



# Wisconsin Hardy Plant Society

## Perennial Notes

January 2004

### Dues Notice Enclosed

Wisconsin Hardy Plant Society dues must be paid by March 1, 2003. Use the membership form included in this newsletter to return your dues payment to WHPS Treasurer Barb Herreid.

### COMING EVENTS!

**NEXT  
WEEK!**

**January 18, 2004, WHPS Potluck Brunch**, 10:00 a.m. in the Commons at Olbrich Gardens. Bring a food item to share and your own plate and utensils. Arrive anytime after 9:00 a.m. to set up. Food will be served at 10:00 a.m. Slide presentation will immediately follow brunch. We ask that members stay after the slide presentation for a few minutes to help reset the room for the Olbrich concert that starts at 2:00 p.m. Weather permitting, we also plan to take a winter tour of the gardens—there is much to see this time of year!

**February 6-8, Garden Expo**, Alliant Center. WHPS speaker Ed Hasselkus will talk on February 7 at 2:00 p.m. on *Five-Star-Rated Plants at the Longenecker Gardens*. Volunteers will be needed to work at the WHPS booth at the Expo. See page 2 for more information. You can sign up to volunteer at the January 18 Potluck Brunch.

**February 18, 7:00 p.m.**, Olbrich Gardens. Speaker Robert Herman of [www.Uncommonplants.com](http://www.Uncommonplants.com). will discuss *New Concepts of Garden Design from Germany*.

**March 17, 7 p.m.**, Olbrich Gardens. Speaker Kevin Milaeager, Milaeager's Garden Center, Racine, WI on the topic, *What's New in Perennial Plants for 2004*.

**April 21, 7:00 p.m.**, Olbrich Gardens. Speaker Richard Hawkey, Chicago Botanic Garden, will discuss *More Plant Evaluations at the CBG*.

**May 22, 9:00-Noon. WHPS Annual Plant Sale** at The Pet Lodge in Middleton. Volunteers will be needed to work the plant digs in the weeks leading up to the sale, and also the day before and day of the sale.

**June 11-20, 2004. WHPS Biannual Tour to Gardens of the United Kingdom.** [Waiting list only.](#)  
Contact Frank Greer (608-233-4686, [fgreer@sbcglobal.net](mailto:fgreer@sbcglobal.net))

**June, July, August Garden Tours**—to be announced.

**August 18, 7:00 p.m. Olbrich Gardens Potluck** supper and tour of the gardens.



**Potential Trips in 2004 and Beyond**  
(will be announced in upcoming publications)

- Spring Shopping Trip
- Trip to Door County in late summer
- Trip to Virginia in April 2005



### Other events of note

A more complete listing of plant sales and tours will be noted in the next newsletter.

**February 19th, 9:00a.m.-4:00 p.m. Horticulture Magazine Symposium—*Designing with Perennials: Creating the Total Garden Picture*.** At Olbrich Gardens.

**Olbrich Plant Sale**, May 6-8

**Friends of the Arboretum Native Plant Sale**, May 8

## Chanticleer and Chartreuse

reprinted with permission from Jerry Weeks, President, The Perennial Plant Society of Middle Tennessee

Color in the garden conveys a mood—bright warm colors (reds, pinks, oranges and yellows) suggest a vibrant, exciting and warm surrounding. Cool colors (blues, purples, violets, whites and some shades of pink and yellow) create a calming and peaceful mood. Green often provides the background and sometimes the bridge between contrasting colors.

Until this summer, the color chartreuse reminded me of *Ilex vomitoria* and some of the negative effects produced by this holly potion on the human body. I definitely did not rank chartreuse at the top of my color choices. That is, until I experienced Chanticleer.

Chanticleer is a public garden located in Wayne, Pennsylvania. I visited this "pleasure garden" on the outskirts of Philadelphia in late June with three young horticulturists from Cheekwood. From the street, this residential property deliberately blends in with the neighborhood and its modest sign suggests nothing of the treasures of horticultural design found there. The visit left me and these three plants people exhilarated and awestruck by the horticultural wonders worked inside the garden. Richard Link, one of the three Cheekwood horticulturists, described it aptly as a national treasure.

A small grove of golden locust trees (*Robinia pseudoacacia frisia*) drew our view to the garden entrance. Their bright chartreuse leaves rose above the mists of a recent summer shower and beckoned us to enter. The trees were actually located at the top of a landing inside the entrance and adjoined the terraces surrounding the house. This locust grove marked the beginning of a garden filled with many rooms that sloped away from the residence.

Although small in acreage, the overall design of the gardens uses bold color and textures plus borrowed scenery to

suggest a much greater size. The eye quickly focused on the sighting of chartreuse as it led the visitor's eye from place to place within the garden's many rooms. The chartreuse-colored foliage provided a unity and coherence that offset the excitement generated by its hue and intensity.

The repetition of the color and its varying displays of subtlety and boldness, much like the music composer's fugue, generated a reassurance to the viewer that invited him to proceed among the plantings. The chartreuse plants served as markers along the paths and beds and eventually provided a focus for the vistas of the garden. The dynamic design of color created visual movement on this horticultural canvas. This effect was enhanced by employing mass plantings in drifts. Two of the most spectacular beds employed Golden Japanese Forest Grass (*Hakonechloa macra* 'Aureola') and Dwarf Greenstripe Bamboo (*Peioblastus viridistriatus* 'Dwarf Greenstripe').

The plant foliage varied tremendously in size, ranging from the petite rounded leaves of the groundcover Golden Japanese Sedum (*Sedum makinoi* 'Ogon') spilling over the edges of a small drainage tile, to the massive 'Chartreuse Giant' elephant ear.

Time limited our visit. I left Chanticleer with a sampling of 'Ogon' sedum and dwarf greenstripe bamboo provided by the horticulturist. I also left with a determination to employ chartreuse in my own garden. The chartreuse treasures have survived our Tennessee summer, and I will plant them this weekend.

Happy gardening, Jerry Weeks, President

*Note: WHPS members were wowed by this garden on their June 2003 Philadelphia trip.*

### WHPS Donations 2003

Each year, the WHPS Board of Directors meets in the fall to determine how to distribute funds raised at the Annual Plant Sale. At the fall membership meeting in November, WHPS Board members made the following recommendations for donations in 2003, which were approved by the membership.

\$1,500 to Olbrich Gardens to fund a horticulture internship.

\$500 to Olbrich Gardens towards publication of the educational newsletter.

\$2,000 to the Longenecker Gardens endowment.

\$1,000 to the Arboretum Native Plants collection.

Earlier in 2003, \$1,000 was donated to Janesville Rotary Gardens towards the bulb collection and \$455 was donated to Olbrich gardens for a projector.

### WHPS Volunteers needed for Garden Expo

- Member volunteers are needed for shifts at the Annual Garden Expo February 6-8.
- The shifts average two hours each, and each volunteer will be given a free pass to the Expo. Parking fee is not included.
- Duties include talking to potential members about WHPS activities and the benefits of membership.
- We will not be selling any items this year, but individuals who sign up for membership will also enter a drawing for plants that are on display in the booth.
- If you are interested in volunteering for a shift at the WHPS booth, sign up at the January 18 Potluck, or contact Stephanie O'Neal (256-6108; sone2@aol.com).

## WHPS Donation Helps Midvale Planting Program

The following article from WHPS member Jill Hynum was written by Jean Sweet and published in the Midvale Neighborhood newsletter. It includes a list of the trees that were planted at the Gateway entrance to the neighborhood, with the assistance of \$500 provided by WHPS to help the Midvale Neighborhood Association with planting this area.



### Trees at the Gateway

As a background setting for the Bison and the Midvale Heights Neighborhood sign, adding height, depth and texture to the bare site, landscape volunteers chose a variety of trees to plant at the Gateway.

Prominently planted with great expectations in April 2002 was the Bur Oak named the Boundary Oak by the donor of the tree, Greg Bell of Charles Lane. Despite our best care and watering, our oak was very slow to leaf out this spring; you may have noticed that it looks more like a shrub sprouting stems with oak leaves near its base. Nearby, next spring, we plan to plant another Oak, and give it our best effort towards healthy growth and development.

Last spring the crabapples 'Prairiefire' and 'Sugar Tyme' were planted and blossomed. Even the Eastern Redbud clump produced flowers. To the north of the Sundial near the sidewalk we planted a Ginkgo tree. A donation from the Olbrich Gardens plant sale was a *Cornus Mas* 'Golden Glory', another spring flowering tree, which we planted near the Bike/Pedestrian Path. A little known tree, Ironwood, also called Hophornbeam, was purchased bare root and planted near the northern apex of the two sidewalks. Despite the stressful growing conditions of 2002 and now the current drought, all these other trees look good.

These trees plus the many shrubs and flowers of the Gateway have been faithfully weeded and regularly watered and the grass mowed by many neighborhood volunteers. If you pass by and see them "on duty," please give the neighbors a wave and a thank you.



### In Memoriam, Dr. Lyle L. Olson

Lyle Olson, a member of the Wisconsin Hardy Plant Society and the American Conifer Society, passed away on July 30, 2003. Many of our members will remember Lyle, who helped out with the plant sale, usually wearing Khaki camouflage pants and a safari hat. Lyle was a master gardener, and donated much of his time to local gardening projects, as well as driving all the way from Darlington to volunteer at the Longenecker Gardens. After his retirement from his practice as an MD, he worked with McKay Nursery as his hobby.

He attended many Olbrich seminars and WHPS talks, as his lust for knowledge in the plant kingdom was never ending. His plethora of knowledge of woody plants was such an asset to those of who volunteered with him. He was always willing to help anyone with a question or problem with their garden or trees or even giving insight into questions about medical problems, although he was quick to remind you he was retired.

Lyle gardened on a beautiful piece of land overlooking Darlington. Even as he battled prostrate cancer that returned after 13 years of remission he was planning and making paths through his wooded area to display his woodland plants. Jane LaFlash recalls his presence at an early spring pruning workshop, and his statement that he couldn't wait to get home to put all he learned to work.

Ed Hasselkus, Sandy and Dennis Allen, Shari Voss and Jane LaFlash traveled with him to Michigan to an American Conifer Society meeting where Lyle was eager to purchase unusual plants, even as seedlings right after he'd been diagnosed with the return of cancer. He drove a small car, and going to nurseries with Lyle was a blast, especially watching how he would manage to cram the car full of specialty plants.

He also wrote the weekly column "Garden Gab" for the *Republican Journal*. Lyle loved to travel to unusual places, and even after his wife's death in 1998 continued to travel often with Hospice or the UW Arboretum.



Lyle was a very loving, educated person who will be sorely missed by all the Longenecker volunteers, the Hardy Plant Society and anyone who had the honor to be his acquaintance.

—Sandra Allen

## A Pilgrimage

Ah, but the month of May. I had stayed overnight with old friends in the charming town of Gig Harbor, on the Puget Sound just across the Tacoma Narrows, south of Seattle.

Driving into this former fishing village the evening before, I marveled at the waist-high masses of calla lilies springing up with abandon and the Chilean monkey puzzle trees dotting main street. The embankment above the car park was a solid mass of *Mitella diphylla* (how I have struggled with this plant over the years), happily ensconced in its native environs—a cool, north-facing shady bank. Though my friends had already left for work that morning, I helped myself to breakfast in the guest house that overlooked their garden. And what a charmer it was, a joint project of Paul and one of his twin daughters.

Though they had shown me plans for the gardens 7-8 years ago on a previous visit, you can imagine my amazement when this father-daughter garden was featured in *Better Homes and Gardens* earlier this year. The garden was in the English style, a rectangular plot divided into small areas by boxwood hedges, brick paths, lattice work, and arbors. It was all contained by a white picket fence, mostly hidden behind green screens of woody plant material. It was intimate and cozy, well suited to the house, which had been a Victorian sea captain's cottage in its former life. The hilltop garden borrowed the distant views of the exquisite harbor below, bobbing with pleasure craft and fishing boats. The plantings were neat and tidy and made use of architectural phormiums and *Euphorbia wulfenii*. I envied them for being able to grow many plants considered "tropicals" here in Wisconsin.

After one last trip around the garden I set out for my objective of the day, a visit to Heronswood Nursery on the west side of the Puget Sound on Bainbridge Island, almost directly across from the city of Seattle. I had picked up a map of Kitsap County for the trek, something I would advise all to do, as the nursery is reached by a series of two-lane rural roads. Driving along, I admired the massive Douglas firs, oddly enough laced with *Cornus florida* (flowering dogwood) in full bloom, from the southeast United States. After two hours of driving, which included brief halts at a couple of unheralded, wished-I-hadn't-stopped, roadside nurseries, I came upon the small wooden sign at the head of a twin driveway announcing that I had arrived at Heronswood.

Proceeding down the first drive, a ramshackle house quickly came into view, surrounded by a garden planted with old cars and rusting hulks of pick up trucks, with several old refrigerators as accents, and visually tied together with a sprinkling of old automobile tires. The only living thing was a vicious looking German shepherd who made it readily apparent that I was unwelcome. I expected to see bootleggers pouring out on the scene waving shotguns.

Slamming the car into reverse, I turned down the other driveway, which became a serene, winding woodland drive leading into Heronswood. Reaching the main area of commercial activity, I was asked if I had made an appointment, to which I replied yes, which was true. I was later to

learn that making an appointment was a "formality" required by the covenants of the neighborhood forbidding any businesses with regularly scheduled hours, though I could hardly see what difference it would have made to the immediate neighbors in this case! As a matter of fact, no one was ever turned away, unless it was by that German shepherd! I was then introduced to a young gardener, who gave me brief overview of the establishment, and directed me to a master list of all the plants for sale in a dozen or so hoop houses.

I was then invited to tour the gardens on my own and to make note of the location of plants I had questions about and he would try to identify them for me later. I was also informed that all the plants were only identified by numbered labels, and under no circumstances was I to look at a label and record its number. (Apparently, they have had lots of trouble with label thieves!) If I violated this simple rule, I would be escorted back to the highway and my visit terminated. This limitation was to be pure torture, and made the visit rather unsatisfactory as many of the wonderful things I saw on my journey throughout the garden remain as "unknowns."

I elected to proceed into the garden right away as it was such a beautiful day. At the entrance, I spied a large, single white peony whose closed, ghostly orbs were back lit by the morning sun. Later, when I passed by again, the globes had responded to the climbing sun by opening and revealing their golden crowns of stamens. My notes from the excursion say this was *Paeonia 'steviann'*, but I cannot find a text reference to it and I suspect I just can't read my own handwriting. The path that led to the main house was surrounded by a magnificent woodland garden, a showcase for shade-loving plants from the Far East of many different taxa. I fell out over a small (12-15' in bloom) white thalictrum with tiny lancinate leaves—*T. lacinatum*, of course. There was a wonderful dove tree (*Davidia involucrata*) in full flower and some pink leaved forms of *Saxifrage fortunei* that I would have killed for. I did find one of my favorite anemones used in profusion, *A. nemorosa 'vestal'*, with gorgeous fully double white flowers.

There were many kinds of trillium in bloom and various woodland slipper orchids. Along certain paths you were swallowed up by giant Australian tree ferns, under which were a profusion of eye catching arums, giant polygonatums and disporums, the likes of which I had never seen. Many of these are described in Dan Hinkley's **The Explorer's Garden**. I also spied the bluebell found only in the Chatham Islands in the south Pacific, *Myosotidium hortensii*, a most delectable plant. The whole thing reminded me of Savill Valley Garden in Surrey, England, with its similar rich tapestry of woodland plants.

Finally making it up to the main house, I admired an allee of *Cupressus macrocarpa 'Goldcrest'* (golden Monterey cypress) fronted by masses of *Hakonechloa macra 'Aureola'* that presaged a more formal part of the garden. This

continued on next page

**A Pilgrimage**, continued

area consisted of many rooms divided by evergreen and woody hedges, vine covered lattice work and arbors. A back terrace area was surrounded by a 15-foot high open lattice work of hornbeam hedges (*Carpinus*). There was also a rather exotic potager (kitchen) garden that included some large specimens of gunnera and a large mushroom fountain. I was delighted to see *Astrantia* 'Hadspen Blood', whose deep red blood color resembled the specimens I had seen at Bressingham Gardens in England some years ago. Though I have purchased this several times, the color on my plants does not match these specimens. Goes to show that with the finest examples of a particular cultivar, a "clone" is the only way to duplicate it. This is certainly true of many of the fine Rodgersias, with their spumy pyramids of pink flowers that I have seen in English gardens, as well. You can just forget much of the hype about tissue culture!

Returning to the sales area, I spent the next hour or so poking through the hoop houses. I am sorry to say that even plants for sale here at the motherlode, so to speak, are no bigger than the plants you get by mail order—all in two-inch pots, which require several years of patience before the big payoff comes, if you are lucky. Also, what few plants I had been able to identify in the garden that were now on my "must have list" were unavailable—a big disappointment. I did pick up a fabulous abutilon I had admired in the gardens at Wisley on a number of visits—'Wisley Red', with its nodding, bell-shaped flowers of red and yellow. I also purchased two new forms of *Anemone nemerosa*—'Royal blue' and 'Wyatt's pink'.

I was intrigued with a new form of *Carex siderostica* 'variegata', with "reverse" variegation—the center of each leaf is white rather than the margins. However, I am sad to report that this plant loses most of its variegation by mid summer, making it a less desirable form in my mind than the common variety, which keeps its white edges until frost. Finally, I brought back some nice plants of a fastigate boxwood—'Graham Blands'. I did pass up *Anemonopsis macrophylla* that has not done well for Shari Voss in Green County, though I was struck by the plant in flower in the woodland garden and otherwise couldn't have resisted it.

All in all, I was glad to finally see the nursery and its stunning display garden after all these years. However, I was so familiar with the garden from photographs and previous admirers' written descriptions that it was a bit of a let down. You'll know what I mean if you see yet another article on Heronswood in the RHS journal *The Garden*, in the December 2003 issue by Graham Rice.

And my reward for all of this? Certainly not a specimen of *Thalictrum lancinatum*, but rather a nightmare of a journey back to the Seattle-Tacoma airport at rush hour. Fortunately, my flight did not leave until the next morning or I might still be out there somewhere on Interstate 5!!

—by A. Hort Hound

**Would you like to host a dig for the 2004 WHPS Plant Sale?**

If you are interested in hosting a dig for the 2004 Plant Sale, please contact Dig Coordinator Ruth Cadoret (233-4504; rcadoret@wisc.edu).

If you haven't hosted a dig before, it couldn't be easier. All you need is a space large enough to set up a table for the dig volunteers (usually 2) to pot up the seedlings or plants that you dig from your garden for separating. Volunteers can also help dig the plants, under your supervision.

Soil mix, pots and trays are provided by WHPS, and volunteers bring their own trowels.

You will be responsible for caring for the plants until the sale, but volunteers can be arranged to pick up the plants the day before the sale.

The more unusual plants the better, but many who attend the sale are just getting started, and can benefit from those grand old standards of the garden that have served us so well over the years.

Weather permitting, the digs will begin in early April. Contact Ruth Cadoret as soon as you can to let her know you would like to host a dig.

**Would you like to help less experienced members learn more about gardening?**

Many of our members are just getting started with their own gardens are eager to learn more about caring for and growing a garden.

At the same time, we have many members who have been gardening for some time and have much experience to share.

The WHPS board has been discussing the possibility of creating a program where experienced gardeners can be matched with new gardeners. Those with less experience would work in the host garden at various times over the gardening year to learn the ins and outs of spring, summer, fall and even winter activities.

If you are interested in being a garden host, or if you would like to work with an experienced gardener to learn more about gardening, please contact Frank Greer (608-233-4686, fgreer@sbcglobal.net).

## Member tips and info



A plant exchange is great for members. We can also exchange plants in place of gifts to our friends that garden.

For those of you that have friends that garden you may want to give an IOU for plants as a Birthday or Christmas present. I have given an IOU for plants with friends instead of giving a purchased gift. If you have a friend that would like some of your extra plants, try making a gift card from your old plant catalogs. I cut out the picture of the types of plants that I have extra and attached the picture to a card or notepaper. Then your friend receives not only a gift in the future but they have a picture and growing instructions to plan the perfect place in the Spring. It is also a way of giving an expensive gift without costing much at all. After all, many of us have friends that we exchange gifts with and do not know what to buy them. I would prefer a plant for my garden instead of another calendar or candle, wouldn't you?



—Sherry Lloyd



As cleanup begins for the fall and annuals are being removed from containers, leave the potting medium in the container. These containers can be used to plant bulbs for an early spring display in the garden. Once the bulbs have finished their bloom, the potting medium can be put into the compost pile and the pots prepared for new annual plantings for late spring and summer.

—Frank Greer

Got a garden tip or idea for our members to use in their garden? Contact Stephanie O'Neal at [sone2@aol.com](mailto:sone2@aol.com)

## Wisconsin Hardy Plant Society



**January 2004  
Newsletter  
925 Waban Hill  
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**Someone you know interested in joining WHPS?**

Contact WHPS Treasurer Barb Herreid at [barb.herreid@usa.xerox.com](mailto:barb.herreid@usa.xerox.com) or call (608) 271-9483