



COMING EVENTS!

GARDEN TOURS

Tuesday, July 2 6:00-8:00 p.m.—4 member gardens, south of PD

Nadie Costello, 5198 Wildheather Drive—in Tarpleywick Hills; South on Fish Hatchery, left on Lacy Road then right on Syene and right again on Wildheather Dr.

Joan Severa, 5806 Pembroke Drive, and Chris Biederman, 2830 Osmundsen Rd—these two gardens adjoin and one can be entered from the other. Osmundsen Road intersects both Lacy Road and County PD.

Heide Carvin, 5907 Green Clover Lane—From Osmundson Rd turn west on Timber Ridge (first right turn south of PD) and then right on Green Clover Lane.

Saturday, July 13, 2002, 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m., **A Walk in Tom Cottingham's Garden**, 7421 North Avenue, Middleton (West on University, then right on Parmenter to North Avenue).

Tuesday, July 16, 6:00 p.m. til dark. The Madison Area Master Gardeners tour (WHPS members invited).

Sally Averkamp, 5627 Crestwood Place—off Rosa Rd., last house on the left on Crestwood.

Jane Wood, 203 Bordner Drive—Rosa Rd. to Elder then left on Bordner, last house on the left on Bordner.

Sue Niesen, 6613 Old Sauk Rd.—0.9 mile off Old Middleton Rd.

Nancy Mead, 6010 S. Highland Ave.—0.2 mile off Old Middleton Rd.

Wednesday, July 31, 6:30 p.m.—**Marlyn Sachtjen's at 5181 West River Road, Waunakee** (Highway 113 North of Highway M, turn right on River Road)—we will have refreshments (wine, cheese, softdrinks, cookies or what ever) as we stroll around the garden.

August 2-4 Trip to Minneapolis—Trip is fully subscribed.

Wednesday, August 21, 6:00 p.m. **Potluck supper** at Olbrich Gardens.

Wednesday, September 18, 7:00 p.m. (Social hour at 6:30 p.m.), Olbrich Gardens. **Bulb Evaluations at Olbrich Botanical Gardens and Janesville Rotary Gardens**, with Jeff Epping and Mark Dwyer. Thinking about a last minute fall bulb order? The speakers will discuss the best bulbs for Madison area gardens, and Mark will report on the Rotary Gardens' tulip extravaganza this past spring.

Wednesday, October 16, 7:00 p.m. (Social hour at 6:30 p.m.) Olbrich Gardens. **Garden Conifers**, with Chubb Harper, "Mr. Conifer of the Midwest." Chubb has put together three collections of garden conifers in his lifetime and given them away to institutions. He knows his stuff!

Saturday, October 26, all day. Olbrich Gardens. **Fall Symposium: Making the Right Connections**

Learn how to connect your house to your garden, and your garden to the natural landscape at the Olbrich Botanical Gardens Fall Symposium: Making the Right Connections. Follow the flow of indoors to outdoors, and cultivated to natural with suggestions for planning your home landscape. Speakers include: Lauren Springer, plant expert and author from Denver, Colorado, on *Creating a Resonant Garden: Marrying the Natural and Personal Landscape*; Neil Diboll of Prairie Nursery in Westfield, Wisconsin on *Prairie Meadows and Gardens: A Step by Step Approach*; and Dr. Jim Ault, Director of Chicago Botanic Garden's Plant Evaluation Program on *Perennial Plants for the Midwest*. Sponsored by the Olbrich Botanical Society and the Wisconsin Hardy Plant Society. The cost for the symposium is \$70 to Olbrich Botanical Society and Wisconsin Hardy Plant Society members, and \$80 for the general public. For information, or to register, call 608-246-4550.

Wednesday, November 20, 7:00 p.m. (Social hour at 6:30), Olbrich Gardens. **Members Potpourri and Annual Business Meeting**. Members, take your photos and slides now and show them at the November 20 meeting!

Other Events of Note

August 3, Madison Area Iris Society Sale, 9 a.m.-3 p.m. Olbrich Gardens, (608) 839-5449.

August 10-11, Wisconsin Daylily Society Sale, 8/10 10 a.m.-5 p.m., 8/11 noon-4 p.m. Olbrich Gardens, (608) 221-1933.

August 24-25, Olbrich Gardens. *Dahlia Show*—free.

Thursday, September 19, 7:00 p.m., Olbrich Gardens Fall Lecture Series—*It's Elemental—Let's Talk Plants Lecture Series: Garden Perennials*, guest speaker Dr. Allan Armitage (Author of A Hort Hound's favorite perennial book, and a professor at the Univ. Georgia). \$10 Olbrich members, \$12 general public.

Thursday, September 26, 7:00 p.m., Olbrich Gardens. *It's Elemental—Let's Talk Plants Lecture Series: Clematis Up Close*. Guest speaker is Richard Hawke of the Chicago Botanical Garden Plant Evaluation Program (Richard is a great speaker and always has pertinent and good information). \$10 Olbrich members, \$12 general public.

Fairies in the Garden

The genus *Aquilegia* contains some of my favorite flowers; columbines are graceful fairies dancing in the breeze in almost every rainbow color. The native columbine,



Aquilegia Canadensis, waltzes in the woodland, reseeding merrily until you have a "forest" of the pale red and yellow flowers. Most columbines would like a touch of sun, but will bloom even in three hours of sun, and can

even be happy in high shade (like the north side of your house under open sky).

Most people know the McKana Hybrids, which are huge (half the size of my fist) flowers with long spurs (little tails of flower) and come in all sorts of gorgeous color combinations, but the genus contains all sorts of flowers.

Aquilegia chrysantha is one of the longest blooming columbines for me; it goes for about 6 weeks, starting in mid-May and hanging on to greet the early daylilies. It also has the longest spurs and is a clear yellow. The Queen series (White Queen, Yellow Queen) were developed using chrysantha, and they have some of the same lasting qualities, but they have larger flowers.

The flabellatas tend to have very blue foliage and compact plants; they work very well in a rock garden where their

diminutive size isn't lost among the giants. The flabellatas are under a foot, and the spurs are very short, and often curled slightly. If you're looking for short columbines that will fit into the regular garden, try the Biedermeier Hybrids, which have very short spurs and up-facing flowers.

Most of the vulgaris cultivars are double, nodding, and without spurs, which makes them look unrelated until you look at the foliage. I'm not fond of them, but I do have one that is two-toned, and that is very pretty. The many Barlow hybrids (from Nora Barlow, which is the least attractive of them, in my opinion) are also nodding, and the flower is a half-sphere with the petals forming a spiky appearance. Some of the maroon Barlows are very pretty as a dainty counterpoint in the garden.

Some of the more unusual columbines are very pretty, while others are just curiosities. *A. cernua* is one of the curiosities. It has hanging maroon flowers on a 4- or 5-inch plant, but the flowers are contained within a long 'bract' of yellow-green. *Aquilegia transylvanica* is what you might expect—dark, brooding, purple-black flowers—but it's quite pretty. It also seems to be short-lived.

Aquilegia alpina is gorgeous, with nodding blue-lavender flowers on a 24-30 inch plant. The color of the flowers is very similar to some of the blue iris that bloom at that time (like the tall, bearded 'Stepping Out').

Aquilegia scopulorum (blue), *Aquilegia barnebyi* (pink and yellow), and

Aquilegia chaplinii (yellow) are all rock garden denizens because they require excellent drainage.

Columbines will reseed, and as with any seed-grown plant, the seedlings won't necessarily look anything like the parents. They are difficult to divide, which is the reason that you often can't choose the specific color you want. They begin blooming in mid-May, and there is a little green worm (very scientific, isn't it? I think it's a sawfly's larvae) that will eat all the foliage off your plants in early June. It doesn't seem to hurt the columbine, but you can hand-pick or spray with Bt. Columbines also often get leaf-miner, which makes twirling light patterns on the leaves, but doesn't seem to usually hurt the plant either. Columbines tend to be short-lived perennials, with a three- to five-year life span, but I've had the same chrysantha plant for about 8 years. They like well-drained soil. Some, like chrysantha and its cultivars, are quite tall (30-36"), and others are quite short. *A. canadensis* is the most shade-tolerant.

Although this year's columbine display is almost over, please stop out next spring to see many different varieties in bloom....if you come in early June, you will also get to see the Siberian iris display.

—Jean Bawden, Earthspirit Farm

Earthspirit Farm, 4385 Oak Hill Road, Oregon (835-8907), will have an Open Garden on July 20, 21 and 27 from 10 a.m.-5:00 p.m. The nursery sells hosta, daylilies, Japanese and Siberian iris, ornamental shrubs for the perennial border, and a few select perennials.

Early Delivery from Heronswood

Like clockwork I received my shipment of hardy perennials, one deciduous tree and more than dozen conifers (dwarf and otherwise) from Heronswood Nursery on March 20th—exactly as promised. This, of course, is foolishly early, but it was not the first shipping date offered, so I went for it. I re-potted everything per directions on arrival.

This is the second time I've ordered from Heronswood with a March shipping date and all of those plants (mostly willows) managed fine, with time in the garage and front hall before I finally planted them.

This batch of perennials are well up, the tree is leafing out and all the conifers have soft new growth. This year I actually planted two conifers during that mid-April hot spell, as well as a shipment of "green" snowdrops from Hitch Lyman's Temple Nursery in the Finger Lakes area of NY state. They're doing fine, as is everything else, but I am exhausted—and so is my patience—from schlepping a dozen pots in and out of the front hall for more than a month.

Does that mean I won't accept a March shipping date again? Don't be silly.

—Linda Brazill

Petasites or Pestasites?

Pet or Pest? That is the question. No, it's no longer a question. It was THE question for a long, long time—longer than I care to admit. As gardeners, we all give our plants the special attention they require—protecting, coddling, curtail-ing—to include them in our borders. But there are limits. How much was I willing to put up with to enjoy this plant's presence in my garden? And it was PRESENT!

Left alone, it would have consumed 450 square feet in three years.

From April to November, I went on weekly Petasites patrol, slicing off up to a dozen new petasites shoots each time.

People who came over, admired and left with a petasites start (with warnings) stopped coming around.

One morning I tripped over a raised brick in a previously smooth path. Curled malevolently beneath was a half inch thick petasites root.

Bits of root in the excavation dirt from the above mentioned path resulted in dozens of plants in the dirt pile.

It sent a leaf three feet up a downspout.

It sent a shoot behind a four-foot retaining wall and emerged triumphant at the top.

This was its final atrocity. Out came the Roundup (after another year of petasites cost/benefit analysis). After that were three years of digging survivors.

As an experiment, I transplanted several petasites to the yard of a friend. His small border had been decimated (imagine a lunar landscape) by the romping and tromping of two very large, active puppies. There wasn't even a blade of grass left in the lawn.

Petasites flourished.

The dogs are now four years old and a bit less active. Burdock, plantain, and various things with thorns are doing well. (My friend, who is not a gardener, can't see why I insist on pulling the burdock if Petasites is allowed. He can't even distinguish the two.) Grass still will not grow. The sedum survives, although bruised. The peony manages one stalk. On hot summer days the dogs sleep in the shade of petasites huge leaves. Perhaps, after all, there is an appropriate place for this plant.

For those not familiar with Petasites japonica, it is grown primarily for its huge, heart-shaped leaves. It likes shade, moisture and room to spread. With good reason, it is not included in many lists of garden perennials.

I still miss it.

—Ruth Cadoret

WHPS Plant Sale 2002 a Winner

Many thanks to all of the volunteers who made the plant sale a success (we made more this year than ever before). Special thanks to The Flower Factory and Janesville Rotary Gardens for their contributions of plants, and thanks to Song Sparrow Nursery for contributing pots for the digs. Forgive me if I don't mention everyone by name in this short space, but we are grateful to the many members who hosted digs in their gardens, to those who helped with the digs and transporting of plants, to those who worked the day before to set up for the sale and worked during the sale on May 18, and to those who helped cleanup at the end of the day. Very special thanks to The Pet Lodge (thanks Sandy Allen!), our host for the event, and thanks to WHPS treasurer Barb Herreid, who coordinated the check out process so efficiently and conveniently for our customers.

This year featured a broad range of plants, including many special shade plants (epimediums, hostas, brunnera, thalictrum, many varieties of primula, and so on), a great variety of sun plants (including many prairie plants), some woodies and even a ladslylipper for our silent auction.

At the end of the sale, leftover plants were donated to the HospiceCare Center. We hope to have a report in a future newsletter on how their planting is coming along.

In the coming months, while you are all buying and planting this year, think about saving your pots (especially 3, 4 and 6 inch pots) and flats for next year's plant sale. We had more than 10 digs this year and used a lot of pots and flats in preparation for the sale.

Don't forget to mark your calendar for next year's sale—Saturday, May 17, 2003!

Galanthus in January, Adonis in February? Madison's English Winter

(Or, Musings of A. Hort Hound)

It was on the evening of February 19th that I found a message on my answering machine from Monika Burwell (Kurt Bluemel's sister) of Earthly Pursuits in Maryland. The *Adonis amurensis* that had been back-ordered for over a year was now ready for shipment. When did I want it? My first inkling was that Monika was out of her mind, for after all, this was Wisconsin, not South Carolina. I am sure the likes of John Ellsley can plant Adonis any old time!! But, on second thought, knowing that her source was a Dutch grower who ships the plant bare root, it seemed logical (?) that I accept the order rather than have the roots continue to shrivel in cold storage in Maryland.

In the meantime, the unprecedented winter without winter was continuing around me. On February 24, the mercury cracked 62, setting a record high for the date. I received an excited call from the Guru of All Things Green—his clumps of Adonis were in full bloom—come right over and take a gander. We both marveled at this earliest ever appearance of the flowers of one of our favorite plants. A few days later, my own shriveled roots of Adonis arrived in the mail, just as the February spring was eclipsed by a sudden fall in temperature.

On morning of March 1st, I set out with trowel in hand to plant Adonis. The temperature read 13 degrees on the thermometer as I scraped away an inch of snow from the mulch of pine straw. Mrs. A Hort Hound was certain one of the neighbors would see me and call 911, thinking that I had lost my marbles. Unbelievably, beneath the mulch, there was not the slightest bit of frost in the ground as I thrust the trowel in the rich, moist earth to make a space for the not-so-good-looking bare roots.

That night 8 inches of snow fell and it was followed by three days of below zero temperatures, the only such days of the entire winter. In fact, the first two weeks of March were colder than the first two weeks of February. However, Adonis fared quite well!!! (But not those shriveled roots I am sorry to say.)

Most folks forget that the growing season in these parts ended on the 7th of October with a record low temperature of 23 degrees, finishing off all of the tender annuals. However, instead of the

harbinger of a prolonged winter, the minimum temperature did not fall to 23 degrees again until December 9th. In fact December 5th brought an all-time high of 64 degrees for the entire month of December.

These were truly extraordinary times. We had parsley from the garden on Christmas Day (well all right, I cut it a few days before Christmas). Well into December there were flowers on *Corydalis lutea*, and foliage on the epidmediums and golden feverfew showed no signs of winter's grip. December 14th was, incredibly, the first day that the temperature did not rise above freezing. Though there was a little snow for Christmas, the record warmth persisted throughout the month of January, culminating in the flowering of *Galanthus nivalis* (snowdrops) during the last week of of the month. I think Lake Mendota was frozen over for a grand total of 3 days.



In contrast, the spring was quite cool with adequate rainfall. There were two terrible days in late April when record high temperatures in the mid 80's shriveled the splendid flowers of *Chionodoxa gigantea*, *Iris reticulata* and *Iris danfordiae*. This brief, torrid flower-busting period of heat ended abruptly with a another gardener's nightmare—a thunderstorm whose marble size hail, straight-line winds, and torrential downpours decimated the daffodils, especially the very large flowered ones with delicate substance like D. 'Professor Einstein', with its white perianth and orange crown.

If it hadn't been for these two days, the spring would have been nearly perfect for those of us gardening in the city. Despite 4 consecutive days or so below freezing in the third week of May (do you recall that the last day below freezing in 2001 was April 18?), there was very little frost damage in my garden, despite the heavily frosted leaves of the hardy geraniums noted one morning. Guess that's why they're hardy!

This was my third year of converting my large pots of summer flowering annuals into pots of spring bulbs (reusing the same soil), and by far the most successful. In fact, I write without any humility in

describing my success. The bloom period from these half-dozen large pots extended over two months, beginning with the early blooming bulbs planted near the surface, and ending with late blooming bulbs like the lily-flowered tulips planted on the very bottom of the pots. They were planted up in late November and stowed in the crawl space underneath the house.

This year I wised up and removed the pots from this shelter at the end of February just as the foliage of *C. tommasinianus* began to emerge. The cold and snow of the first two weeks of March required protection with a heavy tarp, but I discerned no damage to the bulbs or the pots. The show began with *C. tommasinianus*. Though it has lovely pale lavender flowers, it is the only bulb that I would not repeat next year. Though lovely in its birth, its death is truly agonizing as the blossoms in their death throws collapse overnight into wet noodles hanging languidly over the edges of the pot. They reminded me of those plucked fowl you always see strung up by their necks in Asian food markets.

Next year, I'll try those gaudy fat Dutch hybrid crocuses instead. Perhaps in death they will be less dramatic. The crocuses were followed by a beautiful display of *Tulip kaufmania* type and *T. humilis* 'Persian Pearl'. Next followed the large *Daffodil* 'Professor Einstein', with its enormous flowers with orange cups, though as noted above, subject to severe hail damage in late April. A daffodil with a pale yellow perianth and pink cup, 'Ipi Tombi' followed Prof Einstein and held up very well in the cooler weather. The piece de resistance was a combination of the later-flowering small daffodil D. 'Hawera', blooming in sync with the two-toned purple-blue flowering *Muscaria latifolium* (my favorite grape hyacinth).

D. 'Hawera' can be lost in the garden unless planted in mass and, unfortunately, does not persist in Wisconsin gardens. However, it was definitely the star of the spring pot show. Holding up to 5 small pale yellow blossoms per stem and with up to 20 bulbs per pot, the flowers resembled swarms of yellow butterflies dancing in the spring breezes. And best of all, the flowers did

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not come out all at once and the bloom time was more than three weeks, owing to the cool weather we had during this period. The persistent flowers accompanied the late flowering dwarf tulips *T. batalinii* 'Yellow Jewel' and the flashy



satin rose *T. 'Mariette'* and the elegant ivory *T. 'Elegant Lady'* whose petal edges are flushed with violet. The latter two are the tall lily-flowering types, appropriately rising well above the foliage of the other

spent bulbs in the pots. These flowers lasted until May 31.

Speaking of tulips, I do hope you made it down to Janesville in May to see the spectacular tulip display at Janesville Rotary Gardens. Mark Dwyer and crew planted 50 bulbs of 500 different varieties planted in a mind boggling checkerboard color design. It was thought to include all of the commercially available varieties of tulips in the U.S., and the cost was something like \$30,000. I fell for a very tall lily-flowering tulip—*T. 'Blushing Lady'* whose blended colors of sunset orange, rosy pink, and a softer yellow cannot be appreciated with mere words. I was also smitten by the lily-flowered '*Mona Lisa'* which was primrose yellow with raspberry flames.

The best of the extensive display species tulips was *T. clusiana* '*Lady Jane'*, one of the softer colored candy cane types of rose and ivory. Can't wait to try these out in the garden next year. By the way, they are planning to leave the tulips in place until next spring in order to complete the evaluation progress. Roy Klehm and John Ellsley had preceded my visit by one day and were also said to have been wowed by the display.

Moving off the subject of bulbs, I was amazed at how well the woodies do when there is no winter. *Acer palmatum* (Japanese maples) and the oakleaf hydrangeas (*Hydrangea quercifolia*) came through with absolutely no die back. In fact, I have found a flower bud at the end of nearly every branch of the oakleaves, about 15 in all. Should be a spectacular summer display. And I am thrilled at *Schizophragma hydrangeoides* (the Japanese hydrangea vine) on the white oak by the front door. It is covered with blooms this spring, and its single sterile flower

petals are larger than those of *Hydrangea anomala* ssp *petiolaris*, which is fast becoming a signature plant for Madison area gardens. It is reportedly less hardy than *H. anomala*, but seems to grow faster for me and has very attractive leaves with serrated edges, though its fall color is not nearly as attractive as *H. anomala*. I am told that both vines occur together in the same mountainous regions of Japan.

My most relished woody achievement this spring was with *Enkianthus campanulatus*. It's a rather narrow upright shrub with layered branches and tufted, whirled foliage. It was purchased in 1992 from Day Star Nursery in Maine for its proclaimed hardiness. However, it never had more than a few blooms before this year, when it was covered with small creamy red-veined bells, the red veins becoming more prominent towards the end of the three-week blooming period. It was almost worth waiting 10 years for (I did say almost), but it also has wonderful fall color which makes it, along with its graceful habitus, well worth growing.

Perhaps because the spring progressed rather slowly, I was able to accomplish several projects that had been in my mind for several years. The first was a rather simple task. But I finally did it. I broke up several of the largest clumps of *Galanthus nivalis* (snow drops) in early May and spread them around the garden, "in the green" to other spots. Also, I did the same with *Eranthis hyemalis* (winter aconite) another bulb you are admonished to divide "in the green" because the small bulbs shipped in the fall are very slow to establish in large colonies.

Speaking of the latter, in April of 2001 I harvested a cup of these seeds from my mother-in-law's garden near Philadelphia. Spreading them around the edges of the garden path, I am happy to report that hundreds germinated this spring though they only passed through the dicotyledon stage (two-leaf stage). I understand it may take three or four years for them to come into bloom along the lushly planted paths. Now don't laugh—yes "lushly planted" (euphemism for impassable). However, I am a firm believer that garden paths should be wide enough for one person, walking sideways—none of this two people walking abreast stuff so hallowed in England.

The second project was more time consuming. After several years of critical comments by Mrs. A Hort Hound

regarding the two-bit filtering system for my pond, I finally bit the bullet this spring with the help of Bob Risser at The Frog Bog in Verona, though I am sure that Bob got tired of seeing my face on successive mornings at 0800 for days on end when he opened for business. It involved getting the stone mason to take off some of the topping stone to install the pipes through the wall needed for an outside filtering system. And while I was at it, the electrical system was redone as well. Needless to say I am very pleased with the results, though many dollars poorer.

Some of you may know that three years ago Bob gave up his career of 18 years as a mail carrier to make a business out of his passion. Indeed, he is the most knowledgeable person in the Madison area when it comes to setting up and maintaining a pond. He is the driving force behind the Madison Area Pond Society, which recently had its big pond tour of Madison's West side ponds. What many of you might not know is that Bob began his career working at Felly's, after getting a degree in Landscape Architecture from UW in the mid 1970's. For a brief time, he even had a business—called Naturally—that sold mostly houseplants on State Street near the Capitol Square.

A third spring project was the completion of a shady trough garden. I have always envied my NARGS friends who have alpine troughs all over their gardens. It is not possible to grow alpiners in a shade garden, but for the past two seasons I have admired the shady plant troughs in the display garden at the Flower Factory.

Again, I am very pleased with the results, as I am now able to display the newer varieties of mini-hostas that are available, as well as my collection of dwarf epimediums and ferns. These were simply lost in the garden previously. I do foresee that this is going to be a very high-maintenance item, so stay tuned to see what I have to say about this in a couple of years. I kind of put it in the same category as water gardening in the shade, for which I had very little guidance when I began 5 years ago, but now am rather free with advice on the subject!

I did get the usual number of mail order plants in the mail this year. Most exciting to date were the new *Tricyrtis* from Barry Yinger's Asiatica. One particularly stood out—



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SEED EXCHANGE FAQ

What is a seed exchange? Exchanging seed is a time-honored tradition among gardeners. We collect ripe seed throughout the growing season. In late fall or early winter the seeds are brought or sent to a central place and distributed to those who want them.

When should seeds be collected? Collect seeds all season long! The first to ripen are ready NOW(as I write in mid-May). Pay attention to those developing seed pods as you stroll about your garden. Pick seeds as soon as they are ready or the plant, the wind, the birds or the chipmunk will disperse them. Wait too long and the seeds will be gone.

When is a seed ripe? As you watch the fruiting structure develop, be it seed pod, capsule, seed head or berry, it will expand and change color, becoming darker as the seed ripens. The seed, too, will darken. When ripe, the seed will be hard, so that you are not able to easily crush it between your fingers.

What should I collect seeds in? Anything that will contain them and allow them to dry. An open dish, glass, jar, envelope or paper bag will do. I am partial to envelopes. Lots are available in junk mail solicitations. When the seed is dry, envelopes are easy to seal up. The envelope is labeled, of course, as soon as the seeds are put in.

How should seeds be stored until exchange time? Traditional advice is to store them in a cool, dry place. Mine do fine on the bookshelves in my living room. A major exception to this advice is for seeds of most early woodland wild flowers, such as Dutchmans Breeches, Hepatica and Trillium. These seeds should not be allowed to dry out and require special storage conditions.

What sort of seeds are best to collect for sharing? Bring seeds of plants that people ask for, from plants you want lots of-and don't want to pay \$5 apiece for, from plants that don't divide well or spread too slowly, reseeding annuals and short-lived perennials. Keep in mind that seed of named varieties and hybrids will, in general, produce plants that differ from the parents. Seeds from an unnamed species will come true.

How many seeds should I collect? A little bit of seed goes a long way. A teaspoon of primrose seed is enough for 25 people. Collecting into a letter size envelope will prevent over collecting.

More questions? Information on seed cleaning, long-term seed storage and details of the WHPS seed exchange will be in future newsletters. Questions can be e-mailed to rcadoret@wisc.edu, or phone me at 233-4504 (7:00 a.m.-9:00 p.m.)

—Ruth Cadoret

A garden expert is any ordinary person talking about somebody else's garden.

—From *Don't Throw in the Towel*,
by Texas Bix Bender



Although one cannot teach an old dog new tricks, gardeners of all ages are always on the lookout 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.

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Garden Design for Plantaholics

by Nancy Fleisher

Reprinted from The Perennial Post, April 2002, the newsletter of the MTPS, with permission.

Does your passion for plant variety overcome your desire for a well-designed garden? Do you wander around the garden, newest purchase in hand, just looking for an empty square inch of soil? When you hear experts say, "Plant in drifts of 5 or 7 or more," do you silently reply, "How could I? I barely have room for one of each?" If so, you share the dilemma of many plant lovers, myself included—how to create a garden that incorporates a wide variety of interesting plants, but does not look like a mad scientist's workshop.

In my ongoing search for ideas to make plant collecting compatible with aesthetics, I have found one overriding principle that seems to guide the others: simplicity is essential to balance the complexity of the plant collector's palette. Whether achieved with plants, water, hardscape or some combination, simplicity needs to be foremost in our thinking as we plan homes for our varied plants.

One way to achieve this kind of simplicity is to plant lots of one kind of plant to balance lots of single plants. For example, a ground cover like Thyme or *Veronica* 'Georgia Blue' can be woven throughout a sunny area to tie together an otherwise disparate collection of plants. In a shady garden *Viola labradorica*, *Tiarella cordifolia* or *Phlox divaricata* can serve a similar function, as can *Campanula porsharskyana* in a partly sunny area. (Overly aggressive ground covers like English Ivy, Virginia creeper, Vinca major or Bishop's weed should, of course, be avoided, lest they eventually smother your prized specimen plants.)

Edging a bed of varied plants with a single type of plant is another way to create a line of continuity and simplicity in the garden. Lamb's ears (*Stachys byzantina*) can be used in this way, as can Candytuft (*Iberis sempervirens*) or in a well-drained spot, Lavender or *Dianthus* 'Bath's Pink'. Other options for edging might include short daylilies like *Hemerocallis* 'Happy Returns', or the subshrub Germander (*Teucrium chamaedrys*).

The repetition of one particular plant throughout the garden is yet another way to offset too much variety in the other plant material. Choose an evergreen shrub like *Ilex glabra* 'Nigra' or *Buxus* 'Green Velvet', for example, and place it at regular or irregular intervals along a path as a way of tying things together and leading the eye through the garden. A perennial with foliage that looks good most of the year is another option to use as a repeat plant. *Yucca* 'Color Guard' comes to mind for sun, *Helleborus orientalis* for shade. Repeated clumps of an ornamental grass like *Miscanthus* 'Morning Light' or *Calamagrostis* 'Karl Foerster' would have the same kind of effect. If you have a favorite perennial that looks great most of the year but goes dormant (or looks lousy) in the winter, you could still use it as your repeat plant by pairing each clump with a winter beauty like *Cyclamen hederifolium*, or with bulbs that bloom in February.

Hardscape, as well as plants, can give coherence to the collector's garden if the design focus is simplicity. When we choose a single material for multiple hardscape installations (for example, identical stone for a retaining wall, patio floor and garden path, or red cedar for a privacy fence, gate and arbor), we are balancing variety with sameness just as we are when we choose a single plant for multiple repetitions in the landscape. Long unbroken lines and simple designs also help to balance plant complexity. Save the busy combination of patio tiles for someone else's landscape, where mass plantings may provide repetition to balance the tile's variety.

Another unifying force for the collector's garden can be a pond or a flowing stream of water. A stream gives the eye a flowing line to follow and the

ear a soothing sound, while the surface of a pond is simple open space, its peace contrasting with our riot of plants. As before, we are looking to balance disparity with continuity, activity with rest.

Of course a pond, a stone wall, or a hedge of boxwoods is not possible in every garden. An alternative way to give the eye a satisfying rest might be the simple addition of a large shapely pot in a mass of fine-textured plants, or the placing of a single bench or piece of sculpture. Size, mass and placement would be keys to the effectiveness of such an installation. A plant could be the restful focal point too, if its size and form set it apart from all our other plants. A Japanese maple like 'Waterfall'

might fit the bill in a garden of herbaceous perennials (as long as we don't have 17 other Japanese maples in our garden).

No doubt there are many other techniques that may help us plantaholics make our gardens more coherent and more beautiful. We will discover some of them if we keep our central concepts in mind. Don't tell me to eliminate variety, complexity or even chaos. Just show me how to balance them with some repetition, simplicity and coherence.

Nancy Fleisher is a former president of the Middle Tennessee Perennial Society. She was our hostess for the WHPS trip to Nashville in April 2001, and made all the local arrangements. She gardens, where else, but near Granny White Pike in Nashville. Most WHPS Members should be able to identify with Nancy's dilemma as a plantaholic.

The repetition of one particular plant throughout the garden is yet another way to offset too much variety...

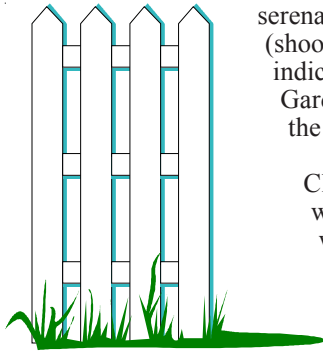


Galanthus in January...continued from page 5

Tricyrtis nana 'Karasuba' (translation = crow leaf)—with deep purple foliage, which reportedly has yellow flowers! I am licking my chops with anticipation of that color combination! I am also pleased to report on my success with *Eremerus robustus* (foxtail lilies, desert lilies), planted two years ago. Do you recall the spectacular clump on last June's WHPS tour in the garden of Rita Dupuis? The bulbs (?) measure 10 inches across and resemble a dried octopus. Though everything I read about these bulbs said they should not thrive in my garden (prefers full sun, dislike lots of summer moisture, Zone 6 hardiness, good drainage essential), their giant green fists came thrusting out of the soil in April. As of June 9, their flower stalks are approaching 6 feet without any open blossoms. I suspect they will be in full bloom the moment after I leave for the WHPS trip to England.

For those of you who were in the garden in late April on the WHPS tour, I did manage to identify those two epimediums so many visitors asked about. They both had purple foliage and lavender/purple flowers. One was *Epimedium* 'Yubae' (large, dark purple flowers) and the other was *E. grandiflora* var 'Violaceum' (small lavender flowers). Thanks to all of those who dropped by—your comments meant a lot to me and it has kept me going strong.

All things considered, it has been a wonderful spring for gardeners, aided by the mildest winter in memory. As I biked through the Arboretum and crossed Curtis Prairie on my way to work one beautiful morning in the waning days of May, the goldfinches accompanied me with their bobbing up and down flight and the perennial indigo bunting serenaded me from the skeleton of the Jackson Oak. I admired the islands of *Dodecatheon media* (shooting stars) scattered throughout the newly-emerging grasses, as well as the hints of blue indicating where the lupines would be in full bloom in a week or so. Passing on to the Longnecker Gardens, I admired the still beautiful display of lilacs, with their heavenly fragrance in the air, as the last flutterings of the crabapple blossoms fell to the ground.



Climbing up the hill to the pinetum and magnolia collection, I couldn't help but think how wonderful it was to be a gardener. Imagine the alternative—I could be putt-putting around a wide expanse of lawn somewhere, dismounting occasionally to whack away at a ridiculously small white orb, the object of the whole process being to deposit the orb into a tiny tin cup. Though, I suppose, we have to give England credit (?) for the game of golf, it will not stop me from leering at these open areas of green nothingness usurping good garden space as the WHPS traverses the UK in June.

**Wisconsin Hardy
Plant Society**



**June 2002
Newsletter
925 Waban Hill
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