



The Spade & The Hoe

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From the Desk of Pamela Frank

I am still enjoying the hyacinth bean plant in my garden. The beautiful pea-like flowers in various shades of purple is matched by the deep purple seed pods that make me smile.

Hyacinth bean, or Lablab, is a twining climber from Africa. Lablab purpureus has fragrant purple pea-like flowers and deep purple flat peapods that contain black seeds with a white spot.

My brother Jimmy turned me on to the hyacinth bean but neither of us knew what it was. Jimmy told me about these lovely plants that he saw in his neighbors' yard and then took some seedpods.

Jimmy planted some seeds in the summer of 2007 and they came up like crazy.

He gave me a bag of seedpods that fall. I planted seeds in three areas of my yard this spring. On my arch trellis they have grown thick, over six feet tall and covered with purple flowers and beautiful seedpods.

I shared hyacinth bean seeds with many a garden club member this year, so I hope that there are many a fan of this lovely plant among my gardening friends.

November Program

On Tuesday, November 11th, we will meet at the police station at 7pm for a program on *Hostas in the Landscape* by Tom Micheletti.

Tom is an avid hosta grower who lives in Deer Park. His website address is www.hostapatch.com.

I pray you, mar no more trees with writing love songs in their barks.

- William Shakespeare
(1564-1616)

From As You Like It

October Program

Maria Woltmann, owner of Hlavacek Florist, presented a enjoyable demonstration on Fall, Hanukkah and Christmas decorations. Thanks also to Hospitality for the refreshments.

The thorns and briars, vermilion hue,

Now full of hips and haws are seen;

*If village prophecies be true,
They prove that winter will be keen.*

- John Clare

Herbal Teas

As we move into the winter months and begin to spend more time indoors, it's a wonderful opportunity to brew up some herbal teas from your garden. Hot herbal teas give a great deal of enjoyment on a cold, snowy day, sitting by the fire and sipping the hot fragrant tea slowly, thinking of gardens and quiet things.

Through the Garden Gate

There is something bitter-sweet about fall: the cleanup of the beds, the shutting down of the growing season when the garden looks so bare, but the quickening of the blood over the beauty of the autumn leaves, and the anticipation of the beauty of snow as it transforms the garden into a fantasy land of sparkling white.

Another delight is seeing the migratory birds passing through while old favorites arrive to spend the winter at the bird feeders aka Behnke's Bar & Grill.

The problem of the economy sinking so low is that many of us will have to pursue a more simpler life.

That's why our members' plant exchange can be so helpful. Perhaps some of us will want (need) to turn part of our flower gardens into vegetable gardens come spring to ease the crunch on our budgets.

This is a good thing. We can surely go beyond tomatoes and peppers. Beans, peas, onions, potatoes, lettuces, etc. are so easy to grow.

Esther



Magical Mistletoe

As the Viking legend goes, Balder, the god of summer sun, was slain from a dart made from the wood of a mistletoe plant. He was revived at the request of the other gods and goddesses, and mistletoe was given to the goddess of Love to look after. It was ruled that everyone who passed under it should receive a kiss, and hence it was regarded as an emblem of love, and not of hate.

Mistletoe is a semi-parasitic evergreen that lives in warmer climates like Missouri and southern Iowa. It grows on mature trees and steal nutrients from the host. The berries of mistletoe are very poisonous and should be removed before hanging the sprig.

"The fogs and excess of atmospheric humidity render this the most cheerless month of the year, and therefore every effort should be made to maintain the conservatory and other structures devoted to ornamental plants."

- The Garden Oracle, 1896

The Oak is called the king of trees,
The Aspen quivers in the breeze,
The Poplar grows up straight and tall,
The Peach tree spreads along the wall,
The Sycamore gives pleasant shade,
The Willow droops in watery glade,
The Fir tree useful timber gives,
The Beech amid the forest lives.

- Sara Coleridge
(1802-1850) *Trees*



Did You Know

Feverfew, a member of the sunflower family, has been grown for 2,000 years. Its name is from the old French "febrifuge" meaning to drive away fever, and that is exactly what the monks used it for. It was taken as a cold cure mixed with honey, or used as a gargle for sore throats. It was also believed that inserting some leaves in the nostrils would help sure a migraine.

Feverfew has been grown in the garden for its flowers since the 16th century and the Victorians cultivated varieties for bedding, dwarf, and larger ones for the back of borders.

The old herbalists thought foxgloves a cure-all for practically all ailments. In his famous *Herball*, Gerard recommended it as a cure for falling sickness, fevers, agues, liver complaints and "for cleaning the body of clammy and naughty humours." But towards the end of the 18th century, foxglove was used in the treatment of heart complaints, being the source of the drug digitalis, which is extracted from the leaves. As with belladonna and henbane, foxglove is full of harmful toxins as well as producing digitalis, so it's not a plant to mess with.

-Tips From the Old Gardeners

Cut chrysanthemums will last longer if you dip the cut ends into very hot water and then immediately into very cold water.

- *The Country Diary of Garden Lore*

Walnut is regarded as a sinister tree. It kills any vegetation planted near it. A heavy crop of walnuts indicates a harsh winter. To dream of walnuts implies unfaithfulness in relationships.

Fireplace Logs

Beechwood fires burn bright and clear
If the logs are kept a year;
Chestnuts only good they say
If for years 'tis stored away:
Birch and firwood burn too fast,
Blaze too bright and do not last.
But ashwood green and ashwood brown,
Are fit for a Queen with a golden crown.

Oaken logs, if dry and old
Keep away the winter's cold:
Poplar gives a bitter smoke,
Fills your eyes and makes you choke:
Elmwood burns like churchyard mould,
Even the very flames are cold:
Applewood will scent the room:
Pearwood smells like flowers in bloom:
But ashwood wet and ashwood dry,
A King may warm his slippers by.

- Anon

Cedar was used by the Plains Indians for spiritual purification. The Pawnee burned twigs of the cedar tree for relief from nightmares and nervous conditions. In the ancient world, incense made from the cedar tree was highly valued. The best incense came from Lebanon. Cedar is still used in closets for its scent and its properties as an insect deterrent.



Using Herbs in the Home

As you harvest and dry herbs such as thyme, rosemary, oregano, mints, lavender and any others that you will be cutting back, collect the woody stems. Once dried, you can put them together into 6-8" bundles of branches, add in some of your dried flowers for color and tie them with colored raffia. As the days and nights get cooler and you begin using your fireplace, toss in one of your bundles to release its pleasant scent.

Lavender can make a fragrant rinse water to scent the laundry or lavender buds can be placed in a small cotton bag and tossed in the dryer, giving the laundry a clean fresh smell. Bunches of lavender can be hung in closets to add fragrance.

Make a double thickness square of fabric and sew up three sides. Fill it with 1 cup rosemary, 1/2 cup thyme, 1/2 cup lemon balm or lemon verbena, 1 tbsp. small cinnamon chips, and 1 tsp. cloves. Then sew up the fourth side. The fragrance is released when you set a hot pot on it.

Sage is a strong aromatic herb used in salads, soups, pickles, cheeses, desserts, vinegars, wines, liqueurs and ales. The leaves were good to eat when fried in batter, according to Henry VIII, and better still washed down with a glass of sage beer. Sage is used as an antiseptic and astringent and can treat injuries such as if you shut your fingers in the car door or fall heavily on your tailbone.



In November, remember to:

- do not fertilize indoor plants in November, December or January as these are slow growing months;
- after frost kills annuals, remove and discard dead plants;
- after frost has killed the foliage of tender bulbs, dig them up, knock off the soil, and cut off the stems;
- store tender bulbs in a ventilated container layered with peat moss, sand, shredded newspaper or sawdust at no colder than 40°;
- after the ground freezes, spread mulch over all the beds; use shredded leaves, leaf mold, pine needles, wood chips and sawdust, shredded newspaper, and any other scrap material that will decompose;
- use wood ashes from the fireplace as mulch as it will add potash to the soil;
- it is best to clean up the garden in fall to reduce the incidence of over-wintering insects;
- hope for snow as it is a wonderful insulator, plus it washes down into soil modest amounts of atmospheric nitrogen;
- harvest the last of your sage and use it in holiday cooking;
- rake up the leaves on the grass and shred them for the compost pile or spread them over the flower beds, taking care not to cover the crowns of plants, nor put it too close to tree trunks.

*Winter seems to me
A time for tea
When all the garden
Is at rest
To sit and sip
Is best.
- Adelma Grenie Simmons*

What's Blooming Table

Remember to bring in your blooming plants or cut flowers to share their beauty with friends.

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