



Wisconsin Hardy Plant Society

Perennial Notes

August 2007

New Garden Tour Opportunity October 20:

INSIDE "THE DEVIL IN THE WHITE CITY" (see insert for more info and to register)

WHPS COMING EVENTS!

THIS WEEK!!!

Wednesday, August 15, WHPS Summer Potluck 6:30 p.m. at Olbrich Gardens Commons, 3330 Atwood Avenue, Madison. Bring a dish to share (appetizer, salad, entre, dessert—all are welcome!) along with your own utensils and plate. Juice and lemonade will be provided, and there is a soda machine nearby off the lobby. It will be a great evening to enjoy Olbrich—the grasses are reaching their peak, fall bloomers are coming into bud and the Thai Garden has been loving all this tropical weather!

Milwaukee Trip SOLD OUT!—Saturday, August 18, 2007, *Tour of Eight Milwaukee Gardens.*

ANY EXTRA PLANTS FROM YOUR GARDEN OR PLANTS YOU CAN'T FIND A PLACE FOR?

Saturday, September 15, 2007, WHPS Member Plant Exchange. Join us for this fun and FREE event, 10:00 a.m.-noon. at the home of Stephanie O'Neal, 1850 Baird Street, Madison. Bring any plants—perennials, shrubs, trees, annuals (we've even seen some houseplants). Members bring plants they have recently dug, or have bought and not yet used in their garden, free for the taking. You are also welcome to tour the garden.

Directions: If you are coming from the University on Park Street, take a left on Wingra Drive (Arby's is there), then right on Beld, go over the railroad tracks and left on Kenward (Trigg's Plumbing is there), then, when Kenward ends, turn right (that's Baird). Stephanie's is the little white house (1850) on the right just before you get to the next street (which is Bram). If you are coming from the Beltline up Park Street, just past the light at Buick Street (Walgreen's is there) is a curve off to the right (that's Beld). Take it and then turn right at the next street (Bram). The second street (just past Fisher Street) is Baird. Turn left and look for the little white house on the left.

Wednesday, September 19, 2007, Olbrich Gardens Commons, 6:30 p.m. social, 7:00 p.m. program. Guest speaker will be Jeff Epping, Director of Horticulture for Olbrich Gardens.

Wednesday, October 17, 2007, Olbrich Gardens Commons, 6:30 p.m. social, 7:00 p.m. program. Galen Gates, Director of Plant Collections for the Chicago Botanic Garden will be the guest speaker.



Saturday, October 20, 2007, Trip to Chicago—Inside "The Devil in the White City." \$50, registration form and payment due by September 6. See insert for more information.

Wednesday, November 14, 2007, Olbrich Gardens, 6:30 p.m. social and Seed Exchange, 7:00 p.m. Annual Meeting and Member Potpourri.

Wednesday, December 5, 2007, Olbrich Gardens, 6:30 p.m. social, 7:00 p.m. program. Guest speaker Mark Dwyer horticulturist/landscaper for Janesville Rotary Gardens will discuss plant combinations.

If you've been taking pictures of your garden you can contribute them to the Garden Expo display or present them via slides, PowerPoint or DVD at the Member Potpourri November 14.

Coming in 2008, WHPS trip to Ireland!



Got Poor Soil?

Do you have poor soil? Does it need a lift? Try adding finished compost to your soil. Do you immediately think, "Oh, it is so time consuming to compost?" Well, let that be an excuse no longer! Dane County will do the composting for you and the best news is it can be free!!!

You may obtain finished compost from two of the three Dane County yard waste/compost sites. The sites that supply finished compost are the Westport Site (located two miles east of Waunakee on Hwy 19) and the Verona site (east of Verona off of Hwy 18 & 151 at Badger Prairie Park, a former landfill). The sites are open Monday through Saturday from 8:00 a.m.–3:30 p.m. (except for Westport Saturday hours 7:00 a.m.–11:00 a.m.).

If you plan to get a small amount of compost, bring your own containers and shovel. Large plastic pots from shrubs or Rubbermaid containers work great for hauling finished compost. The sites may have screened compost available and there is usually a small charge for that. If you need larger quantities, you may purchase finished compost by the truckload. Check the prices on the Web site or ask the operator at the site when you arrive. They usually have a loader and an operator will load your truck for you if you want compost in bulk.

Since compost does break down, you will need to add some each year. After a while, you should notice an improvement in your soil quality. It does require some work but it will pay off in the future. Keep at it and happy gardening!

For more information about the compost sites, visit the Dane County Web site —
http://www.co.dane.wi.us/pwht/recycle/compost_sites.aspx

If you have any questions, you can contact the Dane County Department of Public works at 608-267-1502.

—Bill Hoernke

Watering Tip

This may be old news to most gardeners, but during dry times I hoe the soil around my plants before I water. When I water, the water soaks in just where I want it and I need less water overall.

—Joan Heitman

Other Plant Sales/Garden Tours of Note

August 18, Daylily Sale, 10:00 a.m.–4:00 p.m., August 19, 11:00 a.m.–3:00 p.m., Olbrich Gardens. Sponsored by the Wisconsin Daylily Society.

September 15, WHPS Member Free Plant Exchange, 10:00 a.m.–noon, 1850 Baird Street, Madison. (see page one for directions).

Rotary Gardens 9th Annual Plant Sale

September 8-16, 9 a.m.–5 p.m. daily

Presale on September 7 for Friends-Members (9 a.m.–5 p.m.) 10% off everything.

Rotary Gardens Horticulture Center, 825 Sharon Street, Janesville, WI 53545 (follow plant sale signs posted on Palmer Drive). Contact: Mark Dwyer (608-754-1779) or mark.dwyer@rotarygardens.org

With autumn fast approaching, it's still a wonderful time to work in the garden. Many plants will establish well with late summer planting in warm soils. This time of year is perfect for installing perennials and shrubs in the garden, planting spring blooming bulbs and improving poor soil with beneficial compost. Foresight and initiative now will bring great rewards in the garden next spring and for years in the future!

The sale will include over 400 varieties of perennials, ranging from native prairie plants and ornamental grasses to perennials such as hostas and ferns for the shade. There will be perennials for all sites and situations. The warm ground temperatures this time of year are perfect for quick establishment of these plants. The merit of these plants frequently goes beyond their flowers, as many have ornamental foliage and a wonderful texture. Other offerings include thousands of gigantic mums, colorful asters, flowering kale and wonderful spring blooming bulbs. Many varieties of ornamental shrubs and hardy roses will be featured as well.

Bagged mushroom compost will be available while supplies last. Master Gardeners, knowledgeable volunteers and Rotary Gardens staff will be available to answer questions and help you with your purchases.

All proceeds from this plant sale benefit the continued operation and development of Rotary Gardens.

Free Mulch Sites

Those of you in the city of Madison can take advantage of free mulch offered by the city. This is mulch from brush left streetside by residents that is shredded twice and left in piles at Elver, Garner, Warner and Sycamore parks. Because some of the trees and shrubs may have been diseased, it may not be best to place the mulch on planted beds, but it's great for paths and for using with newspaper to make new beds (see back page).

Self-sowing Annuals in the Perennial Border

Following are just a couple of questions from the hundreds of visitors to my garden during the Olbrich Home Garden Tour.

What is the vine growing on the pergola?

Answer: Kentucky Wisteria (*Wisteria macrostachys*)

What are those masses of plants growing among the perennials?

Answer: Self-sown annuals that include the following:

- Spiderflower (*Cleome hassleriana*) in various shades of pink.
- Larkspur (*Consolida ajacis*) blue flower spikes and feathery foliage growing in the blue/white/yellow border.
- Opium poppy (*Papaver somniferum* 'Peony Flowered') very double pink to reddish pink flowers growing in the pink/purple/mauve border.
- *Verbena bonariensis* (no common name) purple flowers on tall see-through plants growing in a purple/pink border.

These are useful plants to fill any gaps in the sunny perennial border. They need planting only once and will reappear year after year. Management does require pulling several hundred unwanted seedlings!

I've already started collecting seed of the poppy to again share with members of the Wisconsin Hardy Plant Society at the November 14 Seed Exchange.

—Ed Hasselkus

Keeping track of what's been planted

I've tried several ways of keeping track of the plant tags and information for the plants in my garden: filling a binder with the plant labels taped or stapled to the page, buying journals, etc. They were good for keeping tags in one place, but if I wanted to keep them in alphabetical order it was impossible without a lot of shifting around. What a hassle!

This year I found a way to store my plant tags in alpha order, sectioned by perennials, shrubs, trees, bulbs, etc. I bought a couple of clear plastic shoe boxes and some 3"X5" cards and spent some time stapling/taping the plant tags to the cards and filing them in the shoe boxes. The up-front time was well worth it. I can go directly to the shoe box (which fits right on my bookshelf near the gardening books) and look up the plant I want, filing it back where it was just like that. If there is additional info I want to add and there is no space left on the card, I just fill out another card and attach it to the original.

—Stephanie O'Neal

Members comment

From Mary Polancih:

Now I understand why Olbrich is making such extensive use of leaf mulch! Between the heavy rain in late May and the early heat, corn gluten did not do enough to suppress the weeds in my perennial and hosta beds. In desperation, I tried using some of my own composted leaves on a new piece of hosta garden and several areas of existing perennial beds. Then I left on vacation with crossed fingers. The areas mulched in leaves were weed free when I returned. Several weeks later, they still look good, and require almost no weeding.



Has anyone else had a mildew problem with pulmonaria? Mine were glorious this spring, but in the last several weeks every one of the several varieties in my yard has collapsed with a gray mildew. Nothing else in the yard seems to be affected. I have removed all the leaves and new growth is coming in clean. Anyone have an explanation of how to avoid reinfection?

Rabbits are terrible again this summer—almost as bad as the earwigs and Japanese beetles—and they eat more! I am resorting to circles of hardware cloth around plants the bunnies start eating. I tell non-gardeners it is garden art. Experienced gardeners don't ask.

One plant every pest is leaving alone is my African Orange Eggplant, purchased at the Rotary Gardens Plant Sale. It has nasty black thorns on stem and both surfaces of the leaves. Can't wait to see what the fruits look like.

From Elaine Strassburg:

I live in the country and was plagued by groundhogs burrowing under my stone foundation into the old dirt foundation part of my very old farmhouse. This happened quite a few years ago and I did require professional help to get them out of the basement and prevent their return. However, the rascals then proceeded to burrow under other outbuildings. I tried numerous remedies—most of them requiring strong smelly stuff that worked temporarily, but I couldn't afford perpetually.



It suddenly struck me that I have a perpetual, free supply of very strong, smelly, used kitty litter. So, I proceeded to dump clumps down their holes until they fled to the back three acres. I routinely patrol the place and if I see new holes near/under buildings, I dump kitty litter (used, of course) down the holes. It works. And it seems to work with other critters too. Of course, this is appropriate on my two-acre yard, but I'm not sure how appropriate it is in the city. Nonetheless, the litter goes down the holes they dig, so it shouldn't smell up the neighborhood.

Bungees in the Garden

This tip was discovered while touring Joan Severa's garden in June. If you have a tall ornamental grass that no longer stands upright, tie a bungee cord around the lower third of the plant (especially if it is behind other shrubs or plants). The bungee holds the plant upright, but is forgiving enough to keep the plant looking natural. And so many bungee designs and colors are available to coordinate with your garden!

Send us a tip/write an article

Members are encouraged to submit articles or tips for publication in the newsletter. If you've something garden-related—a poem you've written, a photo you've taken that will duplicate well in black and white, or if you have a few paragraphs to offer on a favorite plant, plant combination, garden you've toured or trip you've taken—send it to sone2@aol.com, or mail it to Stephanie O'Neal, 1850 Baird Street, Madison, WI 53713.

Planning for next year

Now is a great time to start laying out new beds for next year.

You can use a hose or landscaper's paint to layout the parameters of your new bed. No need to get rid of the grass when you have newspaper and mulch. Within the new bed, lay newspaper (at least 6-10 pages thick) on top of the grass. Sprinkle the newspaper with water and then lay mulch on top (at least 3-4 inches thick). Water the mulch and you are done for the next seven to eight months. When spring comes, you'll be able to pull aside the mulch and easily plant your new garden bed.

This hot, dry weather is the perfect time to design your new beds—no lush grass to cut before laying the newspaper and mulch.

With the help of garden catalogs and your own imagination, the bed will be designed many times over until you are ready to plant in the spring.

WHPS Web site: www.madison.com/communities/wisconsinhardyplantsociety/

Wisconsin Hardy Plant Society



**August 2007
Newsletter
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Someone you know interested in joining WHPS/have a question about your membership?

Contact WHPS Treasurer Laurie Zimmerman at whps05@yahoo.com, (608) 838-4477

INSIDE "THE DEVIL IN THE WHITE CITY"

WHPS CHICAGO TRIP RESERVATION FORM

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 20, 2007

\$50.00 registration cost

Walk in the footsteps of the heroes and villain of **The Devil in the White City**, Erik Larson's best-selling story of good and evil at the World's Columbian Exposition of 1893!

This field trip includes rousing discussions about the book, more history and stories about Daniel H. Burnham and Frederick Law Olmsted, and a drive past the site of the nefarious Dr. Holmes' hotel.

Walk all around the Exhibition's grounds—better known now as Jackson Park—and see the Olmsted-designed lagoons and Wooded Island, the renovated Japanese Garden, the Fine Arts Building left from the Fair and other remarkable points of interest. Wear comfy shoes for a two-mile, slowly paced walk and dress for the weather.

Landscape historian Barbara Geiger, whose specialty is the late 19th century, leads the field trip. Barbara is a UW alum and was our speaker for the April WHPS meeting.

We will leave for Chicago on Saturday morning, October 20, at 7:00 a.m. from the Dutch Mill Park and Ride on a Badger bus. The estimated time for returning to Madison will be 6:30 p.m. Registration will include transportation, box lunch and our tour guide.

Registration deadline is September 6, 2007.

Make checks payable to Wisconsin Hardy Plant Society and send to:



Jane LaFlash
211 S Fair Oaks Ave.
Madison, WI 53704

----- **RETURN THIS FORM WITH YOUR PAYMENT** -----

Name/s _____

Work phone _____ Home phone _____ Cell phone _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip code _____

E-mail _____

Must fill in!!

Emergency contact name _____

Phone _____

Vegetarian lunch request _____

I/we agree to release Wisconsin Hardy Plant Society, trip tour guide and board members from any liability for loss or injury of any kind will on this tour.

Signature/s _____

Dated _____

Office use only: Check # _____ Date received _____