



The Spade & The Hoe

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October Meeting

Our regular meeting will be held on October 12 at 7:15pm in room 203 at the Park Center. The speaker will be Maria Woltmann of Hlavacek Florist who will give a demonstration on Fall Décor and a Holiday Boutique. Plan to attend this fun-filled evening.

Flower Family Album Asters

Goldenrod (solidago) is a respected member of this family. Boltonia prefers a dry location but should be pinched back when it's about a foot tall. Our native hardy asters (novae-angliae or New England aster) have been hybridized by the Europeans for dwarf types to be used in war cemeteries. Rock asters like full sun and really good drainage otherwise they die. The tiny English daisy (bellis perennis) is a weed in English lawns but is hard to grow here.

The blue cornflower is not an aster but a Composite. It is incorrect to call it Bachelor's Button, as that name really belongs to Globe Amaranth. It self-seeds nicely.

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

The September meeting was a field trip to Cantigny, its historic house, gardens and museum. It appears that everyone who went spent an enjoyable day.

A Word to the Wise...

According to the Old Farmer's Almanac, this winter will be a bitterly cold winter. So plan to provide protection for your tender plants.

Did you know...?

When tulips are blooming in the fields in Holland, Dutch bulb growers do their best to cut off the flowers as quickly as possible. The flowers take away energy from the bulbs, preventing them from growing to top size. Typically a grower lets his fields bloom for about a week, just enough time to cull out plants of odd size or color. After that he brings out a "kopmachine" or beheading machine. In late April and early May, one can see large piles of tulip flowers heaped beside Holland's canals. In some places the flowers are fed to cows, which usually eat the red ones first. Reminds me of people picking through Spice Drops for the red ones!

Through the Garden Gate

I have been noticing strange things happening lately. The latest one is that, after all these years, one of the oak trees in the front lawn has, for the first time, produced acorns! An arborist had no explanation for why it hadn't done so in over a decade of growth, but now it is. Also, the sugar maple has dumped billions of seeds on our front lawn and driveway for the first time. Could it have something to do with the Old Farmer's prediction?

I was able to can lots of jars of tomato sauce, plus bread-and-butter pickles. My neighbor planted the cucumbers, but said 'anything that grows on your side of the fence is yours to eat'. It's a good trade-off: I give him zucchini bread, cake, and cookies, and he give me cukes, basil, and eggplant parmesan (yummy). We've been neighbors for over 36 years; been to our children's weddings. We look out for each other.

Returning home from Italy, I noticed several juncos in our garden. These little snowbirds are a reminder that winter is on its way, but so early?? The signs are point to an early and cold winter.
Br-r- r.





**The Flower Family—
Chrysanthemums**

This family consists of florists chrysanthemum, hardy chrysanthemum, the annual tricolor chrysanthemum, Shasta daisy, painted daisy, and ox-eye daisy, plus yarrow, achillea the pearl (used in flower arrangements) Artemisia with their silvery gray leaves, golden marguerite, and feverfew. These all have fragrant foliage and a standard insecticide is made from pyrethrum powder from a member of this family. These flowers do spread, especially feverfew, but can be kept in check easily. In days of yore, fringed Artemisia (wormwood) was added to vinegar, the leaves of chrysanthemum were candied, tarragon gave a delicious flavor to salads and feverfew, chamomile, fringed Artemisia (wormwood) and tansy were used in medicines.



Peppermint Travel Pillow
To ease apprehension and motion sickness, make a soft neck cushion and fill it with:
1/4 c. peppermint
1 tbsp. mint-scented geranium
1/4 c. lemon verbena
1/4 c. lavender
1 tbsp. crushed lemon zest

Question:
Has anyone else had the strange problem of something (chipmunk, rabbit or squirrel) digging up the iris rhizomes? In every iris bed, I am finding some, not all, dug up. And they didn't have iris borers in them.

Autumn Festivals
Fall colors at the Morton Arboretum all month long
(www.mortonarb.org/events)
Harvest Days at Garfield Farm in LaFox
(www.garfieldfarm.org)
Cider Festival at McHenry County Historical Museum in Union (815-923-2267)
Pumpkinfest at Didier Farms in Prairie View on Aptakisic Road
(www.didierfarms.com)
Goebbert's Pumpkin Farm in Hampshire
Haunted Corn Maze at Jonamac Orchard in Malta
815-825-2158 or www.jonamacorchard.com
also is a great time to get some apples. Note: no flashlights permitted in the maze.

In October, remember to:

- keep mowing the lawn until it goes dormant;
- water evergreens until the ground freezes;
- wrap those that are in windy locations in burlap;
- mound soil around the bases of roses to protect the grafts;
- mulch roses and perennials with shredded leaves or pine needles after a hard frost when plants are completely dormant;
- wrap roses, clematis, and other plants in chicken wire to protect them from rabbits;
- put up bird feeders and bird baths and keep them clean and filled;
- after a hard frost, remove plant debris as it is a home for over wintering diseases and insects;
- pick green tomatoes for ripening or for frying;

. Chicagoland Gardening, September/October 2006



Guest Columnist— Nancy Spears

Autumn comes to the high plains and deserts creating colorful changes reminiscent of the Midwest's fall colors. As you drive through them, the roadways are lined with yellow blooming shrubby plants of various tones and hues. Reminds me of mums back home. Other more prickly shrubby things have tiny lavender and purple flowers closely hugging the stems nestled by thorns. (Can you tell I got out and investigated?) And then there are the remains of something which now has only red stems. It all makes for a lovely mix of color.

The mountains are filled with sages with subtly differing grey-green shades. Small pines dot the area and when there is a stream, there are deciduous trees exhibiting fall colors of red and yellow. The beauty of color and texture can't be beat!

Now we have seen the California redwoods. They are magnificent! If you have never made it here, do so. We drove the Prairie Creek State Park (part of the National Park System) and the Lady Bird Johnson Grove. However, at the end of a very narrow, unpaved road through the redwoods and then along the beach, we found Fern Canyon. We walked about a mile up the pebbled creek bed with the water running alongside and the canyon walls are filled with five-fingered ferns. What luscious greenery! Moss-covered fallen trees span the canyon and oxalis grows abundantly.

Nominating Committee Report

The nominating committee, consisting of Brigitte, Gloria and Esther, will give their report on nominations for offices for the coming calendar year.

Remember: Dues are Due Effective January 1st.

Tips

To keep your birdbath from getting that slimy green algae, clean it really good, fill it with fresh water, then add a bundle of about 6 stems of lavender flowers to the water. The bundle will keep the water clear for 2-3 weeks. During hot weather, replace the bundle more frequently.

To disinfect your pruner blades easily, use Clorox disinfectant wipes between cuts. No more spilled bleach and water, no more drips.

An inexpensive soaker hose can be made from any old hose (garage sale find?). Just use a fine nail to poke holes up and down its length, add a cap on one end and, voila!, a soaker hose.

To keep from tracking dirt into the house, push a couple of 1" or so diameter by 15" dowels into the soil near your door. Drape your clogs over the dowels. They will stay free of dirt, creatures, and rain. Plus, they are very handy when you step outside "for a minute".

What's Blooming Table

Remember to bring in your treasured flowers or plants to our October meeting.

Questions, comments, payment of dues?

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