Newsletter of the



Wisconsin Hardy Plant Society



April 2006

COMING EVENTS!

Wednesday, April 19, 2006, 6:30 p.m. WHPS meeting at Janesville Rotary Gardens. Rotary Gardens promises a	Greer (608-233-4686, fgreer@sbcglobal.net) if you have any questions.
spectacular display of bulbs and a tour by Mark Dwyer. We cannot coordinate car pooling, so members will have to find their own transportation, or you can take the WHPS bus for	<i>WHPS Summer Garden Tours</i> : Sun Prairie July 19; Mt. Horeb/Black Earth/Mazomanie area July 25. More info
\$15 (there is still some space available). For more informa- tion/questions/registration for the bus, contact Sandy Allen, 6923 North Avenue, Middleton, 53562; dsamr@chorus.net. <u>The bus LEAVES at 5:30</u> . Food is NOT included; you can	and directions in the next newsletter (mid-June). Wednesday, August 16, 2006, 6:00 p.m., Olbrich Gar- dens, <i>WHPS Summer Potluck</i> . Members bring a dish to
bring your own snack and beverage with you; we ask that you bring a dollar to tip the bus driver. Saturday, April 29, Green Bay Buying Trip. We hope to visit	 share, followed by an evening tour of Olbrich Gardens. Wednesday, September 13, 6:30 p.m. social hour, 7:00 p.m. program, Olbrich Gardens. Speaker will be Ann
at least three and possibly six nurseries that have unusual garden plants. <u>THIS TRIP IS SOLD OUT</u> . If you are reg- istered for the trip, note that the bus leaves the Dutch Mill Park and Ride at 6:00 a.m. Box lunch will be provided, but dinner is NOT included. Questions? Contact Sandy Allen, dsamr@chorus.net.	 Raver, garden columnist for <i>The New York Times</i>. Saturday, September 16, 10:00-noon. <i>WHPS Plant Exchange</i>. Members bring plants they have recently dug, or have not used in their garden, free for the taking.
Saturday, May 13, 2006 Klehm's Song Sparrow Farm, Avalon, Wisconsin special buying opportunity for WHPS	Wednesday, October 18, 6:30 p.m. social hour, 7:00 p.m. program, Olbrich Gardens. <i>Speaker to be announced</i> .
<i>Members</i> BETWEEN 9:00-10:30 a.m. ONLY (see map and info on page 2).	Wednesday, November 15, 2006 6:30 p.m social hour and seed exchange, 7:00 p.m. program. <i>WHPS Seed</i>
Saturday, May 20, 2006 WHPS Plant Sale from 9-noon at the Pet Lodge in Middleton. SEE FLYER ENCLOSED FOR FULL INFO.	<i>Exchange and Member Potpourri</i> . As you take photos of your garden throughout the year, keep in mind our annual Member Potpourri and plan to show a few slides, a PowerPoint presentation or a video at our Member Potpourri.
June 9-16, 2006, <i>WHPS Trip to England</i> . The tour will proceed West from London and reach Lands End at the very tip of SW England in Cornwall. The gardens have been carefully selected to cover the best of both large and small private gardens in route. Contact WHPS President Frank	We love looking at member gardens! Wednesday, December 13, 6:30 p.m. social hour, 7:00 p.m. meeting. <i>Speaker to be announced</i> .

There's still time to sign up and volunteer for the plant sale!

Volunteers are needed to work at the digs. Contact Ruth Cadoret at rcadoret@wisc.edu.

Volunteers are needed to transport plants to the sale site Friday, May 19. To volunteer, contact Stephanie O'Neal at 256-6108 or sone2@aol.com.

Volunteers are needed to work setting up the sale on Friday, May 19 and at the plant sale, Saturday, May 20. Contact Stephanie.

And, of course, we need willing volunteers to come to the plant sale May 20 and buy plants!

A Hardy Alternative to the Japanese Maple



Acer pseudosieboldianum, the Korean maple, is winter hardy in the Madison area in contrast to the marginally hardy Japanese maple (A. palmatum). Plantings of the Korean maple on the UW-Madison campus have thrived since their planting in 1948.

The palmately lobed

leaves of the Korean maple turn brilliant red in autumn. In spring, red flowers appear with the newly expanding leaves.

Fabulous specimens of this small-scale tree may be seen in the Longenecker Horticultural Gardens of the UW Arboretum.

Several of my Longenecker Gardens volunteers have collected seedlings that will be available for purchase at the WHPS Plant Sale on May 20.

-Ed Hasselkus

Meet our board

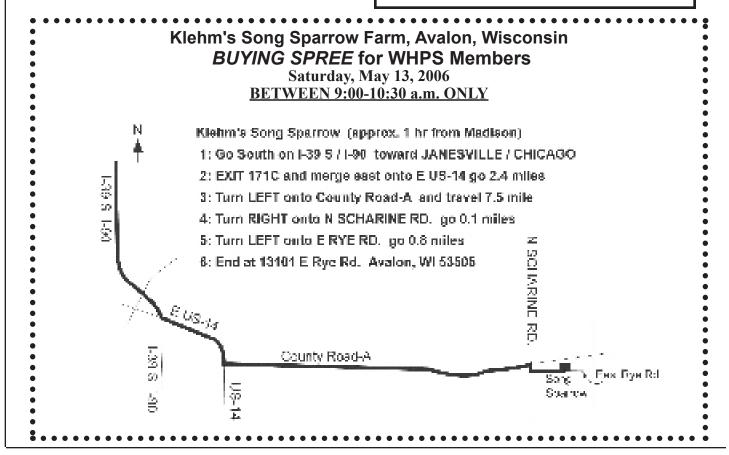
Bill Hoernke

Bill got hooked on gardening as a kid helping his mother weed the flower beds and water plants during summer droughts, and as a young man working in his mom's flower shop in Monona (Char's Floral). He now enjoys his



own garden, and his love for hostas has become an obsession—keeping track of his hostas in a computer database. He has also branched out into other perennials, trees, shrubs, and bulbs (tulips work really well between hostas).

One of Bill's other hobbies is model trains, and he's an active member of the Wisconsin Garden Railway Society (WGRS). He is Webmaster for their Web site—www.wgrsociety.org—and can be found volunteering at several train shows, including those at Olbrich and Rotary Gardens. Bill is a master gardener and enjoys gardening with his family. He recently began selling some of his hosta plants at his mother's plant sale, which takes place each spring. Bill joined the Wisconsin Hardy Plant Society board in January of 2006.



Plant Sales and Garden Tours and Shows—Spring and Summer 2006

Plant Sales

April 15 and 29, 9:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m. Shorewood Hills Garden Club Annual Cocoa Mulch Sale. Cocoa Mulch/Rice hulls mixture and Duck Doo will be offered. Shorewood Hills Firestation, 1008 Shorewood Blvd. Pre orders contact Georgene Stratman, 238-4860.

April 21, 1:00-5:00 p.m., April 22, 9:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m.*Olbrich Leaf Mulch Sale* 1-5 p.m. Bags (approx. 45 lb.) for \$5.00. Bulk quantities also available. www. olbrich.org.

Friday, May 5, 4-7 p.m., Saturday, May 6, 9 a.m.-5 p.m. Olbrich's Spectacular Spring Plant Sale, 608-246-4724.

Thursday, May 11, 4:00-8:00 p.m. Friday, May 12, 7:00 a.m.-6:00 p.m. Saturday, May 13, 7:00 a.m.-noon Nancy Hogan Plant Sale.5678 Rankin Lane in Town of (Westport) Rock garden plants, perennials, grasses, cactus, Fushia, Coleus, etc. From Northport Drive, 1 mile West on Hwy M to Woodland, or from Middleton, Allen Blvd., proceed East on Highway M for approx. miles (just past Highway K to Woodland. Go north on Woodland for about 3/4 mile, Corner of Rankin Lane and Woodland - White house, gray shutters with Rock Garden in front. Questions? Call 849-7202.

May 7, 1-3 p.m., Dahlia Tuber Sale, Olbrich Gardens. Sponsored by Badger State Dahlia Society, 608-233-2394. Friday, May 12, 8:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m. Sat, May 13, 8:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m.

Friday, May 12, 8:00 to 4:00 Sat, May 13, 8:00 to 1:00 Fitchburg Gardener's Plant Sale 5586 Cheryl Dr., Fitchburg, WI 608 271-5985. (2.5 mi. south of the beltline on Fish Hatchery Rd. - right on Cheryl Dr. - 2nd block on the right.)

Friday, May 12, 8:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. Saturday, May 13, 8:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.West Side Garden Club plant sale.3918 Nakoma Road, Madison.

Friday May 12, 8:00 a.m. to noon. Saturday, May 13, 8:00 a.m. to noon. Lois Kinlen and Jean Halverson will have their plant sale at 26 Merlham Street in Madison.

Saturday, May 13, 9:00 a.m.-2:00 p.m., 2006 Friends of the Arboretum Native Plant Sale. Wildflower Tent at UW-Madison Arboretum, 1207 Seminole Highway, Madison. Over 100 native plant species for sale.

May 20, 8:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m. Indian Hills Garden Club. Spring Harbor Middle School, 1110 Spring Harbor Drive.

Sunday, May 28, 10:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m., Hosta Sale, Olbrich Gardens. Sponsored by Wisconsin Hosta Society, 608-786-1758

Saturday, August 5, 9:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m., Iris Sale, Olbrich Gardens. Sponsored by Madison Area Iris Society, 608-825-7423

Saturday, August 12, 10:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m. and Sunday, August 13, 11:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m., Daylily Sale, Olbrich Gardens. Sponsored by The Wisconsin Daylily Society, 608-837-2317.

Saturday, May 20 and Sunday, May 21, 9:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m. Bonsai Show. There will be bonsai demon-

Garden Tours & Shows

strations each day at 11 am and 2 pm. More than fifty quality bonsai will be on display, as well as a sales area for bonsai, tools, books, and supplies. Admission is \$2. Sponsored by Badger Bonsai Society, 608-249-5227

Saturday, June 3 1-4 p.m. and Sunday, June 4, 10:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m., Iris Show, Olbrich Gardens, Sponsored by Madison Area Iris Society, 608-825-7423.

June 3, 1:30 p.m. New Shrubs Show and Tell at Schonheit Gardens, Sun Prairie, WI with Dave Wanninger from Beaver Creek Nursery. Free, but registration required.

Sunday, June 18, 12:30-4:30 p.m., Madison Rose Society Show, free, Olbrich Gardens. 608-845-6063.

Saturday, July 15, 10 a.m.-4:00 p.m., **Daylily Show**, Olbrich Gardens. Sponsored by The Wisconsin Daylily Society, 608-837-2317.

Friday, July 14 10 a.m.-4:00 p.m. and Saturday, July 15, 9:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m. Olbrich Gardens Home Garden Tour—Monona, Advance tickets \$12 general public; \$14 day of tour. 608-246-4550.

Monday, August 21-Wednesday, August 23.Olbrich Summer Bus Tour to Iowa, Call 608-246-4550 for more information.

Saturday, August 26, 10:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m. and Sunday, August 27, 10:00 a.m.-4:00 pm.Dahlia Show, Sponsored by the Badger State Dahlia Society, 608-233-2394.

Although one cannot teach an old dog new tricks, gardeners of all ages are always on the look-out for novelties and are constantly striving to improve their garden. As Karl Foerster used to say, "He who is satisfied with his garden, does not deserve it!"

----Isabelle Van Groeningen, "A Steady March into the Future," The Hardy Plant, Spring, 2000.

Winter Aconites

by Eric Hsu-Reprinted with permission from the Newsletter of the Mid-Atlantic Hardy Plant Society, March 2006



Few plants warm my heart and bring a smile to my face the way winter aconites do when I see them peering toward sunlight in late winter. I used to make the intermittent jaunts into the Wister Garden at Scott Arboretum in Swarthmore, Pennsylvania, in March when the slopes would be covered with the buttercuplike flowers. The drifts were as impressive as the naturalized one I had seen around a derelict Roman fort near Cambridge, England.

Winter aconites are sometimes glimpsed in old neighborhood gardens, fighting valiantly against English ivy and other encroaching vegetation. Their bright flowers are a welcome break from the somber, even funereal, hues of hellebores and the icy white of snowdrops. American garden writer Louis Beebe Wilder was partial toward winter aconites and marveled how they withstood the vicissitudes of winter (*Adventures with Hardy Bulbs* 1936): "As soon as they feel it to be safe, and long before we are sanguine, up pushes the flower stem carrying its single round gold ball, which presently opens wide too look like a buttercup, with just below it, and forming a very pretty setting for it, a frill-like green involucral bract, which has been compared to an Elizabethan ruff."

Yet despite its cheery disposition, the winter aconite has always enjoyed a sinister reputation over the centuries. In Greek mythology, it symbolized the malevolence of Hecate the Queen of Hell and was proffered as a brew by Medea, the unfortunate wife of Jason, to Theseus, who promptly threw it away. Henry Phillip's Flora Historica of 1824 recorded an autopsy in January 3, 1822 performed on Mrs. Gorst, who succumbed from eating this "root" prepared as horseradish. Her brother-in-law fortunately escaped a similar fate. John Gerard's Herball (1597) recalled winter aconite as, "the small winter wolfsbane whose leaves come forth from the ground in the dead time of winter, many times bearing the snow on the heades of his leaves and flowers, and the deeper the snowe is the fairer and the larger the flower, and the warmer the weather is the lesser is the flower and worse coloured." Indeed, the yellow color appears wan during mild spells, only to intensify with cold.

Early literature has listed winter aconite under *Helleborus*, *Aconitum* and *Ranunculus*; the generic name means "flower of the earth," although it also has been interpreted as "spring flower." (Eranthis is from the Greek *er*, spring, and *anthos*, a flower.) The humility with which the plant kowtows to the ground suggests the suitability of the former.

There are six recognized species of *Eranthis*, but only *Eranthis hyemalis* is generally grown. The Japanese *E. pinnatifida* has beautiful starry white flowers, but needs the cosseted

environment of a cool greenhouse or cold frame (although Judy Glattstein has successfully coaxed it to grow outside in her woodland garden), while *E. stellata* and *E. lobulata*, denizens of Turkestan and China, and Siberian native *E. sibirica*, a close cousin of *E. hyemalis*, have yet to reach an audience outside of specialists. According to reports from alpine plant aficionados, *E. longistipitata*, a Lilliputian version of *E. hyemalis*, has performed outdoors as a garden plant. Commonly sold as *E. cilicica*, *E. hyemalis* Cilicica Group has bronze foilage set off with large flowers. Pale yellow or double-petal variants are infrequently seen in populations, but not common in cultivation. The luminous chrome yellow of the typical species is more to my liking than the pale yellow, which looks more sickly than attractive.

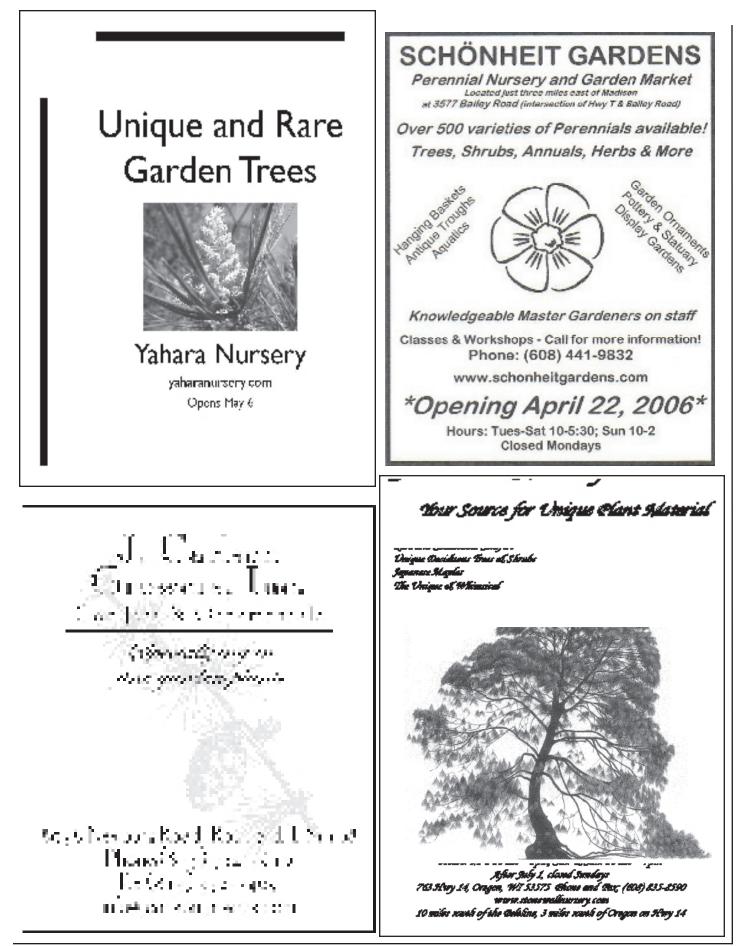
Cultivation

Gardeners who see established colonies of winter aconites in old gardens may be forgiven for believing that the effect can be easily achieved by purchasing hundreds of tubers. Unfortunately, tubers purchased in autumn are often desiccated and will disappoint the expectant gardener. I once planted hundreds one year underneath the cedar at Scott Arboretum, only to be dismayed at seeing ten plants emerge-the promised carpet of yellow evaporated.

E.A. Bowles once said in *My Garden in Spring*: "the modern colour-schemed affair can seldom include such a pure drift of its cheery yellow faces in their toby frills... It is difficult to establish a new colony of it--for it is one of those plants which suffer terribly from being kept out of the ground any length of time,--I find the best time to transplant it is during its period of flowering. Roots bought in the autumn are generally sick into death." The best way to ensure success is to beg for established clumps "in the green" when they are actively flowering. Lift them gingerly with the soil intact and plant them in the ideal location as soon as possible. At this stage, the clumps can be divided. Once established, the plants may become prolific.

Those who are wiling to expend time may propagate *Eranthis* from seed. Harvest the seed from the beak-like capsules as soon as they are ripe. Do not sow them thickly, since the seedlings will resent disturbance. Provided with adequate care, they should flower within their third or fourth year.

Eric Hsu is now working as the Putnam Fellow at Arnold Arboretum of Harvard University, near Boston, Massachusetts. He is curating the Acer collection and coordinating the American Public Garden Association's North American Plan Collections Consortium (NAPCC) multi-institutional Acer network. However, he does miss the bubbling horticultural scence in the Delaware River Valley region, having worked previously at Scott Arboretum of Swarthmore College. He is becoming acquainted with the New England region, which does have a subtle, understated horticultural community. The only thing he cannot stand is the cold, snowy winters in Boston.





Conifer Society Meeting Trip Offered

The American Conifer Society is planning their regional meeting for August 18th and 19th, in Painesville, OH, east of Cleveland. The meeting begins Friday night with a social hour, light dinner, a speaker and the arrival of many unusual conifers propagated by members that will go on a Silent and Verbal auction Saturday night after the Banquet. Saturday they plan to visit The Mimi Gale Botanical Garden, Klyn Nurseries and Girard Nurseries. Girard is famous for the work with Rhododendron and Azalea and have many introductions of Conifers, including 'Girard Saybook Gold' Juniper.

Several members in Wisconsin have indicated an interest in going as a group. We are looking into renting a 15-passenger van, with the intent of leaving Thrusday and visiting Wave Crest Nursery near Holland, MI (a conifer and perennial delight) and Gee Farms before heading to Adrian, MI to stay overnight. Friday morning we will visit Hidden Lakes Gardens and perhaps a few other stops, before we go to the meeting starting at 5:30.

If any one is interested in accompaning Ed Hasselkus, Sandy Allen, Glenn Spevacek, Diane Scharkey and Eleanor Ligman, we would love to have you come along! Information about the meeting can be obtained by visiting www.conifersociety.org.

If you are interested in this wild, wonderful trip, contact Sandy Allen at dsamr@ chorus.net, or call 608-836-9602. Approximate cost for travel will be determined by the number who commit to the trip. We hope to make it under \$135 plus motel. There is a registration fee for the meeting that will be announced later, but is usually under \$200. You do not have to be a member of ACS to attend. —Sandy Allen

I once read somewhere that most gardens will disappear within three or four years after the gardener ceases to tend them. This idea haunts me as I grow older. I sometimes think of it at particularly trying moments. Such as when the raspberry canes slash my arms and draw blood, or when I wrestle with a large stone, or when I teeter on the edge of a gully trying to yank out a weed that is my only means of support. "Why am I doing this?" I ask myself. "It'll all be gone as soon as I'm dead." Then I remind myself that this is true of most human endeavors, and I go on gardening.

-From The Invisible Garden, Dorothy Sucher, Counterpoint, Washington DC, 1999

COOL CAMASSIAS—North American Natives with Potential for Your Spring Garden



The promises of a colorful spring garden are here with tulips, daffodils and hyacinths starting to peak out of the ground, but are you tired of the same old types of bulbs? If you are looking for something different to plant this October for wonderful spring color, try camassias. Locating this bulb might be difficult but trendy garden centers and many mail-order suppliers are now carrying cultivated varieties of camassia. A little bit of searching will be worth it when these treasures bloom in your May garden.

These fall-planted bulbs are wonderful, hardy perennials in the garden and bloom with mid-season tulips. Blooms will be effective for about three weeks. With flower stalks typically reaching heights of 20-36 inches, these bulbs prefer a damp location and can thrive in partial shade. The erect flower clusters with many star-shaped blooms come in shades of deep blue, sky blue and white. The foliage is "sword-like" and forms a clump that is typically half of the overall plant height. Frequently sold as "wild hyacinths," these members of the lily family have been called Quamash (meaning "sweet") by Native Americans for thousands of years and their historical uses are noteworthy.

Camassias are native to North America, primarily the Pacific Northwest where they can be found in mountain meadows. Related to Scilla, there are four native species distributed throughout Northern California, Oregon, Washington and British Columbia, Canada. One species, Camassia scilloides, is native to central and eastern North America and has the widest distribution of the camassias. Camassia quamash is the species that has been utilized as a food source by Native Americans in the Pacific Northwest for thousands of years. The bulb of this plant formed the greater part of the vegetable food diet utilized by Native Americans of that area. A dietary staple, this starchy food was much like the potato is for western cultures. The bulbous root, after being dug and stored, is typically boiled or roasted and is said to be delicious and highly nutritious. Lewis (of Lewis and Clark) noted that it caused bowel complaints if eaten "in quantity." When boiled in water, the bulbs yielded a molasses that was very much prized and used during festivals.

Camassias will not do well in dry soils. Grow these natives in deep, fertile, humus-rich and moisture-retentive soils. They will thrive in full sun if there is adequate moisture, however, they will do very well in part shade as well. Plant bulbs 6-8 inches deep from the base of the bulb to the soil level. Space bulbs every 8 inches and try to plant in groups of five, ten or even twenty-five bulbs. After blooming in mid-late May, the foliage will begin to yellow and go dormant by the end of June. The foliage can then be cut down as the bulb is dormant. Plant camassias amongst other perennials that will fill in the vacant spot left by the dormant bulbs. Given a proper spot, camassias will naturalize and multiply. If too many bulbs develop in one location, they can be dug up, divided and immediately replanted in early fall.

Camassias are wonderful for the middle of the border and lend themselves well to compositions that require a "cooler" color to offset many of the bright yellows and reds that can dominate the garden at this time. Camassias are also wonderful cut flowers and long-lived in the vase. One of the best blue camassias is Camassia leichtlinii 'Blue Danube' with wonderful, deep blue flower spires. Camassia cusickii offers a powdery blue tone and for white, try Camassia leichtlinii 'Alba'. If you are interested in the added element of interesting foliage, try Camassia quamash 'Blue Melody'. While blooming later than other camassias in early June, this variety has creammargined foliage and blue flower spires.

With so many spring-blooming bulbs to choose from, why not try a hardy, North American native that will thrive in our climate? Not only will these bulbs perform in our gardens for many years, they have a historical context and will make great conversation starters as your neighbors speculate on your newest addition to the spring garden. Rotary Gardens has over 5,000 camassias representing three of the five species and eight varieties.

-Mark Dwyer, Janesville Rotary Gardens

Coming up at Janesville Rotary Gardens

BAGGED COMPOST SALE

Rotary Gardens Every Saturday in April and May 8 am until 2 pm, Horticulture Center 1.5 cu. ft. bags (40 lbs) \$5 per bag (10% off for Members and Volunteers) Call Mark for Info (608) 754-1779

HEIRLOOM TOMATO PLANT SALE

Rotary Gardens Saturdays, May 13, 20, 27 8 am until 2 pm, Horticulture Center Choose from 100 varieties of heirloom tomato plants Plants sold in 4-packs for \$2.50 (10% off for Members and Volunteers) Call Mark for Info (608) 754-1779

ROTARY GARDENS HOME GARDEN TOUR

Saturday, June 24th 10 am until 4 pm (rain or shine) Enjoy eight wonderful home gardens in the Janesville area. Tickets are \$9 in advance or \$12 the day of the event Children 12 and under are free Call Mark at (608) 754-1779 for ticket information or questions. •••••• Member News, Tips etc. •••••

Are you photographing your garden?

If you have been/will be photographing your garden, you might want to think about presenting 10-15 photos at our



Member Potpourri in November. The Potpourri is a member favorite, emphasing the diversity of gardening styles, and is a wonderful tonic as winter looms in November.

You can also contribute photos for the WHPS display at the annual WHA Garden Expo. If

you would like to contribute to the Garden Expo display, please send your favorite garden photo(s) to Stephanie O'Neal, 1850 Baird Street, Madison, WI 53713, or email jpegs of the photos to sone2@aol.com.

Do you have plants for the plant sale?

Do you have extra plants from your garden that you would like to contribute to the plant sale but feel that there aren't enough to host a plant dig?

You can drop off any extra plants you'd like to contribute to the sale on May 19, the day before the sale, between the hours of 3:00 and 6:00 p.m. <u>Please do not</u> <u>drop off plants on the day of the sale</u>.

We would like to know ahead of time if possible that you will be dropping off plants, so contact Stephanie O'Neal at 608-256-6108, sone2@aol.com to let us know what kind of plants, how many you have and when you will be dropping them off.

If you need sticks and markers to label your plants, they can be dropped off to you the week before the sale.

WHPS MEMBER TO-DO LIST FOR 5/20/06-BUY PLANTS AT WHPS PLANT SALE!

Do you have a garden tip or idea for our members? Contact Stephanie O'Neal at sone2@aol.com WHPS Web site: www.madison.com/communities/wisconsinhardyplantsociety/

