



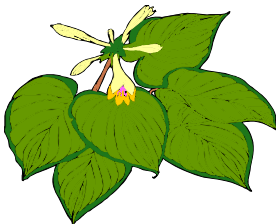
The Spade & The Hoe

Volume 6 Issue 5

May 2008

From the Desk of Pamela Frank

If someone asked me to name my favorite perennial I would be hard pressed to answer them. I have plenty of peonies and still I'm seeking more. I have dozens of roses and keep buying new plants. Unlike the peonies, some roses die over the winter. I had a lovely Betty Boop bush for several years, but last year the plant was afflicted with rosette disease, and although it was still flowering, I had to dig it up and throw it out. I have many iris around the beds, bearded and Siberian, and I just bought more Siberian. I love my honeysuckle plants. They are colorful and sometime fragrant. I also enjoy my clematis although I struggle with them. I'll tell you what: I am now hot for hostas! Last year I enlarged a shade bed so I could add more hostas. I have been hunting for some new hosta varieties. It can be confusing because sometimes it seems like the growers give different names to the same varieties. I look through catalogs and nurseries for hostas that I think are beautiful or interesting. So my fellow gardeners, to help support my hosta habit, I may ask to see what hostas are in your garden.



May Meeting

The May 8th, Thursday, meeting will be at the home of Gloria and Len Tralmer for the annual plant exchange. Bring your excess plants, in pots or bags, and clearly identified to 2435 Saranac Court (Lake west to Landwehr, north to Indian Ridge, left on the 1st street to the stop sign at Saranac Ct., and right to their house. See you there!



Thanks to Pam Frank for bringing April's refreshments.

April Program

Last month's program was very well attended with 27 members and guests. We acquired 3 new members that evening. Greg Bartoshuk was an engaging speaker, answered questions in depth, and distributed many door prizes.

A Garden is a place where much more than a seed can grow. It is a place of solace, exploration, and experimentation. It is the place where imagination grows.

A flower holds the chaos of the world in a moment of spellbinding beauty.

From Potted Gardens
By Rebecca Cole

Through the Garden Gate
Ah, the warmth of spring!
Robins singing in the trees,
goldfinches in their summer dress,
daffodils, scillas, crocuses,
Virginia bluebells,
and tulips blooming. On a nice, warm day, I was out cleaning up the front beds and lawn, and then tackling the north side of the back garden. Everything is peeking out. It is so exciting to see things coming up. For those of us who like to start plants from seeds, the flats are doing nicely. What fun! I can hardly wait to transplant them into the garden.

I had the lawn aerated this year, for the 1st time in, oh, 10-20 years. About time! Then laid down fertilizer and grass seed (not at the same time), so I should have a good-looking lawn this summer.

Once the beds are all cleaned up, then it will be time to wash the windows. It will be nice to be able to look out a clean window for a change.



Pansy

In olden times, the herb pansy was an important medicinal plant, and its juice was used to treat respiratory ailments, children's convulsions, and epilepsy. It was also considered a powerful love potion. If pansy juice were dropped on the eyelids of someone who slept, he or she would fall in love with the first person who came into view—who would most likely be the one who was administering the eye drops. But the pansy was also taken seriously as a healer of broken hearts, hence, its common name *heartsease*.

- An Unthymely Death

Into your garden you can walk
And with each plant and flower talk;

View all their glories, from each one

Raise some rare meditation.

- John Rea,

from *Flora, Ceres and Pomona*,
1665

Plant Sales

Gloria Dei Lutheran Church. Friday, May 16th 2-6pm, and Saturday, May 17th, 9am-2pm. Annuals, perennials, pre-planted containers, hanging baskets, or bring your own container and have it planted. Located at Pfingsten and Cherry, Northbrook.

Northbrook Garden Club. Friday and Saturday, May 16th and 17th, 10am-4pm. Perennials from members' gardens. 1500 Maple.

Helpful Hints

When tidying up the garden, deadheading, etc., dig a small hole right next to the plant and bury the spent flowers or yellow leaves in it. In a few weeks you will have great soil, a little bit at a time.

Use plenty of mulch to conserve water, slow down weeds, and build up the soil.



Color or Unusual Foliage

When planning your garden, consider incorporating plants for their foliage quality.

Coleus is available from seed as well as cuttings, growing from 1-3' tall. Bloodleaf also can be propagated easily from cuttings and grows 6-12" tall in full sun. Mexican mint grows to 3' tall in full sun and roots easily. Oxalis has shamrock leaves in brilliant copper, growing 6" tall in full sun. Joseph's Coat has red leaves and grows 2-3' in part shade. Licorice plant is used in hanging baskets and can hang 2-3' in full sun. Sweet potato comes in maroon to char-treuse, likes full sun, and trails 2-5'.

*It was the morning of the sixth of May,
And May had painted with her soft showers*

A garden full of leaves and flowers.

And man's hand had arrayed it with such craft

*There never was a garden of such price
But if it were the very Paradise.*

- Geoffrey Chaucer (1343-1400)

From The Canterbury Tales

Deer-Proof Plants

There is not a plant that is 100% deer-proof; a hungry deer will eat almost anything when food is scarce. The following plants are less palatable to deer:

Perennials:

hellebores, ferns, creeping thyme, lamb's ear, salvia, catmint, monarda, baptisia, yarrow, monkshood, pulmonaria, ajuga, vinca and ornamental grasses.

Trees and Shrubs:

birch, ginkgo, spruce, honeylocust, boxwood, barberry, juniper and witchhazel.

To deer, these plants either smell bad, taste bad, are fuzzy or wooly.

A garden is a place where the mind goes to seed.

- Anonymous

Then in we went, to the garden glorious

Like a place, of pleasure most solacious

With flora paynted and wrought curiously

In divers knottes of marvellous greatnes.

- Anonymous

More Helpful Hints

Group trees and shrubs in large beds of mulch to facilitate easier lawn mowing. Remember to mulch all around them.

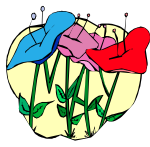
Place plants together that have the same watering and sun requirements. This will reduce the time spent dragging hoses all over the garden.

Foliage, Continued

Persian shield has magenta/silver leaves growing up to 3' in full sun to part shade. Inch plant is a ground cover with burgundy leaves that likes full sun and dry conditions.

Wormwood artemisia has variegated lemon yellow and green foliage, grows to 1' and likes full sun. Barleria is a heat loving plant with variegated foliage growing 15-18" tall in part shade. Caricature plant grows well in full sun to about 3' tall. Rex begonia is a large-leaved plant growing to 12-15" in shade. Creeping Jenny grows in a spreading habit in full sun or part shade. Waffle plant has burgundy leaves and grows to 12-15" tall in shade to part shade.





Guest Columnist —

The Guest Columnist is being discontinued due to lack of interest.

Foliage Continued Again

Caladium is a tuberose-rooted perennial growing from 8" - 3' tall and having either strap-like leaves or elephant-ear-like leaves. It does best in shade but the strap-like leaves grow well in full sun to part sun. Dig them up and store them over winter. Canna lily grows 3-14' tall in full sun with plenty of moisture. Dig them up and store them over winter, too. Elephant ears are a group of plants with large and colorful leaves, from chartreuse to almost black. They like part shade with plenty of water. Store them over winter, too. Palm grass features corrugated leaves that can be 12" long on plants that grow to 2-3' tall in full sun. Flowering maple is a slender weeping shrub that grows to 1-3' and prefers full sun and a moist soil. Banana can be grown as a tender perennial, producing big, colorful and bold leaves. They do best in full sun in moist soil. Bananas can be overwintered by digging the root, cutting back the stem to about 6", and storing like a canna. Some annuals with colorful foliage include coleus, polka dot plant, amaranthus, cockscomb, dusty miller, eucalyptus cinerea (silver dollar plant), and cuphea ignea (cigar flower).

It is good to be alone in a garden at dawn or dark, so that all its shy presences may haunt you and possess you in a reverie of suspended thought.

- James Douglas (1753-1819)

In May, remember to:

- put a ring of grit or coarse sand around a hosta to eliminate slugs;
- sharpen lawn mower blades;
- plant seedlings after mid-May;
- fertilize the lawn;
- remember to keep a garden diary;
- plant spring crops from seeds, such as, carrots, radishes, peas, spinach and beets;
- start tomato and pepper seeds indoors;
- prune spring-flowering shrubs after they bloom;
- turn houseplants 1/4 turn each time you water them so they grow straight;
- fertilize houseplants when new growth appears;
- increase watering but guard against overwatering;
- monitor plants for insect damage; if you must spray them, move the plant to a sink so you can spray the undersides of the leaves where many bugs congregate;
- if planting bare-root shrubs, soak the roots overnight before planting.

A garden is a delight to the eye, and a solace to the soil; it soothes angry passions, and produces that pleasure which is a foretaste of Paradise.

- Sa' Di (1184-1291)

What's Blooming Table

Edith Hahn displayed a stunning red orchid cactus, Jacki Kimel a lovely gesneriad, Nancy Spears a Wollemi pine tree, and Esther Behnke a vase of daffodils.

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