



The Spade & The Hoe

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From the Desk of Pamela Frank

I was recently asked what I think are the "hot" annuals and perennials this year. I'm not into "hot" or trendy plants or anything else. I will buy a few annuals for my containers. Annuals that are not for me are marigolds, moss roses, alyssum and pansies; I like their fragrance and colors.

Pansies may last the winter, moss roses and alyssum often do.

I have had alyssum blooming all over the yard for years even though I only planted them in 2003. The alyssum are so prolific that I have to rip it out sometimes when they get too crazy.

The moss roses I plant in the ground often come back sometimes in different places. I brought out a planter just filled with soil out of an unheated greenhouse in June. The planter, as it turned out, was filled with moss roses under the soil that had not been watered all winter and had minimum light. With rain and sunshine, I now have blooming moss roses and I am going to try to keep them over this winter again. A nice surprise!

August Program

On August 12th, Tuesday, we will carpool to Arlene Prchal's home in Mt. Prospect. (Meet at Gloria's house, 2435 Saranac Ct, at 1:30pm to leave by 2:00pm.)

There Arlene maintains a special monarch butterfly garden. She has about 80 milkweed plants and about 70 dill weed plants. She collects the eggs the monarchs lay, nurtures the larvae until they emerge as butterflies, then releases them in her garden. She released about 300 last year.

After our visit there, we will also visit a small park and an ice cream parlor.

So, we are offering treats for your eyes as well as treats for your tummy! Join us for this special program!

July Program

Marian Thill spoke on "Backyard Gardening for Birds and Butterflies" at the police station. Her slides were so good, and her enthusiasm was so contagious, that many of us ran out to purchase more milkweed plants! To continue on this theme, check out August's program. The asclepias are in full bloom now, from the small butterfly bush to the taller swamp or marsh milkweed plants.

Very hot weather in the first week of August presages a very hard winter.

Through the Garden Gate I spent a good part of July madly working in the garden, getting it to look really nice. I hosted a family reunion in my garden, and although it rained in the morning (so what else is new??), the clouds drifted away by mid-morning, the sun came out, and we were able to set up tables and chairs. It's so nice to re-connect with family who live in Kansas & Arkansas and every point in Illinois! Now I can take my time on deadheading, transplanting, digging up grass to expand beds. But not for a moment forgetting that summertime means going slow, relaxing, reading a book by the lake, enjoying the great outdoors!

One of the benefits of all the rain we've been having this summer is that the garden is really lush. Actually there is another benefit — knowing that the garden is really lush without having to pay huge water bills to attain that look! About the only things I water now are the pots and the transplants. Sweet!



Merrick Rose Garden in Evanston

This garden, at the corner of Lake and Oak Sts., 1 block east of Ridge and south of Maple, is home to the historic Fountain Square Centennial Fountain and has 100s of rose bushes on display. They are All American Rose Selections (AARS) display gardens and contain many new varieties that are not yet available to the public. All roses are identified, so you can record the ones you like and look for them the following year at area garden centers.

*Oh, little rose tree, bloom!
Summer is nearly over.
The dahlias bleed, and the
phlox is seed.
Nothing's left of the clover.
And the path of the poppy no
one knows.
I would blossom if I were a
rose.*

- Edna St. Vincent Millay

Ornamental Plants to Attract Birds

Birds devour insects in record numbers. Mosquitoes, aphids, chinch bugs all are yummy treats for birds. To give birds a balanced diet, especially in winter, remember that they love red and black chokeberry shrubs, dogwoods, mulberry, raspberries, elderberry, holly, Russian olive, hawthorn and sunflowers. Just be sure not to spray anything for pesticides.

Ornamental Plants to Produce Food

American elderberry, blueberry, raspberry, dwarf fruit trees have fruit that are delicious. Plus, did you know that the rugosa rose has hips that are rich in vitamin C and used for teas, jams, soups, etc.?



*Is there a joy except gardening that
asks so much, and gives so much? I
know of no other except, perhaps,
the writing of a poem. They are
much alike, even in the amount of
waste that has to be accepted for the
sake of the rare, chancy joy when all
goes well.*

- May Sarton

Fragrant Plants for Summer Fun

Use angel's trumpet, alyssum, monarda, buddleia, calamint, clematis, creeping thyme, oenothera, herbs, iris, hosta, mockorange, honeysuckle vine with yellow or white flowers, lavender, moonflower, lilies, nicotiana, peony, nasturtium, roses, petunia, phlox, and Clethra alnifolia (summersweet) shrub.

Catalogs

Bring your excess catalogs for a catalog exchange at the September meeting.

*Every garden in the ancient Middle
East had a cypress tree, which rep-
resented death, and an almond or
plum tree, which symbolized life and
hope.*

- A Gardener's Miscellany

Fragrant Plants for Indoors for Winter

Paperwhites, hyacinth, citrus tree, jasmine, lavandula, gardenia, hoya, and scented geraniums.

I love old gardens best —
tired old gardens
that rest in the sun.

- Henry Bellaman

God Almighty first planted a Garden.
And indeed, it is the Purest of Hu-
mane pleasure. It is the Greatest
Refreshment to the Spirits of Man.

- Francis Bacon (1561-1626)

Fragrant Plants for Fall

Use chrysanthemum, drop-seed, tuberose, asters, and sweet autumn clematis.

Public Gardens Worth Visiting—Nancy Olderr, Part 2

Rotary Gardens in Janesville, WI — In mid-April of this year, we stopped by the Rotary Gardens. It's only about 10 years old and was built on the site of an old brick factory, but it's at one end of a large park. Its 20 acres boast internationally-themed gardens and a visitor's center with photos showing the development of the gardens. We were there a bit before the blooming season and the snowmelt and heavy rains had swelled rivers over their banks, so trails and bridges along the water features were closed. We could still see enough to realize this garden had good bones and I wouldn't hesitate to return.

Boerner Botanical Gardens, Hales Corner, WI — This garden in suburban Milwaukee is a favorite of mine. Located in a park, it contains an assortment of garden spaces as well as the arboretum. What I especially like about Boerner is that many of the plant collections are in a fairly compact area. I specifically took my 90-year-old mother there once because I knew she would be able to see many flowers without having to walk too far. Plenty of benches allow for rest and contemplation of the gorgeous flowers. Even more delights await those who can walk greater distances. This one I've seen in full summer bloom. On one visit, we also visited a nature area on the far end of the park.

Heat Wave

Did you know that a simple way to combat dried out and/or dead plants during our hot summers is to plant native plants? Ornamental grasses, including sedges and rushes, enhance any collection of perennials or native American plants plus provide winter interest and an element of sound as the wind rustles the foliage and seed-heads. *Miscanthus sinensis*, Japanese silver grass or pennisetum alopecuroides (fountain grass) are clump-formers (non-invasive) grasses. If you have an area where you don't mind if the grasses run around a bit, you can try blue lyme grass, ribbon grass (*phalaris arundinacea*) or *elymus arenarius*. Other grasses are calamagrostis (feather reed grass), blue fescue, blue-oat grass, *deschampsia* (tufted hair), northern sea-oats, prairie dropseed, maiden grass, big blue-stem, little bluestem, side-oats grama, morning star sedge, variegated Japanese sedge, pampas grass, and switch grass. Grasses are practically pest-free, aren't particular about soil or exposure, and almost maintenance-free (divide them every 5 years).

Perennials that don't mind drought-like conditions include Creeping Charlie sedum that blooms yellow all summer, yarrow (in yellow, purple, and peach), various sedums, verbena, hosta, lamb's ear, Russian sage, strawflower, artemisia, amsonia, rock cress, butterfly weed, false indigo, globe thistle, euphorbia, *brunnera macrophylla*, Solomon's seal, geranium, and portulaca.



Many thanks to Holly for bringing a stem of hollyhocks, to Pam for her vase of monarda, rose & lily, to Jacki for her vase of asters, sage, rudbeckia, and cone-flowers, and to Esther for showing us her blooming clivia plant. And to Roshni for providing snacks for the July meeting.

In August, remember to:

- make sure your garden gets 1" of water every 5 days;
- cut back straggly annuals to promote new growth;
- keep up with deadheading for a tidy garden;
- keep a garden diary;
- cut back by 1/2 any perennials to promote new blooms;
- plant autumn-flowering bulbs and cold-hardy pansies;
- use a soaker hose around roses to keep the foliage dry;
- consider planting trees and shrubs now through mid-September so their roots can get established;
- divide iris and replant them just below the soil surface;
- sow lettuce, spinach, radishes and beets;
- pick tomatoes, cucumbers, zucchini and peppers frequently, and harvest herbs;
- seed the lawn in mid-August.

Japanese Beetles?

The best way to stop these destructive beetles is to stop the grubs. Milky Spore is a naturally occurring host specific bacterium that targets the white grubs of these beetles, who eat the spores while feeding on grass roots. The spores kill the grubs, then the decomposing grubs release billions of new spores into your soil to kill the next generation of beetles. Apply spring, summer & fall for 1st year. Then no more.

What's Blooming Table

Keep this feature in mind for our September meeting.

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