



The Spade & The Hoe

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From the Desk of Pamela Frank

I have been doing a little cleaning up in the garden on the few warm days that we've had. I broke off the dead stems of the coneflowers which are about 4' tall with a dried seed head on top. I pulled down the dead twining stems of the hyacinth bean from the arbor and rescued any seed pods that looked viable. Across from the hyacinth bean on the arbor is (was) a very prolific clematis (Nellie Moser) that had been sheared off at ground level, probably by rabbits. I wonder how many more have met that fate. Those d#*^d rabbits. Many of my roses have had canes shirred off. The canes are lying on the ground sliced cleanly as if with a pruner and are a danger to dog paws.

The tulips, daffodils and hyacinths are up. Crocus, snowdrops, scillas, and winter aconites, even primroses (believe it or not) are blooming. Some hostas, peonies, bleeding hearts and other things are popping up. So wonderful! After the heavy blanket of snow melted, some perennials were still green, not lush, but are showing themselves.

I've been pulling weeds, creeping charley and garlic ginger. They probably could survive a nuclear explosion. My maple tree in the backyard got a little haircut by the resident tree squirrel; I've picked up about 30 small branches. Finally Larry brought out the garden ornaments and statues. Putting out the statuary and other whatnots around the yard really cheers up the barrenness that is my backyard.

There are always newer, easier, and better ways to grow a good garden, and I've spent a lifetime trying to find them.

April Program

On Tuesday, April 14th, we will meet at the police station for a program on *Let's Grow Shrubs* by Adele Klein.

*Green, I love you green.
Green wind. Green
branches.*

- Federico Garcia Lorca
(1898-1936)

March Program

Wally Schmidt presented a program on Organic Gardening and Less Toil with Good Soil. We learned to rely less on chemicals and more on our own compost.

A child said 'What is the grass?' fetching it to me with full hands.

How could I answer the child? I do not know what it is any more than he.

- Walt Whitman (1819-1892), from *Leaves of Grass*

Membership List Additions and Changes

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What percentage of the earth's water is drinkable?

Through the Garden Gate I've been busy making newspaper 'jiffy pots' and planting seeds of vegetables and flowers. It's exciting to see the tiny seeds send up shoots and watching them grow taller and stronger day by day. It's even more rewarding when you consider how much money you save by making your own bedding plants. Marjorie Cox and I attended a lecture at Chalet on growing vegetables. Scott Thalmann told us that their packets of vegetable seed already had to be reordered, that they had run out of some varieties. Just what Wally told us last month, too. Seems everybody is getting on the bandwagon to grow their own vegetables! If you've never done more than tomatoes before, start a small garden, maybe 5'x5', so you are not overwhelmed. And plant things that your family loves to eat and things that are easy to grow. Carrots are so simple, as is Black-seeded Simpson lettuce. Beans and peas are also easy. Enlist the whole family in choosing the ones for your garden.

Esther

Name Tags

As you come in to the meeting room, please stop by the table and pick up a name tag. We have several new members and it would be easier for them to make friends if they knew our names.

The two keys to success in gardening are understanding how plants grow and understanding how to provide them with a better home.

- Sheryl London

Heads Up on the Garden Walk and Plant Sale

Sunday, June 14th, is the date of our annual garden walk and plant sale. Just a reminder: kindly label each plant you provide with its name and preference of sun or shade. And, think about potting up those plants as



your divide your overgrown plants. We need lots of plants for the sale.

When all is said and done, even after 10,000 years of husbandry, we still have much to learn about what makes our gardens flourish.

- Shelley Goldbloom

Answer from page 1:

Removing the salty seas, and the water that is tied up in glaciers, that leaves us with less than 1% of potable water.

Fragrant Plants

Spring bloomers: azaleas, primulas, daffodils, Dame's Rockets, fothergilla gardenii shrubs, freesias, grape hyacinths, heliotropes, hyacinths, lilacs, pansies, dianthus, snowdrops, sweet peas, tulips, and woodruffs.

Summer bloomers: angel's trumpets, alyssums, monardas, buddleias, calamints, clematis, creeping thymes, oenotheras, herbs, honeysuckle vines (especially with white or yellow flowers), hostas, irises, lavenders, lilies, mock oranges, moonflowers, nasturtiums, nicotianas, peonies, petunias, phlox, roses, and summersweet (clethra alnifolia) shrubs.

Autumn bloomers: chrysanthemums, dropseeds, sweet autumn clematis, and tuberoses.

Winter bloomers: paperwhites, hyacinths, citrus trees, jasmines, lavandulas, gardenias, scented geraniums, and hoyas.

If I keep a green bough in my heart, the singing bird will come.

- Anonymous

Bring hither the pink and the purple columbine,
With gillyflowers;
Bring coronation, and sops of wine,
Worn of paramours;
Strew me the ground with daffodowndillies,
And cowslips, and kingcups, and loved lilies.

- Edmund Spenser (1551-1599)

From *The Shepherd's Calendar*

The Gardeners' Container Challenge

The board suggests we each fill a container with plants of our choice early in the season. After a summer of tender, loving care, the containers will be photographed. Members will vote on a few winners, and prizes will be awarded. The containers may be hanging, patio pots, window boxes, etc., but must be planted by the gardener. So...start planning and planting!

Starting Seeds Indoors

According to the Chalet Garden Center, they recommend using soil-less planting mix or seed starting mix. Be sure to use something like popsicle sticks to label each tray or row. Either make your own newspaper pots or purchase peat pots. Use artificial light to give the seeds a head start; the fluorescent bulbs should be 16" above the tray to start and turned on for 16 hours a day. Raise the lamps as the seedlings grow. When getting ready to transplant, work your soil with 6 parts top soil, 1 part perlite and 1 part peat moss to give your seedlings a great start. Use soluble fertilizer like Plant Starter. Be sure to harden them off gradually over a period of a week. Seedlings need a constantly moist but not soggy soil. If the temperature is 70', they need 1" of water each week; if 80', they need 1 1/2" of water; and if 90' temps hit, your plants need 2" of water each week.

Tomatoes are either determinant or indeterminant. Determinant means that they grow only so high and all their fruit ripen at the same time. They are best for small gardens. Indeterminant means that they keep growing tall and their fruit ripen all the time the weather is favorable. Which-ever you plant, plant them deeper than their original planting depth. They will grow roots all along the stem and make for healthier plant and more fruit. Put 1/2 c. of fertilizer and a handful of compost in the planting hole.

Japanese Tomato Cages

This idea is getting a lot of publicity lately. The idea is simply this: Before you plant any of your tomatoes, insert a large tomato cage into the soil. Then, on the OUTSIDE of the cage, plant your tomatoes by each of the cage's legs and tie the plants to the legs as they grow up. Into the center of the cage, dump a load of your compost, whether 'finished' or not. When you water the tomatoes, direct the stream into the center so that the water can filter through the compost and bring good stuff to the roots of your plants. Only add 1 cup of fertilizer around the roots of each tomato at the end of June. Do not fertilize any more, as you will be adding too much nitrogen and will only get leaves and not much fruit.

Growing and Planting Tips for Peppers, Cukes, Beans and Squash

Peppers can be transplanted without hardening off. Leave a soaker hose beside them all season. Cucumber seeds are planted directly outdoors with a growing support. Bush bean seeds also are planted outdoors, but need a 12" fence around them as rabbits love them. Zucchini are so easy to grow. Try Park's Green Whopper II. For summer squash try Yellow Straight neck. Winter squash is difficult to grow due to squirrel problems. Use wood chips around the squash to deter the squash vine borer females from laying eggs.

Who ever bends a knee when violets grow,
A hundred secret things shall he know.

- Rachel

Field



In April, remember to:

- sow cool-weather crops, such as beets, carrots, lettuce, peas, cabbages, broccolis, Brussels sprouts and spinach as soon as soil has dried out and the soil is 40';
- cut back perennials left standing last fall;
- start warm-season vegetable seeds indoors 6-8 weeks before the last frost date of May 16th, approximately, including tomatoes, peppers, eggplant, corn, squash, beans and basil; they need the soil to be 70' to be transplanted outdoors;
- plant strawberries now;
- prune out dead raspberry canes;
- cut back grasses before new growth begins;
- divide perennials before growth starts;
- plant garlic, leeks, onions, turnips by the end of April.

Tips for Gardeners

Check out homedepot.com and sign up for the Home Depot Garden Club for monthly hints, coupons for garden supplies, and related information.

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- Dick Raymond

Best Catalogs for Vegetable Seeds, per Chalet Garden Center

1. Totally Tomatoes
2. Park's Seed Company
3. Burpee Seeds
4. Renee's Seeds

Read the packets to learn whether the selection has disease resistance, the number of days until harvest (not the number of days since you started the seed indoors), how long it takes the seed to germinate, and the size of the plant. Heirloom tomatoes generally are not disease resistant.

What's Blooming Table

Bring your flowering plants for show & tell at our April meeting.

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