



# The Spade & The Hoe

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## From the Desk of Pamela Frank

I just finished making a batch of ratatouille, yum! I used my own homegrown eggplant, bell pepper, zucchini and tomatoes. Last week I made eggplant parmesan with the eggplant, double yum! This year the zucchini is very prolific so I have been cooking zucchini dishes and giving away quite a few. This morning I made zucchini in tomato sauce Italian style and canning it, whew! I have made zucchini pickles, breaded and fried zucchini, zucchini agro dolce, zucchini bread and zucchini chocolate cupcakes.

While writing this article I was watching "Everyday Italian" on the food channel and Giada was making eggplant timbale. How I have to go to the store and get smoked mozzarella, grated Romano and a basil plant. From my tomato bounty I make German red tomato jam, spaghetti sauce, stewed tomatoes, 'sun-dried' tomatoes by using my dehydrator, and plain canned tomatoes. Our summer treat for lunch is BLT sandwiches. I have been canning tomatoes since my mother-in-law taught me in 1981, except for 2003 when we moved to Glenview and I didn't have a veggie garden.

I love Kirby pickling cucumbers because they can be used for salads, eaten raw or pickled. With Kirby's I make dill pickles, sweet pickles and cucumber salad. A neighbor gave me several Kirby plants in 2004 which I had never grown before. At my former house in Morton Grove I grew concord grapes, making grape jelly once or twice and then decided to make grape juice for drinking. My neighbor in Glenview has offered me her grapes but they are hard to get at and I don't have the same gump-tion that I once had. The tomatoes are really starting to come

in. I've picked dozens of Kirby's including one that I discovered hidden that was exactly one pound. I just found another monster, a zucchini weighing five pounds. I have so much produce that it is time for me to open a veggie stand.

## September Program

On September 9th, Tuesday, we will meet at the police station at 7pm for a talk by 2 Master Gardeners on Staging your Houseplants for Winter. They will discuss lighting, watering, fertilizing, repotting and managing your plants for optimal health.

## August Program

Arlene Prchal spoke on raising butterflies from egg to butterflies. This was a great educational program, as we all love to see butterflies in our own gardens. Arlene showed us an egg, lots of caterpillars, lots of chrysalis and finally she released the hatched butterflies. What a delight! Plus the home-made ice cream afterward was yummy!

*Lavender planted among roses keeps the aphids away. Parsley grown among roses increases their scent. And do you know why we garnish so many things with parsley? Because it's an antidote to poison, so we used to put it on our guests' food as a sign that, although our cooking might not be up to scratch, we weren't trying to bump them off.*

- Tips from the Old Gardeners

## Our Website Statistics

In May, our last compiled money of statistics, we have had 759 hits, with many of the folks checking out all of our pages.

Through the Garden Gate After our fun fieldtrip to Mt. Prospect, I was asked to be a 'surrogate mother' to a caterpillar of the Eastern Black Swallowtail variety, aka Parsley Swallowtail. This little guy, appropriately named Pooper, is enjoying his new abode (read mason jar) and indulging his sweet tooth on fresh parsley (hence his common name). Rest assured I will keep you informed about his debut into society as a butterfly. But for now, I am busy finishing up on my front garden expansion project which included removing lots of grass, amending the soil, and transplanting many things from my back garden. Plus, tidying up the back beds which have become overgrown with plants, and collecting seeds for next year's plants. Finally, I am so pleased to tell you that I happened upon a hummingbird in my back yard. It was sipping nectar from the potted jasmine flowers! When done, it came to me, hovered for a moment, then flew away. WOW!



### Wise Words of Wisdom

From Eleanor Roosevelt: The future belongs to those who believe in the beauty of their dreams.

From Confucius: Wherever you go, go with all your heart.

From Milton Berle: If opportunity doesn't knock, build a door.

And from Martha Washington: The greater part of our happiness or misery depends on our mental disposition and not on our circumstances.

*"More and more I am coming to the conclusion that rain is a far more important consideration to a gardener than sun, and that one of the lesser advantages that a gardener gains in life is his thorough enjoyment of a rainy day."*

- Margaret Waterfield 1907

### Corn Gluten

Corn gluten is a natural product and safe for kids and pets. In addition to controlling weeds, it also offers nitrogen, so after you put it down, your lawn will turn a rich shade of green. Corn gluten is helpful around the bird feeder to keep birdseed from sprouting, yet will not harm birds or other wildlife.

### Plan Ahead....

The Chicago Flower and Garden Show will once again be held at Navy Pier on March 7 through March 15, 2009. Daily admission will be \$12, and parking will be \$15 on Navy Pier. The show will have educational programs, children's gardens, DIY items for sale, Farmers' Market items, gardens galore among other things. Plan to attend.



*"I value my garden more for being full of black birds than of cherries, and very frankly give them fruit for their songs."*

- Joseph Addison 1700

### Did You Know ....

that you can propagate plants from stem cuttings of the following: artemisia, perennial baby's-breath, gaillardia, asclepias, campanula, chrysanthemum, heuchera (leaf cuttings), delphinium, lavender, veronica, and oenothera, plus root cuttings from bleeding hearts, Oriental poppies, phlox, and globe thistle?

Also, you can propagate the following shrubs from softwood cuttings: barberry, beauty bush, blueberry, buddleia, clematis, forsythia, hibiscus, honeysuckle, privet, roses, spirea, clethra, weigelia, and lilac.

Raspberries are easily propagated by tip layering, division, root cuttings and hardwood cuttings. And, azaleas, arborvitae, boxwood, fir, holly, pine and yew can be started from cuttings.

So, you can have a great garden on the cheap by making your own plants.

### Slugs and Snails

The soot you can get when you have your chimney cleaned can be spread around the hosta beds to eliminate this pests, or sharp gravel, or coarse bark chippings

*"We have descended into the garden and caught three hundred slugs. How I love the mixture of the beautiful and the squalid in gardening. It makes it so like life."*

- Evelyn Underhill 1912

### Weeds, Weeds, Weeds

If you know the faces but not the names of the weeds in your garden, the address will be helpful: <http://www.rce.rutgers.edu/weeds/index-thumbnail.html>. Some indicators of soil characteristics are:

Bindweed—clay, poor drainage

Chickweed—fertile but poor drainage

Crabgrass—dry, thin, low in calcium

Dandelion—compaction, fertile, low in calcium

Dock—poor drainage

Goosegrass—poor drainage

Ground ivy—poor drainage, shady

Morning glory—hardpan

Moss—poor drainage, shade

Oxalis—stony, acid

Plantain—clay, poor drainage

Queen Anne's lace—low fertility

Quack grass—hardpan

Violets—acid, fertile, moisture

Wild onion/garlic—sandy, rich

### A Garden for Autumn Color

Often people will consider only the flowers a shrub will produce, ignoring how the plant will appear in the fall and winter. Many deciduous shrubs produce beautiful fall color. Here is a list of them: for red: Japanese barberry, burning bush, winged euonymus, cornus alba, Korean spice viburnum, red chokeberry, red-osier dogwood, fothergilla, smooth sumac, highbush blueberry, Virginia rose, arrowwood, blackhaw, and oakleaf hydrangea; for orange or yellow: royal azalea, rugosa rose, fothergilla, and witch hazel; and for reddish purple: gray dogwood and mapleleaf viburnum.

## A Buffet Table for Japanese Beetles and Deer

Research by USDA scientist T.L. Ladd has determined that the following plants are their favorites: hybrid tea roses, wine grapes, gooseberry leaves, red raspberries, American elms, corn silks, Norway maples, rose of Sharon, cabbages, Japanese maples, gray birch, Virginia creeper, linden trees, pin oaks, mountain ashes, plum trees, and giant ragweed, among others.

Plants not favored by them are: ragweeds, European white birches, black cherries, catalpas, asparagus, corn foliage, rhubarbs, Alberta peaches, cherry plums, quinces, sweet clethras, bald cypresses, and Rome apples. As you can see, the 'eat' list is a lot longer than the 'not eat' list.

Deer prefer young growth on shrubs and in vegetable gardens. Among the list of plants they dearly love are: lilies, euonymus, hostas, Japanese and China Girl hollies, evergreen azaleas, yews, arborvitaes, tulips and viburnums.

Deer seem to avoid plants that are hairy and have aromatic foliage, so herbs are safe. Others are astilbes, barberries, butterfly bushes, boxwoods, smoke bush, foxgloves, epimediums, irises, daffodils, pachysandra, lilacs and andromedas. Some people claim success with bags of human hair tied to twigs in their gardens, and some tie small bars of fragrant soaps to tree branches.



## In September, remember to:

- make sure your garden gets 1" of water every 5 days;
- cut back straggly annuals to promote new growth;
- divide perennials;
- continue to weed;
- plant trees and shrubs;
- plant spring-blooming bulbs;
- cover newly-planted bulbs with chicken wire covered with soil and mulch to keep squirrels and chipmunks out;
- take stem cuttings from geraniums, begonias, impatiens and coleus to have plants next spring;
- start bringing in houseplants before night temperatures drop below 50'; soak the soil well to dislodge insects;
- vacuum up the Asian lady beetles and empty the bag into the trash car outdoors;
- harvest herbs for drying or freezing; pot up some for fresh winter use.

## Toxic Garden Plants

The whole plant of monkshood is poisonous. The seeds of castor beans can be fatal. Other plants are anemone family (Pasque flower, thimbleweed, windflower, delphinium, larkspur), nightshade family (nicotiana, Chinese lantern), autumn crocus, lily-of-the-valley, foxglove, buttercup family (helleborus), iris, yellow flag. Plus jack-in-the-pulpit, baptisia, celandine poppy, water hemlock, datura family (member of the nightshade family) euphorbia, lobelia (cardinal flower, great blue lobelia), mayapple, bitter-sweet and false hellebore. Also some can irritate the skin like amaryllis, hyacinth, snowdrops, spider lily, squill, Star of Bethlehem, poison ivy, poison oak, yarrow, aster, chrysanthemum, Queen Anne's lace, bleeding heart, pelargonium, tomato, potato, gas plant, and lettuce.

## What's Blooming Table

Keep this feature in mind for our September meeting.

[www.glenviewgardeners.org](http://www.glenviewgardeners.org)

Pamela Frank, President  
832-0630  
lp2jfrank@hotmail.com

Gloria Tralmer, Vice-President  
480-0848  
gtralmer@aol.com

Sheldon Kimel, Treasurer  
657-0772  
jackishelly@sbcglobal.net

Marlene Bothfeld, Programs  
205-0184

Holly Jansen, Garden Walk  
729-7729  
hollyjj77@yahoo.com

Nancy Spears, Publicity  
nancy@spears.net

Jane Prentis, Circulation  
jrprentis@msn.com

Bonnie Kimoto, Hospitality  
486-9048  
bonnie.kimoto@sbcglobal.net

Esther Behnke, Editor  
498-4178  
eabehnke@earthlink.net

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[ggardeners@earthlink.net](mailto:ggardeners@earthlink.net)

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