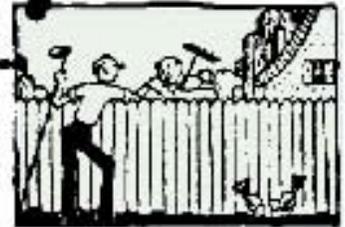




The Garden Spray

Bulletin of the Men's Garden Club of Minneapolis, Inc
2008, Volume 66, Number 02



Upcoming Events

Date	Location	Event
February 12th	LHC	Tom Carlson
March 18th	Macys	Macys Flower Show

LHC = Lake Harriet Church (4901 Chowen Ave. S., Minneapolis)
WLC = Westwood Lutheran Church

FEBRUARY SPEAKER TOM CARLSON OF HOSTASDIRECT.COM

Local entrepreneur Tom Carlson will tell us about his two web-based businesses, HostasDirect.com and IDEalGardenMarkers.com. HostasDirect.com has been in operation several years, offering 400 varieties of hosta in three different size options; this year they will also be adding a line of heuchera to complement the shade/part shade garden. HostasDirect.com has wonderful pictures of their offerings and also hosts the largest searchable hosta database in the world.

Tom will share his love of hosta with us, sharing pictures of new plants as well as old favorites with commentary. He will tell us about the different sizes and growth rates of hosta, and what the industry means by their terminology; he will discuss planting various hosta for best chance of success in terms of light and weather exposure; he will fill us in on common problems and how to treat them.

IDEalGardenMarkers.com is a new venture for Tom and he will show some samples of various types of garden markers available through this web site and how they work to stand up to the challenges of sun and weather exposure in our harsh climate.

February Dinner Meeting: Tuesday February 12th, 2008

Gathering and Conversation	-----6:00 pm
Dinner	-----6:30 pm
Business Meeting	-----Approx. 7:00 pm
Program	-----Approx. 7:30 pm

Dinner Reservations

Permanent reservations for the dinner meeting are in effect. Reservations or cancellations are required by

the Friday before the meeting. Call or e-mail Carole Anne Brekke (952-435-6029, numsix24@comcast.net) for your reservation or cancellation.



Thoughts from the Prez

by *Larry Larson*

We now have transitioned from outside gardening to inside gardening, meaning most of us have begun to pay a lot more attention to our houseplants than we did during the summer. Here are a few tips for inside gardeners on a wide range of subjects:

Many of use love our houseplants but also love our cats. Randi and I have two cats, Ole and Lena, and have always owned cats. But cats like to dig in our houseplants. Here's a couple of ideas to prevent that. First, plant a special planter or pot with plants cats love, like sprouted catnip, oats, rye grass or several containers of that special cat grass you can buy in pet stores. Place this container where cats can easily reach it. So, while they are munching what you want them to munch, they may leave your plants alone.

But wait a minute, you say, your cat DIGS in the soil! Here's one solution: take a piece of double-sided carpet tape and put it across the rim of the pot. Since cats don't like sticky things on their paws, they may leave the pot alone.

Do your plants need a shower? Ever so often, it is not a bad idea to take a shower – with your plants! Plants love a gentle, warm shower, so put them at the back of your tub or shower area and let a fine mist fall onto them from the shower. They love the water and it will also wash off dust and insects from your plant leaves. Leave your plants in the shower overnight and return them to their natural place in the morning.

Do your plants suffer from too little natural light? Take a swivel necked light, put a 100 watt bulb in, and shine it directly onto the plant, about 6-8 inches away.

Do that for 8 hours a day, and your plant will love you. It will also produce more compact stems, rather than those long, leggy plants that are the result of too little light.

If you're planting in terra cotta pots, make sure you submerge the terra cotta pot completely in water before planting anything in it. The reason? The dry clay of the terra cotta pot will soak all the water out of your potting mix.

Don't give your plants the cold shower! Plants like luke warm water. Water that is too cold or too hot can send them into shock.

If you have a fern that constantly gets droopy, mix up a batch of very weak tea and give it to your plant. Do this once per week until your plant is back to looking great again!

Houseplants can also be livened up with a dose of gelatin. Dissolve one envelope of unflavored gelatin in a cup of hot water. Add three cups of cold water, then feed your plants this concoction once per month. This will give your plants an extra nitrogen kick that will help them grown.

Want to make a cheap greenhouse? Put a sheet of plastic in your bathtub, then stack some newspapers on top of the plastic. Put your houseplants on the paper, then put about an inch of lukewarm water in the tub. Close the shower curtain, turn on the light, and walla, your plants are now in a greenhouse. If you're going on a short trip, this method will help keep your plants healthy until you return.

And here's one last suggestion: when you receive some of the plant magazines in the mail, don't throw them away! Bring them to the next garden meeting.



A Note from the Editor

Editor's Note:

Ah, winter! The older I get, the more I appreciate winter. Especially when we have a nice cover of snow to protect our gardens from the bitter cold and dessicating winds. Even though I got frostbite on my nose the other day, I really enjoy taking a break and resting up for the next gardening year. (Unlike Phil Smith, who is no doubt enjoying his Florida garden right now, or Jerry and Lee Shannon who probably have all sorts of interesting things under lights.)

And the rest period is about to end. Any time now, I will be pulling out the elephant ear tubers to see what has survived so far and get the ones that haven't rotted or dried up potted up. And I'll need to find my Cannas Tropicanna and Pretoria and get them under lights, since they seem to take some time to get started. And, of course, I need to get those seeds ordered. In the old days, I used to enjoy growing things from seed that I could also buy at the local garden stores. Now, I'm much more likely to buy flats of Salvia "Victoria Blue" and only start things from seed that I can't count on finding around town. So I'll probably keep starting Ageratum 'Blue Horizon' and Salvia 'Coral Nymph'. But I'll probably just go out and buy Profusion White zinnias. I'm also thinking of making an excursion to Brewery Creek to look at peppers for Phil instead of growing any from seed. Phil likes to look at his hot peppers growing -- and he even weeds and mulches them -- but we never really do anything with them. We had excellent specimens of Mucho Nacho and Holy Mole' (what great names)

that never made it to the table or the freezer. I noticed yesterday that it was still light when I headed home at 5:30. And typically the coldest week of the year is the last week in January. By February 15th, cities stop maintaining outdoor ice rinks because it's too warm. Our rest is almost over!



MARCH PROGRAM PREVIEW

Note date and time change!

On March 18 (the 3rd Tuesday instead of the 2nd) we will gather after 5:00PM for conversation, have dinner at 5:30, and then have Dale Bachman of Bachman's describe the behind the scenes preparations for this year's first floor Macy's Flower Show Floranova, featuring tropicals from Cuba, Central America and Mexico. We will then board a bus at about 6:30 to travel to Macy's in downtown Minneapolis to view the show, and return to the church about 8:30. The reasons for the date and time change are due to the Flower Show running from March 15-30 (after the 2nd Tuesday), and Macy's closing at 8:00 PM. Please note the date change on your calendar and don't miss enjoying this breath of spring with your gardening friends!

Members on the mend:

Clyde Thompson is recovering for heart surgery.

Elaine Spiegel is doing well after surgery this month.

Former member Phil Peterson, who is now 98 years old, has suffered a hip fracture. He is recovering at the Walker Residence at 37th and Bryant in South Minneapolis.

CLUB FINANCIALS

Balance as of 1/15/08
Checking 2,499.67
Cash 100.00
CD 5662.59

(cont. on page 5)



January Meeting Notes

Program Notes. Our speaker, Carrie Larson from McHutchison Company, was accompanied by Linda Toomey from Proven Winners (www.provenwinners.com.) There are 198 Proven Winners currently on the market, with another 678 cultivars in propagation. Proven Winners are garden tested, and have to perform well across the country. They have 63 trialing stations in the U.S. One nice point that both Linda and Carrie brought up was that many Proven Winners are comparatively sterile, so those of us who can't stand to weed out a stray seedling might end up with less of a jumble!



Carrie Larson from McHutchison Company



Stan Crist received his Outstanding Service Award



MGCM member Peter Olin announced his retirement as the Director of the Minnesota Landscape Arboretum



MGCM TO RECEIVE \$1,000.00 GRANT FOR SCHOLARSHIPS

The club has received word through Bob Livingston that a \$1,000.00 grant has been approved to supplement club funds for scholarships. Northwestern Mutual Life through their Quiet Gift program has accepted our request submitted in September. Due to the efforts of Bob Livingston who provided the information and Kent Petterson who wrote the grant the club will be able to continue it's own efforts toward scholarships with this money. We understand that the Quiet Gift program administrator, Mr. Leo Crowley, has requested that we reapply next year for additional assistance.

As a club, we never lacked for interest or good gardens to tour. Despite our best efforts, the public tours in recent years have not been as financially rewarding as was the case in earlier years. Too many tours, with many of them free, have made for lots of competition. Even so, the tours do have promotional benefits for membership, camaraderie and public awareness intangibles that are worthwhile for the club.

The whole purpose of the fund raising is to award scholarships to deserving students of horticulture in Minnesota. The year, with the guidance of the Scholarship Committee the club Board of Directors approved three scholarships of \$1,000.00.

Members attending the Holiday Party on Dec. 4th were able to meet Krystle Heise of Rochester Community Technical College. Our two other recipients were unable to attend due to school commitments. Krystle is a student in Horticulture Technology – Floriculture and Landscape/ Golf Course Maintenance. That sounds like a mouthful (and is), but I can assure you all that her application was filled with the love of plants and gardening that

we all want to encourage in those we support.

Also from Rochester Community Technical College and receiving a \$1,000.00 scholarship was Brenda Staats. Brenda is in the same curriculum of study. Both Krystle and Brenda are the first students from the program in Rochester to receive scholarships.

The third recipient was Constance Sokolouski attending school at Dakota County Technical College in Rosemount. Constance is studying Landscape Design and expects to graduate this spring.

I would like to thank the Scholarship Committee, the Board of Directors and the club membership for their continued support of this worthwhile effort. If anyone has other ideas that might be productive toward funding the scholarship program into the future, please contact anyone on the scholarship committee or the board. Remember, the club is a 501c3 certified organization and contributions can be fully deductible on taxes. The club would like to follow up on ideas that can be as successful as Bob Livingston's suggestion this year.

For the Scholarship Committee
Kent Petterson



MGCM 2008 BUDGET PROPOSAL

David McKeen -Treasurer

<u>Income</u>	
Bank interest	200.00
Grant	1,000.00
Holiday party	2,100.00
Hospitality-Meals	4,400.00
MGCM dues	1,000.00
Plant auction	6,500.00
Slide show	100.00
Tours-club	800.00
Valley Fair work	500.00
Total Income	16,600.00

<u>Expenses</u>	
Arbor Day	100.00
Arboretum Membership	60.00
Award-Trophy	175.00
Bank fees	75.00
Directory	200.00
Donation-Arboretum	1,000.00
FFF	900.00
Garden spray newsletter	500.00
Holiday Party	1,875.00
Hospitality-Meals	4,000.00
Hospitality-room rental	900.00
Insurance	350.00
Membership & Publicity	150.00
Memorials	1,000.00
Office supplies	100.00
Perennial Garden	500.00
Plant Auction	3,200.00
President Contingency	200.00
Programs	800.00
Scholarships	3,000.00
Sunshine	40.00
Tour-Club	500.00
Web service Pd. thru 11-09	
Total Expenses	19,625.00
Overall Total	(3,025.00)

FALL COLORS IN JAPAN

A trip to Japan by Jason Rathe

In November of last year (2007), my wife, Sarah, and I stole away for a twelve day foray in Hong Kong and Japan. Sarah's uncle is an international lawyer working with Dorsey Whitney and has been living in Hong Kong for the last ten years. We had been trying to find an opportunity to visit for the last couple years and finally just decided to do it.

The three days in Hong Kong were dizzying... the city is an endless row of sky scrapers surround a central harbor. But for all its speed and mix of cultures, Hong Kong is a very easy place to visit since one of the official languages is English (along with Mandarin and Cantonese). I highly recommend Hong Kong as "Asia with training wheels" due to having far fewer communication challenges (and a stunning and flawless public transport system).

The last week of our trip was site-seeing in



Japan. One important thing I didn't note at the beginning of this article is that Sarah's uncle recently married a Japanese woman named Yukari (we have a Japanese aunt!!!!). Sarah and I were intending to undertake our the Japan portion of our trip alone, but Yukari would have none of it and, lucky for us, decided to chaperone our trip.

We passed through Tokyo and spent a day in the foothills of the picturesque Mount Fuji (in a popular spa town called Hakone). But most of our trip was spent in Kyoto - the garden city to beat all garden cities.

Before I get to the gardens, I have to put in a plug for the food (see picture below). Eating on travels in Europe and at many Japanese restaurants in the states was no preparation for the reality of the Japanese food culture. Exotic, strange, simple, healthy, and seafood-y are all fair descriptions of our meals, and lots and lots of tofu. I especially admire the plethora and diversity of vegies utilized in all meals (including breakfast).



Fall colors in Hakone



A typical dinner array



Our garden visits were blessed by the gods of seasons - because we were dazzled by the warm tones of Japanese maples at their peak of fall color. Many of the gardens we visited have trees planted every fifteen feet or so - half of the trees are cherries and half are Japanese maples. So the spring season offers clouds of pink blossoms and in the fall you walk through the garden under a ceiling of reds and golds.

One of the most unforgettable experiences was a night stroll in one garden where all the maples were bottom-lit (see picture below).



Garden at Imperial Palace in Kyoto



Maples artfully lighted for night stroll in Kyoto



Favorite Plant: Milkweed

by Jason Rathe

I have to admit, in general the milkweeds are not what is generally considered a great garden plant. As their name implies they have a tendency to be a little weedy - both in their seeding habits as well as having a narrow, loose look one could easily mistake for a weed.



But the plants in the genus *Asclepias* reward closer inspection. The multibranched flower-heads hold tidy round buds that open to one of the most unique flowers in the plant world. If you look at it closely it is like a flower turned inside out with a stiff pronged appendage on the top.

With the addition of stems that bleed sticky white sap and a fruiting structure that opens to send hundreds of parachuted



Swamp milkweed on shore
at my wife's cabin (*Asclepias incarnata*)



One of many creepy-crawlies that take a shine to the “naturally occurring”
milkweed in my yard



seeds adrift on the fall wind, there is plenty to keep any child amused.

Plus there can't be a better insect magnet than milkweed. I saw a milkweed in a garden two summers ago that had more than five different insects buzzing around at one time - like an insect condominium.



The most popular garden milkweed - Butterfly weed - *Asclepias tuberosa*.



An annual milkweed in a mixed border
Asclepias curassavica 'Silky Gold'



An annual on the "crazy" side - *Asclepias physocarpus* 'Oscar'



All milkweeds spew their cottony fluff in the fall



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First Class Mail

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