

December, 2000, Volume 58, Number 12

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This Month Annual Holiday Party

Date: Tuesday, December 5, 2000 Socializing: 6:00 PM Dinner: 6:30 PM Location: Lake Harriet United Methodist 49th and Chowen Avenue South

You must have a reservation The Permanent reservation list is not in effect



Editorial Enticements

Chuck Carlson Edite

This year has been, to say the least, a bit unusual. We had an unusually easy winter, an early spring and now a late fall. We did have a semi-killing frost but that has been followed by an extended period of warm weather. As of the first week in November, I still have a number of plants still with blooms. The most surprising to me is that a foxglove and some yellow non-stop begonias are still blooming. But there is also a few roses, alyssum, wax leafed begonias, lamium and petunias. But the Malva 'Zebrina" is just full of blooms and of course the mums still have a few blooms. Another thing I noticed was that the season has been long enough so that seedlings of the annual alyssum self seeded are starting to bloom. Not only that, the Dusty Miller are the biggest most luxuriant I have ever had. There is even a Hosta called 'June' still in its glory. The only problem is that I haven't been able to get the fall clean-up done before the snow comes. Oh well, there is always next spring.

I hope you all had a good year gardening and are ready to make plans for next year's garden. Speaking of plans for next year, remember we have the convention here and there will be a need for many gardens to be on tour. Whether the gardens are big or small, they can tell the story of Minnesota gardening. If you are asked, don't say no.

Are you into vegetables? I just received a news release from Seminis Garden and will list some of their new releases for 2001. Seminis Garden is a seed breeder and producer so you can't order from them but look for these at retailers or mail order catalogs. I have just picked out

a few and if they strike your fancy, look for the total list on the board at our next dinner meeting.

Carrot 'Nutri-Red' -- A red carrot that turns blood red when cooked. Contains the same amount of lycopene as tomatoes. Lycopene may be a cancer preventative. Bean "Tema' -- A new variety bush bean that germinates in cold soils. It is too tender to ship so it must be grown in home gardens.

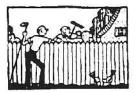
Tomato 'Granny Smith' -- As the name implies, it is green and is the first green tomato that tastes good. It is also good for salsa verde instead of tomatillos. Cabbage 'Showoff' -- This variety is a 15 pound giant. A good one to eat but can also be a winner at our show or the State Fair.

Corn 'Temptation' -- This is an early SE bicolor which will be a new standard. Even if you don't grow it, look for it at the market.

Pepper 'Giant Marconi' -- This one is a 2001 AAS winner and is a big plant with big sweet fruit and matures early. Pepper 'Fooled You' --- A Jalapeno that has no heat but flavor for salsas Pepper 'Serrano del Sol' -- This gem is a hot Serrano, 4500 - 5500 Scovill units. Pepper 'Luigi' -- An Italian sweet pepper that in one trial had 45 peppers on one plant.

Pepper 'Kung Pao' --- If you want to make Kung Pao Chicken, this one is for you having 10,000 Scovil units. Also a winner in a hot stir fry.

Onion 'Super Star' -- This one is the first day neutral onion. It received the AAS award for 2001 and is a white sweet variety just right for that burger. Lettuce 'Red Butterworth' -- This plant is an attractive green overlaid with reddish bronze Butterhead. Its picture looks so good, I am thinking of using this in the flower beds for some texture as well as to have it for a salad.



President's Column

MGCM President Richie Miller

Ritchie's Ramblings

This is being written on November 17, 2000, two days past our Managing Editor's deadline. I apologize to him for being late, but say it so that you might have a time perspective for the next

> sentence. We should be about finished with the yard work for the season. There may be just a little more to do yet if you're as behind as I am and don't mind working in the snow.

> > A message to Lloyd Bachman. Congratulations on being such a long term member of our club. Also, thank you for all that you've done for the

horticulture industry-for our club, for our state, and for our country. It was a pleasure to meet you and witness our club's great respect for you and what you've done.

Ritchie Miller

Photo by Chuck

This is my last rambling article so I really want to thank all those who have provided the support, ideas, manpower, and hard work that has made this year a success. Being the President of our club would be a difficult task without a lot of support and you people made it quite easy. A sincere BIG THANK YOU to each and every one of you. It has proved to be fun for me, I hope that you had fun, too.

Now you can look forward to Carole Ann's article, which will be more informative, humorous, flowery, relevant, succinct, precise, daintily refined, entertaining, and timely than these ramblings. That will be a large change for the better.

There are several things in process that will be completed next year. Our web site thanks to Andy Marlow, the Spray via email thanks to Chuck Carlson, and the national convention thanks to Duane Reynolds. These are the leaders for their efforts and may require some help. Please respond positively if they ask for your help. The above are only the continuing efforts, not the efforts that have a new beginning each year such as the club tours, the perennial garden, the plant auction, the Valley Fair work days, the Food Flower and Foto Show, and all our other activities. Please volunteer to help with a couple of these activities.

We are hosting the national convention next year. We must make this a real success and that will take some focus and effort by each of us. We can show the nation what a club we have and that it is GREAT.

I've had a good time being your President because of all your help. Thanks again.



It has been said A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush. But, Just remember a bird in the hand can also be a real mess.

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The November Program

By Russ Smith

Our speaker, Steve Gonzalez, gave a very interesting and colorful program. Like Chuck Carlson's last month report, I was unable to take notes in the dark and if I had, I probably couldn't read them. Luckily, Steve had a handout about the subject.

Steve started his program by telling some of his life history. He was born in Puerto Rico and lived there as a young child. He at an early age, started working in a greenhouse operation and at 12 years of age started working at the Botanical Garden in San Juan. He is the immediate past president of the Orchid Society of Minnesota. He travels internationally in his work for Minnesota Mining and Manufacturing.

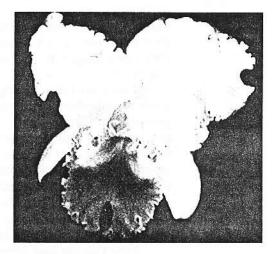
On the subject of orchids he had a prepared handout "About Orchids and Orchid Growing". There are over 25,000 species of orchids identified and grow everywhere (except the North and South Pole). By 1996 there were 100,000 registered hybrids. They are the largest family of flowering plants. The orchid's distinguishing feature is its structure of 3 petals and 3 sepals, with one of the petals deformed. The reproductive system is within the plant but requires pollination by insects or by hand.

There are some 38-40 species of terrestrial orchids growing as native plants in Minnesota. The Minnesota State flower is the Cypripedium reginae a lady slipper type orchid. Most orchids grown by hobby growers are tropical plants and are epiphytic (they grow on trees and

obtain their nourishment from the rain and light. It is important to provide the correct amounts of light, humidity, air circulation, water and fertilization for the best growing condition for the particular variety of orchid. Orchids can be grown in the home in an east or south window, under fluorescent lights or under high pressure sodium lights in addition to growing them in a greenhouse. Some Orchid plants are easily grown while others are very specific as to environment and are difficult to grow. The easiest to grow and produce the longest bloom periods are the Phalaenopsis and Paphiopedilum family.

Steve presented a slide program prepared by the American Orchid Society which gave the basics of orchid growing, followed by slides of different plants that he himself has grown or owns plus slides of different displays prepared for exhibition and judging at orchid shows.

The presentation was enjoyed by all and very informative. Thanks Steve.



Brassocottlena 'Warnham Beauty' Photo by Chuck Carlson





Board Meeting Summary

Margaret Hibberd, Secretary

Summary for November 7, 2000 Present: Carole Ann Brekke, Margaret Hibberd, Eldon Hugelen, Dave Johnson (Fridley), Tim McCauley, Ritchie

Miller, Jackie Overom, Kay Wolfe

President's Report Lloyd Bachman will receive the 50 Year Membership Award

presented by Andy Marlow at the November meeting. We will have the Nomination and Election process at the November meeting. We received more documents from Minnesota State Horticultural Society (MSHS) including financial and minutes from the October member clubs meeting. If our club does not have 100 affiliated members, we can continue to have a member on the MSHS board at least through their January meeting. Then MSHS will decide what our status will be. Roger Sefelt has agreed to continue as our representative on the MSHS board.

Vice President's Report

The November meeting will be Steve Gonzalez, past president of the Minnesota Orchid Society. The January meeting may be Peter Olin and Lloyd Weber talking about the Arboretum trip to England which included the Chelsea Flower Show. All but five of the committee chairs for 2001 are filled.

Secretary's/Treasure's Reports

Both were approved. The treasurer's report noted we were paid \$750.00 from Valley Fair for our day of garden work.

Membership Secretary's Report

We have of 97 members renewed, 6 deciding not to renew, and 13 still deciding.

Committee Reports

Calendars: Dave reported that they sold 250 which is a little behind last year. To compare prices, the MSHS sells a calendar from the University for \$12, making ours a bargain at \$4. Don Trocke has agreed to co-chair Calendars for next year.

Auction : Doug Whitney will chair the committee

2001 Convention: The schedule is done. There will be a tour including Norenberg Gardens and the Arboretum and 2 other day tours.

Perennial Garden: About 10 people appeared for the fall clean-up and the deadheading, tilling and weeding went fast. There were no wood chips to be spread. An interesting tool was found, so it will be auctioned at the November meeting.

OLD BUSINESS:

Internship: Ritchie will take the idea of substituting an internship for work on the perennial garden for scholarships to the Scholarship Committee.

NEW BUSINESS:

MSHS dues for Honorary Members: It was moved and passed that we pay the MSHS portion of our honorary members dues for 2001.

New Members: The board voted to accept four new members: Kristine Deters, Edeltraud Green, Rudy Allebach and Suzette Meakins.



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From The Past

Editors note: I was looking for items for the December Spray and thought of reviving things from the past. This article was written by Dick Hulbert for the Spray in December of 1978. I thought it was worth a reprint. So, below is the article as it appeared in 1978, without editing.

It's Christmas Over The Garden Fence

By Dick Hulbert

When I first addressed myself to the theme, of Christmas and gardening, I was sure I had drawn a blank. Gardening at Christmas is about at its lowest ebb — at least in this part of the country. Or is there a connection? "Deck the halls with boughs of holly." "Oh Christmas Tree, Oh, Christmas Tree." There certainly is a connection between Christmas and the world of greenery:

The two are closely related universally and among all cultures people cannot celebrate sublime divinity without using the language and symbols of nature. All faiths employ the figures of flowers in their places of worship. The Druids who are the ancestors of most of us with Northern European roots, worshipped In the oak groves. The old German hymn, Fairest Lord Jesus, can compare the fairness of Christ only with that of nature, of which he is called Lord.

Archaeologists tell us that no great civilization of culture ever flourished without an adequate and dependable source of food and fibre. Agriculture perhaps began with the fertilization rites which taught mans dependence on the happy joining of the elements of nature making a settled life possible. This was his source of joy and of hope. This only could give him a measure of peace and contentment.

It is precisely when the fields and our yards are barren or snow covered that we realize our dependence on the fruits of nature — an absence which makes our hearts grow fonder. At this time we live on faith and hope, knowing that spring and summer will return with their abundance.

With this in mind it is not hard to see how this love of nature, our fascination with making things grow, translates itself into our devotion to what makes these lovely things happen — in whatever religion we embrace. Christmas almost has to be the merriest to those who tend gardens and love their fellow men.



Happy Holidays Merry Christmas Happy Hanukkah Season's Greetings Whatever your religious persuasion, wishes are for living in peace an harmony



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2001 Calendars

A non-paid advetisment

If you haven't ordered your 2001 calendars yet, be sure to do so as soon as possible.

Call Dave Johnson (Fridley) at 612-571-2713 to place your order. Your last chance to pick them up before the new year will be at the Holiday Party. They do make a nice Christmas greeting to that special friend and at only \$4.00. This is a good deal when compared with other calendars selling for \$10.00 and more.

Slide Shows

By Chuck Carlson

Our club has five musical slide shows that I have been showing to any group wanting a program. The groups have been mostly seniors and church groups. Lately I have found little time to pursue new bookings and have relied on repeat bookings and word of mouth. This of course limits the number of shows given and of course the amount of income the club can realize. We do not charge for the shows but suggest they can donate to the club if they are able. Over the years that I have given these shows the club has received over \$1500.00 and in years before when Chet Groger and Sherm Pinkham volunteered for this service it was even more.

These shows are usually given during the day but some are done during the evening. If there is someone who has the time, please give some thought about taking on this task. It is rewarding to the club and the giver. If you have the slightest interest, see Chuck Carlson and find out more.

The Newsletter

by Chuck Carlson

Since no one else volunteered via the membership renewal process, I have agreed to be the editor for the newsletter for 2001 with the proviso that members act as writers and reporters as well as readers. Thus I expect each of you to provide your expertise. Those on the committee are expected to provide their inputs but I know other members have something to contribute plus have some knowledge others don't. Passing on your sage advice is what this club is about. Needs for *The Spray* are:

- Articles
- Club News—tell me about your committee, advertise your meeting and happenings.
- Personal Happenings—weddings, deaths, trips, garden awards, other awards, how you got started in gardening and any other items.
- Tips, garden jokes, poems or sayings, and pictures.
- Places to Go/Gardening type happenings--See page 11 for an example. There are many places near and far that could be written about. I would like to have this type of article every month.
- Address, phone & email changes.
- Advertisement for something you as a member want to sell or buy (no non-members)
- Questions you may want answered. Please don't use the excuse you are a

bad writer. Do you best and I will edit and get your approval of the changes. Do it this winter when you aren't outside gardening. If everyone sent something and half of you wrote an article, just think what a good newsletter it will be in 2001.





Club News

By Chuck Carlson

Bill Hull

Bill Hull is now residing at Hillcrest Rehabilitation and Health Care Center. His new address and phone number is below.

Bill Hull

Hillcrest Rehab and Health Care 15409 Wayzata Blvd Wayzata MN 55391

His new Phone is 952-473-5466

New Members

The following have been approved by the board as new members into the club.

- Rudy Allebach and Suzette Meakins They reside in Minnetonka. It appears they are outdoor minded and both love gardening and are also part of the Hosta Society.
- Kristine Deters is a forensic scientist and wants to learn more about gardening and horticulture. Her garden resides in Mendota Heights.
- Edeltraud Green is also a resident of Minnetonka and a director of a travel organization. Likes to grow annuals and vegetables
- Welcome to all and we hope your time with us will be enjoyable and you will gain some gardening knowledge as well as giving us some of yours.

Director's Meeting Syracuse New York November 2-4, 2000

Your Mid America Region directors, Russell Smith and Jerome Frampton attended the director's annual November meetings in Syracuse, NY. The meetings were held in the Carrier Holiday Inn.

Russell Smith chaired the E & I Committee meeting. No new business was enacted. The E & I fund is now \$630,000.

Jerome Frampton chaired the Membership and New Club Committee. During the year two new clubs were chartered in Iowa.

All the Directors met and covered the business of the organization. No major decisions were required and the two sessions were condensed into one.

> The last evening a dinner and President's reception was held. At the dinner, the officers and new or reelected directors were installed. The executive officers installed were: Jim McKay President, Paul Bessey 1st VP, Louis Jones 2nd VP, Honey

> > Ron Heggen Past President

Barnekoff 3rd VP, Chris

July 2001 TGOA/MGCA Convention Minneapolis, Minnesota Mer's Garden Club of Minneapols

dening Fun in

Showy Pink Lach's Shipper

Cypripedium Reginae linnesota's State Flower

> The "entertainment" provided for the directors and spouses attending was a tour of the Erie Canal museum and a trip to the Museum and Science & Technology where the movie Alaska was seen at the Omnitheater.

Respectfully Submitted: Russell C Smith and Jerome Frampton

Final Y2K Board Meeting

The final Board meeting for 2000 will be on Tuesday, November 28, 7:30 PM. It will be at Margaret Hibberd's house.

New board members for year 2001 are also invited.



Vermiculite

The following is an Articles from the Yard & Garden Line News. This articles has been reprinted with permission from the Yard & Garden Line News, a program of the University of Minnesota Extension Service. Get answers to your gardening questions at www.extension.umn.edu

The Scoop on Vermiculite for Potting Mixes and Garden Beds

Carl Rosen, Extension Soil Scientist Department of Soil, Water, and Climate

Extension Service recent publicity about asbestos-contaminated vermiculite from the Libby mine in Montana has caused concern among those who have used this amendment for potting mixes and garden beds. While the major health risks associated with asbestos-contaminated vermiculite are more likely from attic insulation uses, questions about garden uses are also being asked. The most frequently asked questions are: 1) what should be done with garden beds where the contaminated vermiculite was used? and 2) is the vermiculite available for potting mixes today safe to use? To help answer these questions a brief review of what vermiculite is, where it comes from, what it is used for, and how some sources became contaminated will be addressed in this article.

Commercial vermiculite is a naturally occurring mica mineral (technically biotite and iron bearing phlogopite) that is mined in various locations around the world. When exposed to high temperatures, the vermiculite expands to about 15 times its natural size. The resulting product has a very low density making it



suitable for a variety of uses including insulation, packing material, potting soil, fireproofing, and cement mixes.

In potting mixes, vermiculite provides porosity to the mixture while at the same time retains water making it an ideal amendment for growing plants in containers. Usually the potting mix contains 5 to 50% vermiculite by volume, with peat, perlite, sand, or soil comprising the rest of the mixture in various proportions. Vermiculite can also be used in garden beds to loosen up clay soils. Over time however, the vermiculite tends to compact and will lose its desirable properties. The difference between potting mix vermiculite and insulation vermiculite is primarily particle size - with smaller size particles used for the potting mixes.

Up until 1990, about 70 to 80% of the vermiculite used in the U.S. was mined in Libby, Montana. The processed vermiculite from Libby was often sold under the trade name "Zonolite". W.R. Grace was the company that owned the mine from 1963 - 1990. A problem specific to the Libby mine was that the vermiculite deposit was also associated with tremolite asbestos, a rare naturally-occurring mineral. Health problems associated with asbestos have been known for many years; however, it is uncertain just how long the health problems have been known at the Libby plant. Due to the high amount of asbestosis, lung cancer, and mesotheloioma related deaths among workers and family members associated with the Libby plant, the mine was closed down in 1990. Because ten years have passed since the closing of the mine, it is unlikely that any of the vermiculite used today comes from the Libby, Montana mine.

Vermiculite is currently mined in South Carolina and Virginia as well in

(Continued On page11)





Places to Go

THE COMO INSIDER

BY Denise Rust

When I took a Christmas day family excursion down to the Como Conservatory three years ago, little did I realize that I would feel called to apply to become a Gardener's Aide there. I submitted an application in January and before I knew it I had a regular two and one half hour Friday morning shift prior to the conservatory opening to the public for the day. Duties include deadheading, trimming dying sections of plants, raking under bushes and trees, sometimes taking out old and planting new flowering plants in the Gallery or Sunken Garden. It is soothing to dig in the dirt even in the middle of winter, and always a joy to work with soil that is, unlike that in my own yard, always rich and weed-free.

It was a year ago at the volunteer Christmas party that I first heard Paul Knuth, one of Como's lead gardeners, enthusiastically evaluating that year's Christmas show in the Sunken Garden and talking of plans for this year's. The 2000 show would have a carousel theme, he said, and indeed it will.

The star of the holiday show, which runs December 1- January 12, is a red poinsettia called, appropriately, Carousel; it has wavy, pinwheel-like bracts and will be shown in three sizes. Three varieties of pink toned poinsettias will also be shown, and these are Marblestar, Cortez Candy and Goldstar Pink. Poinsettias come from cuttings from Fisher Poinsettia of Boulder, Colorado, that were shipped here back in July.

Continuing the carousel theme will be a variety of coleus whose leaf shapes and color variety suggests movement, like a carousel. Varieties will include Flirting Skirt, Mardi Gras, Confetti, Cammilla, Tilt-a-Whirl and Max Levering, as well as a larger plant called Multicolor Rainbow. Other accent plants featured in the show will be a celosia variety called Prestige Scarlet and a variety of amaranthus. Como Park's own Cafesjian's Carousel (which is closed for the season) will provide two large carousel horses for the display, with four smaller horses coming from a private collection.

Conservatory hours are 10:00 AM-4:00 PM and the facility is open every day, including weekends and holidays. Suggested admission donation is \$1 for adults, 50 cents for ages 6-12, and those 5 and under are admitted free. This is a great place to take your visiting relatives over the holidays!



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Vermiculite

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South Africa, Brazil, China, Egypt, India, Japan and Russia. The largest mine today is located in South Africa. No asbestos related disorders have been reported in any of the major vermiculite mines except for the Libby, Montana mine. Testing done by EPA and the Ontario Research Foundation found that no asbestos could be detected in the vermiculite from the South Africa mine. Based on these reports, it can be reasonably assumed that vermiculite used today does not contain significant amounts of asbestos.

When using vermiculite, as well as any other material that inherently contains dust sized particles, it is recommended that dust control measures be adopted and/or personal protective equipment (dust masks) be used to protect against dust inhalation. Keeping the vermiculite moist will greatly reduce dust problems.

If it is known that Libby vermiculite was used in a garden bed, health risks can be reduced by simply covering the area with sod or mulch to ensure that dust from the area is kept to a minium. As a last resort the area can be excavated by professionals and sent off to a landfill.



B and Y Spider

By Jeffrey Hahn Assistant Extension Entomologist

Editors note: Remember the spider we saw at Bob Olson yard on the summer tour? It was in one of his monster hosta specimens. Here is a little information on it.

Big black and yellow spiders in the center of webs have been commonly observed late this summer. These spiders belong to the family called orb weavers (Araneidae). A common species in this group is the black and yellow argiope (are-JEYE-o-pee) spider, Argiope aurantia. Also known as garden spider, this arachnid has a body length up to 1 inch long. Including the legs, it can be over several inches long. This is a strikingly colored spider with a black body and yellow markings on its abdomen. To some people, the markings resembles flames. This spider is often found building its web in gardens or in tall grass.

Because of its size, some people assume that a black and yellow argiope spider is dangerous to people. In reality, it is a shy spider (as nearly all spiders are). It stays in its web and could only move slowly on the ground if it fell out of it. It has poor vision, even for a spider. It would be very unlikely to bite people. If this spider did accidently bite someone, the injury would not be worse then a bee sting. This spider is not dangerous to people and should be left alone.

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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. Managing Editor & Production Manager-----Chuck Carlson The committee: Kae Benda Jim Benda Howard Berg Sher Curry Fred Classe Andy Marlow.

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