



The Spade & The Hoe

Volume 2 Issue 4

April 2004

April Meeting

The program for April 8th will be presented by Robert Milani of The Chalet. A Landscape Designer, Mr. Milani will speak about what constitutes a good landscape design for our gardens. Meet us in room 102 in the Park Center at 7:30 p.m. for this excellent program.

National Garden Week will be June 8-12, 2004. How will you be celebrating?

Garden Walk

Due to an unfortunate (for us) change in plans, we are in need of one more garden for our annual garden walk. Whether you have a new garden or old, have never shown off your garden or have had it on prior walks, please consider showing it off this year. Kindly let me know if you are interested at the April meeting or call or email me. Thanks so very much!



The March meeting was so much fun to see. Katie from KaBloom was witty and clever and so talented. She showed us how to 'wrap' cut flowers around before putting them in a vase or bouquet (and we saw the same thing demonstrated at the Chicago Flower & Garden Show).

She brought some arrangements already done up as well as producing some in front of us eager participants. At the end of her program, we had a drawing for these door prizes including some gift certificates and books. All told, there were about 7-8 door prizes. As the recipient of one of her gift certificates, I went round her shop the next day. She has a really nice display of plants and a great selection of cut flowers. I was able to find a great pot of jasmine to replace one that had died and, as an added bonus, chose roses in a lovely shade of peach. Be sure to sample the wares of KaBloom if you haven't already. I guarantee you won't be disappointed! If nothing else, a walk into her shop will dispel any lingering bit of winter.

Through the Garden Gate

As I write this it is the last week of March, and the snowdrops are still blooming! And now they are joined by the daffodils. The scilla have their little blue buds peeking out. Spring is a lovely time of year. Some friends and I went down to the Flower & Garden Show and saw so many beautiful gardens. My favorites were the Mayor's garden done by Oscar de la Renta (reminded me of Italy!) and Craig Bergmann's Country Garden (so many flowers!). Naturally we came home with a few goodies as well. And a week later was the International Quilt Festival which I attended several days with friends. So much to do in so short a space of time. I'm either quilting or gardening! I have gotten some seeds and such from Burpee's and Wayside Gardens, and the weather is cooperating nicely to put me in a GREAT gardening frame of mind. Happy Spring to you!

And we're concerned about chipmunks, rabbits, squirrels and deer.....

A woman in Brisbane went into her garden to pick some roses when a large kangaroo pushed her to the ground and then kicked, bit and scratched her. She was saved by a neighbor who ran out and screamed at them. Neighbors said they have been terrorized in recent years by a mob of 50 or so kangaroos.

Book Reviews

Taylor's Encyclopedia of Garden Plants is filled with more than 1,200 plants of every kind suitable for North American gardens. It even gives the pronunciation of plant names.

Landscape Makeovers: 50 Projects for a Picture-Perfect Yard \$20

This book gives the details of projects you may have seen on HGTV. Curb appeal, privacy, & problem areas are treated with tons of ideas. The projects are rated in difficulty, time, cost, and skills. This book explains how to achieve the results you want to make your landscape beautiful. In this book, all seems possible.

'From you have I been absent in the spring,
When proud-pied April, dressed in all his trim,
Hath put a spirit of youth in every thing.'

William Shakespeare

Medicinal Flowers

Plants which resembled particular parts of the body were often thought to be of benefit to that part and were used in medicines. The shape of liverwort meant that it must benefit the liver and the lung-like pattern on pulmonaria led to it being prescribed for respiratory problems.

A vase of magnolia buds arranged

in the evening will open during the night to scent a whole room. Or, create a simple arrangement with a few sprays of apple blossom dotted with Virginia bluebells. Arrangements stay fresher if placed in a cool place away from direct sun and where they are not disturbed as people pass by.

Pressed Flowers

Buy some oval wooden frames to create pretty pressed flower pictures with johnny-jump-ups, violets, roses, or other blooms. Cut a white card to fit the frame and the mount. Mark the area inside the mount on the card. Recreate the flower in pressed petals, glueing with latex adhesive. Place the mount over the picture, cover with the glass and place into the frame.



In April, remember to:

- ✓ apply a pre-emergent crabgrass killer in mid-April or when soil temperatures reach 60 degrees;
- ✓ uncover & prune roses when forsythias bloom; hard-prune grandiflora & tea rosebushes to invigorate growth; prune out dark & dead canes & fertilize with 6-2-0 slow-release fertilizer;
- ✓ apply a lawn fertilizer with a low-release nitrogen;
- ✓ set out transplants of cool-season annuals & vegetables after hardening them off;
- ✓ divide summer and fall blooming perennials when they begin growing;
- ✓ receive Easter lilies? pull off the yellow stamens to prolong the life of the flower; plant outside when all the flowers have died;
- ✓ mix in 3" of compost or leaf mold to lighten heavy soil in beds;
- ✓ in order to spray fruit trees and crabapples with dormant oil, the temperature must be over 40 degrees with no chance of rain or freezing for 24 hours;
- ✓ cut to the ground all dried ornamental grasses and other perennials left standing for winter interest, such as, coneflowers or sedums;
- ✓ repot houseplants if necessary and begin fertilizing as new growth appears.

Street Sale Planning Ahead

Now is the time to begin taking cuttings from your houseplants and rooting them in water or in a perlite compound. Then we will have plenty of houseplants to offer for sale. Last year, one of the most asked questions was if we had any potted houseplants for sale. And unfortunately, we didn't! So, get out your garden clippers, your scissors, and your sharp knives and get to work.

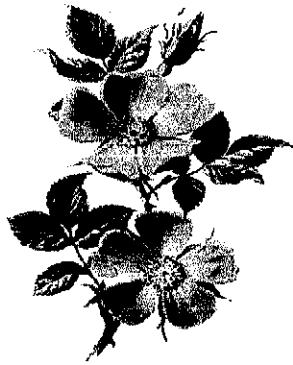
An 1830 Garden

Ever wonder what flowers were in an 1830's garden? Here is a list so you can duplicate it in yours:

Love Lies Bleeding, false indigo, ox-eye daisy, coreopsis tinctoris (for dyes), dianthus, gas plant, cranesbill geranium, globe amaranth, candytuft, morning glory, sweet pea, sweet alyssum, four o'clocks, daffodils, scarlet runner beans, mignonettes, lavender cottons, French marigolds, African marigolds, tulips, coltsfoot (for coughs & colds), sweet violets.

A Victorian Garden

Love Lies Bleeding, begonias, caladiums, calceolarias, china asters, cannas, celosias, balsams, cornflowers, cleomes, coleus, dahlias, fuchsias, globe amaranths, sweet peas, stocks, four o'clocks, nicotianas, love-in-a-mist, portulacas, mignonettes, nasturtiums, verbenas, pansies, monkshoods, columbines, goatsbeards, feverfews, basket-of-gold, campanulas, vincas, lily-of-the-valleys, bleeding hearts, foxgloves, spiderworts, poppies, flax, candytufts, forget-me-nots, hostas, purple loosestrife, irises, & yuccas.



April

'A gardener's life
Is full of sweets and sour;
He gets the sunshine
When he needs the showers.'

Reginald Arkell

Spring

Impatient gardeners may find the fruits of their efforts at starting plants indoors wiped out in a single spell of bad weather. April rains can drown the plants, cool the ground, wash out seedbeds, and bruise seedlings. After you've cleared the debris around your garden, it's time to come indoors and enjoy a cup of fresh herb tea. Then, divide the perennials that need it, prepare the soil for all new plantings, and begin to harden-off the cool-weather seedlings you've started. Choose the location with care to maximize your seedlings' needs. A light layer of mulch will cushion seedlings. A southern exposure is best for plants that like lots of sun while an eastern exposure is best for plants that like morning sun. Northern exposures, & under trees and shrubs are good for the shade-loving plants. Remember that buildings can create their own micro-climates.

What's Blooming Table

Thanks to Nancy Spears for bringing her forsythia branches, and to Holly Jansen for her bromiliad. Remember to bring your plants to the next meeting on April 8th!

Questions, comments, payment of dues?

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