



# The Spade & The Hoe

Volume 5 Issue 5

May 2007

## May Meeting

The regular May 10th meeting will be held at 7:15 p.m. at the home of Gloria and Len Tralmer. This will be our annual members' plant exchange. Take Landwehr Road north to Indian Ridge Drive, west to the first street which is Saranac Lane, then go to the first stop sign and turn right on Saranac Court and go to 2435.

If you would be happy all your life, plant a garden.  
-Chinese Proverb

## News, News, News!

Remember to get your tickets for the Open Days Conservancy's gardens at the Botanic Garden or by mail order. Also, A Bloomin' Sale will be held there on May 18-20.

I never before knew the full value of trees. My house is entirely embosomed in high plane trees, with good grass below, and under them I breakfast, dine, write, read and receive my company.  
- Thomas Jefferson



**The April meeting** was held in the conference room at the new police station. Richard Helminiak was the most engaging speaker and demonstrated his love of all things bonsai. Afterwards, he raffled off a bonsai that he had just pruned and planted.

## Expensive flowers

The popularity of tulips blossomed in Holland in the 1630s. Scores of variations were cultivated and the prices of bulbs soared. It was a thriving market for both the aristocracy and commoners alike, with trade expanding into a year-round activity. At the height of this craze, the cost of a single tulip bulb would be something like:

2 barrels of beer  
2 hogshead of wine  
2 barrels of butter  
1,000 pounds of cheese  
2 loads of wheat  
4 loads of rye  
1 dozen sheep  
several hefty oxen and pigs  
a piece of fine silver, and  
a room's set of furniture.  
...a pretty steep price to pay  
for just one tulip bulb!

The best way to get real enjoyment out of the garden is to put on a wide straw hat, hold a little trowel in one hand and a cool drink in the other, and tell the man where to dig.

- Charles Barr

Through the Garden Gate With the weather being so unsteady, a few days of nice, warm sunshine followed by cold, windy days, it took longer to clean up all the beds than usual. But finally that chore was done. Then on to transplanting, dividing, planting new stock, and glorying in the loveliness that is Springtime. There is so much to do in spring that we need every day of warm weather that we can get. Jackson & Perkins had delivered a new rose during that last cold spell and I kept it by the window while keeping its roots wet. Finally, I was able to plant that poor baby. It had started leafing out in the house! I had bought two other roses from Costco and planted them also, plus lots of digging up and replanting, so that all, thank God, is done. All that's left now is trimming back the shrubs, planting new shrubs, spreading mulch, potting up annuals, etc., etc. When all this is finally done, and all the spring chores are done including washing the lawn furniture, I will take my book, a glass of wine, turn off my cell phone, and spend the day on the swing just resting and reading. Doesn't that sound lovely? I expect you do the same thing, too. It's a nice way to relax and enjoy the beauty of spring.

Mother's Day

**Guest Columnist—  
Sharon Geniesse**

So much is being written this spring about the recent deep freeze and snow cover that has injured newly erupted plants and blossoms. Experts say we may need to 'wait and see'. As of today, April 19th, garden shops have beautifully planted containers for sale, tempting us to forget the 'safe' date of mid-May to put out annuals in our zone. Meanwhile we know the cicada frenzy will begin in May. I don't remember the phenomenon as being very exciting in 1990, but 1973 was full of memories as our three oldest children were 8, 7, and 4 at the time, and our family project was to encase the cicadas at their various stages in resin. When we moved to our present condo three years ago, I sadly got rid of that batch of cicadas! But maybe this is the year to relive those memories and do that project with our youngest grandchildren who are 10 and 8.

Gil and I have had our share of 'down time' recently. We both became ill in Florida in February with bronchitis and I progressed to pneumonia. We received good medical care, but it was comforting to fly home on March 20th and see our own doctor the next day. It's been a slow recovery but a good chance to catch up on reading. One of our sons gave me "Chicken Soup for the Gardener's Soul" and I'd highly recommend it. It's also available at the Glenview Library. Gil and I spent four days at our lake house recently. The air was so fresh and we felt well enough to get some of the outdoor chores started. We always love to

uncover the perennial gardens and plan for our next trip to the local nursery. I also hung a woven basket containing pale-colored silk flowers near our kitchen window. The area is open but somewhat protected by an overhang. For the past four years I've hung three identical baskets along the walkway, but birds have only nested in the one closest to the kitchen. I hung the baskets on Tuesday and by Wednesday afternoon, two cardinals had returned and were busy preparing their nest in the basket closest to the kitchen! How wonderful nature is and she renews our spirit each spring as we enjoy being out again working in our gardens. Happy gardening!!!

*No garden is without weeds.*  
- Thomas Fuller

**For Those Rainy Days, Gardening on the Web**

gardening.about.com  
gardenstructure.com  
plansnow.com  
urbanext.uiuc.edu/hort  
heirloomroses.com  
bhg.com  
mortonarb.org  
chicago-botanic.org  
gardenleaf.com  
organicgardening.com/  
hortmag.com  
bluestem.hort.purdue.edu/plant  
garden.com  
noproblemgarden.com  
hometime.com/projects  
gardenweb.com

*Adam was a gardener, and God,  
who made him, sees that half of all  
good gardening is done upon the  
knees.*  
- Rudyard Kipling

Long ago, periwinkle was a favorite essential ingredient in love potions. It was also believed to ward off evil spirits.

- A Gardener's Miscellany

**Our Garden Walk**

Holly was pleased to announce that Jacki and Shelly Kimel volunteered their garden for the garden walk this June. Holly still needs one more garden. Come on, people. Let's have another 'new' garden. How about it???

**History Lesson 101**

The ancient art of aromatherapy, or using scents to treat both emotional and physical ills, has been practiced since medieval times. Violets were among the first flowers considered useful both for cooking and for medicinal purposes. Basil was used to stimulate the heart and relieve melancholy; rosemary was used to preserve youth; marjoram was used to help relieve melancholy; garlic was used to protect against infection when eaten or carried; thyme was used to raise the spirits and increase energy; mint was used to refresh the spirit; and violets were used to aid digestion and dispel sadness.

An old English legend has it that lily-of-the-valley blooms sprouted wherever drops of blood had fallen upon the ground from St. George, who had to battle a fierce fire-breathing dragon. In colonial times, people filled bags with marigolds and kept them near fireplaces or chimneys to dry out so that they could be used as curatives. The leaves were inhaled to cure a head cold, and yellow dye was made from the flowers to use as hair coloring. Marigolds were also thought to be a cure for toothaches, moles and warts and, steeped in wine, to cure stomachaches.



## Peppermint

Mints are recorded in the Ebers papyrus, the world's oldest surviving medical text, and are frequently mentioned in the Bible. The Greeks and Romans crowned themselves with mint for banquets and put bunches on the table in the hope of warding off drunkenness. Ending a meal with a sprig of mint to help the digestion and sweeten the breath is a very ancient custom, culminating in the widespread popularity of 'after dinner mints' today. Mint was used for scenting bath water. Peppermint is the most widely used mint. The oil is distilled from the leaves and flowering tips of the plants. Peppermint oil, particularly as an inhalation, relieves nausea and respiratory problems and aids digestion. Rats and mice detest the invigorating aroma, making rags soaked in peppermint oil a very effective deterrent of vermin.

*If the day and night are such that you greet them with joy and life emits a fragrance like flowers and sweet scented herbs—that is your success. All nature is your congratulations.*

- Henry David Thoreau

## In May, remember to:

- apply mulch to conserve water;
- wait until May 15th to plant tender annuals;
- plant containers now and add slow-release fertilizer to the pots;
- plant summer bulbs like dahlias and cannas in late May;
- prune early spring-flowering trees and shrubs after they have bloomed;
- plant trees and shrubs;
- begin pinching back the stems of chrysanthemums once they are 6”;
- allow bulb foliage to die back naturally in order to store up food for next year's bloom;
- plant tomatoes and peppers after the ground has warmed up;
- plant cucumbers, zucchini, basil, parsley, dill, green beans and cilantro.
- Chicagoland Gardening, May/June 2007

**If you have room for only one herb in your garden, make it a scented geranium.** You can use the fragrant leaves for potpourri, teas, drinks and desserts, as well as jellies, sauces and vinegars. Growing beside a path where you can brush against it, this generous plant will share its scent with you each time you pass. Among the popular favorites are rose, lemon, orange, apricot, grapefruit, and strawberry scents.

## What's Blooming Table

Everyone likes to see what their friends are growing. Thanks to Nancy for sharing her moss garden.

## Questions, comments, payment of dues?

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