



# The Spade & The Hoe

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## March Meeting

Our next meeting will be held on March 10th at 7:30 P.M. at the Park Center, on the second floor in room 205. The program will be given by Autumn Tree Care on Flowering Trees and Their Diseases. Plan to attend this interesting program.

## Statistics

In the month of January, 337 people accessed our website. In the busiest week, 94 people



viewed our pages. *Last night, there came a frost, which has done great damage to my garden. It is sad that Nature will play such tricks with us poor mortals.*

- Nathaniel Hawthorne

**Striped skunks** do not use their spray on each other, even in the fiercest fight. The only predator of the striped skunk is the Great Horned Owl.

## The February meeting

was a digital slide show of lighting displays in various settings around houses. The speaker from Schmechtig Landscaping brought different styles of lamp holders and answered all of our questions. Thanks to Dan Behnke for bringing his digital projector and screen for the speaker to use. Thanks also to Pat Reed for her delicious treat of chocolate brownies.

*The fair-weather gardener, who will do nothing except when the wind and weather and everything else are favorable, is never a master of his craft.*

- Henry Ellacombe

## What's that smell.....

The breeding season for the striped skunk is March. During mating season, males spray more often. Skunks emerge from their dens at dusk to forage for food. Never leave pet food outdoors. Dog owners should check their yard with a flashlight before allowing Fido to go out. If Fido does get sprayed, wash him with 1 qt. hydrogen peroxide, 1/4 c. baking soda, & 1 tbsp. dishwashing liquid.

## Through the Garden Gate

I am pleased to announce that the snowdrops are blooming in my garden! They began in mid-February and are so delightful to see. Many plants are already sending up their little green shoots. Daffodils are 6-8" tall. Most certainly they will be covered by a new blanket of snow.

Oh, I saw two new avian visitors the other day—a red-headed woodpecker (besides red-bellied and two pairs of downys), and, a crow! When was the last time we saw any? This one was all by himself. Perhaps he was a scout for the rest of the flock? The starlings have been back for several weeks already.

And a flock of twenty-three robins were digging up their dinner in my lawn!!!

As we are now in the season of spring, albeit early spring, we can experience more and more of the stellar delights of flowering trees & shrubs & spring bulbs. You did remember to plant those tulip bulbs last November, right?

I must report on my lemon tree. The remaining lemons have ripened and new blossoms have appeared. The lemons taste so good, but then, I'm prejudiced.

**Did you know...**

*Lamb's Ears was grown by settlers who used the absorbent leaves to bandage wounds.*

Daylilies were originally from China, Korea and Japan. They were brought to England in the 1600s and later brought to North America by the early settlers. Daylilies need 6 hours of sunlight daily, a little moisture (not dry soil), and every 3-5 years they need to be divided to prevent overcrowding. The plant is drought-resistant and impervious to most insects and diseases.



Your job as gardener is to try to keep things running smoothly for the plants and animals that live in or visit your yard, whatever the weather decides to do.

- Ruth Shaw Ernst

From *The Gardener's Guide to Life: Timeless Lessons Based on the Principles of Gardening*, compiled and edited by Criswell Freeman

**Want to learn about some** terribly invasive plants in your garden or at your favorite nursery? The CBG warns about Indian strawberry (*duchesnea indica*), a very invasive plant that forms a thick mat while also choking out native plants & invading lawns. Ribbon grass (*phalaris arundinacea 'Picta'*) is also very invasive, creeping into neighbor's yards. They mention Asian bittersweet (*celastrus orbiculatus*), purple loosestrife (*lythrum salicaria*) and Japanese rose (*rosa multiflora*). See the article in their Spring 2005 issue of Garden Talk.

**Chicago Flower & Garden Show**

This spring the flower show will be held on March 12th, Saturday, through March 20th, Sunday. Fee for adults is \$11 on weekdays and \$13 on weekends. Gather a group of members and head on down for an enjoyable afternoon of gazing at stunning gardens and new plant combinations, picking up all sorts of pamphlets and brochures, attending interesting lectures, checking out the vendors, discussing ideas and sharing insights with your fellow members, and, of course, having a delicious lunch with old friends. Go for it!

**In March, remember to:**

- Mix 2-3" of compost into the soil once it has dried out to adjust heavy soil;
- Once the temperature stays above 40', spray dormant oil on crabapple trees to reduce/eliminate apple scab;
- Cut all ornamental grasses down to the ground;
- Cut all perennials that were left standing for winter interest;
- Repot houseplants;
- Begin fertilizing houseplants as new growth appears.

• -with help from Garden Talk, Spring 2005

A Bloomin' Sale is scheduled for May 13 (for members only), 14 and 15. CBG is offering 40,000 assorted perennials, annuals, veggies, grasses, roses, ferns, wildflowers, etc.



### **Bird Treats**

Wash the seeds of cantaloupe and honeydew in a strainer and let them dry on a plate for 24 hours. Cardinals, chickadees, white- and red-breasted nuthatches, and tufted titmice will empty your feeders in a short while.

To make your own suet, melt 1/2 lb. of lard in the microwave or on the stove. Stir in 3 c. of quick-cooking oats. Spoon the mixture into containers lined with waxed paper (it's best to use an old package that suet came in, for that will fit into your suet feeder nicely). Chill overnight in the refrigerator to harden the mixture.



### **Say What??**

Young birds can eat the equivalent of their own weight every day. One researcher observed a tireless male house wren (that presumably lost its mate) bring food to its nest 1,217 times in just one day. And you think you're running ragged!

*"God almighty first planted a garden. And, indeed, it is the purest of human pleasures."  
- Frances Bacon*

The oil of orange blossoms, called neroli, makes a wonderful facial oil and massage blend, helping to regenerate skin cells and improve skin elasticity. It is one of the most suitable essential oils to use for nervous tension, insomnia, and stress-related illnesses as it has a very positive calming influence on mind and body. It is rumored to have aphrodisiac properties, no doubt due to its deeply relaxing effect and its enticing scent.

Its properties consist of: antibacterial, calming, healing for the skin, circulatory, nerves, digestive, sedative, antidepressant, and aphrodisiac. Besides, the blossoms are so very fragrant.

If you have never had a garden, you cannot understand, and if you have had a garden, you will know that it would take a whole book to describe all that came to pass there.

- Frances Hodgson Burnett

### **What's Blooming Table**

Please bring in your treasured plants, blooms, or flowering branches for all of us to admire at the March meeting.

### **Questions, comments, payment of dues?**

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