



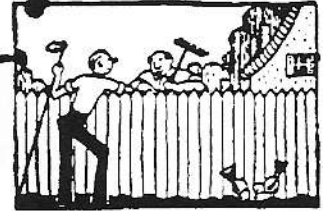
The Garden Spray

Bulletin of the Men's Garden Club of Minneapolis, Inc.

Affiliated with Gardeners of America and the Minnesota State Horticultural Society

March 1998, Volume 56, Number 3

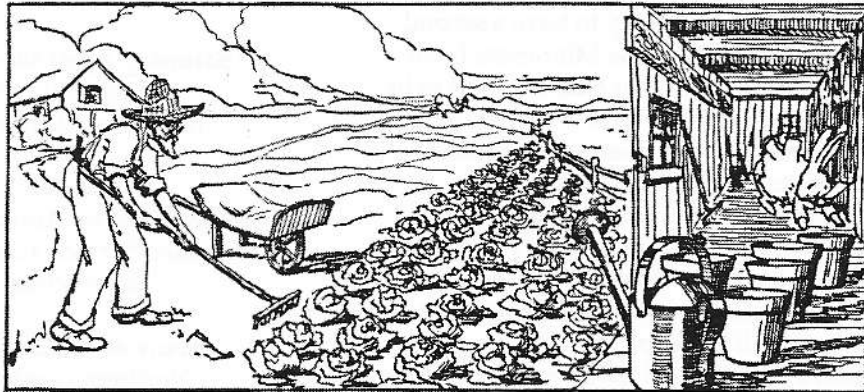
March Dinner Meeting...



Dayton's-Bachman's Flower Show

See, smell, and hear the 34th annual flower show which will fill Dayton's eighth floor auditorium. The theme this year is Beatrix Potter's Lakeland. Beatrix Potter wrote and illustrated *Peter Rabbit* and several other stories.

The meal this year will be a sophisticated box dinner. This is done to speed up the dinner part in order to have more time for the show. Following dinner, Dale Bachman will inform us about the garden and details of the theme development. Two Bachman gift certificates will be awarded during the dinner.



from Beatrix Potter's Peter Rabbit

Since permanent reservations are not in effect, you must make reservations for all who wish to attend. You must also send a check for the total number of people attending. Dinner is \$ 17.00 per person. Reservations must be returned by March 17. A reservation form is at the bottom of page 11. Clip it out, fill it in and send it along with your check.

There is a limit of 120 people who can attend, so send in your reservation early!

Date: Tuesday March 31, 1998

Time: Dinner 6:00 PM

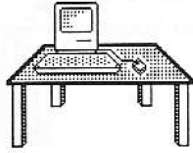
Place: Dayton's Downtown

Eighth and Nicollet Mall, Downtown Minneapolis.

The dinner will be in Gallery 12 (across from the Oak Grill) on Dayton's 12th floor.

Remember

The permanent reservation list is not in effect for March. Use the form on page 11 to make your reservations. Do it today!



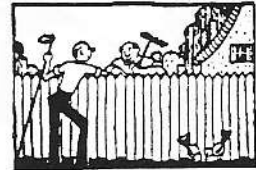
The Editor's Desk

Chuck Carlson
Managing Editor

A number of us volunteered at the Home and Garden show. During this effort a few interesting points about the Minnesota State Horticultural Society (MSHS) came to my attention. Did you know that MSHS is the largest horticultural society in the US? It has 21,000 members. It is also the oldest society in Minnesota, 130 years old and it has the only magazine devoted to northern gardening. Plus the magazine is geared to home gardening.

We are also lucky to have a second resource available, The Minnesota Landscape Arboretum. Our club is proud to be associated with the "Arb". On January 28, 1955 some MGCM members formed a committee to explore the idea of an arboretum. By the winter of 1956 funds were raised and 160 acres were purchased. In 1958 the University of Minnesota became the manager for the arboretum. Over time it has expanded in size, gardens, buildings and functions. Everyone – gardeners, businesses, walkers, skiers and those who just enjoy being outdoors – can enjoy the Arboretum. I deliberately left out runners, for who can enjoy the intricacies of mother nature without stopping or at least slowing down to smell the roses.

MGCM is going to take part in the Arboretum's garden club fair. It's on April 18 between 10 AM and 3 PM. It is intended to promote gardening and garden clubs. I not only recommend you attend but also that you volunteer to help with MGCM's participation. If you have any ideas for us to promote or are willing to volunteer your help, contact Barb Berosik.



Coming Attractions

Tuesday, March 3 – 7:30 PM
Board of Directors meeting
Howard Berg's house

Tuesday, March 31 – 6:30 PM
Dayton's- Bachman's Flower Show
Dayton's 7th floor Auditorium

Tuesday, April 7 – 7:30 PM
Board of Directors meeting
Walt Muehleger's house

Saturday April 18 – 10 AM
Garden Club Fair
Minnesota Arboretum

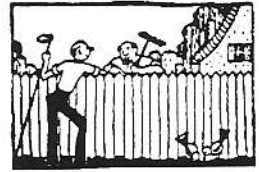
Classes

Many given by Anoka County
Extension Service. Call 755-1280
for brochure.

Many at the Center for
Northern Gardening
Details in the *Minnesota Horticulturist*

The Garden Spray is published monthly by the Men's Garden Club of Minneapolis, Inc., for its members and friends. The Men's Garden Club of Minneapolis is a not-for-profit, equal opportunity organization.

Managing Editor Chuck Carlson
Production Manager ... Andy Marlow
Staff Tim McCauley,
Mary Maynard, Margaret Hibberd
Howard Berg, and Bob Stepan.



Mary's Meanderings

by Mary Maynard, President MGCM

Well, they're here! All those seeds that I agonized over have been faithfully delivered to my door. And, as usual, my thoughts right now are along the lines of "Now What?" or "What was I thinking"

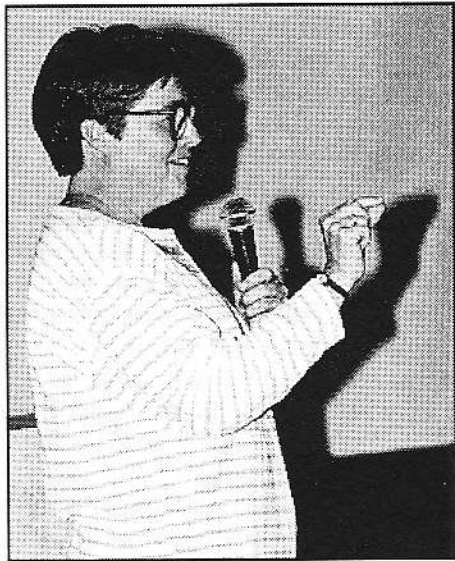


Photo by Lloyd Wittstock

or "Where on earth (or in earth) will I put these?" or "What if all of these germinate?"

(Editors note: You bring them to the MGCM Plant Auction and Sale.)

This year, Margaret Hibberd and I are splitting up packets of Cosmos seeds, since that's our National Flower at the Food, Flower and Foto (FFF) show this year. I believe we

have seven different kinds, with another on back order.

As you know, the typical cosmos is not a small plant. In addition, Harold Gulde's advice on dahlia selections led to a little overexcitement on my part (and generosity on the part of the supplier he recommended). This in turn resulted in 13 new dahlia varieties. Another plant that is not exactly tiny!

I also decided to grow some petunias this year, since it is a category I have never entered at the State Fair Flower Show. So I have four varieties of petunia to grow out somewhere. Hmmm. At least they're smaller plants than dahlias!

Add in the new perennials that I thought I'd try, basically because the

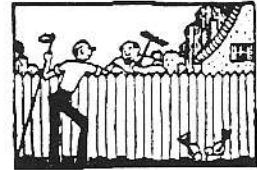
pictures were nice, and I could be in trouble. Uh-oh! Time to dig up more of the lawn!

Actually, I can't wait to get started. I'm sterilizing flats and cellpacks, checking all the bulbs in the shop lights in the basement, rigging up all the extension cords and fans and heating cables to make the goofiest-looking light farm you've ever seen. In later stages, it includes plywood and folding chairs. Very professional-looking.

In the meantime, our club activities are moving along. The Auction committee is well underway, and we had the first FFF Show committee meeting. The first planning session for our biennial public tours will have been held by the time you read this. And Eldon Hugelen, Kay Wolfe and Warren Nordley are working hard to make our annual visit to the Dayton's-Bachman's Flower Show a success. See you there!

Cleaning Your Pots

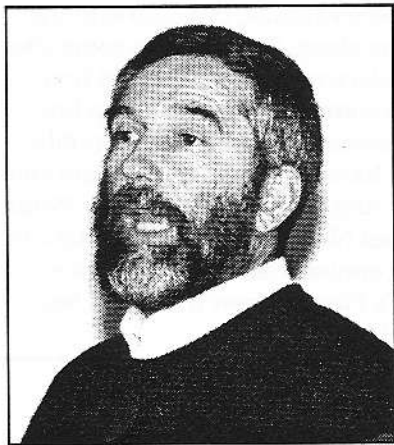
When starting seed or transplanting new seedlings make sure you sterilize your containers. It is very easy to do by soaking them in a 1:10 solution of Hilex and water. Soak for 30 minutes and rinse. Clay containers should be brushed clean and soaked for at least two hours. Rinse again and air dry for at least 8 hours.



February Program Report

by Tim McCauley

For the last several years Ambergate Gardens has been one of the plant sources for our annual auction. Ambergate owner Mike Heger spoke at the February meeting and furnished us with some insight on the trials and tribulations of owning your own business.



Mike Heger
Photo by Lloyd Wittstock

Mike credits his interest in perennials to Dr. Leon Snyder. While on the staff of the Minnesota Landscape Arboretum, Dr. Snyder assigned Mike the duty of caring for the annuals and perennials. After recognizing the landscape value of perennials, Mike designed and planted some beds at home. He was introduced to and quickly became enamored with Martagon lilies. Realizing how difficult it was to obtain the slow growing Martagons, Mike and wife Jean decided to start a business emphasizing unusual and hard-to-come-by plants.

The original intention was to do mail order of bare root plants. But people started to show up with money in hand, wanting to buy. Within several years their two-thirds acre homestead was filled to overflowing with nursery stock and display beds. A 36 acre tract of land southwest of Victoria was purchased to provide space for expansion.

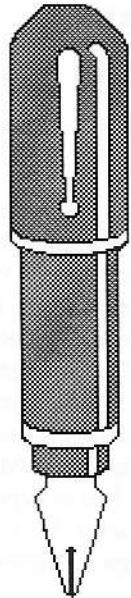
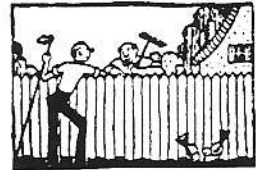
For ten years this area was only used to field-grow plants but was recently

upgraded to house the retail sales operation. Adjacent land was purchased for a driveway. Parking areas were constructed and all the potted material moved to the new site. At least two plant houses will be erected this year, display beds are slowly evolving, and a permanent sign declares that the new Ambergate Gardens are officially open for business!

Those who came to the meeting expecting to hear Mike talk about perennials weren't disappointed by the second half of the presentation. The growth in Ambergate's business coincides with the burgeoning interest in perennials. The increased popularity of native American plants that have been overlooked for years, along with the influx of new plants from abroad, are allowing the gardening public a wider and more varied selection from which to choose. A few of Ambergate's forty or so new items for 1998 were previewed and for those of you who have trouble writing a wish list in the dark here is a short recap.

- Allium tanguticum 'Summer Beauty' – An ornamental onion that goes dormant later than most – a candidate for the mixed border.
- Artemisia lactiflora 'Guizhou' – While most Artemisias have silver foliage, this variety has dark foliage and purple stems.
- Artemisia lactifolia 'Valerie Finis' – Very versatile, one of best of the silver foliage varieties.
- Euphorbia daltus 'Chameleon' – Grown for its dark foliage.
- Monarda 'Petite Delight' – a new dwarf variety only 15 to 18 inches tall.
- Prairie Drop Seed – Mike's favorite native grass, a non-invasive clumper.
- Aralia racemosa – a little known native, grown for its foliage.

(continued on page 10)



Board Meeting Minutes

Walt Muehlegger, Secretary

Feb. 3, 1998

Present: Howard Berg, Chuck Carlson, Eldon Hugelen, Maury Lindblom, Mary Maynard, Tim McCauley, Ritchie Miller, Walt Muehlegger, and Kay Wolfe.

The meeting was called to order by president Mary Maynard at 7:30 p.m.

Reports

Secretary's report: Minutes of the Jan. 6, 1998 Board meeting were approved on a motion by Maury Lindblom second by Chuck Carlson.

Treasurer's report: The report was approved as presented on a motion by Tim McCauley second by Kay Wolfe.

Vice President's report: Programs are being scheduled. Discussion on the Dayton's-Bachman's Flower Show event predominated.

Reports and or discussion took place for the following committees: Food, Flower and Foto Show (FFF), Perennial Gardens, 2001 Convention, Calendars and Membership.

New Business

Liaison assignments between all committees and the Board were made as follows:

- Arbor Day - Tim McCauley
- Audit Report - Howard Berg
- Awards - Ritchie Miller
- Bronze Medal - Chuck Carlson
- Calendars - Howard Berg
- Community Service - Maury Lindblom

- Emergency Telephone - Mary Maynard
- FFF - Mary Maynard
- Garden Spray - Chuck Carlson
- Holiday Party - Walt Muehlegger
- Hospitality - Mary Maynard
- Membership - Maury Lindblom
- Photography - Chuck Carlson
- Plant Auction - Tim McCauley
- Perennial Garden - Kay Wolfe
- Scholarship - Howard Berg
- Sunshine - Eldon Hugelen
- Tours - Kay Wolfe

Old Business

We are committed to the Arboretum for the Education Fair.

Mary Maynard sent a letter to our caterer to say we are changing caterers.

Honorary member petition for Andy Marlow was approved.

There was discussion to show snippets of MGCM slide shows at future club meetings.

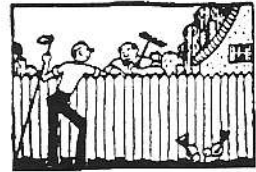
New member Denise K. Rust was approved.

The meeting was adjourned.

(Editor's note: This is a condensed version of the board meeting minutes. An unabridged version is available from Secretary Walter Muehlegger.)

New Member

Denise K. Rust
7933 Girard Court
Brooklyn Park, MN 55444-2071
Phone: 560-7747



Perennial Trial Garden Update

by Kay Wolfe

Gardeners around the country are growing more and unusual perennials than ever before. When buying or ordering new perennials those of us in Minnesota are often at a disadvantage. Nurseries and garden writers often mislabel the hardiness zones of the plants. Many of us have successfully grown perennials that are not recommended for our zone. Even native Minnesota plants are sometimes listed as zone 5 or 6 when in fact they are fully hardy in zones 2, 3 or 4.

The goal of the Minnesota Perennial Trial Garden Committee is to obtain current information on the actual hardiness and performance of perennials in zone 4. Plans are to grow a select group of perennials on a three year trial basis at three trial sites. The perennials will be planted at three distinct locations and will not be given any special winter protection. The plants will be installed this spring and data will be collected in 1998, 1999, and 2000. In 2001 we will begin a trial of another group of perennials.

The Perennial Trial Garden Committee includes the Men's Garden Club of Minneapolis, Mary Maguire Lerman of the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board, Dr. John Erwin from the Department of Horticulture at the University of Minnesota, and Steve Poppe of the West Central Experimental Station of the University of Minnesota, Morris. Also on the committee are industry representatives Mike Heger of Ambergate Gardens, Steve Kelley of Kelley & Kelley Nursery, and Jayne Roberts representing the wholesale trade. A full time extension researcher will be hired at the University

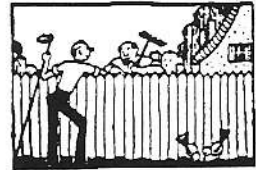
to coordinate the research program.

The three trial sites have diverse conditions. The Lyndale Park Gardens has an established evergreen border north of the beds to provide screening from strong winter winds. The University of Minnesota at St. Paul is a fully exposed site with no wind protection and adjoins the annual trial garden. The site at Morris is protected by shelterbelts, but is exposed to winds from the northwest. Morris is located on the western edge of Minnesota bordering the Dakotas.

At the end of each of the trials a written report will be published detailing hardiness, disease resistance, insect resistance, growth and bloom data and other data such as nectar value for butterflies and hummingbirds. The goal of the committee is to make this report available to organizations like the Perennial Plant Association, the Minnesota Commercial Flower Growers, Garden Clubs of America and other horticultural organizations and publications.

MGCM's role is to design, plant and maintain the trial site at the Lyndale Park Gardens. Plant material for the project is being obtained by the Park Board and the University on a donation basis from wholesale perennial nurseries. The Lyndale Park Gardens is located near Lake Harriet and includes the Rose Garden and Rock Garden. The perennial garden site is a curving border 500 feet long and is backed by beautiful mature pines, spruce, redbuds and crab apples. It is located just west of the rock garden.

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Snapshots

by Lloyd Wittstock

The photography committee of the club is always looking for new ideas and this year some of your best ones were used. Those included the bulletin boards open to any member for photos or anything postable at each meeting, the committee's offer to photograph member's gardens on request, and a year end album.

The annual photo contest was rewarding to contributors and viewers. This year at one of our meetings, the committee showed some good and not so good slides with suggestions for improvement. Members responded with some wonderful prints and slides—we needed four judges in two teams this year.

Look for at least two changes in the contest this year. Wildflower photos will be limited to wildflowers in the wild only. (This is in response to the widespread availability and popularity of wildflowers in the garden.) Garden grown wildflowers can be submitted in other categories. The other change will be to allow panoramic prints, as one-use and APS cameras have



made panoramic prints more common. The committee will decide on how they fit in, either as a special category or as a new size within our five by seven inch limit. The size limit is intended to keep costs down for contributors and to encourage wide participation.

Maybe photography fits so well into the goals of the club because appreciation of plants is so visual. Even the most accomplished and eloquent of the speakers usually brings along a plant or a slide of plants. Shape, size and color can be described in words, but drawings and photos bring on the spark of recognition. For example, if you haven't yet checked out Andy Marrow's hosta page (www.users.aol.com/AJMarlow/AJPage.html), go see the photos and stand for the details.

Get your camera ready for early shots of spring. Spring is the time to find early native wild flowers and bulbous plants in bloom.

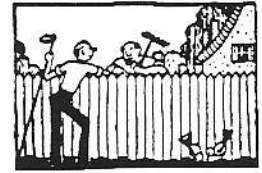
Writers Sketch

Lloyd has been a member of MGCM since 1982. He lives in southeast Minneapolis and has a city lot garden of perennials, annuals, small trees and a few vegetables. A screened living area is nestled in the corner of the garden for a place to relax and view the garden. Lloyd has been on the Board, is the chair of the Photograph committee, served on other committees, supplies photos for the Spray and always enters the Flower, Food & Foto Show. Lloyd works at the American Indian Opportunities Industrialization Center as a teacher.

Classified

Bodies Wanted

At least six good bodies to man (or women) the MGCM booth at the Arboretum Garden Club Fair. Contact Barb Berosik at 451-9971. You can also visit other booths and events.



A Great Plant And A Rare Man

by Axel Troedsson

My old friend Bob Savory was an accomplished but modest man. He was as knowledgeable as anyone about perennials and how to grow them. He hybridized everything from orchids to irises. But he loved hostas best. They had that siren call for him ever since he was a small boy and his mom gave him some funkia to divide. He started with them, then went on to some others and never looked back.

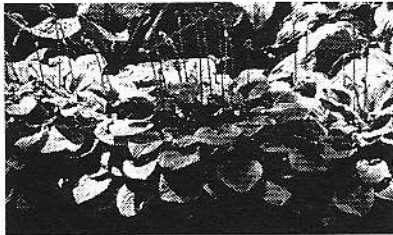


Photo by
Andy Marlow

Bob was a very affable man and could talk all day long to rank amateurs or experts with equal interest and gusto. I'm just one of those rank amateurs, but he always had time for me when I stopped by. He hybridized some champions over the years, but none any better than one of his early ones—*H.* 'Golden Tiara'. During one of my visits he told me how he came up with 'Golden Tiara'.

Bob was interested in producing a good small edging plant; preferably one which had some variegation (there weren't many variegated plants in those days—1970). He started with *H.*, *nakaiana* as a pod parent for the crossing because he wanted a plant which:

1. grew fast
2. was very compact
3. was small—could be used as an edger/landscaper
4. was very floriferous

He crossed 40 pollen donors which seemed to be good potential parents and a large number of seedlings were produced. Those that had good growth characteristics and other special features were culled

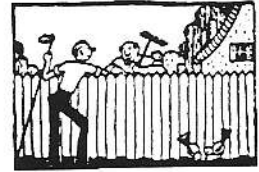
from the host of *green plants*. None of these had spectacular variegation, but they were otherwise very good plants.

Bob knew a professor at the University of Minnesota who was working with some experimental plant hormones. The professor gave him one to try on his seedlings. No one knew how it should be applied to hosta seedlings, so Bob devised his own method. He was able to suspend the hormone in lanolin and arbitrarily applied it with a brush to a place where the roots join the stem—a place where he thought the dormant root buds were. He hoped to stimulate them into growth and at the same time alter their genetic expression with the hormone.

Several spectacular plants came from this. The best variegated one had a beautiful gold border surrounding a small dense clump of dark green foliage. It grew "like the wind," had masses of flowers and caught the eye of everyone who came to his garden. He called it 'Golden Tiara'. Another splendid and variegated small specimen from the same group was later registered as 'Duchess'—but for some reason it is far less well known.

Bob kept 'Golden Tiara' off the market until he had increased his stock sufficiently to market it properly. This was no easy matter, because so many good friends and customers saw and were quite persistent in applying the pressure to buy a slip. Bob persevered, and kept dividing it, but he felt the constant and growing pressure to release it. Finally, in one bold move, he cut virtually all the stock to single crown divisions. When he was

(continued on page 11)



Earthy Wisdom

by the Dirty Green Thumb

You have no doubt noticed that so far I have only given you the recipe for nice clean garden dirt. Good enough to use as potting soil, and that is the way my annual wife wants it. She plants her annual seedlings from the local greenhouse – all thousand of them – in nice neat rows like a French army.

For those of you who don't want all that digging and mixing to make the purists garden bed for annuals, take a 4" wedge hoe and make a 3" deep trench where you want to plant seedlings or seeds. Fill it with professional planting soil like Sunshine. This works great for shallow roots.

Bulbs and perennials are something else again, especially if you don't want to tear up the whole garden just to plant a tulip bulb. Bulbs will grow in and like any well drained (meaning the water drains away but the root stays moist) soil of heavier texture. The rules for bulbs suggest an inch of sand at the bottom of the hole with nothing other than aerated soil above. Of course, all plants need their oxygen. After the blossoming is over, mulch and add some bone meal to regenerate the bulb for next year. Lilies like this treatment, also. Just remember, don't remove the leaves until they dry up. My experience is I don't plant deep enough – 4 times the diameter of the bulb – but adding mulch will help if they are planted too shallow.

Now those perennials. I hate to describe the dirt content since each variety likes the soil a bit different. Peonies, for example, like pure aged horse manure. Remember it has a legume-like root that doesn't freeze, if it did, it could be called a potato or even a dahlia. It does like

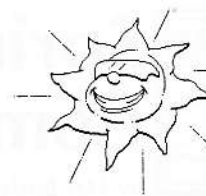
shallow planting, lots of water and mulch for cool roots. I don't raise many dahlias but they seem to like the same stuff. Just plant them deeper. Use the hill method, planting in a depression and then filling with your dirt of choice as the stalk grows. My favorite, delphiniums, also like to be in heavy soil surrounded at the surface level with mulch for cool moist roots. The best crop I ever grew was in Edina clay. Iris make good company in this kind of soil, also.

Some of my best friends are up to their knees in compost waiting for the humus to show. Their raised beds are eight inches high with two feet of icky rotted leaves, Watermelon rinds and angle worms. However at show time they take all the blue ribbons so we better hear from the **Good Humus Man**. We need an experienced volunteer to write a piece on growing organically.

We have yet to receive a question I can answer. Get busy and send one to our editor this month!

Let the Sun Shine

Bob Churilla's replaced knee had to be removed until infection is eliminated.



He will then get another replacement. Walt Gustafson is still at home recuperating. Keep both men in your thoughts and prayers, and give them some words of

encouragement.

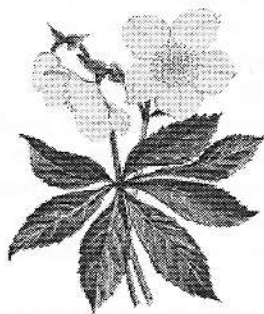
Please call Phil Peterson at 949-3433 if you know anyone who is hospitalized.



Heleborus... Flower of the Month

By Chuck Carlson

The flower featured this month is helleborus. Other names are Christmas Rose, Winter Rose, Lenten Rose or just Hellebore.



Helleborus, niger

It is a low growing perennial that spreads via rhizomes, and is one of the first flowers of spring or late winter. The flowers are either bell-shaped or cup-shaped and about two inches wide. Blossoms are white but shaded with purple and green-yellow. Only two types are hardy in zone 4: *H. niger* (Christmas Rose) and *H. orientales* (Lenten Rose).

Propagation is by splitting the rhizomes or by seed. Seeds should be planted right after they ripen. This gives them three months at summer temperatures before winter provides three months of cold temperatures. These cycles will break the germination delay mechanism and allow the seed to germinate in the spring. If you want to be one of the first to have a flower blooming in the spring, try a Hellebore.



Spring is Coming

by Hal Borland

No winter lasts for ever,
no spring skips its turn.
April is a promise,
that May is bound to keep.

Perennial Garden

(continued from page 6)

The MGCM Perennial Garden committee, working with Mary Lerman, decided to plant the first six feet of the edge of the long border with the trial plants. Behind the edge of trial plants is room for a spacious permanent perennial garden. The committee is designing a garden featuring varieties of foliage including perennials, ornamental grasses, and shrubbery.

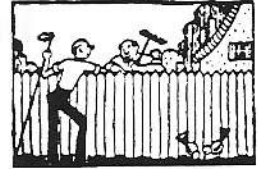
In 1997 the six foot band for the trial perennials was dug and some trial plants were installed. Plans are to dig the area behind the trial beds this spring, to install the rest of the first set of trial plants, and begin planting the permanent garden. Look for information and announcements of digging and planting days this coming spring!

If you have ideas for designs or plant materials for the permanent perennial garden, contact Kay Wolfe. We hope to make this a spectacular garden that shows the talents of our club and educates the public about the beauty and diversity of perennials.

Program Report

- Gillenia (Bowman's Root) – Native woodland plant, year round interest.
- Rudbeckia 'Gold Drop' – unusual semi-double to double flowers.
- Heuchera (Coral Bells) 'Chocolate Ruffles' – Distinct dark foliage.

Hopefully we will again be offering some Ambergate plants at the annual MGCM Plant Auction and Sale. Arrive early, head to the country store and tell them Mike sent you.



Golden Tiara

(continued from page 8)

finished he wondered if he'd gone too far and would lose them all—but he didn't. This remarkable hosta is incredibly resilient and can be divided to exceedingly fine divisions.

'Golden Tiara' is one of those wonderful hostas that grows well for everyone everywhere. And you can walk into anyone's garden and identify it immediately—like 'Krossa Regal', 'Sum and Substance', and fluctuans 'Variegated'. Also, it does "grow like the wind." When the first plants were released for sale in the mid-70s they went for \$80 per division. Within three years it was \$40 and by 1982 at the Midwest regional meeting they were five for \$15. All because it could be propagated so quickly, by the home gardener as well as the professional. Who says we need tissue culture?

Years later the Botany professor ran into Bob Savory and asked him if anything ever came from the hormone experiment. In characteristic understatement Bob said to him, "Well, I got a little gold edged one that might amount to something."

Addendum: Bob Savory was named the winner of the Alex Summers Award of the American Hosta Society in 1994. It is the highest award of the American Hosta Society and is given for outstanding contributions to the genus hosta and service to the society. *H.* 'Golden Tiara' was named the A. J. Summers Distinguished Merit Hosta for 1994. Bob Savory, a member of MGCM for over 40 years, died in December 1995. Savory's is still in business in Edina, MN and still a great place for Hostas.

(Editor's note: Axel Troedsson is a rather reclusive hostaphile who has written frequently for the Midwest Hosta Society newsletter. This article was submitted to Andy Marlow when he was still *Spray* editor and when members of the American Hosta Society e-mail listserv were debating the merits of *H.* 'Golden Tiara'.)



Please reserve box dinner(s)

for my guest(s) and me at the Dayton's-Bachman's Flower Show on March 31

Members Name: _____

Guest (s) Name: _____

Enclosed is my check for _____ dinners @ \$17.00 each for a total of \$ _____

Return no later than March 16 to Kay Wolfe, 2740 Florida Avenue South,
Minneapolis, MN 55426-3330

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