



# The Spade & The Hoe

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## From the Desk of Pamela Frank

I first spotted the flowers in August 2007 while driving east on Glenview road, and in front of a house were 6" white trumpet-like flowers coming from a large green hosta. I was stunned! Why hadn't I noticed them before? I consulted my hosta manual and plant catalogs, but it wasn't in any of them. It was really hard to find information because I didn't know its name. I went to Border's and perused the shelves until I found the one hosta book they carried. I finally found the flower. The name of the hosta is, taa daa!, hosta pantaginea. The leaves are light green and the flowers are very fragrant. Some catalogs offer an offspring called hosta Aphrodite. I had to have this plant so I went back to the hosta house and finally found someone home. I asked if I could have a hosta. The homeowner said her son took care of the garden and could I come back in October. October? I wanted the plant now. I went back in October and the homeowner said that her son didn't want to remove any plants but to come back in the spring. Oh no! How could they? I went back in the spring of this year and was given several of the hostas. I later dropped off some plume poppies for their garden. The funny thing about this story is that now I have about 1/2 dozen pantaginea plants. I was telling Holly about my disappointment at a garden club meeting. She said she has that hosta with the huge white flowers and she will share it with me. I took dear sweet Holly up on her offer this spring. After I joined Glenview Gardeners in 2005, I was hanging out with dear Miss Brigitte and she offered me a plain light green hosta. Thinking it might be Sum and Substance, I planted it and called it Brigitte hosta. It

bloomed this summer and, guess what, it is the pantaginea. It's a funny thing that when you have an experience with something, a car, a dog or a plant, you suddenly seem to notice them in your daily life more often. This August when the hosta pantaginea was in bloom, I enjoyed seeing them in many gardens.

## October Program

On October 23, Thursday, we will meet at the police station at 7pm for a demonstration by Maria Woltmann, owner of Hlavacek Florist on Fall, Hanukkah and Christmas Decorations.

## September Program

Anne Gachuhi and Juanita Crear-Price, master gardeners from the U. of I. Extension gave an excellent program on Staging Your Houseplants for the Winter. Their program was packed full of useful information and I for one came away with a better appreciation for the requirements of houseplants. Thanks also to Dorothy Barz for the refreshments.

*A solitary maple on a woodside  
flames in single scarlet, recalling  
nothing so much as the  
daughter of a noble house  
dressed for a fancy ball, with  
the whole family gathered round  
to admire her before she goes.*

Henry James, 1843-1916

**Sicilian fairies** made their homes under large rosemary plants and rocked their babies in the rosemary flowers.

Through the Garden Gate  
As I reported at the September program meeting, little Pooper developed into a Black Swallowtail one morning. I let her (it's a female) out onto my parsley plant and there she stayed for a couple of hours while her wings dried. Then she took off to enjoy the flowers. Females have a band of blue on the edge of their wings while males have a band of brown.

Returning from a trip to Door County, I discovered that in the previous 5 days, my rain gauge recorded 5.25" of rain! No wonder everything is so lush. Tomatoes are coming in heavily and they taste so good. Cucumbers, too. Peppers never do well for me. The expanded front bed is finished and I have transplanted things from the back to the front. But now comes all the work of autumn: cleaning cushions, painting furniture, washing windows and screens, tidying up the garden flower beds. So much to do, but it is done one thing at a time, while enjoying the fall weather.



### Rabbits Love These Plants

Crocus, gladiolus, grape hyacinth, lilies, tulips, astilbes, cosmos, gazanias, impatiens, nasturtiums, liatris, pansies, daisies, petunias, snapdragons, beans, beets, lettuce, peppers, rose canes, raspberry canes and spinach, to name a few.

### Rabbits Don't Like These

Currents, gooseberries, ageratum, asters, acanthus, bee-balm, gaillardias, bleeding hearts, ajugas, candytufts, geraniums, daylilies, ferns, tiarellas, forget-me-nots, foxgloves, hollyhocks, baptisias, Siberian irises, Lady's Mantles, primroses, meadow rue, monkshoods, peonies, phloxes, salvias, onions, daffodils, asparagus, leeks, potatoes, rhubarbs, squash, tomatoes, basil, marjoram, mint, oregano, parsley, tarragon, begonias, pelargoniums, calendulas, cleome, lamb's ears, columbines, lobelias, lavenders, gooseneck loosestrife, lily-of-the-valley, sedum, veronicas, artemisias, Virginia bluebells and coreopsis, to name a few.

*"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

*I love snow, and all the forms  
Of the radiant frost;  
I love waves, and winds, and storms,  
Everything almost  
Which is Nature's, and may be  
Untainted by man's misery.*

- Percy Bysshe Shelley 1792-1822, from 'Rarely, Comest Thou'



*Everybody talks about the weather,  
but nobody does anything about it.*  
- Charles Dudley Warner, 1829-1900

### Did You Know ....

Gardeners have a leg up on 'going green'. Here are some cleaning tips from Mike Nowak made of ordinary household ingredients.

Baking soda—it provides the grit when scrubbing. It also fizzes when mixed with water, vinegar or lemon, to speed up cleaning.

Hydrogen peroxide—put the 3% solution from the drugstore into a spray bottle and use it instead of your usual kitchen and bath cleaner. It cleans, disinfects, and bleaches.

Borax—that team of twenty mules disinfects, bleaches and deodorizes. Lemons—lemon juice is a good grease cutter. Bottled works almost as well as fresh squeezed.

Olive oil—it's a furniture polish (as well as a dry skin lotion).

Distilled white vinegar—A natural disinfectant also breaks up dirt. Plus it's a great window cleaner. Apple cider and red wine vinegars work, too, but they can stain.

Washing soda—this removes stains and helps unblock pipes, but it is caustic so wear rubber gloves.

Vegetable based liquid castile soap—is a non-petroleum cleaner that can be used for all kinds of jobs. So, go green, and help our poor planet!

*Who has seen the wind?  
Neither you nor I;  
But when the trees bow down  
their heads  
The wind is passing by.*

- Christina Rossetti, 1830-1894,  
From 'The Wind'

### Good Soil: Plants Most Needed Item for Success

Do you have heavy clay soil? Are your plants puny and weak? Now is the time to change that. Dig up the plants in that area (save or discard), fork it all up, or borrow a Mantis rototiller. Then, and this is crucial, cover the area with 3-4" of your compost (assuming you have a compost pile) or run to the store and buy some Cotton Burr Compost. Your compost doesn't even have to be finished cooking. Finally, dig it all in again. Leave it fallow all winter and in the spring, dig in some more of your compost. Now you are ready to plant. If your whole garden is clay soil, do a section each spring and fall. It will take a few years, but in the end, you will have a garden of which you can be proud.

### What's a Pest & Who's a Friend?

Earthworms are good friends as they bring soil to the surface, oxygenate it and mix up the nutrients. Birds, centipedes, spiders, ladybugs, lacewings, black beetles, hoverflies and toads devote nearly all their time to stripping your garden of soil and plant pests, such as aphids. Toads do sterling work in gorging on slugs and snails. So, aphids and earwigs and those awful Japanese ladybeetles (that look like our own ladybugs) and those iridescent Japanese beetles that eat practically every flower in sight are PESTS.



## **Nasturtiums—From Rich Colors to Poor Man’s Capers**

Nasturtiums are the first oranges and golds of fall. The cooler evenings have revived them and they put on a great show now. They self-seed, but if you like real capers (though sometimes they can be a bit salty), here is a great recipe. You’ll need to pick the seeds while they are still green and firm. For every cup of seeds, you need 1 cup of white wine vinegar, 1 tsp. salt, and 5-8 peppercorns, slightly crushed.

Rinse and drain the seeds and blot them well on paper towels. Next, pour them into a pint canning jar. Bring the vinegar, salt and peppers to a boil and pour this over the seeds. Seal and refrigerate the jar. Let them sit undisturbed for about 3 months, then enjoy!

You can spice them up by tossing in garlic, onion, celery seed, dill or thyme. Use them in salads and on vegetable and fish dishes.

- from Holly Jansen

## **Planting Techniques**

Every year I have volunteer tomatoes come up here and there. I never planted cherry tomatoes, yet I have a prolific tomato plant furnishing me with tasty cherry tomatoes. And sometimes I have a melon plant appear. The secret is, this comes from my compost! A fellow I know has several large squash vines and a ‘mystery’ melon from his compost. Also, he has a row of sunflowers along his fence that came from seeds he put out for the birds and other critters.



## **In October, remember to:**

- continue planting spring bulbs until the ground freezes;
- 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°;
- spread compost over the garden beds;
- if black spot was a problem, pick up all infected leaves and discard;
- protect tomato, pepper and cucumber plants from early frost by covering them with newspaper or blankets, removing the covers early the next morning;
- after a hard frost, dig up vegetable plants and discard;
- bring in houseplants before night temperatures drop below 50°; soak the soil well to dislodge insects;
- take cuttings of favored annuals to pot up and keep for next year’s garden;
- mow the grass until it goes dormant, shredding fallen leaves and leaving them on the lawn for nourishment;
- trap earwigs in rolled-up damp newspaper and toss them paper into the trash in the morning.

## **Fragrant Fall & Winter Plants**

Mums, tuberose, and sweet autumn clematis for fall, and paperwhites, hyacinth, citrus, jasmine, lavender, gardenia, scented geraniums, and hoyo for winter.

## **What’s Blooming Table**

Thanks to Susan Fine for bringing her Norwich canary crocosmia, to Bonnie & Ray Kimoto for their hydrangeas & Chinese lanterns, and to Roshni & Noshir Khory for their violets in a pot.

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