEN AVENUE SOUTH at 49th STREET

DINNER 6:00 P.M. PRICE \$5.00

"GETTING STARTED IN ROCK GARDENING" is the topic for the program at the October 9 meeting of MGCM. Our speaker, BETTY ANN MECH proprietor of the Rock Creek Gardens, has over 40 years of gardening experience and is an authority in the field of rock gardening. Ms. Mech was a consultant for the Park Board planners designing the rock garden now being developed across the road from the Rose Garden in Lyndale Park. She recently prepared a slide show program on rock gardening for the Minnesota State Horticultural Society. An enthusiast she will make you one, too; so start locating your site and collecting your rocks now.

EDITORIAL COMMENTS: Do you remember Betty Ann Mech's appearance at an MGCM meeting several years ago? Unless she's aged remarkably she won't look as though she's been gardening for 40 years. Perhaps she had a grandfather like mine. Grandpa Goldsworthy regularly took me along to "help" in his "potato patch" before I was of kindergarten age. He took my 2-1/2 year younger brother only once. The reason given: "Bessie, I never seed a lazier boy. He even do lie on his belly to pick berries."

There'll be a full moon the night of our October MGCM meeting but that doesn't mean you'll have time to run out and collect the rocks for your new rock garden after the meeting. In some parts of the state you might find sizeable rocks are everywhere. Near Chisholm in the 1920's the Mesaba Street Railway had to move so many rocks for a wye that they named it Boulder Siding.

Before you collect those rocks THINK! The rocks won't require any maintenance but the rock garden plants will. Lots of hand weeding, too. Members of the Rock Garden Society supplied rocks and planted a rock garden for us in a corner of our Fragrance Garden in 1982. We haven't been too successful in perpetuating it. Too many of us can't tell the rock garden plants from the weeds.



CHARLES PROCTOR'S REPORT ON THE FALL SHOW

The 1984 Garden Show is now history. It was, artistically, very successful. Numerically, it didn't quite come up to hopes. Only 23 members exhibited compared with 25, 29, 29, 28 and 31 over the last 5 years. There were 349 entries compared with an average of 446 over the same 5 years.

Some members who have been strong exhibitors over the years did not exhibit this year. In many cases it was understandable--either terminated membership or unforeseen problems. On the other hand 6 members exhibited for the first time, a real plus. We have 15 who have exhibited year after year. The big winners were:

COURT OF HONOR

| <u>Flowers</u> | <u>Vegetables</u> |
|---|-----------------------------------|
| Floyd Ashley - Bonzai | Larry Bagge - Lady Bell pepper |
| Vern Carlson - Winter flowering sweet pea | *Bob Smith - Thornfree blackberry |
| Henry Halverson - Delphinium | Kennebec potato |
| Jerry Shannon - Dahlia | Bob Smith - Redcoat plum |
| *Jerry Shannon - Collection of varie- gated foliage plants | Blue Ribbon cabbage |
| Stan Van Vorst - Asters | Tomato collection |
| Abutilon hanging basket | |

***Denotes Grand Champion**

SWEEPSTAKES

Jerry Shannon Bob Smith
Vern Carlson gave Jerry a close run--dead-even prior to the bonus points
for Court of Honor, etc.

NATIONAL AWARD

Vern Carlson - Chrysanthemum Vern Carlson - Beans

Jerry Shannon won both Grand Champion and Sweepstakes in the flower section as did Bob Smith for vegetables--the first time I have seen this happen in my 25 years of these shows. The final payoff was Vern Carlson's winning of both National awards.

IT'S TIME TO PREPARE TO HANDLE FIRE BLIGHT.

Fire blight derives its name from the symptoms produced. Infected blossoms and leaves are typically dark brown or black as if scorched by fire. Only the terminal 6 to 18 inches of a branch usually are affected in this way, with the extreme tip curling over like a shepherd's staff. Dead leaves may remain on the tree throughout the summer.

Cultural Practices For Control of Fire Blight

1. Mark infected branches during the growing season so you will know which ones to remove later when the leaves are gone.
2. Summer pruning is not advisable because bacteria can easily be spread around the tree on your tools. To lessen this spread during warm months, wipe pruning tools with liquid household bleach between cuts. Cut branches at least 6 inches below canker margins.
3. During the dormant season, prune off all infected branches larger than 1/2 inch in diameter. If you also can remove all smaller infected twigs, do so; but only a small percentage of them will harbor the bacteria over winter.



TERRACE TALKS

Fall is here, although at the date of writing the temperature is in the 80's and the sun is shining. Not Indian summer because we have had no hard frost yet, but it is surely nice.

It was fun getting back to an inside educational meeting again with the group. We certainly enjoyed the talk by Merv Eisel from the landscape arboretum. Let's strive to get to the meetings, they are educational and the fellowship is great. Let's bring guests and new gardening members

each time to expand and solidify the club.

Chet Groger tells me that the calanders are in, so they should be available for picking up in the October meeting.

I will call on Gregory Smith to discuss the show and tell table at the next meeting. Why doesn't everyone bring a flower, plant, tool, vegetable or something to show and tell. This can be an interesting part of our club.

Bill Hull announced at the last meeting that he is a volunteer at the hospital and needs flowers for tables at a banquet. He needs 30 arrangements in quart bottles (he has the bottles) for the morning of the eleventh of October. If you can help him and everything is not frozen, he would appreciate flowers. His telephone number is 926-1327.

—Russ

MULCH IN A WEEK?

According to the CHRISTIAN SCIENCE MONITOR Cliff Wilson of London England showed that in one week lawn clippings can be converted into a very acceptable brown mulch that no longer turns slimy when spread between plants. Used this way the grass-clipping mulch controls weeds, moderates soil temperatures, stimulates earthworms and the activity of other beneficial soil organisms. The secret is the daily turning of the clippings. This introduces fresh supplies of oxygen, which allows the decay bacteria to work freely.

The tender clippings, rich in nitrogen, heat up almost overnight. Excess moisture vapor is driven off so by the end of the week the brown mulch is less than half the volume of the original clippings. In the partially decomposed state the clippings are readily processed further into plant nutrients by the soil organisms.

After experimenting, Wilson developed a batch-composting bin expressly for grass clippings. An Archimedes screw in the center makes turning the clippings each day a simple matter. If you want to do similar things with your lawn clippings, place them in a wooden box or plastic garbage can with several air holes drilled near the bottom to allow air to get in, and an equal number near the top to allow moisture vapor to escape. Keep the box or can covered so that no rain can get into it. The grass clippings contain more than enough moisture for good decomposition.

DRIFT FROM THE SPRAYER
by Ed Culbert

I'm glad I don't have the problem F. C. Lynch editor of the Houston TX. YARDNER had. He reports, "This year I shortened all my tomato stakes about one foot. When I tried to pull the stakes up, after the plants had died, they broke off even with the ground. Why? Termites had and still were eating the bottom part. It was the first time in thirty odd years that termites had attacked my stakes."

My only trouble/experience with termites came a couple of years ago when our daughter brought me a load of oak fireplace wood with her from Kentucky. Shortly after I got it 'stashed' away in the basement there was "sawdust" all over the floor. I threw wood and termites out the window. Next spring having found me and Minnesota winters inhospitable the termites were gone.

Lynch's 1984 bean crop was poor, too. "This year my beans failed to produce more than half dozen servings before dying", he said. My beans on the other hand have never been so good. I planted 4 rows of yellow beans and 3 rows of green beans in a 10' x 12' patch. Elsewhere I had 7 poles of Kentucky Wonder beans. From my first two pickings we canned 44 pints for winter and had several good meals.

Then, to my amazement the yellow beans flowered profusely again and we had more beans than the first time around. Barbara took a scrub pail and peddled to neighbors on both sides. From mid July to early September we've stuffed ourselves with beans three times a week until they came running out our ears.

An article on storing vegetables in a recent give-away paper says, "Fall dug carrots, beets and turnips are harvested before the first killing frost. Tops should be trimmed to 1/2 inch and roots placed in perforated plastic and stored in a refrigerator, root cellar or pit."

I usually wait to dig my carrots and parsnips until the top 1/4 inch of soil freezes. I then rinse them in a tub of water; cut off the leafy end (to prevent sprouting) and the tail; and, stack them on end in a 5 gallon crock into which I pour (and shake down) vermiculite. I then store the crocks in the fruit cellar. The small carrots are stored in the refrigerator to be eaten first. The parsnips in the crock have kept up to 6 months (mid-June).

The same article says re tomatoes, "Harvest season can be extended several weeks if green mature fruit are picked before frost. Pull vines and attached green fruit and hang from garage rafters. Mature green fruit will store one to five weeks at 50-60 degrees F." I wonder if that procedure will work any better than the recommended hanging of geraniums from the basement ceiling to overwinter.

When frost is predicted, I pick every green tomato bigger than a golf ball. In the days when crated peaches came individually wrapped I used the wrappers to wrap each tomato before carefully storing the tomatoes in boxes. I now pile them sans wrappers, in half-bushel baskets, the greener ones at the bottom. Every week I check and move those which are turning color to a higher spot in the basket. Very few spoil or dry up but it is hard to get my wife to use them after early December.

GOOD NEWS RE.: OUR 1988 CONVENTION

Yes, there are several pieces of good news regarding the 1988 Convention of the Men's Garden Clubs of America, which we are hosting here in Minneapolis.

GOOD NEWS #1: Not too long ago I talked with our national president, Jud Good, and MGCA convention committee chairman, George Mines, and they helped us move ahead by giving us a definite assignment. We now do have the 1988 convention laid on our shoulders - and we were authorized to consummate hotel contract(s). That gave us a jump of several months ahead of the November MGCA Board of Directors meeting in Des Moines.

GOOD NEWS #2: We have now consummated those agreements and have contracted for 300 rooms at the Hyatt-Regency Hotel and for 200 at the Holiday Inn Downtown - just across the street from each other. Your committee that toured and studied many hotels made very serious work of its assignment and selected these two hotels for many reasons. They wanted us, for one thing, and made an attractive offer, which we even improved upon as discussions continued. The location is paramount and with the Hyatt being our primary hotel, we have excellent meeting spaces available. Contracts were signed by Russ Smith as club president and by me as 1988 convention chairman. Following the selection by the committee, the contracts were approved by our attorney-member, then by the steering committee of all past presidents and editor Ed Culbert, and by our club's board of directors. Incidentally, it was very interesting to us to learn after our decision, that 50 of the 87 (57%) conventions coming to Minneapolis in the next 18 months will be at the Hyatt-Regency.

GOOD NEWS #3: We have a lot of ideas for unique procedures to help increase total attendance and to please the registrants. We're not going to tip our hat to all of them so other conventions can use them but, frankly, want to test them here first. Then we may have some worthwhile procedures to pass along to other host clubs. But you are cordially invited to give us your ideas. We want them in a steady barrage from now until the day before the 1988 convention. So, don't hesitate.

GOOD NEWS #4: Who's been doing all this work? The steering committee in which about sixteen past presidents and Ed (Culbert) attended meetings and counseled us. The hotel search committee consisting of Charlie Proctor, Jerry Shannon, Ray Marshall, Russ Smith and Bill Hull, who made the tours and sweated out the recommendations. And the board of directors who helped us sweat it out and gave its approval to our decisions: Russ Smith, Andy Marlow, Mike Denesuk, George McCollough, Chet Groger, Bob Churilla, Dale Durst, Robert L. Smith, and Stan Van Vorst. Thanks all of you.

Bill Hull, convention chairman

MERV EISEL SHEDS SOME LIGHT ON GARDENING IN THE SHADE

reported by Andy Marlow

What do you do when all the trees you've planted in your yard grow up and shade out the gardens you've carefully nurtured for years? Speaker Merv Eisel had lots of advice for members about adapting to gardening in the shade when he spoke at the September 11 MGCM meeting. Merv Eisel describes himself as "a hardy perennial from the Arboretum." He's been assistant professor and extension horticulturist at the University of Minnesota Landscape Arboretum since it opened. He's been particularly involved with the outstanding hosta demonstration garden. In fact, Merv has some 75 varieties of hosta in his own garden.

Eisel began by pointing out that gardening in the shade poses several unique problems: reduced light, increased root competition (if the shade is the result of a tree canopy), and reduced air movement. Carefully selection of plant materials can overcome the problem of shade, but different plant materials must be used depending on the degree of shade. Total shade from a building, for example, is different from dappled shade from a tree. Root competition varies, too, depending on the type of planting nearby. Trees with shallow roots, like maples and elms, are more likely to be a problem than oaks or apples, which have deep tap roots. In fact, Eisel showed a slide of hostas thriving, nestled right up against the trunk of a large oak. Careful planning, and some pruning, can minimize disease problems caused by limited air circulation.

Plants that like full sun, but tolerate part shade usually do better in part shade conditions, Eisel has found. And, he says, plants that like part shade, but tolerate full shade do best in full shade.

A complete list of all the plant materials Merv discussed simply wouldn't fit in this space, so what follows is but a sample. He did hand out a more complete list, which you can probably get by calling Merv at the Arboretum. You will not, however, get to see the excellent slides of them shown at the meeting.

ANNUALS THAT TOLERATE PART SHADE BUT DO BETTER IN THE SUN:

CELOSIA - "Apricot Brandy," "Forest Fire" and "Golden Triumph" are some recommended varieties.

HELIOTROPE - This is a cool season plant that really benefits from partial shade in our climate.

NICOTIANA - Most flowering tobacco does well, but Merv recommends "Nikky White" and a new, compact series called "Domino."

VERBENA - Eisel says pastel and blue tints look better in the shade because they're cool colors.

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ANNUALS THAT TOLERATE FULL SHADE BUT DO BETTER IN PART SHADE:

BEGONIAS - Both tuberous and fibrous rooted ones do well. Eisel would like to see more mass planting of tuberous begonias.

BROWALLIA - Has not done well at the Arboretum when pplanted at the recommended 12" spacing. Plant 6" apart instead.

IMPATIENS - The best flowering plant for the shade. New Guinea hybrids do better with more light. Eisel says they don't carry over the winter without some spider mite problems, but there's usually no problem outdoors. "Orange Blitz" is a good choice.

PERENNIALS THAT TOLERATE PART SHADE:

ASTILBE - Likes cool, moist conditions. Merv feels it deserves wider planting in our area. Comes in many colors.

BERGENIA - Grown primarily for the foliage, but cultivars are coming from Germany with better flowers. Looks best in early spring.

BLEEDING HEART - White blooming varieties appear to be the trend for "Old Fashioned" bleeding heart. "Fern Leaf" types can bloom all season if they get enough moisture.

LILIES - Several varieties of lily do well in partial shade. Martagon blooms in early spring and is available in many colors. The native "Michigan" lily is showy and gets quite tall. Also recommended is a Japanese species lily, *L. tsingtauense*.

PERENNIALS THAT TOLERATE FULL SHADE:

FERNS - The best fern for shade is the "Maidenhair." The "Ostrich" fern makes a good show, growing to over 6'.

HOSTAS - THE plant for the shade. The Chinese name for hosta translates to "jade mountain." Most are native to Japan and China, but many varieties have been bred here. Dick Lehman's "Ruffles" was the second or third named cultivar in the world. There are now over 300 named varieties. The Arboretum is the international registrar for hostas and has a very large collection. Newer hostas are being developed with bigger flowers, double flowers, more fragrant blossoms and repeat blooms. Some good varieties are:

- *"August Moon" - best yellow-green. lavender flowers.
- *cathayana (formerly lancifolia) - tough, rugged and needs little care. will tolerate lots of sun. light blue.
- *crispula - one of the shoiest variegated. dark green center with ruffled margin. sometimes has twisted tips.
- *"Francis Williams" - most popular hosta in all the polls. can grow to a clump 4-5' in diameter. very showy.
- *nakiana - small heart-shaped leaf. makes a mound 6" tall. will tolerate sun. repeat blooms if spent blossoms removed.

Eisel also recommends woodland wildflowers for areas shaded by

(over)

trees. The Arboretum has a large collection of native wildflowers in the Grace B. Dayton wildflower garden. The May Apple is one of Eisel's favorites and thrives at the arboretum.

For gardeners who have begun to believe that either their trees or their gardens must go, Merv Eisel presented lots of ideas for making gardening in the shade a "growing" experience.

A reminder ...

When I see you at our meetings,
You never say "Hello"
You're busy all the time you're there,
with those you really know.
I stand around among the men,
Yet I'm a lonesome guy,
We new members feel so strange,
When you old-timers pass us by.
Why don't you nod and say a word,
or stop and shake our hand.
I'd also like to meet your friends--
I hope you understand.
So when you meet next meeting night,
Can't you a moment spend?
Step up and introduce yourself,
I had hoped to make new friends.

- O. B. Darrow



Return to
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1985 MGCA CONVENTION, to be held JULY 16 at the O'HARE
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