

The Garden Spray

December 1989, Volume 47, Number 12



Happy

Holidays

'Twas the night before
Christmas and all
through the yard
The branches were bare
and the ground
frozen hard;
Those roses were dormant
and mulched all around
To protect them from
damage if frost
heaves the ground.

When what to my wondering
eyes should appear
But a truck full of gifts
of gardening gear.
Saint Nick was the driver--
a right jolly old elf,
And he winked as he said,
"I'm a gardener myself!"

Then jolly St. Nick,
having emptied his load,
Started his truck and
took to the road.

And I heard him exclaim
through the motor's
loud hum:

"MERRY CHRISTMAS to all,
and to all a GREEN THUMB!"

—Charles and Janice Jensen

announcements.

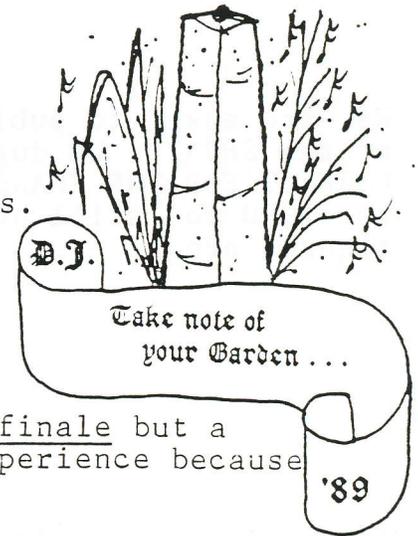
The Minnesota State Horticultural Society 5th District (Hennepin County primarily) has been activated after several years of inactivity. A 1/2 day spring seminar has been tentatively scheduled for the first Saturday in April 1990. A summer flower and vegetable show in which the Men's Garden clubs of Minnetonka and Minneapolis are anticipated to participate (probably instead of our individual shows) is tentatively scheduled for mid July, to coincide with the Annual convention of the Minnesota State Horticultural Society to be held in Minneapolis in 1990. A summer bus tour and a fall gardening seminar are also tentatively scheduled.

This new activity will provide our group with a greater availability to timely garden information. If you are interested in participating in the planning of any of these events, contact Duane Reynolds, Kent Petterson, Lee Gilligan, Duane Johnson, Russ Smith or Fred Glasoe.

If you are interested in orchids and would like to attend an Orchid Society of Minnesota monthly meeting, contact Russ Smith. The meetings are generally held at 1:00 P.M. on the third Saturday of each month in room 35b in the classroom office building at the U of M Twin Cities St. Paul Campus. There is no admission charge for guests. Members have a plant display table where the displayed plants are discussed. There is also a speaker discussing an orchid related topic. If you are interested, contact Russ Smith at 545 4404 or 475 1878. Be my Guest.

Notes from the President . . .

Moving to the last note as your President. What else than--Finale--the ending. Thanks for all the memories. This year has been something special to me because of your help and support. I've grown very much in the gardening experience. What a special honor you have given me by allowing me to serve as your President.



This Club is very very special to me. This is not a finale but a new beginning to many new avenues of horticultural experience because of the people in this Club.

DECEMBER MGCM PEOPLE OF THE MONTH

Months have run out and I'd still like to recognize two special guys. This member joined in 1980. He has been very active in the Community Garden. He's there when you need him. He has offered great service to that project. Also he has headed up the Calendar Sales for the past two years. He is a regular attender at the Board meeting. I don't think he's missed one in two years. HOWARD BERG thanks for all your help.

The second person of the month joined in 1977. When you need something big to happen in the Club, he's ready to make it happen. A Past President, he changed my direction in this Club. So many positive things happened for me when he asked me to serve as Vice President of this Club. BOB CHURILLA your guidance over these past years has been more than helpful. BOB AND HOWARD MGCM PEOPLE OF THE MONTH.

DIRECTION FOR THE 90'S

Where do we go as a club for the 90's? Our group has possibilities to continue for many years. My greatest concern is membership.--We have lost several "Giants" over the past 3 or 4 years to death. The bottom line is that we need to explore new and other ways to expand our membership. Frankly, I've been disappointed by the number of new members taken in this year. I have been heartened to know that the new members will keep the flame alive in this Club's leadership.--We need to look at our basic reason for existing--horticulture.

The olè hitching post in my front yard stands tall waiting for a floral treatment in 1990. Each of us can be proud to be a part of such a fine organization--MGCM.

Happy Gardening in the 90's.
Duane J.

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CALLING ALL PARTY GOERS. Remember to bring a Christmas wrapped package to put under the tree on December 5. If you bring guests bring a package for each of them, too. Deposit packages under the tree when you arrive.

* * * * *

While anyone can buy a nice windowsill orchid for from \$10 to \$25, an exceptionally fine specimen of a superior new hybrid can fetch as much as \$10,000 to \$20,000. The Smithsonian Institution's orchid collection includes over 30,000 plants.

WE GOOFED
(Meaning the editor did)

We were asked to publish the membership renewal form in the November issue of the SPRAY. We dug up the file copy and ran it again. BUT WE FAILED TO CORRECT FOR THE CHANGE IN HORT. SOCIETY DUES. So, If you sent in \$32.00 for 1990 you still owe \$1.00. If your money hasn't come in yet the correct figures are:

MGCM dues	\$ 7.00
MGCA dues	15.00
MN. Hort. Soc. dues	<u>11.00</u>
Total	\$33.00

NOVEMBER BOARD MEETING

After discussing alternatives the board decided to hold the dinner charge at \$6.00 for 1990 despite the fact that the church has raised the rental 100% (from \$50.00 to \$100.00). Meanwhile relocation will be investigated.

NEW MEMBER

Mary J. Maynard	926-7506
4375 Dart Ave. S.	931-6372
St. Louis Park, MN 55424	

NEW OFFICERS ELECTED FOR 1990

At the regular MGCM monthly meeting on November 14th the nominating committee's report was accepted without dissent and the following slate of officers and directors was elected to serve in 1990.

President - Kent Petterson	Secretary - Reed Sonstegard
Vice President - Merle Pulley	Treasurer - Joseph Stenger
Board Members: Melvin Anderson, Charles Benson, Lee Gilligan Gregory Smith	

THE CHRISTMAS PARTY

There is still time to make reservations for the MGCM annual Christmas party if you hurry. Telephone Cnet Groger at 922-6411 that you are coming then fill in the blank below and mail it to him. A telephoned reservation still requires cash payment in advance of December 5.

Cnet Groger
Apt. 255
5210 Villa Way
Edina, MN 55436

Amt. Encl. \$ _____

NOV. 30, 1989 LAST DATE FOR RESERVATIONS

Please reserve _____ places for me and my guests for the annual Christmas party. Signed _____

Guests Names: _____

I will _____ Will not _____ be able to serve as a carver.

DRIFT FROM THE SPRAYER

by Ed Culbert

Now that Christmas is about upon us it is time to button up and head out for the Christmas tree lots--There used to be many of them but we see few now-a-days--or the nurseryman's. There we shiver as we study the trees on display trying to find the perfect one among the many. We wonder if the flattened trees just being unloaded from a truck will ever spread out. Dare we choose one of them?

Some of us may prefer to drive to a grower's place to cut our own tree. If we have youngsters or grandchildren that will delight them most. Others will dream nostalgically of long past Christmases when axe in hand we tramped through the crusted snow into the woods to find that perfect balsam to carry home on our shoulders. Carry home not drag home at the certain risk of losing some of those precious needles.

How well I remember the year I sought in vain for an acceptable balsam. When darkness closed in I seized upon and carried home a sturdy spruce meanwhile sinking up to my knees through the crusted snow on every third step. The cold froze my mittened fingers. The wind seared my face and the tree twisted and squirmed. The tree was really far too big--and it wasn't a balsam. So, back I went the next day and again the day after that until I found a balsam, not the perfect one but one I could accept.

The next year the Oliver Iron Mining Company required permits to cut trees. Permits were limited to one tree per employee. I knew how to get around the employee bit but my time home from college allowed no time to scour the woods for the perfect tree.

In recent years we have been besieged with advertising for "live table-sized Christmas trees" in pots "suitable for planting out in our yards later." I tried one once.--I can't believe that I, myself, ever purchased it. It was some kind of fir. I tried to nurse it along in the house until spring. I'm not sure it was still alive then. It certainly didn't survive and grow. But there is an alternative--the Norfolk Island Pine.

This plant has needles, is green, somewhat resembles a Christmas tree and makes a fine living table decoration. The branches will hold tiny ornaments. It is easy of culture, never has to be planted out, grows a little each year but slowly. We got one as part of a table decoration years ago. It was 4 or 5 inches tall. We planted it in a small pot. It is now 24 inches tall, has a spread of 30 inches and is comfortable in a 6-inch pot. Of course, ultimately, whenever that is, it could grow to ceiling height.

But, back to buttoning up and heading out as I shall do about December first. Flower and Garden magazine a few years back had information and advice I generally follow.

"The Douglas fir is the favorite tree in western states. Balsam fir is superior but it is rare. Spruces shed needles quicker after cutting than any other conifer. Pines hold their needles longer than other needled evergreens.

The plantation grown Scotch pine is our most popular Christmas tree because it is most readily available at the market.

Buy a freshly cut tree. Foliage should be soft and pliable. Jolt the cut end on a solid surface to see if needles fall. Avoid trees sprayed green paint.

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Condition your tree by washing it down with warm water. Make a slanting cut near the base of the stem. Stand the tree in a bucket of warm water and place it in a cool room. Give it elbow space so its branches can assume a normal position. A tree stand with a container to be kept filled with water is a good investment."

CLUB RECEIVES RECOGNITION

A letter of "appreciation to the Board of Directors and members of the Men's Garden Club of Minneapolis" from Rick Bonlender, Minnesota Green Coordinator, was recently received by our president, Duane Johnson.

It cites the names of MGCM members who have in recent months contributed volunteer hours, hosted visits, helped in fund-raising, etc. and goes on to say: "Finally, the club's previous contributions have not gone unnoticed, namely; a tour of the Fragrance Garden during the 1988 "Celebrate Gardening Day", a slide presentation at a membership meeting, information in "The Garden Spray" and Fragrance Garden pictures in the Minnesota Green slide show.

"Thanks to MGCM's support, and the assistance of several other substantial contributors, Minnesota Green's second year has been very fruitful. The model sites started last year are continuing to mature and the volunteer networks at those sites are strengthening. New sites have been started in St. Paul: RAP Head Start, and Greening of Grand Avenue; in Roseville: Central Park; and in Minneapolis: Harrison Neighborhood. In addition, several other organizations interested in greening have received our support through technical assistance and/or bedding plants."

LONG LASTING FENCES FROM TREES

To build new fences or replace old ones, people usually turn to store-bought metal or treated posts. But if you have access to a woodlot, there are trees that do the job just as well. Numerous native hardwoods can be used successfully as fence posts, says Randall B. Weiligmann, forestry specialist at OSU. Many need not and should not be treated with preservatives. "Untreated hardwoods used for fence posts should have a high concentration of heartwood, the darker colored wood in the center of a branch or tree. Heartwood is much more resistant to decay than sapwood, the lighter colored wood between the heartwood and bark."

The heartwood of some tree species, such as bur oak, black locust and eastern red cedar can provide 20 or more years of service as fence posts. Catalpa, white oak, white cedar and swamp white oak should last 10 to 20 years. Count on 5 to 10 years of service from black ash, slippery elm, black cherry, butternut and from tamarack, a softwood. Expect about 5 years of sturdy support from ash, red oak, black oak, basswood, hickory, beech and ironwood. By comparison, commercially available fenceposts treated with preservatives generally should last 20 or more years.

--Condensed from Mansfield Ohio MGC bulletin

Ivy stands for faithfulness and marriage. Tendrils on climbing plants represent the ties that bind us together.

The wallflower, both fragrant and velvety soft, expresses fidelity in adversity.