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MEN'S & WOMEN'S
GARDEN CLUB
OF MINNEAPOLIS

February 2018

The Garden Spray

Vol. 76, No. 2

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February Meeting Preview

Anne Spenningsby, Chair

LANDSCAPE DESIGN WITH JULIE WEISENHORN

Tuesday, February 13

Lake Harriet United Methodist Church

4901 Chowen Avenue South, Minneapolis

Menu

6:00 Social Time & Ring Toss
6:15 Dinner
7:00 Business Meeting
7:30 Program

Champaign Chicken
Wild Rice Pilaf
Green Beans Almondine
Tossed Salad
Bread/dinner Rolls and Butter
Cheesecake

- Permanent reservations are in effect.
- Dinner is \$13.00.
- Reservations or cancellations are required no later than Friday, February 9.
- Email Sharla Aasang at resmwgcm@juno.com, or call (612) 623-9341 and leave a message.
- For last-minute cancellations, call Alan Gallaher at (952) 933-1713. If he can sell it, you won't be billed.

From the President

Mary Barsness

Happy February!

February is probably my least favorite month. To me it seems dreary and gray without

much to look forward to. Thank goodness it is short.

I have been receiving seed and plant catalogs which allow me to dream about nicer weather and getting back into the garden. Many of the new plants Gary Geister showed us at the January meeting were featured in several of the catalogs I received. Thanks Gary, for bringing some new and exciting plants to our May plant sale. I for one can't wait to try some of these in my garden.

February is associated with St. Valentine's Day and red roses. However, the flowers of the month are violet and primrose.



The violet signifies watchfulness, loyalty, and faithfulness. In the Victorian era, giving violets conveyed the message "I'll always be true." The flower is found in shades of blue and mauve as well as yellow and cream.

Primroses are colorful perennials of European origin that are not actually related to the rose. Among the first to bloom as winter retreats, they'll multiply each year if given a little shade and moist but not soggy soil. Giving someone a primrose lets them know you can't live without them.

Hope to see everyone at February meeting.



From the Editors

Nancy Felice, Tom McKusick, Co-editors

This month's *Garden Spray* covers a lot of ground, kind of like the snow that's been around for, what, about six months now?

Luckily there's plenty here to fuel your thoughts of spring gardening. Check out Kay Wolf's follow-up to our conifer program and enjoy Robert Kean's suspenseful account of life and death among the seedlings.

There's also information about volunteering at the annual plant sale in May, and news about the FFF show next summer.

See, it'll be fall again before we know it.

Announcements



Stuff happens, part 1: Dinner meeting RSVPs

As gardeners know, life can be unpredictable. If you find at the last minute you can't make a club dinner meeting even though you've made a reservation--or you find you can make it but didn't RSVP, fear not. Call Sharla Aaseng at (612) 623-9341, and she'll do her best to accommodate last-minute changes.

Stuff happens, part 2: 2018 directory additions and corrections

Please check your listing in the 2018 Club Directory. If anything has changed, or is incorrect, send your changes to [Mollie Dean](#) by Thursday, March 1. She'll compile a list and distribute changes to club members.

Annual MWGCM Plant Sale

Gary Geister, Chair

LOOKING AHEAD: MWGCM PLANT SALE VOLUNTEERS NEEDED BEFORE, DURING AND AFTER

Sale date: Tuesday, May 8
St. Mary's Greek Orthodox Church
3450 Irving Avenue South, Minneapolis

While the location is the same as previous years, and the plant quality and variety will undoubtedly be as good as ever, there will be some changes:

1. Sale hours will be extended. The sale will start at **1:00 p.m. and end at 6:30 p.m.**
2. There will be **no monthly dinner or live auction.**
3. There will be no 50% off sale at the end of the day. Instead, **club members will be able to take a one-time 25% discount** on their purchases.



Great turnout at the 2017 plant sale.

One thing that has not changed is that members will be able to pre-order annual flats and specialty plants from our local wholesaler and pick them up on the day of the sale. More news on that when the plant list is available.

The plant sale is the club's main source of revenue. Last year we cleared a profit of \$6,340 on sales of \$14,740. Committee chair Gary Geister is aiming for sales of \$20,000 this year.

Needless to say, we need many volunteers to make the sale a success. Thanks to everyone who signed up at the January meeting. There are still many open slots. If you'd like to volunteer for any of these opportunities, please contact [Mary Maynard](#).

[Click here for a list of volunteer opportunities.](#)

-- Mary Maynard

2018 Flower, Food & Foto Show

Judy Berglund, Chair

FFF FEATURED FLOWER FOR 2018: SUNFLOWER

Every year, MWGCM's Flower, Food and Foto Show in August features one flower and one vegetable. Annual sunflower is our featured flower for 2018.

The sunflower is an annual, easily grown in average, moist, well-drained soils in full sun. They tolerate poor soils that are on the dry side. Plant seeds in the garden after last frost date.

Taller varieties should be sited in locations sheltered from strong winds. Species plants feature 3"- to 6"-wide sunflowers with orange-yellow rays and brown to purple center disks. Flowers bloom in late summer. Extensive hybridization has resulted in a large number of cultivars that greatly expand the range of flower colors from bright to pastel shades of yellow, red, mahogany, bronze, white and bi-colors. Dwarf varieties (1'-3' tall) and mammoth varieties (to 15' tall) are also available.



For cut flowers, the show schedule calls for one stem including leaves entered in Section A, Class 15. An exhibitor may enter multiple entries in horticulture under one class provided each entry is a different named variety, shape or color.

So plan to incorporate a few of these lovely giants in



your garden this year and enter them in our show on August 18th and 19th.

Lyndale Park Gardens/Mixed Border Garden

Kay Wolf, Chair

CONIFERS IN THE GARDEN

During our October program "Using Dwarf and Miniature Conifers in the Garden," guest speaker Jeremy Moore, local rep for Iseli Nursery in Oregon, asked how many of us grow conifers in our gardens, and how many have more than 25%. The Lyndale Park Mixed Border Garden Committee grows many garden-size conifers. Since 1998, we have planted 210 shrubs and small trees, of which 100 are conifers, that's about 47%.

These conifers add structure in winter and are immediately present in spring. Foliage comes in a variety of colors including blue, gold, and variegated as well as green. Forms are also varied from the traditional cone shape to globe, offering many design options.

Of the 100 conifers in our garden, 35 are *Thuja occidentalis*, western white cedar, commonly known as arborvitae. The western white cedar is native to Minnesota, so that may be a good reason it grows so well for us. All of the nine *Thuja* varieties we grow are small garden-size varieties.

Most useful are the pyramidal green *Thuja*. We use the 'Techny' (H 14' W 7') variety to fill in the backdrop. A smaller version, 'Technito' (H 6' W 4'), is also a good backdrop shrub. The Techny/Technito series have dark green-blue foliage with a rather loose form. Two tall, narrow varieties, 'Degroot's Spire' (H 10' W 3') and 'Holmstrup' (H 7' W 3') are used as accents near the garden edge. Both have brighter green foliage, with twisted or curved sprays. Our favorite



'Fire Chief' (left front), 'Little Giant' (green globes),

yellow pyramidal Thuja is 'Yellow Ribbon' (H 8' W 3').

'Degroot's Spire' (upper right).

There are many globe shape varieties of Thuja. We grow two green forms: 'Technito Globe' (H 4' W 4'), which is blue-green, and 'Little Giant' (H 4' W 4'), which is brighter green with tighter foliage. The two complement each other when planted together.

Two other globe forms we recommend are 'Fire Chief' (4' x 4') and 'Bobazam' (3' x 3'), trademark name of "Mr. Bowling Ball®." Both have the soft juvenile foliage. Fire Chief is green underneath then becomes golden with orange tips. Mr. Bowling Ball is a soft sage green. Both make wonderful accents in the front of the border.

Thuja like moist, well-drained conditions and grow in any soil. We find they are quite drought tolerant once established. They like full sun but tolerate part shade. As for size (remember conifers always keep growing), catalogs generally list 10-year sizes. However, most can be maintained at a garden size by pruning and shearing. (DeGroots Spire can actually be kept to 4 to 5 feet in height.) Thuja can be sheared any time of year, so we give them haircuts whenever they look shaggy. Shearing helps keep them thick and prevents branches from opening up.

Stop by the park garden and we can show you the Thuja varieties and how we care for them. Our Tuesday crew works almost every Tuesday morning from April to July; another crew works on Saturdays. Email mgcmgarden@q.com to find out our work times-or make a special appointment. We love to give tours!



Another view of conifers in the Mixed Border Garden before annuals are planted.

Photos by Kay Wolf and Kathy Lenarz.

Member Article: "What's wrong with my seedlings?" by Robert Kean

There are many reasons I like to start my own plant from seeds. Primarily I like to try new and interesting varieties and often find more choices in seed catalogs than in local garden centers. Growing your own can be cost effective, and I also like the challenge of starting things from seed. Finally, I get joy from watching the tiny seedlings sprouting and growing under lights in my basement when the garden outside is still mostly dormant.

Over the years, my seed-starting skills and equipment have gradually improved, to

the point that I usually have a very high success rate and can quickly address problems. So, I was puzzled with the events of spring 2017. I had very good germination and plants put on a few leaves, but then just stopped growing. Some of the leaves slowly turned pale green, others were purplish, and others shriveled and dropped off. I tried more fertilizer and it didn't help. Then I tried less fertilizer and that didn't help either. I checked for aphids and spider mites, and found none. I wondered if the plants were getting too much bottom heat, so I adjusted that, but there was no difference in plant performance. I then did what every modern gardener does when faced with an unfamiliar problem: I went to Google. I searched "what's wrong with my seedlings," but found nothing useful. I searched specific symptoms (problems of tomato seedlings, yellow seedling leaves, etc.), but still I found no matches. I suspected that I had a bad batch of starting mix. Being a scientist, I did an experiment starting two sets of cucumber seeds in different mixes. Initially, the cucumbers started in an alternate mix looked much better (confirming my hypothesis), but within a week, both sets looked about the same (rejecting my hypothesis).

Then I began to notice small insects about the size of fruit flies flying around my plant area. At first they did not seem to be interacting with the plants. I went through my gardening books and finally found a brief reference to "fungus gnats" as an occasional minor pest. The description seemed to match the little flies. Then the mystery began to unravel. Although fungus gnats don't feed on plants, they do lay eggs in the soil. The eggs hatch into larva, which feed on soil organic matter, but they prefer to feed on plant roots. Fungus gnats, usually just a nuisance pest for mature potted plants, are positively lethal for seedlings. They need moist soil, rich in organic matter, to reproduce, which exactly describes most seed starting mixes. My seeding trays were an ideal fungus gnat nursery complete with delicious and tender young roots.

The Internet is filled with advice on how to control or get rid of fungus gnats organically and chemically. Unfortunately, by the time I found a solution, most of my seedlings were too far gone. Most of the survivors were stunted and many never fully recovered. Obviously, the best option is to avoid fungus gnats in the first place. I think mine came from houseplants that went outside for the summer and then came back in for the winter. If you do the same thing, I advise watching for the gnats. It is also good to start your seeds in a different part of the house from where you winter your other plants. This is what I plan to do, with the hopes of a more successful crop in 2018 (older and a bit wiser) and hopefully with no new surprises this year.

Membership Corner

Kathy Lenarz, Chair

We have three new members who joined at our January meeting: Sue Clark (spouse of Bill Clark, who joined MWGCM last July), and Dorothy and Harold Ludtke. More

about Sue, Dorothy and Harold in next month's *Garden Spray*.

The 2018 directories will be again at the February meeting. Since we don't claim to be quite perfect, we will be compiling a list of corrections, and plan to make it available in a form that you can add to your directory. Please check your own information. If any changes are necessary, please send to [Mollie Dean](#) by March 1.



Sandra Mangel introduced new members Harold and Dorothy Ludtke at the February meeting.

Every member bring a member.

2017 MWGCM Donors

The MWGCM deeply appreciates the generosity of donors to our club over the years. We wish to take this opportunity to acknowledging those who have been so generous this past year. Below is the list of our supporters and, in the case of memorial donations, the people whom we remembered this year. A cumulative, permanent list is on our website. Thank you for your gracious gifts.

MEMORIAL DONATIONS

Donor	Recipient	Remembering
Alan Gallaher	Lyndale Park Mixed Border Garden	Charles Benson
Mary Maynard	Scholarship Fund	Charles Benson
Kay Wolfe	Lyndale Park Mixed Border Garden	Charles Benson
Kay Wolfe	Lyndale Park Mixed Border Garden	Elaine Maynard
Pamela Baker	Lyndale Park Mixed Border Garden	Bob Redmond
Stephanie Malone	Lyndale Park Mixed Border Garden	Bob Redmond
Mary Maynard	Lyndale Park Mixed Border Garden	Bob Redmond

SUPPORTING DONATIONS

Donor	Recipient
Amazon Smile	General Fund
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Judy Brooke	Scholarship Fund
Judy Brooke	Lyndale Park Mixed Border Garden
Judy Eiden	General Fund
Judy Eiden	Scholarship Fund
Judy Eiden	Lyndale Park Mixed Border Garden
Jan Johnson	Scholarship Fund
Larry Larson	General Fund
Mary Maynard	Scholarship Fund
Theresa Rooney	General Fund
Steve Shubik	Lyndale Park Mixed Border Garden
Virginia M. Tietel	Scholarship Fund

Special Acknowledgement of Support

We wish to thank the following businesses who generously supported the 2017 Silent Auction Scholarship Fund. Please support these businesses to acknowledge their support of MWGCM which raised \$2,403 for scholarships.

6Smith
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Sandra Mangel

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Cub Foods Minnetonka	Kelley and Kelley Nursery Long Lake	Sharpening Center Hopkins
Cub Foods St. Louis Park	Lakewinds Food Co-op Minnetonka	Smack Shack Minneapolis
Cupcakes by David St. Paul	Lund's and Byerly's Glen Lake Minnetonka	Snuffy's Malt Shop Minnetonka
Deakyne's True Value Minnetonka	Maynard's Excelsior	Sunnyside Gardens Minneapolis
Donahue's Greenhouse Faribault	Midwest Suppliers St. Louis Park	Tangletown Gardens Minneapolis
Embassy Suites Bloomington	Minnesota Landscape Arboretum Chaska	Terra Garden Center Lakeville
Famous Dave's Bar-B-Que Minnetonka	Mother Earth Gardens Minneapolis	The Home Depot St. Louis Park
Gardens by Lynn Minnetonka	Old Log Theater Excelsior	Tonkadale Greenhouse Minnetonka
Gertens Greenhouse and Garden Center Inver Grove Heights	Otten Brothers Garden Center Long Lake	Wagners Garden Center Minneapolis

Treasurer's Snapshot

Alan Gallaher, Treasurer

FEBRUARY 2018

Checking Balance	\$ 25,982
Designated Funds	
Lyndale Park/Mixed Border Garden	\$ 2,576
Scholarship	\$ 3,749
Deane Fund at RCU	\$ 61,875
Working Balance	\$ 19,657
Petty Cash	\$ 100
MWGCM 19-month CD at US Bank	\$ 5,368

Meeting & Event Calendar

February 13

Julie Weisenhorn: Landscape Design
Lake Harriet United Methodist Church

March 13

Arla Carmichael & Steve Kelley: Gems for
the Shade
Lakewood Cemetery Mausoleum

April 10

Leslie Letka: Rain Gardens
Lakewood Cemetery Mausoleum

May 8

Annual Plant Sale
St. Mary's Greek Orthodox Church

June 12

Jan Welsh: Butterfly Bootcamp:
Gardening to Attract Butterflies
Lakewood Cemetery Mausoleum

July

Garden Tours TBA

August

Flower, Food & Foto Show

September 11

Barbara Ronningen: Overwintering
Ornamental Plants
Lakewood Cemetery Mausoleum

October 9

Fiona Lennox: Native Plants
Lakewood Cemetery Mausoleum

November 13

Mary Meyer: Minnesota Landscape
Arboretum Grasses
Lake Harriet United Methodist Church

December 11

2018 Officers & Directors

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Mary Maynard administers the oath to the new board.

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

