



The Spade & The Hoe

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July 2006

July Meeting

Our regular meeting will be held on Thursday, July 13th, at 7:15pm in room 102 at the Park Center. The speaker will be Bob Nicholson and his topic is Growing Roses, Month by Month. Plan to attend what promises to be a very useful program.

Flower Family Album Foxgloves

This family has flowers that have 'jaws'. True foxglove gives us the heart sedative digitalis, but its roots are poisonous. It is a biennial. The perennial yellow foxglove is much smaller but can have three bloom periods throughout summer. Native pentstemon are much easier to grow. The wild snapdragons or toadflax, called Butter and Eggs, are bad spreaders, but the Macedonian toadflax is very beautiful. Che-lone turtlehead is a weedy plant used only in the wild garden. Snapdragons are one of the family aristocrats. Linaria (toadflax or fairy bouquet), an excellent annual, makes easy window plants for winter if seeds are sown in pots in August and are kept cool.

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

The Garden Walk was a huge success. Not only did the rain stop just before visitors came, but it held off all afternoon and evening. I received many calls asking for the addresses (they must be part of the publicity next year!). One of the visitors came from Elmhurst, and said that ours was one of the best walks she's been on and that she comes every year! I heard good comments about everyone's gardens from the visitors.

Their purchases enhanced our finances by \$220.00!

Many thanks to our members who donated their excess plants and who not only potted them up nicely but labeled them with names and growing requirements! Many thanks also to Jackie and Shelly, Brigitte, and Dolores for providing refreshments. And to Pam, Holly and Esther for opening up your gardens. We couldn't have done it without you all. And, finally, kudos to our members who stopped by our members' gardens as a warm and welcomed show of support. You are a great group of friends!

Through the Garden Gate

Everyone has been saying that this spring has been so very strange. I agree, and add summer to that statement. I summer my houseplants on the porch or in the garden. Well, I just notice that my Christmas cactus, that usually blooms from Halloween to Valentine's Day, has set buds! There are at least 8 buds on the one plant. How odd!

All the rain we've been having has been beneficial to me (no big water bill) as well as to the garden. Everything is so lush! It has kept me hoping though, trying to keep up with the deadheading and weeding.

The month of June has been a very hectic one for me: one graduation, 2 deaths of close family members, and, of course, the Garden Walk. I look forward to a restful, peaceful July. I plan to spend it on my swing with my book and a glass of wine by my side. My wish for all of you is a happy, safe, pleasant, calm and enjoyable month. Ciao!





The Flower Family— Figwort Family

The wild mulleins are such persistent weeds that we are apt to lose sight of the beauty of their spikes of yellow flowers on prickly leaves. Verbascum is an improved form that will bloom at iris time. Veronica, or speedwell, has some of the best blue flowers, and sometimes white and lavender varieties. The tall wild white one is called culver's physic of our woods. Calceolaria, or pocketbook, is difficult to grow, even in a greenhouse. It really is a houseplant, good for north windows in a cool room. The native wood betony looks like a mint but has a round stem. Its flowers are yellow with crimson and should be grown among your ferns in the shade. Torenia, an annual, loves the shade garden with its lavender flowers touched with orange and deep purple. Dwarf veronicas are great for rock gardens and are being hybridized and improved. Others in this family are painted cup (castilleja), collinsia, and monkey flower (mimulus).

Dream big. But try not to let ambition turn your joy into drudgery. I found in dreams a place of wind and flowers, full of sweet trees and the color of glad grass...

- Algernon Charles Swinburne

A Question:

For years we have been tending our own gardens, making them into splendid oases for our enjoyment and that of our families and friends. Perhaps it is now time for us to participate in some kind of community gardening. Perhaps we can plant a garden for others to enjoy, designing and maintaining gardens throughout the village. Maybe by a nursing home, the senior center, or perhaps weeding and planting flowers in an elderly person's garden. You must have ideas to share on this thought. What about it? Let's talk.

Garden lessons are one of gardening's great joys — equal almost to the joy of seeing one's dreams gradually unfurl into green reality. I hope you will make the time to be in the garden. I hope you will take the time to be still and experience the paradise.

- Emilie Barnes,
*Everything I Know I
Learned in My Garden*

In July, remember to:

- watch out for Japanese beetles and knock them into a tin can filled with soapy water, ammonia, or the like;
- deadhead early blooming flowers such as geraniums, salvias, delphiniums, and catmint to promote a second flowering;
- avoid watering leaves of roses;
- during dry spells, water your plants, shrubs and trees, but not the grass;
- mow grass at 2 1/2" to help it shade its roots during hot weather;
- water tomatoes, peppers, squash, cucumbers and eggplant deeply;
- fertilize vegetables to ensure healthy root systems;
- stake or cage tomatoes as they begin to grow;
- fertilize roses for the 3rd & last time by the end of July, watering them first.

- Garden Talk, Summer 2006



Guest Columnist—

This column will be back in August.

Flower Family Album - Nightshades

This is one of the truly great plant families. Dinner might be with potatoes, eggplant, peppers and tomatoes. But like every family, there are a few black sheep. Potatoes originated in South America, not Ireland. They feed a greater proportion of the earth's inhabitants than any other crop except rice. The little bit of poison develops in the green of sun-burned potatoes, so don't eat them. Potato seeds are also poisonous.

Bitter nightshade, the climber, has lavender flowers and red berries that are poisonous to people but not to birds. It attracts potato bugs to the garden. Black nightshade or deadly nightshade, will cause violent nausea. An annual, it's easy to pull up. The drug belladonna is extracted from the roots of the true deadly nightshade, atropa belladonna.

Chinese lantern plant is a ground cherry with inflated pods of vivid orange-scarlet. When dried, they are used in winter bouquets. It is highly invasive due to its spreading roots. Jerusalem-cherry makes a cheery winter plant that is easily grown. Pot it up in August, and keep it away from drafts in the house. When it is through fruiting, cut it back severely and place it in a cool north window. Keep all new growth pinched back. Repot with fresh soil in spring.

Grow what you love. The love will keep it growing.

Flower Family Album— cousins of the potato

The great white trumpets of Angel's trumpet (*datura*) is its crowning glory. It's related also to the foul-smelling Jimson weed, the seeds of which are known for their hallucinogenic quality. *Nicotiana* opens at twilight and sends out a heavy fragrance. Butterfly flower (*schizanthus*) has fragile orchid-like flowers. It needs cool weather and moist air to thrive. *Salpiglossis* is very beautiful with gold lace covering its cloak of rich purple, maroon or crimson velvet. It's as easily grown as petunias. *Browallias* give a supply of blue flowers all throughout the summer, sending up new growth from the base each time the old is cut back. *Petunias* are a garden stand-by. White ones are the best window-box flower and add romance when reflected in a pool. Pot up a few in the fall and they will fill your windows with bloom in the late winter. *Cup-flower* or *nierembergia* have the same form as the potato blossoms but their foliage is like that of flax. They are tender perennials, blooming in August from spring-sown seeds and easily carried over in a cool, light basement to bloom in your window in April. Later you can plant it in the garden.

Our children have grown with the garden; every niche has been nursery, governess, and playmate....My garden has been a pirate ship, Barbie Doll vacation paradise, Sylvanian Family campground, jungle, maze, obstacle course, arena for birthday treasure hunts, and the Yukon for Calvin and Hobbes. It is well peopled.

What's Blooming Table

Please bring in a special flower or plant for our What's Blooming Table.

Questions, comments, payment of dues?

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