

# The Spade & The Hoe©

Volume 3 Issue 5

May 2005

## **May Meeting**

Our next meeting will be held on May 21st, Saturday, at 10:00 A.M. at The Grove. Dave Bills will lead us in a trail walk and will discuss wildflowers and invasive plants. Note: the cost will be \$5 per person. Meet at the Interpretive Center. Dress for the weather and for walking on dirt paths. Also, bring some OFF to ward off those pesky mosquitoes.

## **Statistics**

In the month of March, 383 people accessed our website, for 21 hits a day, looking at our 5 pages. In the busiest days of March 17 and 18, most hits were between 9-10am, 1-3pm, and 7-8pm. Most were from .coms and .nets, and the United Kingdom, Spain, Sweden and the U.S. Government (NASA) were the sources of the most hits. How about that!

**The April meeting** was a film slide show demonstrating how to photograph plants. The speaker was Carol Freeman and she spoke of observing our plants in all seasons, of getting very close to the flowers and also taking far shots so we could get a really good idea of the plants. Thanks go to Brigitte Steinforth for bringing brownies and fruit drinks.

## **Garden Walk News**

We will be visiting Nancy Spears', Brigitte Steinforth's, and Patricia Reed's gardens in July. And Jackie and Shelly Kimel will be hosts at Brigitte's garden, Jane Prentis will be host at Nancy's, and I will be host at Patricia's garden. Watch for further information in the June issue of The Spade & The Hoe.

## **Tea With Craig**

Craig Bergmann will host a tea on Sunday, June 26, at his garden center in Winthrop Harbor. Please contact Patricia Reed for information on car-pooling. She will drive her van.

**The June program** will be a plant exchange plus potting up herbs & annuals.

## **Through the Garden Gate**

April surprised us with a gift of absolutely gorgeous days! So I spent most of the month cleaning up the garden beds, trimming, raking, even planting a lily Dan gave me for Easter and some hyacinths that had finished blooming. The bed under the dining room window was spectacular this year. Three bleeding hearts, Virginia bluebells, forget-me-nots, narcissi, and daffodils. I also went to the Botanic Garden to see the orchid show and sale. I came home with a lovely white phalanopsis. Now I must learn how to take care of

orchids. I do wish I could have some tulips. I love that plant but, unfortunately, so do the chipmunks, squirrels and rabbits. The blue scilla make a nice companion plant with the yellow daffodils. They spread nicely, too. And all the peony plants have buds, so I can anticipate vases full of them in every room. Peonies are really a mainstay in the early spring garden. Once planted, they never need fussing over. They really don't like being moved. Plus they look good until frost!

### ***On the road again with Nancy and Richard...***

We are at Epcot in Florida. If you ever were impressed with topiaries, you will be completely blown away with what the Disney gardeners have done. Gone are the three-tiered balls of green. Every character you can imagine has been created in topiary form, utilizing many varieties of plants which provide texture and color to enhance the features. Very few accessories are used to accent the figures. Examples are a family of pandas playing around a bamboo plant, created from grey and dark air plants. Simba features a flowing mane of grasses contrasting with his closely filled in body ivy. Tigger was made using dark plants and light-leaved plants to create the stripes. The white parts of eyes were made of mosses and lichens. Beauty's Beast has crazy hair made from hemp.

On a tour of the Disney nurseries, we learned that wire frame cages are the basis for the sculptures, some of which are 6-8 feet tall. An internal watering system on a timer is built in. Chicken wire is wrapped around the figure and potting medium is stuffed in. Then the plants are added. They grow like this for quite a while before being put on display. The gardeners also make extras just in case. Most of the nations around the World Showcase had at least one topiary representative of their country, a troll at Norway, Pandas at China, Pooh characters at England, etc. They made peacock whose tail was of a beautiful geometric design in stunning colors of blooming plants!

### **Guest Columnist—Dolores Gilbertson**

At one of our meetings last fall I mentioned a method of evicting chipmunks without harm to them and hopefully to much inconvenience to them. I used plastic netting cut into small rolled strips and placed around the top and inside of my containers, after I planted the flowers. This was very successful and only once during the summer was the chipmunk able to pull out the netting which was easily replaced. It certainly was a lot easier than sweeping the dirt off the porch on almost a daily basis.

With the success with the containers, I tried using longer rolled strips around the cement base of my front and back porches which were held in place by the plantings in front of the porches. However, because of the thickness of some of the plantings, I really couldn't get a continuous roll around the whole back porch but it did work anyway. I didn't think the project of placing netting was difficult or too time consuming to get rid of the little pests BUT...the caveat is ....I've missed the little critters.

DON'T FORGET to get a booster tetanus shot every ten years! Very important for gardeners as viruses and bacterium live in the soil. I just got mine.

**In May, remember to:**

- plant annuals, vines, herbs and vegetables after our last frost date of May 15;
  - some can be planted as early as April 23 in warm micro-pockets;
  - wait until May 31 for tender plants;
  - prune trees and shrubs after they bloom;
  - fertilize roses when buds are set;
  - spray emerging lilies and other susceptible plants with anti-rodent spray if rabbits and deer are a problem;
  - fertilize lawn;
  - spread compost on all beds;
  - before you dig, call Julie at 800-892-0123.
- with help from Garden Talk, Spring 2005

Garden time requires daily attention but does not require that everything be done in a day. Come away from your rat race, your traffic jam, to be renewed and refreshed in the company of growing things. It won't take long, but it will feel like a day in the country. You're on garden time now. Take time to be still and experience paradise.

-Everything I Know I learned in My Garden, by Emilie Barnes

**Make your own herbal blends**

Seasonings sold in stores often start with salt. Use fresh herbs from your garden to make more healthier blends. Use larger amounts of the herbs listed at the top and gradually reduce the amount as you move to the bottom of the lists. Use 4 times as much fresh as dried.

salad blend:

basil, parsley, lovage, marjoram, dill, tarragon, savory.

soup blend:

basil, lovage, parsley, marjoram, thyme, savory, bay laurel.

poultry blend:

sage, thyme, savory, parsley, lovage, marjoram, basil.

fish blend:

basil, lemon balm, dill, savory, rosemary, rue, fennel leaves.

beef and veal blend:

basil, lovage, parsley, thyme, marjoram, savory, sage.

-Growing and Using Herbs in the Midwest, by Rosemary Divock

**What's Blooming Table**

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

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

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### **Basic Herb Butter**

4 tbsp. fresh herbs OR 1 tbsp. dried herbs  
1 stick unsalted butter, softened  
1/2 tsp. lemon juice  
dash of pepper

In a food processor on low speed, gradually add herbs, then butter. Add lemon juice and pepper, mixing well. Cover and refrigerate several hours before using. Can be stored in the refrigerator 3-4 weeks or frozen up to 4 months. Spread on bread, baked potatoes or cooked vegetables, over prepared chicken, fish or steak.

*"Just living is not enough," said the butterfly. "One must have sunshine, freedom, and a little flower." - Hans Christian Andersen*

Working in the garden gives me something beyond enjoyment of the senses...It gives me a profound feeling of inner peace. There is no rush toward accomplishment, no blowing of trumpets. Here is the great mystery of life and growth. Everything is changing, growing, aiming at something, but silently, unboastfully, taking its time.

- Ruth Stout