



The Spade & The Hoe

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February 2006

The February Meeting will be held on the 9th at 7:15 P.M. at the Park Center, room 102. Bill Porter of the village of Glenview and Robin Flakne will speak on the new plantings in the village. See you there!

Quiz: Do you know who are our five longest members? (See page 3 for the answer.)

The Flower Family Album - Umbelliferae or Cut-Leaved Carrots

The family name refers to the way this family arranges their tiny white or yellow flowers. This is the way to attract their favorite butterfly, the black swallowtail, whose eggs produce the green and scarlet caterpillars that feed on the plant. Several members are poisonous, root, leaf, and seed: water and poison hemlock are the main ones. Members are cow-parsnip, black snakeroot, sea-holly, Queen Anne's Lace (aka wild carrot and Devil's Plague), blue lace-flower, sweet cicely, and the rampant goutweed

-The Flower Family Album
By Helen Field Fischer and
Gretchen Marshbarger

The January meeting was a presentation by Roy Jenkinson of Hibbard Road Gardens. His slide program was on plants suitable for shade gardens.

Dues are Due!

It's that time of year again as our year runs January to December. Dues will remain the same as this year: single dues = \$30, couples' dues = \$35. Kindly mail your dues in to our treasurer Joan at 2745 Karen Lane., Glenview 60025 or bring it to the February meeting, to insure that you receive the monthly newsletter!

Cont'd—Cut-Leaved Carrots

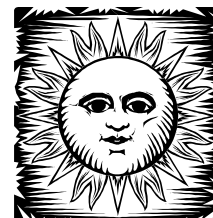
(aka Bishops-Weed). It is an inconsiderate spreader. This family ranks second only to the mint family in the role of providing seasonings for our foods. Here we find dill, caraway, anise, coriander, chervil, cumin, lovage, celery, parsley, and angelica.



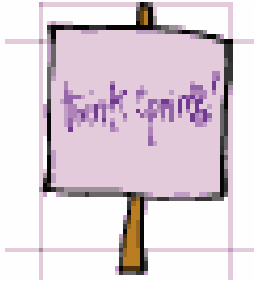
Through the Garden Gate

I am sad to report that my puny efforts to 'clone' the shrub rose *McCartney* met with total failure. The stems all bore leaves and lasted until mid January when they all, one-by-one, died. I plan to read up on this and try again. I harvested my crop of lemons, that is, what the squirrels let me keep. I intend to build a cage in the garden so I can leave the tree outside all summer in the hot sun! And, I also have new blossoms, so I look forward to a future crop.

My phalanopsis orchid has not come up with another flower stalk yet, but my daughter's has and hers is blooming again! Ah, well. I know Brigitte has tremendous luck (?) with hers. I'll just sit tight and be ver-r-ry patient with mine. I brought the clivia out of total darkness and 'drought' into the light, with a little watering, so we'll see if this will help it in its mission to bloom for me. Has anyone ever had a jade plant bloom? Let me know. I seem to have stub-



I seem to have stub-



The Flower Family— Primulaceae

Primroses are the first plants to bloom in Europe, hence the name. The family loves shade, coolness, and moisture but not wet soil. Its members are the loosestrifes (lysimachias and steironemas), shooting star or dodecatheon, cyclamen, moneywort (another lysimachia, aka creeping charlie), pimpernel or anagallis, and the fairy primrose and polyanthus primrose (both primulas). Cyclamen want a temperature between 50' and 70' in our homes, a very light window, and no water standing in its saucer. Given that, it will bloom all winter. Wild primroses are so numerous in England that they are used to make Cowslip wine, like we make dandelion wine. Moneywort is a useful ground cover where nothing else will grow. It is a good spreader for under trees, in swales, or in the back of the lot where your garden hose doesn't reach, but do not plant it in your choice flower beds. Fortunately, it is easy to pull out of unwanted areas.

Jasmine

The flowers exude a heady and exotic fragrance. A costly oil, jasmine is an ingredient in many fine perfumes. The oil is also used in skin care products for its soothing and softening effect, in preventing scarring by increasing the skin's elasticity, and in treating depression, tension, fear, and listlessness. It also is an aphrodisiac.



Feeding Goldfinches

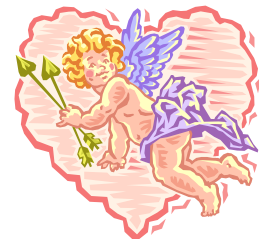
If you plant their favorite shrubs, they'll go nuts over the seed heads!

American cranberrybush
aster
bachelor's buttons
monarda (beebalm)
button bush (cephalanthus)
cockscomb (celosia)
cosmos
floss flower (ageratum)
four o'clocks (mirabilis)
goldenrod (solidago)
larkspur
nannyberry viburnum
penstemon
purple coneflower
red chokeberry (aronia)
snapdragon (antirrhinum)
cleome (spider flower)
sunflower (helianthus)
coreopsis (tickseed)

In February, remember to:

- review seed, bulb and nursery catalogs and order wisely;
- prune branches from forsythia, quince, flowering almond and others for forcing indoors;
- start those seeds that have a longer germination period for spring or summer planting;
- read seed packet instructions for best results;
- supplement sunlight with two 40-watt fluorescent bulbs, one cool, one warm, and keep the lights on 14-16 hours a day. This helps herbs, orchids and other flowering plants, too ;
- keep Valentine flowers fresh, cut 1" off the bottom of each stem on an angle with a sharp knife and immediately place in warm water. Keep in a cool room out of direct light .

- Garden Talk, winter 2005



**Guest Columnist—
Justine Dial:**

Window Boxes

I've always liked window boxes. My mother-in-law lived for a number of years in Richmond, Virginia and houses with window boxes were quite prevalent there. I thought the displays were beautiful. A few years ago, I therefore purchased a few boxes through the mail from Smith & Hawken and decided to give them a try. Here are my tips. I honestly don't recollect where I got these tips (I must have read an article somewhere) but they do seem to work!

My window boxes are made of wood. S & H doesn't carry them anymore. I've had them for at least 7 years and they have yet to show any signs of rot. They were pre-painted and came with a drainage slit in the bottom of the box. I do not have them permanently attached to the house. I've installed brackets and each year put up and remove the boxes. Choose your site carefully because you'll need access to water and maintain the plants. Also, the planted boxes are very heavy.

I line the boxes with a black plastic garbage bag, making a slit for drainage. The bag allows for easy cleanup in the fall and helps prevent

the soil from drying out in the summer.

Next I fill the boxes with Pro-Mix that has been thoroughly moistened. Pro-mix is a soil-less potting medium (available at Home Depot). Then I mix in Terra Sorb, a small granule that expands and looks like jello when you add water; according to their website it is a hydrogel. The Terra Sorb will help prevent the soil from drying out. Finally I mix in some Osmocote, which is a slow-release fertilizer. Terra Sorb and Osmocote are readily available at a number of garden centers.

In terms of plant selection, my house faces south and the light is pretty good. My favorite plants are petunias, geraniums, snapdragon, verbena, and lobelia. After you have your window boxes planted, they are low maintenance for the remaining spring, summer, and fall. Just water when dry and clean up spent flowers.

Our Five Longest Members are:

Gloria Tralmer—1992
Jane Prentis—1993
Esther Behnke—1994
Nancy Spears—1994
Diane Meyers—1995

Did you ever wonder what plants the Chicago Dept. of Transportation uses in their median planters? Well then, go to

www.cityofchicago.org/transportation, then click on **CDOT Programs and Services, then on **Highway Medians/Landscape**.**

What's Blooming Table

Please bring in your treasured plants, or blooms for all of us to admire at the February meeting. It is always a treat to view someone else's success with houseplants.

Questions, comments, payment of dues?

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