



The Spade & The Hoe

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August Meeting

Instead of the August meeting, we will have a field trip on Saturday, August 9th, to the Garfield Farm in LaFox. We will be touring the farm, the heirloom flower, herb and vegetable fields, the prairie restoration project, the outbuildings and the farmhouse. We will see the rare breeds of farm animals. This will entail much walking **ON A WORKING FARM.** Please wear close-toed shoes! There will be plenty of manure around. This is a working 1840s farm and inn on 370 acres. The family artifacts, over 2000 19th century documents, buildings and surviving prairie make this one of the most intact historic sites in the country. We will meet at Esther Behnke's at 9:00am



in order to carpool. Again, kindly park on Blake Ln., 1/2 block to the north. Please let me know ahead of time if you plan to attend as we need to schedule drivers. If you can volunteer as a driver, please let me know that, too. Admission to the farm is \$3.00 each. We will lunch in Geneva. There are several wonderful places there from which to choose.

"The enjoyments of a garden being so manifold and continuous, bringing brightness to the home, health to the body, and happiness to the mind, it is for us, who have proved them, whose daily lives are made more cheerful by their influence, out of our gratitude and our good will, to invite and to instruct others, that they may share our joy."

- S. Reynolds Holie

Miniature Roses

For low borders or in tubs on the patio, miniature roses make an attractive display to bloom through the summer. For a charming birthday or anniversary gift, offer a potted miniature rose in a pretty basket or container.

Through the Garden Gate

This is such crazy weather! My neighbor and I have picked a very few red tomatoes, and watch the green ones remain green. We needed rain, yes, but so much? We need lots of sun, too. Where is it? Fortunately, I can pick bowls of snow peas and green beans for dinner. Zucchini need lots of sun and so are still tiny. I swear I will stop beating my head against a brick wall & NEVER plant green peppers again. They have never grown for me. I've decided they just don't like me. The herbs are growing so well. I'll have to cut some for drying soon. My neighbor was so entranced by the poppies that I am giving him seeds so he will have them next year. He shares his cucumbers with me and I share my flowers. An even trade. I thought the mock orange shrub was dead, but it is coming up from the roots! What a joy to see that! Hope springs eternal...

Slugs & Snails Be Gone

Coffee grounds spread around your hostas or other 'tasty' plants will repel them. But old coffee sprayed on these pests will kill them. It is the caffeine, in a 2% solution, that does the trick, totally eliminating them in two days time.



Herbs

Always add fresh, frozen or dried herbs the last few minutes of cooking as they tend to lose their flavor. The only exception is bay leaves which become more flavorful during long periods of cooking.

The best time to pick herbs is on a clear day as soon as the dew evaporates but before the sun's heat dries up the essential oils.

Mid-morning from 9:00 to 11:00am is ideal. For fragrance, pick the plants just before they bloom; for flowers, pick them soon after the buds open before they begin to fade and brown. Put cut plants gently in a trug or flat-bottomed basket.

Keep the basket in the shade while you harvest.

Do not put the plants in a sack or bag as this will crush and bruise the herbs and make them sweat.

Drying herbs: gather up small bunches of herbs, tie with string or rubberband and hang upside down in a warm, dry, dark area with ventilation, such as a basement, garage, attic or shed. Another way is to put them head-first into a small brown paper bag. Tie the bag shut, punch holes in the bag (to keep a greener color to the leaves) and hang to dry.

When dry, remove leaves from the stems. Keep leaves whole so they retain their scent and put them into a glass jar with an air-tight lid away from sunlight, moisture and dust.

Plastic and metal containers affect the herb's chemistry. Crushes the leaves just before using.

-Growing & Using Herbs in the Midwest



In August, remember to:

mow your lawn at 2 1/2 - 3 inches in hot weather & leave the clippings on the ground as they are a readily available source of nitrogen fertilizer; keep after those weeds (they grow 'like weeds' in hot weather); remove yellow or brown leaves from plants; divide peonies and daylilies at the end of the month; side-dress vegetables with fertilizer - tomatoes especially are heavy feeders; water pots daily & feed weekly with a diluted fertilizer; in hot weather, water apple trees and other fall fruit-bearing bushes and trees.

- CBG excerpts

Fuchsias

The frilled delicacy of fuchsia would enhance any garden. They need protection during the winter and can be grown as houseplants. Check your houseplants book for details. Many fuchsias flower late in the season and will continue to bloom until the nights become quite cold.

On the Road with Nancy Spears...

If you love wildflowers, you will love the prairies and meadows of South Dakota. It is fun to see the 'wild' versions of the garden cultivars thriving on their own. The hills are covered with native lavender bergamot, bee balm (Monarda), which gives a sea of lavender accented with islands of yellow prairie coneflower (Ratibida), and scattered blue flax. A tiny campanula called harebell (Bluebell of Scotland) is lovely as you get closer viewing. Yellow sweetclover (Melilotus) is everywhere and Missouri goldenrod (Solidago) is starting to blanket the open areas accented with purple coneflower (Echinacea). Sego Lily (Calochortus) is a new plant to me with its white tripetal flower. Wooly purple verbena (Vervain) and purple prairie clover (Petalostemum) add spiky dimensions to the landscape. White common yarrow (Achillea) is still prevalent and common yellow



mullein (Verbascum) sends spires upward among black-eyed susans (Rudbeckia) and common sunflowers (Helianthus).

Herbs, continued....

Drying herbs in the microwave speeds up the drying process and retains the color and flavor. This method works well for parsley, chives and basil especially. Place a single layer of herbs on a microwaveable plate, cover with a paper towel and cook on high for 1 minute. Check to see if the leaves are crisp. If not, set it for another 30 to 60 seconds. Be careful not to overcook as this will destroy the flavor. Store as before.

Freezing Herbs

Small bunches of herbs like mints and chives can be wrapped in foil then stored in the freezer. They can be cut off as needed. Herbs such as basil, chives, cilantro, dill and parsley are best when frozen in small plastic bags. Store the bags in a rigid container so they do not get crushed.

I'd Choose to be a Daisy

I'd choose to be a daisy, If I might be a flower, Closing my petals softly At twilight's quiet hour; And waking in the morning, When falls the early dew, To welcome Heaven's bright sunshine, And Heaven's bright teardrops, too.

- Author Unknown

The Ten Commandments of Gardening

Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's roses;
Thou shalt honor thy mum and thy poppy;
Thou shalt not plant it if thou cannot spell it;
Thou shalt not feel silly talking to thy plants;
Thou shalt nurture thy bleeding heart and thy weeping willow;
Thou shalt dig in thy dirt, not dish thy dirt;
Thou shalt bloom where thou be planted;
Thy plants shall be expelled from thy Garden of Weeden;
Thou shalt forget-me-not with friendship everlasting;
and Thou shalt rest on the seventh daisy.

- courtesy of Gloria Tralmer

Questions, comments, payment of dues?

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