



The Spade & The Hoe

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April 2007

April Meeting

The regular April 12th meeting will be held at 7:15 p.m. in the Training Room at the Glenview Police Station. As you enter the main door, turn right to the last room on the right. The program will be by Richard Helminiak, one of the caretakers of the bonsai collection at the CBG, who will speak on starting a bonsai plant.

Everything is good in its season. - Italian Proverb

News, News, News!

We are very pleased to tell you that, after 6-7 months of frustration and fruitless work, we now have a new domain name: www.glenviewgardeners.org. We have a new host site that promises to be a lot more reliable than the old one was, plus our computer guru is able to use FrontPage extensions instead of cpanel (for those of you 'in the know' about such things. Check it out!



The March meeting was held in the training room at the new police station. Luci Barnas demonstrated her method of starting seeds indoors and gave away a small pot of papayas that she had grown from seeds.

Warning

With sunshine, warm weather and spring rains, come the delight of growing plants. But among the many wonderful plants lurks the three wild and poisonous plants: Poison oak, poison ivy and poison sumac. Not everyone is sensitive, and those who are can expect a reaction within hours after contact. Itchy, red bumps appear first, then turn to blisters. Legs, arms, hands and face are the most common points for rashes as these make contact with the plants. Several measures can be taken to relieve itching, discomfort and prevent spreading the rash:

- 1) wash the exposed area well, the sooner the better; cool baths will relieve itching.
- 2) don't scratch as this causes further irritation and can lead to infection.
- 3) apply calamine lotion, hydrocortisone or Burrow's solution to affected areas to relieve itching and dry the oozing areas.

Through the Garden Gate
One day in March we discovered a flock of mallard ducks eating the fallen cracked corn. Since then, they return every day just before dinner time to eat. They have such beautiful feathers and they are fun to watch.

I was able to get out in the garden and cut back the grasses, coneflowers, and other tall things left standing over the winter. The butterfly bush needs cutting back to 8" or so as it blooms on new wood only. Same with some clematis, but not other varieties. We had a good amount of snow this winter which surely helped our ground water table. Now we can look forward to daffodils, tulips, crocuses, stars of Bethlehem, scillas, hyacinths and other truly spirit-lifting flowers! My garden is so beautiful in spring, as are so many of yours, that it's easy to say that spring is my most favorite season of the year, followed closely by summer, then autumn, and finally winter. Each season has its own beauty, some more colorful than others but the pastels of spring really appeal to me. So this is the year we all are getting our beds in order, right? Plants divided, weeds pulled, plants trimmed. Just remember to delight in them.



**Guest Columnist—
Len Tralmer
'Day in the Life of a Duck
Mother'**

As I worked in the garden last year, my wife Gloria came walking out from behind our Black Hill spruce saying "I bet you don't know what I have with me?" Out she walked with a string of 8 two-day-old ducklings in a line following her. I found out that the neighbor children found them in their garage, abandoned by the duck mother. Gloria was called and loaded them into a basket and took them quickly to our lake. She hoped to leave them there but to her surprise, she found them tagging behind and following her home. At this point Gloria found a sucker and proceeded to dump them on me. I had now become a 'Duck Mother'. I set them up in a large dog cage. With the addition of a solid roof over the cage, food from a neighbor, a saucer feeding bowl and a saucer swimming pool, I handled the feeding and training. For the first day I worked with them on our deck by immersing their food in water and getting the 16" pool ready. Then I took them to the lake. They seemed to like that but they stayed on the rip-rap rock finding bugs and insects. One day they saw an airplane at about 10,000 feet and they all looked at it for some time. After those four days I was facing a weekend departure. What to do with the ducklings? Gloria called around to several sanctuaries to find them a home. Meanwhile, I saw a woman

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cleaning the windows on a home that has lake access. When I asked her if she wanted to take care of 8 ducklings, she immediately agreed to accept them. I was shocked that she accepted and suggested that she think it over for awhile. Within 20 minutes she arrived with her husband to take them permanently. With that assurance from them, we gathered up my cage and bowls and transferred them to their care. By the next day the husband had strung up a chicken wire fence in a 30' circle around a shade tree and the ducks lived there for the balance of the summer with daily lake treks before they took off with the wild ducks.

A Shade Garden for Your Front Entry

Instead of planting the same-old, same-old yews or junipers, try using some of the shade-tolerant plants we have that are great for our zone 5 area. Some of those are lady's mantle (alchemilla), anemone, columbine (aquilegia), astilbe, bleeding heart (dicentra), ornamental onion (gallium), geranium (not pelargonium), coral bell (heuchera), hosta, and lamium. And be sure to plant more than 1 or 2 of each next to each other. Plant them in groups of 3 to 5 to make a nice showing.

A Sunny Garden for Your Front Entry

Does yours have lots of sun? Starting with spring bulbs, you can plant many colorful and cheery plants to make your home look inviting. Among them are achillea, artemisia, aster, coreopsis, candytuft, iris, liatris, potentilla, salvia, scabiosa (pincushion plant), and veronica. Use different cultivars of these to really brighten up the scene.



The Chicago Park District is planning its own Garden in a City Show in Grant Park's Butler Field under a tent (as they did last year) for May 5-13.

Weather Forecast:

The weather for our spring is... it will be a wet spring. So, the information about spraying your crabapple trees is all the more vital! Get out there!



Chicagoland Flower and Garden Show

Was anyone else as disappointed as Gloria and I were over the paucity of flower gardens and garden-related vendors? And can someone tell us what relationship exists between jewelry vendors, children's sweaters vendors, shop rags vendors, pots and pans vendors, etc. and gardening? I grant you the planners had only about 8 months to get the 'show on the road', so we can only hope that, with a full year ahead of them now, that next year's will be a lot better.

A Bloomin' Sale

The Chicago Botanic Garden's annual plant sale is scheduled for May 18—20, 2007. Open to members only on the 18th from 1pm to 7pm, and on the 19th from 9am to 10am, it will be open to everyone on the 19th & 20th from 10am to 3pm.



Outreach Projects

Several of our members will be at the Glenview Senior wing at the Park Center to help weed and plant their butterfly garden.

Our members had been volunteering their time and plants at the Farmers' Market, but that venue may not be around this summer. The Park District is considering taking it over and moving it to Wagner Farm, and the fees for booth space most likely would be higher and probably would apply even to us. Finally, some of us will be at Our Lady of Perpetual Help to plant the ten new rain garden bases along Church and Grove Streets.

Garlic (*allium sativum*)

Garlic has been called the "herbal wonder drug" for its many medicinal uses. It has been found in Sumerian caves where early humans lived over 12,000 years ago. It has powerful antibiotic properties and has been used to stave off colds and flu, lower blood pressure, reduce serum cholesterol levels, and its flavor can't be beat.

Rain in spring is as precious as oil.

- Chinese Proverb

In April, remember to:

- prune clematis;
- cut back butterfly bushes to 10-12" to stimulate new growth;
- plant bare root plants, but first soak them in water overnight;
- divide and re-plant perennials;
- plant pansies and hardy annuals;
- aerate your lawn which helps soil compaction and poor drainage;
- plant rhubarb and asparagus crowns;
- plant strawberries;
- plant fruit trees, grapes, raspberries and blackberries;
- apply pre-emergent herbicides when soil temperatures reach 50 degrees;
- use post-emergence herbicides for actively growing broadleaf weeds like dandelions.

. Chicagoland Gardening, March/April 2007

Protect Your Crabapple Trees

Apply fungicidal treatments to crabapples that were severely infested with apple scab last year. Wet springs have made this a major problem. Three applications of fungicide 14 days apart through the wet period before leaf buds open will help control it. Be sure to prune the tree while dormant to promote air circulation in the center.

Not all clouds bring rain.

- Dutch Proverb

What's Blooming Table

Everyone likes to see what their friends are growing. Bring your plants to the April meeting!

Questions, comments, payment of dues?

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