



## Perennial Notes

December 2000

*Making a garden is not just an end in itself; it can be a journey to something beyond. Gardens are places where we take the rough, sore and awkward bits of our psyche, and work through problems as we dig, plant and water. The process takes us from our particular piece of earth into a landscape that knows no boundaries.*

From "A Sense of Place," Jo Munro, *Hortus*, Spring 2000

### COMING EVENTS!

**December 6, 2000** 7:00 p.m.  
Olbrich Gardens. *Spring Bulbs* by our own Steve Lesch. Though this may seem like an odd topic for December, after the recent weather you all should be ready for it. See you there. *Last chance for seed exchange! Stop by the table as you enter for the meeting.*

**January 21, 2001** 11:00 a.m.  
Olbrich Gardens. *Annual Brunch and Highlights of the 2000 WHPS Trip to England* by John Cannon and John Frisch.

**February 9-11, 2001** *WHA Garden Expo*. Sign up to work a shift at the WHPS booth.

**February 21, 2001** 7:00 p.m.  
Olbrich Gardens. Glen Spivacek, garden designer and former director of the Green Bay Botanical Garden—topic to be announced.

**March 21, 2001** 7:00 p.m.  
Olbrich Gardens. WHPS member Margarete R. Harvey, Milwaukee Landscape Architect—*Gardening in Containers*.

**April 18, 2001** 7:00 p.m. Olbrich Gardens. Richard Hawke—*New Plant Evaluations at the Chicago Botanical Garden*.

**May 19, 2001** *Annual Plant Sale*. Sign-up to be a volunteer at the January 21 brunch!

**August 15, 2001** *Potluck supper at Olbrich Gardens*.



### FUTURE WHPS TRIPS

**April 19-22, 2001** *Gardens and Nurseries of Nashville, Tennessee*. This bus trip will include a visit to the National Quilt Museum in Paducah, Kentucky where we will have a look at the use of flora in quilt design. In Nashville, we plan to visit Cheekwood (the city's botanical garden) in its spring glory, and with the help of some friends in the Middle Tennessee Perennial Society, private gardens and several specialty nurseries in the Nashville metro area. We are also considering a stop in Peoria or Springfield, Illinois to visit a garden or nursery or two.

**June, 2 2001** *Day trip to Janesville Rotary Garden, Roy Klehm's Beaver Creek and Songsparrow Nurseries, North Wind Nursery in Lake Geneva, and WHPS member Barbara Behrend's garden in Burlington*. Barb will host a wine & cheese late afternoon reception for the group.

**August 10-12, 2001** *Gardens and Nurseries of Michigan*. This bus trip will visit Frederick Meijer Gardens in

Grand Rapids, Michigan, highlighted by a conservatory, a tram ride throughout the perennial gardens and the Statue Garden, with the largest statue in the United States, the three-story statue of Leonardo da Vinci's Horse. We will visit MSU's arboretum, Hidden Lakes Arboretum, Cranbrook House and Gardens, Fernwood Arboretum, and two nurseries containing rare and unusual perennials, dwarf conifers and ornamental woodies.

**October 13, 2001** *Fall trip to Chiwaukee Prairie and Craig Bergman's nursery and garden center in Wingate Harbor, IL*. Bergman's has a wonderful autumn display garden, and there should be gentians on the prairie.

**June/July 2002** *Gardens of Northern England and Scotland*. Preliminary itinerary has been completed but no definite dates as of yet. Will center around Edinburg in Scotland and York in northern England.

### WHPS NEEDS YOU! Volunteers needed.

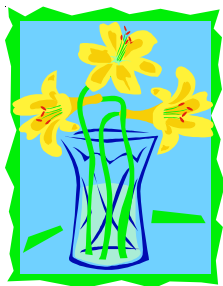
The Garden Expo display table February 9-11 needs members for two-hour segments. It's fun, and you get free admission to the Garden Expo! Sign up at the December 6 meeting, or call Stephanie O'Neal at 256-6108.

The Plant Sale needs help with the digs about 3-4 weeks before the May 19 sale; help setting up the night before; help the day of the sale; and help with cleanup after. Sign up at the January 21 brunch.

The more volunteers we have, the less work involved for all. Join us!

# Every Color But True Blue...Daylilies

By Jean Bawden



I fell in love with daylilies in 1992, after my iris fell to borers and my lilies fascinated. The event occurred when I saw an ad for a daylily tour, and one of the

houses on tour was that of Hiram Percy. I went, I saw, and I succumbed! Here were wonderful plants in exquisite colors...lavenders and purples and cherries and burgundies, along with more intense versions of colors I had seen before. I dutifully wrote down lists of names, and asked Mr. Percy where he got the wonderful plants. He talked about names of people I'd never heard of, so I took my lists to the local garden centers. None of the plants existed! I finally called him and asked for addresses, and he managed to convince me that I should join the Wisconsin Daylily Society so I could learn more. And so began my present fall to the addiction of not only growing daylilies, but also hybridizing about 800-1000 new plants a year, and also selling daylilies.

Daylilies are the stalwarts of the midsummer garden; their ease of culture and bright colors make them a sure thing in creating atmosphere in July. There are daylilies of every hue except for true blue, and they come in all sorts of shapes and sizes, from 2" mini flowers to 12" spidery forms, from short plants for the front of the garden to tall, graceful beauties for the back of the bed. Some bloom very early in June and others don't begin until late August, so if you choose both early and late bloomers, you can have a three- to four-month bloom season.

Unlike the old, orange "ditch" lily, modern cultivars increase within the clump, rather than running wild. There are well over 40,000 named cultivars, with new wonders happen-

ing every year. Newer cultivars have edges of a different color than the main flower color, multiple eye zones (the darker ring towards the center of some flowers), or jagged little hooks on the edges.

Daylilies can range in price from \$5 for two fans to \$250 for a single fan, depending on how new the plant is and how unusual it is. Most daylilies are sold in groups of two fans. A fan is one set of leaves, and will usually produce one flowering stem, which is called a scape. The more fans a daylily has, the more flowering stems, and the more stems (scapes), the more blooms the plant will have.

These are very tolerant plants; they love adequate moisture, but will adapt to both dry and wet situations. Some daylilies keep their colors better with a half-day of shade, but if there is too much shade, flowering decreases. They are not bothered by many pests or diseases under normal conditions.

Daylilies are divided by the number of chromosomes they have into diploids or tetraploids. Tetraploids have twice the chromosomes of diploids, so when there is a sufficient parent base, the possible number of gene combinations is multiplied thousands of times. Until recently, diploids had better color and were better garden plants, but the tetraploid hybridizers have now developed plants with great color and vigor. Because there were very few tets in the gene pool, people who were hybridizing tet daylilies began to convert diploids to tetraploids through the use of colchicines, in order to widen the parent base. Tetraploids hybridized since the mid-eighties have all the color and garden sturdiness of the diploids.

Daylilies are also divided into the categories of evergreen, semi-evergreen, or dormant. This

division came about because the daylilies that do really well in the north (dormants) often don't grow well in the deep south, and evergreens sometimes don't grow particularly well in the north. The categories reflect the way the foliage behaves. If a plant is dormant, the leaves die back at some point in late summer or later in the fall. If a plant is evergreen, it tries to grow any time that there is an elevated temperature, even if that elevated temperature is in mid-February.

Beginners usually start out with dormant, but as the interest grows, gardeners begin to grow semi-evergreens and evergreens because most of the famous hybridizers live in the Deep South. Some evergreens grow very well in the north, and others need to be protected with mulch to keep them from starting to grow at times when they will still be susceptible to freezing.

Daylilies are divided by shape or size. Flowers with long, narrow petals are called spiders. Flowers with extra petals or petaloids in the center are called doubles. Minis have very small flowers. Some flowers have a lighter circle around the center; these are called halos or watermarks. Others have darker circles around the centers, which are called eyes. Some are called bitones; their three petals are one color, and their three sepals are another. Some flowers bloom with four or five petals and four or five sepals and are called polyploids.

As demand for new and different daylilies increases, more and more varieties are becoming available, particularly with the beginning of micropropagation. No longer is the choice only Stella d'Oro, Happy Returns, or Hyperion. Since I grow over 600 varieties, I lust after the newest and enjoy some of the magnificent oldies.

Following are some good oldies, divided by color or type.

Every Color But True Blue...Daylilies  
continued

## Jean Bawden picks some daylily favorites



### Reds

Charles Johnston  
Mallard  
Indy Rhapsody

### Purples

Strutter's Ball  
Peacock Maiden  
Respighi  
Velvet Shadows

### Gold

Condilla  
Camden Gold Dollar  
Chicago Gold Coast

### Yellow

Frozen Jade

### Cream

Fairy Charm  
Ming Porcelain

### Doubles

Frances Joiner  
Peach Magnolia  
Scatterbrain  
Tour de Force

### Peach

Dune Dinger  
Frances Joiner  
Yasmin

### Eyes/Edges

Elizabeth's Magic  
Daring Dilemma  
Hot Town  
Mokan Butterfly

### Spiders

Red Ribbons  
Spider Miracle  
Peacock Maiden

### Lates

Bittersweet Honey  
Garnet Hager

### Black-Reds

Black Plush  
Derrick Cane  
Dominic

### Pinks

Windfrills  
Delightsome

### Whites

Gentle Shepherd

### Lavenders

Twilight Swan  
Lilting Lavender  
Dallas Star  
Dream Blue

### Oranges

Cosmic  
Hummingbird  
Jambalaya  
Mauna Loa

## Plants on the move

by Sandra Allen

Steve Harsy did a slide presentation at the last WHPS meeting that was unreal. He planted a perennial garden and showed its growth and development on a weekly basis over a four-year period! It was a real lesson on how long it takes for a garden to reach maturity and still look good year after year, season after season.

You know what I found intriguing about Steve Harsy's slide presentation the other night? Four years into his perennial garden and not one plant had been moved!

My daughter was standing at the window chatting with my husband one hot July afternoon and watched as I trotted across the yard with a huge shovel full of dirt, sweat dripping off my brow, stinging my eyes with dirty rivulets of moisture, making my glasses opaque. A minute later, I trotted back with an even bigger clump, containing a 3' plant. She asked my husband what in the world was I doing? Is she nuts? He wearily replied "She's moving plants again, she apparently felt it wasn't happy where it was. She does that all the time." My theory is that if you dig a big enough clump and don't disturb the roots, the plant never knows it was moved and if happier with more or less sun it will flourish even in July.

Who out there has planned a perennial bed they actually liked for four years and never had to change it?

Can you really plan color combination that work right from the start? What about the plants that have no regard for another plant's space? Hasn't anyone ever planted a cute 6-inch plant advertised in a catalogue and found it was a misprint and grew 6 feet? Hasn't anyone ever gone to a nursery and found a "must-have" plant not in your original plan and tucked it into bare spot in the border only to find that 4" pot expanded 3' wide?

Or what about the bare spot you find in the spring that sticks out like a sore thumb, so you have to fill the space. You find just the right plant, go to dig a hole and find a little shoot beginning to grow, surrounded by Perillite?

Or what about the person who gives you a plant? My garden is a garden of friendship. It contains Ed Hasselkus, Frank Greer, Carol Schilling, Diane Sharkey, Tom Cottingham and many others to numerous to mention. Those plants aren't part of a scheme, but they are very special to me. Am I a real neophyte?

Three cheers, Steve, for a well-planned garden and a great slide presentation! I Hope you open it up for a dig this spring. If you do, I am bringing my plans for a new garden, and I want you to design it! One well-planned garden wouldn't hurt. After all I have several other areas to plant in.

## A Favorite Crab—Tina the Tiny

by Ed Hasselkus, Curator, Longenecker Horticulture Gardens

Tina crabapple (*Malus sargentii* 'Tina') is one of the smallest of the ornamental crabapples. Most nurseries produce it as a standard by budding it atop a 3.5 foot trunk. The result—a dainty "parasol" that provides year-round interest in even the smallest garden. Fifteen-year-old plants in the Longenecker Horticultural Gardens are now 7 feet tall with a spread of 9 feet. Ultimate spread could be reduced through selective pruning.

Noted plantsman William McReynolds of Hooks Nursery in Lake Zurich, Illinois, introduced 'Tina' about 25 years ago.

The small leaves appear to be partly folded, giving them a crisp appearance. Red flower buds open to masses of pure white flowers. Tiny red fruits persist into the new year, if not harvested by robins and cedar waxwings. Best of all, 'Tina' is highly resistant to apple scab, the scourge of many crabapples.

## TREE HUGGERS, ANONYMOUS by Sandra Allen

Remember when you were young, or your kids were young (if not, at least your grandkids)? Remember how they used to come up to you and grab your leg, holding it tight or, if they were bored or shy, they'd hide between your legs and peer up at the stranger you were talking to? My daughter didn't have many friends, as we lived on a farm, but she used to grab my leg, stand on my foot and try to get a free ride.

Anyway, remember how safe you felt hugging that solid piece of anatomy? It felt soft and strong. Just by hugging that leg you felt protected, your fears dissipated, and nothing could harm you. Thunder could crash and bang all around you, but that leg took fears away.

The point is, have you ever hugged a tree? Not that I would recommend hugging a tree during a thunderstorm, but I mean really hugged it? Have you felt its strength, its warmth, its texture, its endurance and felt sheltered, safe, and secure knowing it would still be there tomorrow? This is a different kind of tree hugging. It's not the same as the environmentalist who sits in a tree for months on end to keep loggers away.

This summer, Steve Lesch was at our house, and in his typical non-assuming way, bluntly took me by surprise in the midst of a conversation. He pointed to a Norway Maple and told me to get rid of it, as it was rotten. Typical of Steve, he didn't skip a beat in his conversation—it was just "Oh, by the way."

Why was it rotten? How could he tell? There weren't any dead branches—no obvious holes or rot oozing out? I'm only 5'2, he's 10' tall—okay, maybe not that tall, but he could see into the first branch crotch, something I never had done nor had a reason to do.

Two weeks later, the tree was felled. I didn't care much about it. It was on the north side of the house, so it didn't provide us with any needed shade, plus I couldn't grow much there, and this was the front of our house that everyone sees. The shrub garden near the tree leaned to the west becoming fanned out and lop-sided seeking the afternoon light, and the pines on the other side looked like they were wind-blown, stretching to the east. The hostas dried up every summer under the tree, and the *Hydrangea*

*petiolaris* (Climbing Hydrangea) seedling that I got from Frank three years ago grew only 1" per year up its bark. I'd be dead before that ever got big enough to blossom. The leaves and samaras were a nuisance, filling up our gutters. Maple seedlings flourished by the trunks of the yews, and we had to cut them back every single year as they were too deeply rooted to yank out! So hey, if Steve Lesch says cut the stupid thing down—lets cut it down! Steve was right, it was rotten to the core, right down to the roots!

After its removal, I sat down on the sofa and looked out the picture window. I was amazed at the light that brightened the room. Plants love light. I love light. My doctor swears I have chlorophyll in my blood.

While I relished the new found light and I knew the shrubs and pines were going to be happier not having to fight for water, something was still not right. That night I had a dream (I am serious, I really dreamed this) that I was gazing out on a deeply-ridged bark. Since my latest fetish (it could be worse) is trying to identify trees by their bark, in my dream I was trying desperately to figure out what kind of a tree it was. I awoke with a start and realized what I was dreaming about. That horrible maple was gone. I would never again be able to gaze out my window and see its deep furrowed bark, never again touch its rough outer core, never again climb its branches to put up Christmas lights and yell for help because I can't get past the fear of climbing down a ladder. My stalwart friend had vanished in a pile of sawdust.

During a recent seminar at Olbrich put on by WHPS, we took a break for lunch and toured the gardens. There was a beautiful ginkgo next to a *Heptacodium miconioides* shrub that we went to admire. Without hesitation, I walked across the mulched bed and hugged it, to the amazement and strange look on my companions' faces.

Now ginkgo bark isn't necessarily the friendliest, smoothest texture against the cheeks. It has a few ridges and "pimples" that can poke you, but boy it felt good hugging a replica of an ancient prehistoric tree! I didn't really

feel a need to explain my actions, but I did ask them if they had ever hugged a tree before, and tried vainly to explain the feelings one gets from this act. Try it, you might like it! One girl looked around to make sure that none of the speakers or other gardeners were looking and tentatively stretched out her arms and touched it. I said "NO, HUG IT!" and hug it she did.

While she hugged it, I told her about its heritage, its strength, its disease resistance, and how all the branches rise up in glee with cluster of 3-5 leaves on spurs growing over the entire branch, giving it a hairy-arm appearance. This tree dances, it makes you laugh at its silly form, its leaves are like none other, fan-shaped, with veins emanating from a central petiole, and they nicely all fall off at the same time in the fall.

As we walked back to the meeting, I asked her how she liked it. Didn't it give her a sense of well being? Wasn't she a better person for doing it? She answered with the kind of yes that says "I don't want to hurt your feelings, but...?"

If you've never hugged a tree, start out maybe at night when no one can see you and hug a beech, *Fagus sylvatica*! It has smooth gray bark that forms wrinkles as it ages, looking like an elephant's leg. Grab it, touch it, stroke it! As you gain confidence move on to *Carpinus caroliniana*, Muscledwood! This tree works out daily at the spa! It feels like your Dad's strong thigh! And if a real old guy with exfoliating or fissured bark catches your eye, hug it. He's probably someone's Grandpa. Watch out for the ants and bugs that hide under its bark and don't stay too long. Those bugs have no couth, they'll run down your shirt!

Keep in mind that trees don't bite, they don't judge you, they don't complain and they don't withdraw from your touch. Feel secure in the knowledge that they will still be there tomorrow and the next day, giving structure and strength to our lives and our spirits. Come on over to Longnecker. There are lots of trees, and the best part is there isn't a phone close by for people to call 911 to report a strange person hugging trees.

Now move over, its my turn to hug that Amur Cherry!

# Musings of A. Hort Hound.....

## Fall Chores

Never mind the 2000 bulbs I had to get into the ground. There were several sections of the garden marked for a fall makeover and a great number of perennials that needed dividing. My first project was to divide my original clump of martagon lilies—*Lilium martagon* ‘Terrace City Hybrids’ planted in 1992, having noted a decline in the number of blooming stalks in the past couple of years. The three original bulbs were found to be as large as softballs and, all told, the three had multiplied into 24. This resulted in 6 new plantings of 4 bulbs each around the garden.

Next, I divided Tom Cottingham’s heirloom ‘Memorial Day’ peony, given to me in 1994. I am fond of its relative shade tolerance (it comes up early and blooms before many other peonies), the cut-leaved foliage, which looks good throughout the growing season and, most of all, its single red flowers which are not collapsed by spring rains. By the way, this peony was pictured in the September issue of *Gardens Illustrated*. It is indeed *Paeonia x smouthii* (pronounced smooth-zee-i), just as we had surmised. It was introduced in 1843 by M. Smouthii, whoever that was!

In the article on herbaceous peonies, it is described as a hybrid between *P. tenuifolia* and *P. lactiflora*. *P. tenuifolia* (introduced to western gardens in 1594), from the Caucasus Mountains and found as far west as Romania, is described as one with smallish, single red flowers (6-7 cm) held above finely divided leaves, which give it a feathery appearance. The leaves are more finely divided than those of *P. x smouthii*. The author notes it is a peony worth growing for the foliage alone. *P. lactiflora*, on the other hand, is an extremely hardy species originating from Siberia, Mongolia, China, and Tibet. The native form is rarely found in gardens, but worth growing for its large white single flowers with yellow stamens. There are many selected cultivars of this species. By the way, I now have three clumps of *P. x smouthii*. Thanks three times over, Tom.

Next, I tackled an area which had become a jungle of woodland plants around several large islands of hostas. Those

of you who made it to the September perennial divide at Phil Sanner’s shared in the largess from this big dig. Initially attacked were the large clumps of *Cimicifuga racemosa* (fairy candles) and only a few of the largest plants were replanted. The *Disporum sessile* I had gotten many years ago at We Du Nursery in North Carolina was covered with its dark blue fruit and I observed long white sub-surface runners extended out many feet from the mother plant, where the secondary plants pop up. It was easy to appreciate why this plant is a great weaver, not a ground cover. Found throughout Asia, its large, creamy white, nodding bell-like flowers are wonderful to behold in late spring. Oh that I had similar success with the many exotic variegated forms observed in gardens on the East and West coasts.

I also moved a large clump of *Disporum lanuginosum*, one of two members of this genus from North America. Clump forming, with pale green flowers resembling Mandarin hats, its orange berries in the fall are accompanied by lovely gold and green streaked leaves.

Found in abundance in the woods of my family’s summer home in the mountains of North Carolina, it gave me great satisfaction to read in Dan Hinkley’s *The Explorer’s Garden* that he had had little personal experience with it. Of course, this true confession leads me to expound on the perceived virtues of this plant, such that anyone who has never grown it would suffer from a terrible inferiority complex. My favorite plant of this genus is well known, of course, to Hinkley—*Disporum flavens* (i.e. *D. uniflorum*). It is from Korea and northeastern China. Growing three-feet tall, its nodding, unbranched stems are tipped by striking, long yellow flowers, somewhat like those of *Uvularia grandiflora* (merry bells, a Wisconsin native).

Not to digress, but I heard tell of a new gold leafed form of *Uvularia* from the plant gurus at the Olbrich fall plant symposium that will soon be available.

Back to *Disporum flavens*, the foliage remains an emerald green all summer and the flowers are replaced by deep

blue oblong fruits in the fall. Lois Kinlen gave me a start of this some years ago and it has been a slow spreader (well, slow compared to *D. sessile*). This is a great woodland plant!! I also grow *Disporum smithii* from the pacific northwest, having collected it from a friend’s property on the Olympic Peninsula of Washington state. It’s multi-branched stems have creamy white flowers that do not fully open and are replaced by orange red berries in the fall. It is also a slow spreader for me.

A plant gone amok in this area, even spreading under a rock wall into the *Primula sieboldii*, was *Polygonatum humile* (a dwarf Solomon’s seal) native to Japan, Korea, and China. It is very stoloniferous and individual, unbranched stems stand only 6 inches tall. In the spring the leaf axils are loaded with relatively large white, pendulous flowers. It is a wonderful ground cover in the shade and forms large, tangled mats. At the Allen Centennial Garden, there is a large mat of said plant on the edge of the pond, in full sun, which by midsummer is always burned up and looks dreadful. Plant this one in the shade! For this species I made no attempt to save any of the plants removed. I am certain there will be lots of solitary survivors of the battle!

Finally, I had to deal with the many clumps of *Hydrastis canadensis* (goldenseal) in this part of the garden. Oh, how guilty I felt (ok, well, not that guilty) when I brought back the original plant from our property in North Carolina many years ago knowing full well that it is an endangered species in that state. The centers of its large maple-shaped leaves sport inconspicuous flowers in the spring, only to be replaced by clusters of red, dogwood-like fruit in mid summer. (Tom Cottingham had a great slide of this at the November WHPS meeting.) This plant self-sows for me.

This fall I was surprised to hear about it in a lecture given by Brent McCown, a horticulture professor at UW. The subject of the lecture was future plant nutraceuticals. For those of you who may be interested, his definition of a

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## Musings of A. Hort Hound (continued)

nutriceutical was a secondary compound made by a plant not essential for growth and development, though of course it may be essential for plant survival.

Anyway, goldenseal contains the nutriceuticals berberine (this gives the roots that golden yellow color) and hydrastine, both of which are thought to give protection from infectious diseases. The woodland herb is very popular in California, where its benefits are rated higher than ginseng.

People in horticulture at UW are interested in this plant for its potential commercial value, which has led to its depletion in the wild. It is very slow to propagate, taking up to 5 years to produce fruit from seed, and researchers at the UW have been able to propagate millions of plants using tissue cultures taken from the root buds. Of course, the goal is to produce selections with more berberine and hydrastine.

Hey, I took a bushel basket full of unwanted plants to the compost heap with little thought of their dollar value!

## Really Good Reading

I have perused several great books during the late summer and fall. Gosh, what will I do as an encore for the long winter reading season? They will be very hard to top. Each makes for good bedside reading, as you can start or stop the text at any point. Perhaps my favorite was Helen Dillon's *On Gardening*. This is a selection of her newspaper columns appearing in Dublin's *The Sunday Tribune* from 1992 to 1995. Each column is typically two printed pages, with 10-15 columns grouped by month of the year. To really appreciate this book, get a hold of the book *Garden Artistry*, also by Helen Dillon. This book is devoted to a presentation in words and photos of her sensational Dublin garden. In *On Gardening*, Helen comments on a wide variety of subjects, from gold-leafed plants for the shade, to more juicy tidbits on Ellen Wilmott and her garden at Warley Place. Wilmott must have been truly despicable.

Close behind is Alen Lacy's new book *In A Green Shade*. This is a selection of his essays published in his quarterly newsletter *Homeground* since 1993. The essays range far afield and cover such topics as "Hostamania," the origins of all the new Tiarellas and Heucheras, gourds, Monarda, and on and on. Every essay is chock full of fascinating information, and the book is hard to put down, even if it is bedtime.

I also enjoyed perusing Christopher Lloyd's *Garden Flowers*, an encyclopedic listing of all the plants with which he has had personal experience. The insightful, pithy comments on the plants are downright curmudgeonly at times, and a number of my personal favorites are given the ultimate plant put down—"impossible to grow, and even if they did grow, they are not worth growing." There are errors—*Aquilegia canadensis* is described as having "white flowers," *Podophyllum hexandrum* (the Himalayan mayapple) is described with white flowers held beneath the leaf umbrel, when in fact it actually has luscious pale pink flowers perched on the top of the red and green variegated leaf umbrels. There are gorgeous groups of photographs placed periodically throughout the book and largely unrelated to the immediate text. I have also acquired Lloyd's latest book, *Christopher Lloyd's Gardening Year*, but one must put a little distance between his books.

I would be remiss not to mention at least one other book—Alex Pankhurst's *Who Does Your Garden Grow?*, obtained from the book list of the English Hardy Plant Society. This is not only a horticultural Who's Who, but also Who is Who and what Who was and when. Didn't you always want to know more about the Bishop of Llandaff, Mrs. R.O. Backhouse, Arthur (AT) Johnson, Norah Leigh, E. B. Anderson, Vera Jameson, and Mrs. Kendal Clark, just to name a few? This makes the plants named after them so much more interesting, and is fascinating reading.

## New Entry to the Local Garden Scene

In the last year or so, Home Depot has burst onto the local garden scene. This

mega warehouse store actually has a good selection of woodies and perennials and Roy Klehm's enterprises seem to supply lots of the plant material. (Did you also notice the Klehm label at K-Mart this year?) I was amazed to find prodigious numbers of my favorite boxwood *Buxus* 'Green Velvet' for \$15.00 each. A neighbor, wrestling with a space on the sidewalk terrace beneath a Norway maple, was about to plunge a spade into several magnificent clumps of *Hosta* 'Gold Standard' when I pointed out to him that nice plants of this as well as other old standby hostas could be obtained a few minutes away for \$4-\$5 apiece at the Home Depot. The hostas were spared the spade!

Home Depot was also the exclusive source of the new, HARDY, "Icicle" pansy and "Icicle" viola, which were written up in mid September in both *USA Today* and *The Christian Science Monitor*. These hardy pansies developed by Fernlea Flowers and Goldsmith Seeds of California are to be planted outdoors in October and guaranteed to be hardy in Minnesota and Ontario! They come in 8 different colors, and have been trial tested at Michigan State University in Lansing. It is advised that they be planted in a well-drained spot and mulched with two inches of fine bark mulch.

Also new this fall were bulbs from "Fall Bulblings." Bulblings is a trademark name for ready to bloom tulip bulbs from Holland—and I mean ready to bloom this fall and not next spring! Nine different varieties were offered at 12 bulbs for \$22. They'll typically bloom 3-4 weeks after planting, and can even be planted outdoors in warmer climates.

I don't know, but this seems a little much, and rather expensive to boot. Who wants tulips in the garden or in the house in November anyway? Ok, so they are rusty red or a golden yellow, and would be quite a conversation piece and undoubtedly put into the panic mode all the environmentalists running around warning about global warming. Though I purchased a couple dozen of the "Icicle" pansies just to try, I passed on the tulips.

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## Gardening on Michigan Avenue

I had the chance to go to Chicago several times this fall and am pleased to report on the further greening of Michigan Avenue and many of its neighboring cross streets. I was able to make a careful study while Mrs. A. Hort Hound did the shops. In fact, this compensated for the displeasure I typically incur on these excursions. The number of sidewalk and median street planters continues to proliferate, and I even witnessed, first hand, the finishing touches on the marble-faced planters in front of the new Nordstroms. They have a built in irrigation system and a large drain hole, which I speculated might drain into the storm sewer?

Some planters had been replanted for fall with pansies (Icicle?), Swiss chard, and small clumping forms of asters, though the unimaginative blocks of mums in front of Bloomingdales were disappointing. In many cases, the plants were labeled, but it is easy to see why many labels were missing. I mean, who wouldn't want a plant label for *Polygonum amplexicaule* with a Nieman Marcus logo? (Even Nieman Marcus doesn't know the genus has been changed to *Persicaria*.)

The variety of plant material was staggering—Saks had a wonderful display of grasses, whereas at Marshall Fields there was a fabulous mixture of Colocasias, bamboos, coleus, and some sort of variegated ginger lily. Planters in the Avenue's median contained various variegated cannas (five-foot tall), with several forms of Ipomoeas trailing over the sides and into the street. Many house plants were used, including mother-in-laws tongue and various forms of wandering jew.

For those of you who like woodies there were Lantanas, various forms of yews, variegated Cornus, boxwoods, lilacs, hibiscus, and oleander. The genus *Hosta* was used extensively, though *Hemerocallis* was used more sparingly.

Down at the northern end of Michigan, peaking into the windows of Georg Jensen's on the ground floor of the Drake Hotel, you would be delighted with the luxurious porcelain of the *Flora*

*Danica* pattern from Royal Copenhagen. The original service was commissioned by the Danish Royal Household as a gift for Catherine II of Russia. However, the Tzarina died before the dinner service was completed, and it is now one of the royal family's treasures at the Rosenborn Castle. The dinner service gets its name from the old botanical work *Flora Danica*, whose minutely-detailed copper plates reproduce the flora of Denmark. Each dish is a work of art, as the flowers are painted free-hand exactly as they were 200 years ago. The majority of the flowers are readily recognized. Not that I want to spoil it for you, but most of the dishes were individually priced at more than \$1000. But, they were beautiful to look at!

Just behind the Drake Hotel, across from the Oak Street Beach, was a charming shaded triangle in which were masses of purple flowering Aconitum, pink Japanese anemones, and large plantings of *Hosta* 'Frances Williams'.

Now, if you were really observant, and had access to a helicopter, you would have noticed the garden started by Major Richard Daley on the roof of the City Hall. It boasts a collection of semipervivums, which will soon be joined by 20,000 other plants representing 150 species. This will form an urban laboratory, 11 stories above street level.

Needless to say, the original projected cost for the rooftop garden was \$750,000, but the project is actually coming in at just under \$1,500,000. Fortunately, funding was provided by Commonwealth Edison.

The intention is to reduce the number of "heat islands," such as rooftops and parking lots that readily absorb the sun's rays, making the city several degrees hotter than outlying areas with more greenery. The gardens are expected to drop rooftop temperatures by 30 to 40 degrees. It is also hoped that the gardens will clean pollution from the air.

Unfortunately, the garden is not easily accessible and will not be open to the public. However, some downtown denizens will be able to see it from the upper stories of nearby buildings.

## The Year's Garden Scourges

This year's garden scourges included a near-record population of slugs after the torrential rains of June. I must confess, I continued to pick them off the basil and parsley at night with a flashlight, but just gave up on the hostas.

The rabbits devastated *Hakonachloa macra* (not *H. macra* 'Aureovariegata') for the second time in three years. Oddly enough, that was the only plant with obvious rabbit damage in the entire garden.

I would be remiss not to mention the June hail storm that wreaked havoc on the *Hosta* foliage. The large leaves of *H. hypoleuca* by the garden bench were peppered with holes and the top-most, largest leaves had to be removed, ruining the total impact of the plant for the rest of the summer.

Rolling off the corner of the roof, hail formed a large pile on a clump of *H. yingerii*, stripping this plant of all its leaves. It went "dormant" for the remainder of the growing season, and I hope it recovers next spring.

I personally could not endure looking at the holey *Hosta* leaves all summer and bushel baskets of the riddled foliage were dumped onto the compost heap. Many of the plants did not recover, and if they did produce new leaves, they were greatly reduced in size.

At least the summer was a relatively cool one (no days over 90 in June, July or August), and the rains always came just as the soil was drying out.

I live-trapped several dozen chipmunks on the terrace—their numbers seem to be ever increasing.

And David Nedveck's idea to put guppies into the pond to control the midge fly larva was a great success!!

**Don't forget to attend  
the December 6  
meeting!**



## Ups and Downs

I did have my triumphs and failures when it came to plants. The seeds brought back from the Munich Botanical Garden—*Nicotiana glauca*—germinated readily and were transplanted outdoors in early June. These things grew AND GREW, ultimately reaching a height of twelve feet by early October. Unfortunately, all of the pink flowers occurred on the very tops of the plants, and none of the lateral branches produced flowers before frost. Mrs. A. Hort Hound could not abide these horticultural marvels and repeatedly threatened to hire an assassin. After all, as she ably put it, what good are plants that can only be appreciated with helicopter tours!! The neighborhood kids referred to them as Jack-in-the-Bean Stalk Plants, and I will admit, they did change the character of the block. They were definitely a conversation piece, one of those rare plants that generates spontaneous comments from even nongardener strolling by. They were quite woody, and the two inch in diameter stalks had to be cut with a bow saw. The roots resembled those of small trees. A few days after they were cut down, a couple of notes appeared in the mailbox. One simply stated "What a relief", and a second questioned whether or not I had observed the giant tumbling into the garden. Though they were not bothered by a black aphids like *N. sylvestris*, and I must confess, even my gardening "friends" to whom I had given seeds or seedlings, had few nice things to say about the plant. I remain totally in the dark as to the plant's origins and even the plant data base on the website of the Missouri Botanic Garden turned up a blank when I searched for it.

Another failure, was the annual *Cerinthe major* 'Purpurescens'. I had fallen in love with this plant when first seen as an underplanting for the rose garden at Sissinghurst, and again this summer in Nori and Sandra Pope's garden at Hadspen House, where they were placed in brilliant bluish-purple ceramic pots that highlighted the iridescent purplish leaves surrounding the small bluish-black flowers. Shari Voss had given me the seeds last win-

ter at a WHPS meeting, and I duly planted them under the grow lights in late March. Every single one sprouted, with large cotyledons like those beans you planted in your third grade class room. Unfortunately, when placed in the garden, the individual branches became long and spindly, absolutely unsightly by the end of July with only the very tips of 24" branches having any unblemished foliage. Of course, after the plants succumbed in late August (with a helping hand, I might add) the self sown seeds sprouted almost immediately. Another plant that bade farewell to the garden, was a seven year old plant of *Stewartia pseudocamellia*. Though it had produced a dozen flowers in the past few years (each flower only lasts one day) the plant continued to look ghastly as it suffered from leaf drop and chlorosis. The uprooting was slightly painful, but I got over it.

As for success stories, *Acer seiboldianum* 'Sode no unchi' has given me nothing but pleasure this growing season. It took the place of that *Hamamelis virginiana* about ten years old on the corner of the house, which had the annoying habit of retaining all of its dead brown leaves all winter long, unless I painstakingly removed each and everyone by hand. A neighbor willingly took the contribution, and Peter Morsch at Stonewall Nursery came up with this replacement woody. This is one of the few dwarf selections of *A. sieboldianum* and is used for rockeries and bonsai in Japan. It has very tiny leaves (2-3 cm) and by the end of October they turned to rich tones of crimson and orange, in the shade no less!! It is reportedly difficult to propagate (this one is a graft) which probably accounts for its high price. If it does not prove winter hardy, there will be much wailing and gnashing of teeth! A far simpler plant, was a seedling of a *Datura* that someone passed on to me at a WHPS meeting last spring. I had never really grown moon flower before, and wasn't sure that it would even bloom this summer. I guess I shouldn't have been in doubt, as Whitey Holmes later told me that another member of this genus is the most significant agricultural weed in the world! It was sited in the collection of pots along the driveway, and gradually rose to a height of 30 inches.

One August evening, I took notice of three large buds as I left for the hospital. Returning home about midnight, after the tragic death of a newborn from a prominent Madison family, I was stunned to see the flowers had fully opened during my brief but trying absence, and oh, the fragrance!! The three simple white flowers blooming at the midnight hour were certainly uplifting for the spirit. In the same family, I must say that I was also taken with the very large *Brugmansias* of many different colors in front of the Imperial Garden Restaurant in Middleton this summer.

Perhaps the most satisfying "gardening" experience of the summer resulted from observing my neighbor using a power washer to clean his sale boat. Impressed with the results, I asked him if he thought it would take the ten year build up of algae and sooty black mold off the garden's lanin stone terraces and pathways. He lent it to me for a day, and I went to town like a kid with a new toy. The results were beyond belief!! The rocks almost looked like they had when they were incorporated into the garden in 1990. I am proud to say I now have my own power washer. Don't buy the low end models sold by Home Depot. I found a good supplier in Milwaukee of a commercial grade machine made in Iowa. The right tool for the right job, my Dad always said! And I can remember many an agonizing hand scrub job in the past, and even Mrs. A. Hort loves to wield the water torch!! (Great for blitzing the front porch steps!)

One of the low points of the summer was the plant order from Glasshouse Works in Stewart, Ohio. This supplier specializes in unusual annuals and tender plants and I placed my order in March for plants to use in my container plantings for the summer. Well, they never came until, of course, the day after I left for a two week vacation in mid July. As the box was not marked "live plants, open immediately", my neighbor just shoved into the garage where I didn't notice it myself until several days after my return. Needless to say, the plants were in a disastrous state. Amazingly, I only lost a couple of the two dozen holocaust survivors, but it was a long, slow recov-



# Wisconsin Hardy Plant Society

## Membership Renewal

How do you know if your dues are paid?

Check the label on the newsletter. If it says PD2000, you are paid through 2000.

*Dues payments are made for January through December and are due for 2001 by no later than March 1, 2001.*

**Please submit this information page along with your dues check.**

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS ( ) change in address?

STREET \_\_\_\_\_

CITY \_\_\_\_\_ STATE \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP CODE \_\_\_\_\_

PHONE \_\_\_\_\_

E-MAIL \_\_\_\_\_

Type of Membership (You can pay dues for up to three years at a time)

( ) INDIVIDUAL.....\$10.00-1 year ( ) \$20.00-2 years ( ) \$30.00-3 years

( ) FAMILY.....\$15.00-1 year ( ) \$30.00-2 years ( ) \$45.00-3 years

( ) BUSINESS.....\$25.00 (includes 1 free ad in newsletter)

( ) I have included a few extra dollars for further support to the society's programs.

I am interested in helping out with the following activities:

( ) Programs

( ) Plant Sale

( ) Mailings

( ) Community Projects

( ) WHA-TV Gardening Expo

( ) Publications

( ) Tours

( ) Hospitality

Other local plant societies I belong to:

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Expertise I have that may be useful to the Society: computer, journalism, publishing, public relations, horticulture, landscape profession, etc.:

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Please mail completed form and check made out to The Wisconsin Hardy Plant Society (WHPS) to:

Barb Herreid, 2788 Florann Drive, Fitchburg, WI 53711; 271-9483

## Quotes from *Don't Throw in the Towel*, by Texas Bix Bender

- *Reading garden catalogs in the winter is like having cocktails in the evening: after one or two, your big plans begin to look feasible.*
- *Rationalizing is the only way to deal with clover and dandelions. They flower prettily, they bring certain nutrients to the soil, and most importantly, they are very easy to grow. What more could you want?*
- *There are two rules for watering plants:  
1. For inside plants—when in doubt, don't. 2. For outside plants—when in doubt, do.*
- *If you want to be happy for an hour, drink wine. If you want to be happy for a day, run away. If you want to be happy for a year, get married. If you want to be happy forever, be a gardener.*
- *If you would be happy for a lifetime, plant a garden—all right, make that busy for a lifetime.*
- *Just because you garden doesn't mean that you have to love every blasted plant that comes along.*
- *Sometime plants just won't grow where you are. If you move, however, they'll grow where you were.*
- *The way to a green thumb is through dirty fingernails. Gardeners get down to earth and then some.*
- *Weeds are crack addicts. No matter how small the crack, there's a weed that desperately wants it.*
- *The fastest-growing thing in your garden is an okra pod or a zucchini you thought was not quite big enough to pick yesterday.*
- *A garden expert is any ordinary person talking about somebody else's garden.*

## Wisconsin Hardy Plant Society



December 2000 Newsletter  
925 Waban Hill  
Madison, WI 53711

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