



# The Spade & The Hoe

Volume 8 Issue 3

March 2010

## From the Desk of Judy Oppgard

Top o' the morn'in gardeners, Thanks to all who braved the snow and made it to the last club meeting. The drive wasn't too bad after all and we had a great valentine-themed party with heart cookies, pink cupcakes, and hot chocolate. The Behnkes' Italian garden presentation was wonderful, especially with the short notice due to the scheduled speaker's cancellation. Spring starts at the end of the month for which everyone is looking forward. The cold has been brutal but at least our plants had a great snow cover. My spring 2010 gardening goal is to establish all our gardens on the National Wildlife Registry. Most of our gardens will already qualify. It's simply a matter of supplying food, water, and shelter. Our native plants are the food, evergreens and birdhouses serve as shelter, and water features like a birdbath to supply the water. I will have informational handouts at the next meeting. Also at the next meeting, the Grove's land steward Wayne Regowski will be telling us about his quest to rid the woods of invasive plant species. I'm sure we'll recognize them from our own yards! This being the month we associate with green let's further our attempt to become as 'green' as possible in our environmental endeavors. Gardeners should be especially keen to protect the planet. Let's make an extra effort to use 'green' products, go paperless by emailing, banking online, & using reusable grocery bags. Erinn go Brach!

## March Program

On Tuesday, March 9th, we will meet at the police station at 7pm for a program on *The Fight Against Invasive Species* by Wayne Regowski of the Grove. He is an educator and advocate of environmental restoration.



## February Program

Due to the blizzard, the speaker declined to travel north, so Esther and Dan Behnke stepped in and presented their program, *The Gardens of Italy*, followed by gardening giveaways. Thanks to Jacki Kimel for the Valentine treats, and to Judy for the Valentine decorations.

## Chicago Flower & Garden Show

March 6-14, 2010

Be sure to attend this exciting show. After a bleak winter, it's nice to see flowers! They have some really great speakers lined up, plus the gardens that they create are unique.

*Bread feeds the body, but the flowers feed the soul.*

- The Koran

## Through the Garden Gate

The past month was a time of trial in many ways. First we had that blizzard, then my computer crashed, causing me tremendous stress as I struggled to replace all of my software and data, then my dear neighbor's wife died. I admit I'm one of the few people who thought the blizzard was beautiful. The sun glinting off the snow covered branches, the play of light and shadow on the garden—it was incredibly lovely. And driving in it was not at all difficult. The computer, however, was different. It took weeks to get every file straightened out. Thanks to Carole and Dan, I am back in business. My neighbor was another matter. We've known each other for over 40 years, and talked over the fence and in our houses. She will be missed.

But, now is the time to start seeds indoors. Check to see that the plants will transplant easily. Some don't like to be moved. If you start them in paper pots, or peat pots, the whole thing can be buried and the plant won't notice a thing. Also, check on the harvest dates so you start them in plenty of time. Have fun!

## Chalet Garden Center

Here are some of the lecture series they offer:

Mar. 12 & 13 - 2010  
"Plant of the Week" introductions

Mar. 19 & 20 - Creating eco-gardens with Dennis Paige

Mar. 26 & 27 - Jim Nau's favorite plants for 2010

Fridays and Saturdays  
10a.m.

## Website Statistics

Last month we had 1,378 people visit our webpage and they requested to see 498 pages. We are noticed!

Members: please send Esther or Carole your photos of our gardens to be uploaded to our website.

*What nature delivers to us is never stale, because what nature creates has eternity in it.*  
- Isaac Bashevis Singer

## Plant Combinations

Do you wonder if certain plants will look good together? Try them out in a pot first. Some great combinations are:

For sun: yarrow 'moonshine', catmint, and fountain grass (pennisetum)

For shade: brunnera 'Jack Frost', hosta, and Japanese painted fern

For foliage: Heuchera 'Obsidian', hosta 'Thunderbolt' and carex 'Evergold'



*Confronted with the vision of a beautiful garden, we see beautiful about ourselves, as a part of nature.*

- Jeff Cox

## Did You Know ....

March is a good time to apply dormant sprays before tender buds and leaves start to emerge. Sprays are highly effective against apple scab. Apply on a calm day, with temperatures around 40° and when there is no danger of a freeze for 24 hours.

If you haven't sharpened your pruning tools yet, take them to the hardware store. Use clippers for twiggy growth, loppers for small stems and branches, and a pruning saw for heavier growth.

Dig trees and shrubs for transplanting before the buds break.

Prune out raspberry canes that fruited last year. The canes are biennial: grow the 1st year and fruit the 2nd.

Eliminate excessive sucker growth on ornamental shrubs. Cut them down to the ground.

## March Fact

Watch for tender crocus, tulip and daffodil shoots. They should remain under mulch or compost until all danger of freezing is past.

*God, I can push the grass apart  
And lay my finger on Thy heart!*  
- Edna St. Vincent Millay



*Touch the earth, love the earth, honor the earth.*

- Henry Beston

## Garden Tips

1. Spread at least 2" of organic matter on clay soil and work it in 4-6" deep.
2. Azaleas love left-over tea and tea leaves.
3. Want gorgeous roses? Bury fish entrails next to them.
4. Mix 2 tbsp Epsom salts to 1 gal. water, then apply 1 pint to each tomato plant.
5. Mix 1/2 c. Epsom salts to 1/2 bushel wood ashes, then sprinkle around daffodils.
6. Sprinkle coffee grounds over carrot plants to repel root maggots.
7. Crushed egg shells mixed into the soil around cabbages, broccoli, cauliflower provide extra calcium which they need.
8. Herbs like lime and gritty soil.
9. Have fun with hydrangea color by controlling the pH of the soil; acid soil (4.5 to 5.5) produces blue flowers; alkaline soil (7.0 to 7.5) gives pink ones.
10. To make soil more acid, add sulfur (1/3 lb. per 25 sq. ft.)
11. To make soil more alkaline, add lime (1 lb. per 25 sq. ft.) Wood ashes also increase the alkalinity of soil. Use half the amount.

- Tips for the Lazy Gardener, by Linda Tilgner

## Photos Wanted!!!!

If you have a really great photo of your garden, send it to Esther in an email, making the photo as large as you can. We will put it up on our website. The photos will be changed regularly during the year.

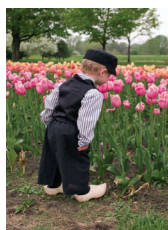
## Plan for a Butterfly Garden

The bed needs full sun, and little summer tending. Include: Russian sage and a hardy hibiscus. In front of them, plant 4 gloriosa daisies, 5 dwarf dahlias, 4 petunias, 3 more of a different color, 10-15 purple cone-flowers, 2 shrub roses of different colors, 3 balloon flowers, 1 baby's breath, 2 verbascum, 3 red salvia, 6 candytuft, 3 nicotiana, 2-4 canna of different colors, 1 floribunda rose, 1 coral bells, 2 phlox, 2 agastache, 1 globe thistle, 3 gaillardias, 3 white coneflowers, 3 tall marigolds, 1 dwarf monarda, 3 yarrow, 2 lady's mantles, and 3 dwarf marigolds.

When you get them home, set them on the bed, still in their pots, and rearrange them according to heights. Make room for a birdbath as you'll have lots of birds and butterflies visiting, and for a stepping stone or two so butterflies can dry off their wings. Then, plant and enjoy!

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

- James Douglas



## In March, remember to:

- Fertilize houseplants as they begin new growth;
- Start summer-blooming bulbs and tubers indoors in moist, soil-less mix;
- Grow herbs on a sunny windowsill;
- Repot houseplants if they are root bound and increase pot size by 1";
- When soil temperatures are consistently in the 50s, sow seeds of cool-season vegetables directly into the garden;
- Cut to the ground those grasses and perennials left from last year;
- Prune autumn-flowering clematis to 12-18" tall;
- Prune roses when forsythia begin to bloom;
- Compost, compost, compost;
- Add compost to vegetable and flower beds;
- Visit the Chicago Flower and Garden Show at Navy Pier;
- Propagate houseplants for the Garden Walk & Plant Sale;
- Divide perennials as soon as the ground is workable.

*The Earth is our mother, She cares for us. The Earth is our mother, we care for her.*

- Native American Saying

## Composting Materials

Bird-cage cleanings, dust from vacuum cleaner, pine needles, feathers, fish scraps, garden residues, grass clippings, hair, kitchen wastes (parings, egg shells, coffee grounds, tea leaves, vegetable and fruit trimmings, etc.), leaves, farm manures, nut shells, peat and sphagnum moss, sawdust, seaweed, wood chips, and rotted wood.

## What's Blooming Table

Remember to bring your blooming plant to show us.

## www.glenviewgardeners.org

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