



Perennial Notes

January 2002

Hardly anything in the world is designed specifically for us, our own garden being an exception, since its most rewarding aspect is that it is our space.

"Matter of Judgement," Peter King, *The Garden*, May 2001



Pay your dues for 2002—renewal form included in this newsletter.

COMING EVENTS!

January 20, 2002, 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. (setup 9:30-10:00 a.m.), Olbrich Gardens Commons—**Annual Potluck Brunch** with the Hosta Society. Bring a favorite dish and enjoy speaker **Craig Bergmann of Bergmann's Nursery** talk about his autumn garden, which WHPS visited this past October 13 (featured in *Horticulture* magazine Sept. 2001). Coffee and juice will be provided. Please bring your own plates and utensils. Note: *We will be in the Commons area this year and will need volunteers after the brunch to help take down tables and set up chairs for the concert immediately following our event.*


February 8-10, 2002, WHPS Display Table at WHA Garden Expo at the Alliant Energy Center. If you would like to volunteer to work a shift at the WHPS display table, please call Stephanie O'Neal for available shifts at 256-6108. Volunteers receive a free ticket to the Expo the day of the volunteer shift.


February 20, 2002, 7:00 p.m., Olbrich Gardens. **Water Gardening**, with speaker **Bob Rieser**, one of the founders of the Madison Pond Society and owner of The Frog Bog in Verona, the first Madison area business solely devoted to water gardening.

March 20, 2002, 7:00 p.m. Olbrich Gardens. **Roy Diblick, Northwind Perennial Farm**, Springfield, WI.

April 17, 2002, 7:00 p.m. Olbrich Gardens. **Bob Freckman, UW Stevens Point—Native Plant Treasures of the Upper Midwest.**

Other Events of Note

 The **Orchid Growers' Guild** will be sponsoring its annual show and sales event on Feb. 2 & 3, 2002, at the Alliant Energy Center (formerly Dane County Expo). Over 20 orchid societies will be displaying their blooming orchids. There will also be educational seminars, and many opportunities to purchase orchid plants, supplies and art work. Admission is \$5.00 (does not include parking). We'll have \$1 off coupons at various plant nurseries in the area. For more information, call 608-244-2123, or check our website at www.geocities.com/orchidguild/index.html. —Jill Hynum

 **Horticulture Magazine Symposium** on Thursday, February 21, 2002, time 8 a.m.-4 p.m. **Solutions for the Shade Gardener** speakers include Darrell Probst on epimediums. To register, call (800) 395-1901.

Expo Volunteers Needed!

Call Stephanie O'Neal at 256-6108 now to volunteer to work the WHPS display table at the WHA Garden Expo, February 8-10 at the Alliant Energy Center.

WHPS TRIPS



June 14-23, 2002, WHPS Biannual trip to the British Isles. Trip oversubscribed. Waiting list only.

**August 2-4, 2002 (Friday-Sunday)
WHPS Trip to Minneapolis**



The planning of the Minneapolis, Minnesota trip is well under way, but far from complete. We have a list of gardens, parks, private homes and nurseries to visit that could take an entire week but we'll narrow them down for a three-day trip.

Some of the highlights include the Minnesota Arboretum, Noerenberg Gardens, Eloise Butler Wildflower Garden, Lake Harriet Rose Garden, Minneapolis Sculpture Garden, Como Park Conservatory and Japanese Garden, and several private gardens and nurseries, including Bachman's Floral Gift & Garden Center (the largest garden center in the Midwest).

We may even try and get a behind-the-scenes tour of Mall of America's horticulture department and how they take care of the multitude of live plants in the Mall, including releasing lady bugs for pest control!

(By the way, we will be viewing a *Taxodium disticum* at the arboretum - possibly the farthest northern living Bald Cypress yet! I personally can't wait!)



Trip coordinator Sandy Allen—608-836-9602;
dsamr@chorus.net.

Web sites of interest

I have found some great Web sites that members might like to look into.

Mike Dirr (who wrote the bible on woody plants, *Manual of Woody Landscape Plants*) now has a Web site—www.nobleplants.com (or under search, just type Noble plants). It is a stitch—and informative—with new articles interspersed with his opinions and his great sense of humor. I found especially interesting an article on *Hydrangea macrophylla* 'Endless Summer' that indicates we might just be able to grow this plant in our zone. This is the one that beginners always ooh and ah about because of its large flowers and ability to change color from pink to blue, depending on acid treatment.

Another great site is <http://forums.gardenweb.com/forums>. This is Gardenweb, with forums on everything you can imagine (over 100 forums) from perennials, trees, shrubs, container plants, propagation, professional forums and, of course, my favorite—conifers. You simply register (free) and then you can respond to questions or ask questions with what appears to be knowledgeable people. You have the ability to e-mail these people individually as well. Ironically, I am getting a great deal of information from people in the Minneapolis, Minnesota region for our planned trip this summer. There are often references to good Web sites from forum members on different plants. Warning! One can spend a day at this site!

Oregon State University has a great site on landscape plants, with images, identifications and information on over 600 plants, primarily woody plants. The photos are great and the information derived is informative—<http://osu.orst.edu/dept/Idplants/index.htm>

—Sandy Allen

Search for instructor at Chicago Botanic Garden

Dr. Wayne Becker, Coordinator of Certificate Programs at Chicago Botanic Garden is looking for an instructor for a herbaceous ornamental certificate course class dealing with ferns, and another for peonies (from a horticultural perspective for the advanced student working toward a certificate). Chicago Botanic pays an honorarium and travel expenses for instructors.

If you have a particular expertise to share (I suggested water plants as one topic), he is also receptive to other herbaceous plant groups with topics for 2002.

If you can help Wayne, you can contact him at (847) 835-8292, wbecker@chicagobotanic.org. He can also share with you the specifics of what he needs.

As many of you know, as of December 10 I started a new position as Director of Education for Olbrich Botanical Gardens. One of my goals will be to create stronger links between the regional gardens/arboreta, especially for teaching/speaker resources.

Thanks!

—Ed Lyon

Under the Grit and Ash, a Garden Endures

By Anne Raver

October 11, 2001. Copyright © 2001 by the New York Times Co. Reprinted by permission.

There are still bits of ash on the leaves of the Japanese anemones in Battery Park, but their pink buds are swelling. And last week, as gardeners with respirators donned heavy rubber gloves and knelt among the Siberian irises to scrape up gray dust and bits of paper — vestiges of the lives that were blasted out of the twin towers on Sept. 11 — it seemed a bit of a miracle to see the blue salvia blooming.

"At first it was overwhelming," said Eric T. Fleisher, 43, the director of horticulture at the Battery Park City Parks Conservancy. "Everything was covered with ash and debris. But once we found the earthworms, and sprinkled the plants and saw the flowers. . . ." He gestured toward the vigorous viburnums, the graceful anemones about to bloom, and let the plants finish the sentence.

A few blocks north, the charred ruins of the World Trade Center looked like the ribs of some cathedral or coliseum of fallen greatness against the evening sky. People stood behind the police lines, breathing the smoke, trying to fathom the enormity of all that had been lost in the space of one morning.

But here in these 30 acres of gardens, which run along the Hudson River from Chambers Street to Battery Place, a soft breeze blew up from the sea, and the lindens cast lovely shadows on the esplanade.

On Sept. 11, Mr. Fleisher, who has worked 12 years in Battery Park City, was talking to a building superintendent about pruning trees that morning. He was standing on the corner of South End and Albany Avenues, as his crew of 15 gardeners did what they usually do: prune, mow, cut back perennials. Many of them saw the plane strike the first tower. Mr. Fleisher heard the explosion, then ran to find his wife, Lisa, and their daughter, Lily, 8, who goes to P.S. 89, on West Street, four blocks north of the World Trade Center.

While his wife and daughter headed uptown to stay with family, Mr. Fleisher went back to their 10th-floor

apartment in 200 Gateway Plaza to get Pippi, their English cocker spaniel. When he got outside, he and Pippi were herded into a boat bound for New Jersey.

Although he has not been able to move back home (he is living with his parents on the Upper East Side, and his family is staying at their country house in Connecticut), he was back working on the gardens two days after the towers fell. He and about 25 gardeners and maintenance workers used vacuum cleaners, hoses, rakes and shovels to clean up the gray ash and debris that had enveloped the park. Some areas, like the lawns and playgrounds to the north, had only a light dusting; places south of the World Trade Center, like Rector Park, were buried under a foot of dust.

"We started at the Police Memorial first, shoveling up two, three feet of ash that had drifted against the wall like snow," Mr. Fleisher said, stopping at the memorial at the corner of Liberty Street and South End Avenue, where a wall is engraved with the names of hundreds of officers who died in the line of duty in years past. "The whole wall was covered with dust, paper and bits of metal from the buildings."

On their first day back, his workers saw something fall from a nearby building, and they scurried onto a boat in the harbor. "No one knew how stable things were," Mr. Fleisher said. "We sat out in the water for a while, and then came back."

It took about two days to dig out the Police Memorial, and to wash off the dark green cedars, liriopie and joe-pye weed that border the area. Then they planted Sedum Autumn Joy, which has deep rose blooms, more than a day's work to comfort the families and friends who began arriving and leaving photographs and wreaths and handwritten notes under a white tent, the makeshift shrine to the hundreds of firefighters and officers who had died.

"This is where a lot of people lost their lives," Mr. Fleisher said. "It

seemed only respectful to make this place as beautiful as possible."

Mr. Fleisher isn't so sure his wife wants to come back to Battery Park City. "But I think it helps people to come back," he said. "For me, working with the soil is a way of working through this."

Farther south, along the esplanade, he reached down and dug up a handful of the dark brown, crumbly soil that lay beneath the caked ash. "Look at this earthworm," Mr. Fleisher said, as a fat worm writhed in his hand. For him, these worms are a powerful sign of hope. "This landscape is so resilient," he said. "And I'm firmly convinced it's because of the organic amendments we've used all these years."

The soil in Battery Park City was mostly sandy landfill taken from the excavation for the World Trade Center. Over the years, he and his crew have built it up with compost made on the spot and organic fertilizers teeming with beneficial bacteria and fungi.

Several gardeners were raking gray ash from beneath the yews, and cutting ivy too crusted with ash to save. "But it'll grow back," said Bill Mick, a gardener who saw the first plane go right through the tower. "I find this cleanup therapeutic. So I wouldn't trade this position for any other horticulture job right now."

Mr. Fleisher has sent soil samples to a laboratory, to make sure nothing toxic has leached into the ground. "I'm concerned about my critters," he said. "The good guys that make this sustainable." But the blooming impatiens under the crab apple, the fiery red dahlias in Wagner Park tell him those critters in the soil are doing just fine.

"Taking care of Mother Earth is not something we can lose sight of," Mr. Fleisher said. "It's more important than ever, now."



Contributed by John Cannon

How To Keep Your Holiday Poinsettia Blooming



The poinsettia plant that decorated our homes during the holiday season should continue

to bring us pleasure through February, with just a few tips on its care.

Keep it away from hot and cold drafts. This is a semitropical plant which prefers temperatures around 70 during the day and cooler temperatures in the 60's at night. It needs to be kept uniformly moist, possibly requiring water 2 to 3 times per week if your home is dry. Be sure that it has good drainage and does not sit in water. Placing it in a dish filled with pebbles will provide humidity and not allow the soil to become saturated with water. Placing sphagnum moss around the pot will help wick away any excess water and can be quite decorative—no Martha Stewart isn't a member (yet) of our organization!

Too much hot direct west sunlight will cause the flowers to fade, so place it in an east or south window where it can get at least six hours of natural daylight and it will thrive. Don't let them touch cold windows, as the chill will cause the leaves to drop.

Poinsettias do not need fertilizer during the holiday season, but once it stops blooming (around the end of February) a balanced fertilizer every two weeks will promote new growth, and maintain healthy foliage.

If you are in for a challenge and a dedicated gardener you may want to try to rebloom your plant.

In April, cut the stems back to about 6" above the soil line. In May, after all possibility of frost is over, begin to harden it off outside in a shady location for about 10-14 days. You may want to repot it to a bigger pot at this time in a good soilless potting mixture that freely drains. Simply

dig a hole and drop the pot into the soil. Fertilize it with a 20-20-20 fertilizer as you would your other container plants throughout the summer.

In September, before we get a frost, start by spraying it with orethene to prevent whitefly infestation and check for bugs, then bring it inside. In October, because this is a photoperiodic plant (meaning they bloom when days are short and nights are long), they need a minimum of 12 hours of complete darkness each day. You can place them in a closet overnight, but don't even allow five minutes of light to hit the plant, or it will be set back by two weeks for blooming. The easiest way to do this is to put it where you can remember to place a five-gallon bucket over it at dinner (around 5:00 PM), and take the bucket off at breakfast. By the middle of November, you should start to see the bracts beginning to color. At this point you do not need to keep it covered.



By the way, the colorful part of the poinsettia is not the flower. They are called bracts and the flower is a small insignificant yellow bloom inside the bracts.

The poinsettia was named after Joel Roberts Poinsett, a physician and amateur botanist who was the first US Ambassador to Mexico during the Mexican civil war. He was responsible for negotiating the purchase of Texas; however, he is most remembered for taking cuttings from a large red flowering shrub he found along the side of the road and sending the cuttings back to his South Carolina home. There he propagated the plant giving plants to his friends and neighbors at Christmas.

The Ecke family of California in the 1900's began growing the poinset-

tias outdoors for use as landscape plants and cut flowers. Later they grew them in greenhouses where they are responsible for mainstreaming the poinsettia into our holiday tradition.

The name Poinsettia conjures up the idea of poison, and although it is a member of the Euphorbia family and has a white latex exuding from a broken stem that has a reputation of being poisonous, the poinsettias is NOT! A lot of research by Ohio State University and the floral industry has proven that even at high toxicity levels no adverse affects other than a bad tummy ache and vomiting will occur. The latex can however, cause a rash on exposure to skin in some individuals.

The name *Euphorbia pulcherrima* was assigned by a German botanist who saw the plant growing through a crack in his greenhouse and was dazzled by its color. Pulcherrima means "very beautiful."



Information obtained in part by Ed Knapton, WHPS member and owner of America's Best Flowers in Cottage Grove, and the Web. Compiled by Sandy Allen.

The more I've thought about it the more I've come to the conclusion that pruning (with a few notable exceptions) is the all-time hoax. The secrets of the ancient art of pruning have been carefully guarded by generations of head gardeners, who had to justify their existence during the winter months. (Nothing better for convincing an employer that work was in progress than the distant sound of clipping and chopping.)Pruning is an operation designed to make those new to gardening feel thoroughly intimidated ...Pruning, to keep a plant vigorous, healthy, and well-balanced in shape, is largely a matter of common sense.

—Helen Dillon, **On Gardening**

A Little Fall Detour

It was a glorious autumn day when I pulled out of the parking garage at the Oakbrook, Il., Hyatt Regency. I had completed my talks by 11:30 a.m. and was on the way home. Much work awaited me there, thanks to the boxes of fall bulbs the UPS man had dropped off in recent weeks. I had promised Mrs. A. Hort Hound that I would stop off at a nearby discount clothing store in Lombard to look for a new suit, but this wouldn't take long, given the time I typically devoted to this kind of shopping.

Much to my misfortune, as I came to Roosevelt Road (the Devil made me do it), I turned left, not right, towards Lombard! Meandering without purpose (ha ha!) along the road as it passed through Wheaton, it wasn't long before my quadcab mysteriously found itself at the entrance to the Gardener's Palette in Winfield.

Amazed at how misfortune had become good fortune, I proceeded to poke around the nursery's 22 acres. This is a first class garden center, it even has its own monogrammed plastic floor coverings for the car. Very appropriate for the white Lexus and the black Mercedes parked on my left and right respectively, but it hardly matters if you are driving a pickup truck.

I spent a good half hour going through the clay pots on the sales table. If you know me, that's hard to imagine, only a half an hour, that is. You see, there were a number of Illinois potters represented who do very nice work. I was not familiar with them, but I am happy to report, that is no longer the case.

Most of the perennials were past their prime, including flats of pansies for only \$9.00. Large pots of mums, however, were spectacular. There must have been 20 different colors from which to choose. If you are ever looking for one of those

gargantuan hanging baskets of trailing mums to hang at the gate house to your lakeshore villa, this is the place!

After another 30 minutes, I satisfied my craving for a mum fix, carefully selecting three beautiful plants. I was especially taken with the variety called 'Helen' that was the color of the finest Merlot.

I then had a "brief" discussion with the manager on duty and we discussed topics ranging from the history of the nursery to the unusual yellow flowering trumpet vine with its bean-like fruits outside the first hoop house. She was the one who insisted that I proceed on to Cantigny just a mile or so away to see their fall display of mums, the best in the area.

Leaving the parking lot with the cab suffused with the scent of mum foliage, I actually toyed with the idea of heading over to the Morton Arboretum for a very late lunch in their wonderful café overlooking the pond. Exercising extreme willpower once again, I managed to reach the gates to Cantigny Park. I would just be there an hour or so at most.

For those of you who have never had the pleasure of visiting Cantigny (pronounced Can-teeny, the g is silent), you should treat yourself to a visit sometime. The park is the estate of the late Colonel Robert McCormick. This is not the McCormick family of spice or reaper fame, but the owners of the Chicago Tribune. As it turns out, Cantigny is also the name of a village in France where a famous World War I battle was fought in 1918. And as you might have guessed, Colonel McCormick was one of the combatants.

As I entered the visitors center at the entrance to the gardens, I was delighted to discover that the Prairie State Bonsai Society was having its annual show and sale. I tried to pass

by quickly, but several magnificent specimens (well all right, it was more than several) caught my eye. Then I had to go through the sales area, after taking note of the winners of the competition, of course.

I regretfully report that the mums were not quite at their peak. There were large pots of the trailing varieties on poles lining many of the walks. Vast hedgerows of *Euonymus alata* (burning bush) were at their fiery-pink best. Other wonderful woodies were just beginning to show fall color.

Cantigny is noted for its display of annuals in its formal gardens, and they did not disappoint. I appreciated the fact that the plants were well labeled so I could take a few notes on what I was looking at. The piece de resistance, which actually took my breath away, was an enormous planting of *Salvia coccinea* which mixed together the three varieties 'Coral Nymph', 'Lady in Red', and 'Snow Nymph'. Graham Rice, in his book **Discovering Annuals**, has this to say about this salvia: "*Salvia coccinea* is a scarlet salvia, but in a more comely style than most red bedding salvias, which have the bloated arrogance of an undersized bouncer in a seedy basement club. In contrast, 'Lady in Red', the pink and white 'Coral Nymph', and 'Snow Nymph' have the assured elegance of the dancers we're standing in line to see."

At Cantigny, these were backed by a large border of the common *Salvia farinacea* 'Blue bedder' and Petunia 'Celebrity Burgundy'. Talk about color in the garden! There was another gorgeous bedding scheme of *Gomphrena globosa* 'Strawberry Fields' and lavender *Verbena bonariensis*. The *Gomphrena* is a striking, relatively new orange-red cultivar which is spectacular in dried arrangements. There were mass plantings of

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A Little Fall Detour...continued from previous page

Solenostemons (Coleus) everywhere including those of *S. duckfoot* 'Dark Red' and, of course, one of my favorites, *S. 'Cantigny Royal'* with its tiny leafed foliage, nearly black when grown in strong light. I took note of more "new" annuals for me—*Abelmoschus* 'Pacific mix' (mallow family), *Stobilanthus* 'Brazilian shield' (striking deep green foliage with silver markings, often sold as a house plant) *Angelonia* 'Purple Stripe' (Brazil), *Ageratum* 'Hawaii Pink Shell', and a low and compact *Scaevola* 'New Wonder Blue'. I hope Mark Dwyer, of the Janesville Rotary Garden is reading this. It would be nice to see some of these in the gardens "unusual annuals" section at next Spring's sale. Definitely some interesting plant material!

They did have a nice display of grasses, but they compared poorly to the display in the perennial garden at Olbrich. There were quite a few autumn flowering Colchicums on display. Did many of you hear Steve Lesch's great bulb talk to the Hosta Society in September? Hold on to your hats, but he told us that he had over 1500 Colchicums currently blooming in his garden, representing 25 different varieties. Ok, Steve, how many of these can you really tell apart, reticulations or no reticulations? Oh, all right, anyone can pick out *C. 'Giganteum'*, which you told us was the size of an auto tire. (Steve is never guilty of hyperbole.)

Needless to say, I didn't have any time for the 45-minute tour of the McCormick Mansion or the war museum also on the Cantigny grounds.

It is a little hazy in my mind as to exactly what time I got back on the road for home, but I thoroughly enjoyed the track north on Hwy 59 through Dupage County and extreme northwestern Cook County. Did you know there are still fields of

soy beans in Cook County—I saw them!) The roadside golden rod, purple asters, and tall yellow heliniums were spectacular.

Every once in a while there was a patch of pampas grass waving its silvery inflorescences in the brisk northeasterly breezes. I know that this is an invasive weed to some, but I still remember the dramatic, almost magical impact it had during the month of October along the eastern reaches of the Pennsylvania Turnpike when basking in the late afternoon sunshine.

As I approached Rockford and the E. Riverside Blvd. exit, fully absorbed in the stereophonic sounds of the grand march scene from Mozart's *Marriage of Figarro*, I imagined that I had been invited to the Anderson Garden for an evening stroll with wine and canapés. Wouldn't that have been a glorious finish to a glorious afternoon?

I did arrive back at home, well after 6 p.m., and was duly informed by Mrs. A. Hort Hound that I had ten minutes before the scheduled departure for an evening dinner engagement. On the way to dinner, she did inquire as to whether or not I had found that new suit I was looking for? I mumbled something about "nothing in my size" and drove onwards, ever thankful that I had taken that wrong left turn. I'll take a few mums and a few new pots any day!!

I also imagined a dream day trip for the WHPS—an early departure for

Wild Flower Wedding

Sweet Cicely put on her **Ladsymock**
And her **Lady's Mantle** edged with dew
She added a pair of **Foxgloves**
And a **Bonnet** of brightest **Blue**
And she and her **Sweet William**
By the **Jack in the Pulpit** were wed
And under all the **Shooting Stars**
"Forget-Me-Not" they said.

But theirs was only **Love in a Mist**
A marriage of **Youth and Old Age**
For she was a **Brazen Hussy** and he
Was a **Russian Sage**.
Her **Honesty's** in question
She was having too good a **Thyme**
Under the **Indian Blankets**.
(It's hard to make this rhyme)

For he'd found her on the **Bedstraw**
Her **Ladies Tresses** awry
With **Joe Pye Weed** and **Ragged Robin**.
And **Basil** standing nearby.
They'd shed their **Dutchman's Breeches**
And hung them on **Jacob's Ladder**
"You'll **Rue** this day, you **Pigweed**,"
He cried growing **Madder** and sadder.

So now his **Love Lies Bleeding**
No **Woundwort** will **Self Heal**
He's donned a purple **Monkshood**
And swears on **Solomon's Seal**
By all the **King's Spears** and **Dame Rockets**
That he's no more **William the Sweet**
He said "**Lady's Slippers** shall **Touch Me Not**"
My love was too **Bittersweet**.

—Judy Staber
Spencertown, New York

(A friend of A. Hort Hound's Aunt)

the Morton Arboretum with lunch, then on to the Gardener's Palatte for shopping, followed by a tour of the Cantigny Gardens. This would all be topped off by an evening wine and cheese reception at the Anderson Garden while we strolled the Upper Midwest's finest Japanese Garden. Dream on!



—A. Hort Hound

Zonal Denial

Zonal denial is defined as an attempt to grow plants which are normally limited to milder winter hardiness zones! As one's palette is expanded and one becomes an enthusiastic gardener, desirable and 'must-have' plants become an obsession.

Thus enters a new psychosis!

This apparently is not a new term to gardeners in Anchorage, Alaska (zone 4) where, a 1997 public radio show interview with a gardener stated they frequently attempt to grow plants outside their zone. According to Dennis Schrader, co-author of the book **Hot Plants for Cool Climates**, many plants can be grown if you are willing to mulch with 6 feet of mulch.

The idea is that if one plant out of many survives one to three winters, it will have adapted and survive indefinitely. However, there is a down side to this. "Many plants may survive one to two tough winters, but are progressively weakened and might fail during a milder third winter," according to an article written by Lovett Pinetum, who has been practicing this tough game for 25 years, with a staggeringly high ratio of losers to winners.

On November 21, 2001, it was 57 degrees outside. Unusual for that time of the year. Winter preparation of the garden has gone on for several weeks without interruption and, thus, our fall/pre-winter chores are done. The dahlias are dug, the canna's are tucked away, fall bulbs are planted (and dug and replanted by the squirrels who apparently didn't like the original design) and tender evergreens have been burlapped for wind protection or tied together to prevent breakage from winter snow loads. Everything is well watered in, and yet we look around the garden trying to find something more to do. Petunias are still pushing a bloom or two, *Lonicera sempervirens* and *Clematis* 'The President' are re-blooming and many of the perennials we planted as annuals are being looked at with "well since there is nothing else to do, may be if it were mulched, it will survive the winter."

The problem this year with many of the marginally hardy plants, particularly with conifers, is that they have put on new growth with the mild fall. These will not have had a chance to harden off and tip die back should be expected next spring.

So as I burlap and mulch my *Cunninghamia lanceolata* (common chinafir, zone [6] 7-8), I hope beyond my wildest dreams to enjoy this conifer one more year. The price of the plant was \$25. Amortized over the two years it has been growing in my garden the cost is down to \$12.50/year! One more year and it

drops to \$8.35. My neighbors watch with skepticism as I rake in mountains of mulch over my prize plants and wonder if they should do the same. Too late though, I already shredded their piles of leaves on the terrace and bagged them for my use!

Oh, how I would love to gloat at Frank Greer if my *Helleborus foetidus* makes it through the winter and blooms. Meanwhile I moved in my *Musa* ssp. 'Nana', a dwarf (?) banana plant. Its taken over the dinning area, topping out at 12 feet with 6-foot leaves. Supposedly it should flower and produce fruit after 18 months of growing, but then the plant dies? At \$.29/lb it would be cheaper to buy bananas at the grocery store, but where's the fun in that besides, I really don't like bananas.

So if zonal denial is a psychosis, as long I can continue to justify the work and money I spend on marginally hardy plants, I am happy. I have one bad attribute. I am always so disappointed each year in the losses and should start to face the fact I was pushing the limits. Zonal denial? Go for it! Check out Michael Dirr's Web site at Noble Plants and read the article about *Hydrangea macrophylla* (zone 6!) a cultivar found to be hardy in Minnesota! You just might be lucky and get rich!

—Sandy Allen

"More, More, More" is my gardening motto. If growing a single kind of daylily is one of life's good things, then growing thirty, forty, or even a hundred of them is one of life's even better things. While a garden with three hosta cultivars is on the right track, a garden where one hundred and fifty can be seen has almost arrived at perfection, provided that room can be found one day, and soon, to cram in another sixty of so. (I know just such a hosta garden, but it can never be mine, for I have competing passions to satisfy, being more or less in love to the point of utter foolishness with asters, astrantias, carexes, epimediums, peonies, pulmonarias, rodgersias, and a lot of other things, in addition to daylilies and hostas, and here I've touched on herbaceous plants, leaving woodies aside, as I wouldn't want to do.)

—In A Green Shade, by Alan Lacy 2000

Outwitting the deer?



Weekend gardening in the sandy soils of Central Wisconsin has presented a new gardening challenge for me—outwitting the deer.

My favorite plant, the hosta, is also one of their favorites! To avoid the frustration of seeing a hosta completely stripped of everything but the upright stems, I've learned to limit placement of them to areas of the garden that are inaccessible to the deer – such as a terraced area.

Planting varieties that don't appeal to deer is another strategy. They prefer bland tasting, nontoxic and non-odorous plant material. Choosing varieties that are spicy, toxic or smelly will increase your chances of surviving a deer-munching spree. Plants that I've had much success with include ferns, narcissus, buddleia, achillea, corydalis, asclepias, allium, barberry, hemlock, dicentra, grasses, iris, nepeta, perovskia and salvia.

There are many repellent products now available to help in the fight. Some that I've tried include Deer Off, Liquid Fence and my current favorite, Tree Guard. These are all spray products that must be reapplied at least monthly. They employ ingredients that smell bad to deer. However, I've noticed that once the deer become accustomed to that particular smell, they lose their effectiveness and it's time to change to another product.

Nets and fencing are another option, but for me are impractical, so I've not tried them.

I've recently discovered a nursery in Michigan called Deer-Resistant Landscape Nursery that specializes in deer resistant plants and products. They also have a Web site at www.deerresistantplants.com.

What seems to work best is to choose varieties that are distasteful to the deer, to use a spray product on other varieties, and to regularly change the repellents. Even after doing all of this, it's best to remember that if they are hungry enough, nothing will deter them! I'm always looking for new ideas, so if you've found something that works well for you, please share it!

—Barb Herreid

Wisconsin Hardy Plant Society



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