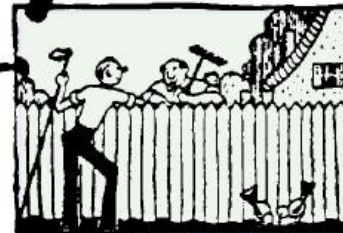




The Garden Spray

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

2012, Volume 70, Number 4



Upcoming Events

“Brasil: Gardens in Paradise with Gardens by Bachman’s”

Date	Location	Event
Apr 3	Macy's	Bachman/Macy's Flower Show
May 8	WLC	Plant Sale and Auction
June 12 (tentative)	Arb	Arb Tour with comments from new director
July, August		Club Tours
Aug 18-19	Arb	FFF Show
Sept. 11	LHC	Martin Stern (Squire House) - Hardy and Reliable Bulbs
Oct. 9	LHC	Attracting Hummingbirds to your Gardens Don Mitchell
Nov. 13	LHC	Gardening Books Kent Petterson
Dec. 11	LHC	Holiday Party

Macy's 8th floor auditorium will bloom into a tropical oasis featuring magnificent landscaped gardens brimming with color and the spirit of the Brazilian* experience. Dale Bachman will present an overview of how these gardens were designed and created by his team after a light dinner at the Oak Grill on Macy's 12th floor.

*Portuguese spelling.

Date: April 3, 2012 (note, this is the **first Tuesday of the month**)

Time:

5:00 pm (gather, be seated, and order drinks)

5:30 pm Dinner is served.

(please arrive by 5 pm)

6:20 pm Dale will speak.

6:50 pm Proceed to 8th floor for flower show.

8:00 pm Macy's store closes.

(must exit store by 8:20 p.m.)

LHC = Lake Harriet Church, 4901 Chowen Ave S., Mpls. (Lower level)

Macy's = Downtown Minneapolis Macy's Store

WLC = Westwood Lutheran Church, St. Louis Park

Arb = U of M Landscape Arboretum

Note: Permanent reservations are not in effect. Dinner reservations for dinner at Macy's Oak Grill are sold out! If you can't come to the dinner, you can still join us to tour the flower show at ~ 7:00!

Looking Ahead

Annual Plant Sale & Auction: May 8

Westwood Lutheran Church

More info on Page 3

Remember: Plant Pre-Order forms are due to Mary Maynard no later than Friday, March 30!

Notes from the Prez:

-- Robert Kean



*"When I grow up I want to be a tree
Want to make my home with the birds and the bees
And the squirrels, they can count on me
When I grow up to be a tree...
I'm gonna reach, I'm gonna reach
I'm gonna reach, reach for the sky..."*

(From John Gorka song "Branching Out")

April is the traditional month for Arbor Day so this month's article will focus on trees. The picture is me with one of the first trees I ever planted. It is a black walnut tree growing on land owned by my family in western New York. At a young age, my father taught me to identify trees. I loved the graceful almost tropical leaves of walnut trees and decided that we needed some on our land. What I didn't realize at the time, there was a good reason we had no walnut trees already growing on this land. The soil is heavy clay, waterlogged much of the year, pH of



about 4, and with a thick layer of shale about 2-3 feet underground. That is all in addition to late spring frosts and early fall frosts. Walnuts are trees like deep loam, neutral pH, and a long warm growing season. About 2 feet tall when planted, the tree struggled for many years with no net increase in size; dying back to the ground in the winter or after a killing spring frost but bravely putting up new growth from the base during each summer. Then I learned that gardeners are allowed to "cheat", we are allowed to use things like lime and fertilizer to help plants grow. After a few years of "help", the tree finally began to make progress. When the tree was about 15 feet tall, my brother accidentally started a grass fire which singed the tree. It lost most of its leaves but ultimately survived and thrived. It stands today as a symbol of patience and perseverance (or perhaps foolishness and stubbornness). In the years since planting it, I have unfortunately discovered that I really don't much like the taste of black walnuts. I do like hickory nuts, but those trees are another story. Wearing my other hat as "Arbor Day committee chair" (and I do literally have another hat - it says "Tree Trust" on it), we are working on a new project for this year, which could potentially be a multiyear collaboration. It involves planting trees and shrubs in the Robert's Bird Sanctuary near Lake Harriet, to enhance the wildlife value and replace buckthorn (and other invasives) with native plants. Our committee has traditionally treated Arbor Day as a "floating holiday", so the planting date might actually be in May or June. Stay posted for more details. The other annual tradition for April is our club outing to the Macy/Bachman's show. Special thanks to our member Dale Bachman for graciously agreeing to (once again) give us some behind-the-scene insights about the show. Thanks!!!! to V.P. Sandra A. for making all the arrangements for the event. Our tropical spring weather should put us in the right mood for the plants of Brasil.



Treasurer's Snapshot

As of 2-21-2012

Checking balance	\$15,861.38
Designated Funds	
Memorials/Park Garden	\$1,905.47
Scholarship	<u>\$5,170.28</u>
Working Balance	\$8,785.63
CD	\$5,210.22

Membership Corner

No membership news this month!

Mark Your Calendars: Plant Sale and Auction May 8

-- Gary Geister

We are having our sale earlier this year but with the temperature in the 70's and 80's for the middle of March we may not be too early.

The annual plant sale and auction will take place at our usual place, the **Westwood Lutheran Church, 9001 Cedar Lake Road, St Louis Park.**

This is the day and event at which you pick up the plants from the preorders. If for some reason you do not have a preorder form contact Mary Maynard. The preorders need to be in Mary Maynard's hands no later than Friday, March 30.

Please note----The Country Store will be open to everyone at 4:30 this year. The country store is an event where you can purchase plants from other members' gardens and seed starting efforts. As requested by some of our members we are going to have more perennials on hand for purchase. We will have a number of new perennials from Ambergate Gardens and a few from Eislies. The FFF flower of the year is Rudbeckia so we are planning on having a few varieties of these also. If you have new or unusual perennials in your own garden bring them in to add to the Country Store or Silent Auction. Gary Geister will have a variety of coleus this year. Some of the varieties are 'Bright Ruffles', 'Fishnet Stockings', 'Handy Andy' (for our own Andy Marlow), 'Hot Lava', 'Jade', 'Pistachio Nightmare', and 'Stormy Weather'. You can look up some of these coleus varieties on the internet.

Any donations members can bring from their favorite garden center, nursery or hardware store to be used for the live auction, silent auction or the raffle would be greatly appreciated.

This is one of our biggest fund raisers for the club so with everyone's donations and purchases this helps keep the membership cost to all of us to a minimum. Hopefully you will be going home with a vehicle filled to the brim with (Cream of the Crop) plants for your 2012 Gardens.

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<http://www.mqcm.org>



FFF 2012 Featured Vegetable “Cool as a Cucumber”

-- Judy Berglund (Photo courtesy of Park Seed)

Each year the MGCM Flower, Food and Foto Show showcases one vegetable and awards a special ribbon for the best specimen. This year we are featuring cucumbers. Sliced, pickled or pulled right off the vine, you'll enjoy the unmistakable flavor of cucumbers! Easy to grow on hills, in rows, up trellises or in containers, cucumbers have something for everyone. They offer a variety of sizes and colors from tiny Gherkin - style ones to long tasty slicers, in different shades of green, white and yellow.

Cucumbers are usually started by planting seeds directly in the garden. Plant after the danger of frost has passed and the soil has warmed in the spring. Warm soil is necessary for germination of seeds and proper growth of plants. With ample soil moisture, cucumbers thrive in warm summer weather. Plant seeds $\frac{1}{2}$ to 1 inch deep and thin seedlings to one plant every 12 inches in the row or to three plants every 36 inches in the hill system.

Cucumber plants have shallow roots and require ample soil moisture at all stages of growth. When fruit begins setting and maturing, adequate moisture becomes especially critical. For best yields, incorporate compost or well-rotted manure before planting. Cucumbers respond to mulching with soil-warming plastic in early spring or organic materials in summer. Side-dress with nitrogen fertilizer when the plants begin to vine. Cucumber beetles should be controlled from the time the young seedlings emerge from the soil.

In small gardens, the vines maybe trained on trellis or fence. When the long burpless varieties are supported, cucumbers hang free and develop straight fruits. Wire cages also can be used for supporting the plants. **DO NOT HANDLE, harvest or work with the plants when wet.**

Pick cucumbers at any stage of development before seeds become hard. Cucumbers usually are eaten when immature. The best size depends upon the use and variety. They may be picked when they are no more than 2 inches long for pickles, 4 to 6 inches long for dills and 6 to 8 inches long for slicing varieties. A cucumber is of highest quality when it is uniformly green, firm, and crisp. The long burpless cucumbers should be 1 to 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ inches in diameter and up to 10 inches long. Some varieties can grow considerably longer. Do not allow cucumbers to turn yellow. Remove from the vine any missed fruit nearing ripeness so that the young fruits continue to develop. The cucumber fruit grows rapidly to harvest size and should be picked at least every other day.

To exhibit cucumbers: For pickling select 7 cucumbers 3-5 inches long. All specimens should be at the same stage of maturity and uniform in size, shape and color. For slicers, select 3 cucumbers that are straight, dark green, and 6 - 10 inches long. They should be uniform in size, shape and color. Do not show overripe fruits that are usually dull in color. Leave about $\frac{1}{4}$ inch of uniform stem length attached to all cucumbers.



MGCM Member Survey Report #4

by Don Untiedt

MGCM is a strong garden club, a preferred garden club for many, largely because of the number and quality of garden activities for its members – Arbor Day planting, May plant sale, public display and trial garden at Lyndale Park, August Flower, Food, and Foto show (FFF), and Holiday Party in December. Members contribute articles of information to a colorful club newspaper The Garden Spray. Our fourth report from the club survey reflects what the survey showed as to how club members feel about these MGCM activities.

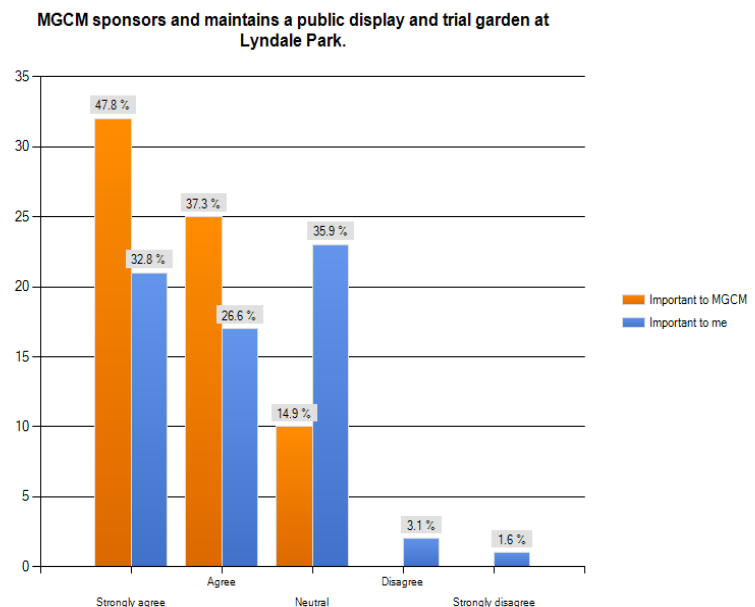
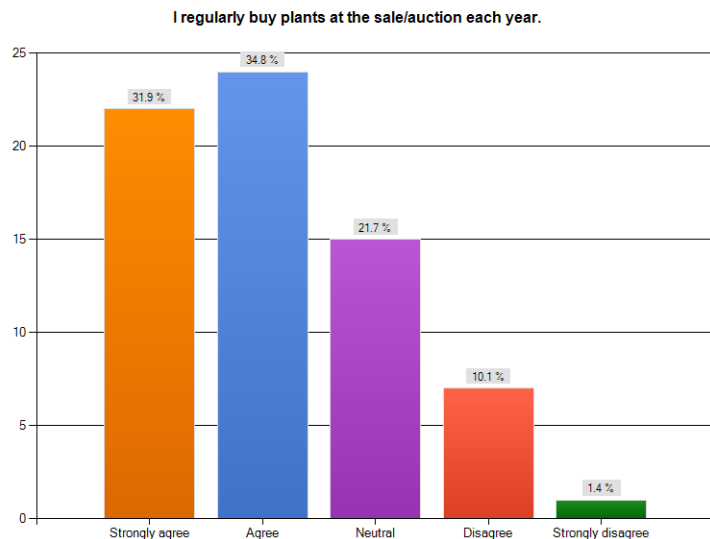
Arbor Day

71% of the members agree that our Arbor Day role is important to the club. 22% of the participants say it is of strong interest to them personally.

Plant Sale and Auction

Two-thirds of our members believe the sale and auction is important to the club. About half of MGCM's operating funds come from the plant sale. 19 members (26% of participants) wrote specific suggestions that they would like to see implemented with future sales. Those ideas for expanding country store sales, including more perennials, and possibly changing the time of the auction, etc., have been forwarded to the Plant Sale Co-Chairs. 61% of the club members would like to see the plant sale opened to the public with more promotion.

(Continued on next page)





MGCM Member Survey Report #4

(Continued from Page 5)

Lyndale Park Public Display and Trial Garden

85% of the respondents agree that the Lyndale Park project is important to MGCM – 48% strongly believe so. 59% see the garden as important to them personally. Evidence of this support shows in the number of volunteers that regularly contribute their time and expertise to the Lyndale garden.

Food, Flower, and Foto (FFF) show at the MN Landscape Arboretum

78% of the members completing the survey said FFF is important to MGCM. 48% are, however, neutral on how important FFF is to them personally. This may explain why 50% of the members have never entered flowers or vegetables. A slightly higher number (56%) have never entered photos.

Holiday Party

Support for the MGCM Holiday party is strong with 73.1% of the respondents.

The Garden Spray

Virtually 100% of the survey respondents like The Garden Spray – 60% strongly agree that it is important to MGCM, with 61% indicating that the Spray is important to them personally. There was not a single person that disagreed with any of the Spray questions. 17 suggestions that might make the Spray even better have been forwarded to the Editor to consider. Some new ideas include the possibility of advertising in the Spray to raise revenue for the club, having a column for letters to the editor, having at least one plant topic per month, and more committee reports.

Our next report in a month will provide insight as to how members feel about club dues, how our volunteer opportunities might be made easier for members and more effective in building a stronger club, and some final thoughts.

Remember: Plant Pre-Order Forms need to be to Mary Maynard no later than Friday, March 30!

The order form is on our website at this link:

<http://bit.ly/GDLFhJ>

Questions? Call or email Mary at 952-926-7506, maynard4375@yahoo.com

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<http://www.mgcm.org>



Photos from the March Meeting

Chuck Carlson, Photographer



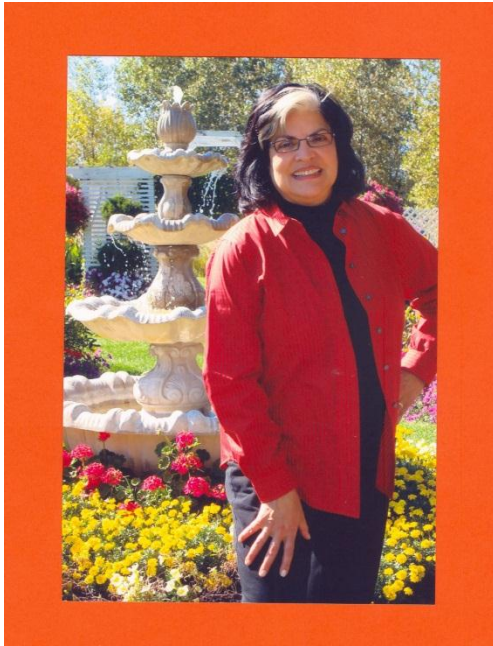
Top to Bottom: "Garden Help 5¢": Rodger Sefelt, Kay Wolfe and Mollie Dean; Jan Johnson settles up with Andy Marlow and Dave McKeen; Shirley Mah Kooyman provides another interesting program; Judy Berglund tries to "stump the experts", which now include Tim Rosener and Bob Livingston.

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<http://www.mqcm.org>



Getting to Know Your Board Member: Sandra Abraham



Weeding the garden for my parents in New Richland, MN is my first memory of gardening. Half of our backyard consisted of a vegetable garden and a flower cutting garden. Now, that was in the 1950's and everyone had vegetable gardens in those days. There was such a good yield of beets, beans, eggplant, carrots, summer squash, and tomatoes that canning season was a major event in the family. There was always enough to feed all three Abraham households in that small town for the entire winter. When spring arrived the radishes and other cold crops were planted and the process was repeated.

Both my mother and grandmother loved flowers of all types and between the two of them we always had cut flowers all summer and into the fall. Every year, on my June birthday, my grandmother would call our house to tell me to ride my bicycle over to her house for my peony bouquet. When I arrived she would very carefully wrap a bouquet in newspaper (she had cut them earlier and put them in her basement by the cistern to sort of "harden" off). They were fragrant and beautiful and I have loved them ever since.

After I moved away and started my nursing career at Northwestern Hospital in Minneapolis I actually began gardening in a community garden in Richfield. It was located by the Rich Acres golf course which has now become a runway, I believe. This was in the 1970's and vegetable gardening was really the thing because coops were just coming into vogue and we all wanted to have homegrown food. With no yard of my own this was the best I could do. We did have a water supply but we had to carry buckets full to our own little plot and it was hard work. Nevertheless, I learned how to deal with all sorts of garden concerns including pests, both animal and plant diseases.

In 1983, I began container gardening on my condominium balcony in Eagan and by 1986 I had a single family home with a yard but no money left after building a house to do any landscaping. After the rainstorm of the century washed out our lawn we had no recourse but to re-grade and terrace the yard. This took all summer of 1991 and in the fall we planted 5 trees and 108 small shrubs and perennials. My childhood gardening skills started to come in handy and I soon realized that, though I thought weeding was all I was doing, many other techniques of gardening were being passed along.

(Continued on next page)



Sandra Abraham -- *Continued*

Today, I enjoy all kinds of gardening and this summer I will begin vegetable gardening in a raised bed garden that will be 30" high and 24" across with a little seat on one side so that I will not have to weed on my knees. Ergonomics is the key here. My, how things change as one matures!

Some of my favorites are roses, hostas, ornamental grasses and other flowering shrubs. I maintain memberships in many plant societies and try to get to most of their meetings. My car can find its way to many garden centers, almost without my steering it. When our gardens in Eagan were new, I couldn't wait for them to mature but now, as I lose some of the trees we planted to ice storms, I wish they were still young. Our gardens are ever changing, as Jerry Shannon always says, and we never know what is around the next corner or coming in the next growing season, but that is what keeps gardening interesting.

Table Topics Return to Dinner Meetings

--Sandra Abraham

In February the popular "table topics" returned to the dinner tables to encourage some discussion at each table about a current topic of interest to Minnesota Gardeners. Since the USDA recently released an updated plant hardiness zone map we asked MGCM if the results of this update would influence their gardening decisions in any way.

I can only report what the people at my table discussed. The conclusion we all came up with was that just because this hardiness map was just officially announced, these changes have been occurring over many years so that any microclimates we have in our gardens have already been realized. Some of us have already adapted and pushed the zone button for our own established microclimates.

The other part of this is that there are other factors to consider as well when it comes to hardiness, such as moisture content of the soil going into the winter months and actual snow cover or not during the winter. We all pretty much agreed that we are not going to change how we garden on our sites.

Editor's Note

We have yet another full issue, but I thought I'd take a trip down Memory Lane and re-print a snippet from a "Lazy Gardener" article from years past on the next page. Hope you enjoy it!



Confessions of a Lazy Gardener: Lawn Care, Part 1

Well, the grass will be greening up any time now, and it's time to think about Lawn Care the Lazy Way. Unfortunately, lawn care is really a situation where A Stitch in Time Saves Nine, and An Ounce of Prevention is Worth a Pound of Cure. So, good lawn care really goes against the grain for a Lazy Gardener, although doing a few things up front will save plenty of time later. Needless to say, I do not have a perfect lawn. To have a perfect lawn, one cannot be a Lazy Gardener, as far as I can tell.

Here are a few lawn care observations:

1. Pre-emergent crabgrass control is worth the time and money. Most of us don't really need more than one fertilizer application in the spring, and getting one of those expensive ones with the yellow stuff in it will make a huge difference during the crabgrass season. You might not get 100% prevention, but even 90% is a LOT of crabgrass you don't have to pull out. Of course, you shouldn't put this down where you plan to plant seed or anything. There is a special version for newly seeded areas, but I've never tried it. As to when to put it on: I usually put it on after I have made Phil mow for the first time in the spring.

2. Seeding in bare or thin spots is not all that hard. I've had good luck with that grass patch stuff that has seed and green-tinted mulch mixed together. Seems like that mulch holds the moisture until the next time I get around to watering. Sometimes my watering practice is not ideal for new grass.

3. Broadleaf weed control. For the easy stuff -- dandelions and plantains, an occasional squirt of one of the usual broadleaf weed killers works fine. I usually mix up a small batch in a hand spray bottle and spray the weed directly. I don't believe in those Weed-and-Feed fertilizers.

For one thing, I don't like stuff sticking to the grass with kids and pets in the area, and for another thing, the time when I need weed control the most is the worst time to apply fertilizer.

4. Creeping Charlie is in a class by itself. I have heard about people who have gotten rid of it, but I'm not convinced that it is in the realm of possibility for the typical Lazy Gardener. Many experts tell us that the secret to the Creeping Charlie problem is to not get it in the first place -- by having a lush green lawn that doesn't allow it to get established. This advice is less than helpful for those of us who have huge mats of the stuff crawling through the back yard, often endangering neighbor relations by hopping into adjacent properties.

I have not succeeded in eradicating Creeping Charlie, but I have noticed a few things: (a) it takes many applications of a broadleaf weed killer to completely eradicate it, if it is indeed possible. Something with Dicamba seems to be more effective. (b) the experts suggest spraying either when it is growing vigorously (pretty much any time, as far as I can tell) and blossoming; or at the end of the season, after it has been weakened by a hard freeze. Even then it takes multiple applications. (c) the 20 Mule Team Borax solution does seem to get rid of a lot of it, but isn't 100% effective. And, you can't reapply it, since boron accumulates in the soil, which is a bad thing. (d) If there isn't a lot of it, pulling it out of the lawn might be as effective as anything else. But you need to be ever watchful. Eternal Vigilance is the Price of a Charlie-free Lawn. (e) Bob Olson reports success with painting individual leaves of Creeping Charlie with Roundup using an artist's brush. I believe this proves that Bob does not qualify as a Lazy Gardener. *(More to come the next time there is space!)*



Minutes of MGCM Board Meeting

March 5, 2012

President, Robert Kean called the meeting to order at 6:35. The agenda and the minutes of the February meeting were approved.

Treasurer's report: Too many dinners were ordered for the February meeting resulting in a shortage. Those who had reservations but did not attend will be asked to pay for their meals.

Vice President's report: Spring meeting are all confirmed. June Arboretum tour to begin 70th anniversary celebration. The Club survey suggested that table talks be reinstated.

Membership secretary's report: Current membership is 89 which includes five who have not yet renewed. Two have promised to send in their dues and the other three will be called to find out their intention.

Committee reports:

Tours: The committee has decided not to have a Public Tour this year as there is not time to get ready for a really good event. There will be two Club tours – July 10, two or three gardens of members close together and a second tour in August.

Arbor Day: The Robert's Bird Sanctuary needs renovation. The several entities who have responsibility for it will meet to determine what needs to be done. MGCM will be involved with the planning and execution – probably over several years.

Holiday party: Randi suggested reviving outside entertainment to lessen Club members' responsibility for the program. She recommended a singer/guitar player. Tallying the silent auction will be simplified and possible computerized.

Plant Auction: Pre-order plants will be supplied by the same vender as last year. Plants for the auction will come from Eisle and Ambergate Gardens.

Old Business: Kay reviewed the MHS Fall meeting on "Growing Your Club". There was discussion on how to energize new members.

One of the major needs for 2012 is improving publicity. We need one person to coordinate this aspect of the Club's business. Committees are expected to handle their own special events.

Robert suggested we have an ad hoc committee to discuss and revise Club literature – brochures, Spray, a possible book mark to be placed in local nurseries, and other materials. An article in the SW Journal on the Park Garden was suggested. Other goals possible are the name of the Club, table topics, growing membership and involving new members.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:25.

Respectfully submitted,
Jan Johnson, Recording Secretary.

MEN'S GARDEN CLUB OF MINNEAPOLIS, INC.



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The Spray

The Garden Spray is published monthly by the Men's Garden Club of Minneapolis, Inc. for its members.

The Men's Garden Club of Minneapolis is a not-for-profit, equal opportunity organization.

Return To:

The Garden Spray

Men's Garden Club of Minneapolis, Inc.

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First Class Mail

April
2012