



# The Garden Spray



Bulletin of the Men's Garden Club of Minneapolis, Inc

Affiliated with The Gardeners of America

March 2002, Volume 60, Number 3



## March Dinner Meeting

**Date:** Tuesday, March 19, 2001

**Dinner:** 5:30 PM; **Program:** 6.10 PM; **Bus leaves** 6:30 PM

**Location:** Lake Harriet United Methodist; 49th and Chowen Avenue South.

**Reservations are necessary and permanent reservations are not in effect.**

**See page 11 for the reservation form. It must be received by Friday, March 15.**

## The Program

### Marshall Field's/Bachman's Flower Show

#### Titled "Provence in Bloom"

We will first hear Dale Bachman during our dinner at Lake Harriet Church. He will provide us with glimpses of the preparations and interesting facts of the show. Then we will board a bus to downtown Minneapolis for a tour through the show so we can imbibe in the sights and sweet odors of many flowers in bloom. As the title implies, it's a show of the French countryside. There will be flowers galore, a French villa, walled gardens, a town square and much more eye candy for everyone to enjoy

**Remember permanent reservations are not in effect.**

**Page 11 has more program details and the reservation form.**

**Note this is not our normal 2nd Tuesday meeting day and time.**

## Future Club Events

April 9	Dinner Meeting Veronica Malone on Herbs	October 8	Dinner Meeting Program is Roberta Sladky Director of Como Conservatory
April 10-13	National Convention at Tucson	October 12	60th Anniversary Luncheon at the Arboretum
May 7	Plant Sale & Auction	November 12	Dinner meeting Susan Davis Price on Minnesota Gardening History
June 11	Dinner Meeting Dave Bedford on Apple Breeding	November 29	Wreath & Holiday Decoration making at Klier's Garden Center
July 13 & 14	Biennial Tour-Open to the Public	December 3	Holiday Party
August 11	Members Garden Tour		
August 17-18	Food Flower & Foto Show (FFF)		
September 10	Dinner meeting Joan Bethiaume on Mr. Wirth and the Park System		



# Editorial Enticements

*This month I am handing my column over to Lynda Carlson. She is enticing you to take a trip through Southern Minnesota and end up in Decorah, Iowa.*

## Notes from a Gardener's Travel Journal

*By Lynda Carlson  
Decorah, Iowa*

Decorah is a jewel in Iowa's crown nestled in the Upper Iowa River limestone bluff country of northeast Iowa. Home of Luther College, it has been a special place for my husband and I since our son's college days there in the early 1990s. We joke to our friends that we must return frequently to visit the tens of thousands of dollars we left there over the course of his four-year education. The true reason for our repeat visits are the unusual combination of activities offered near and in this picturesque rural college town. We returned last fall to escape the city and the grim news on CNN.

Our favorite route to Decorah is south on Highway 52 to Lanesboro, Minnesota. Out of Lanesboro we follow Highway 16 as it hugs the banks of the Root River. The road rolls gently through the Dorer Memorial State Hardwood Forest. Limestone cliffs cut through the forest and tower over the valley. Willowglen Nursery

Our first stop after we rejoined Highway 52 north of Decorah was the gardens at Willowglen Nursery. The combination nursery and homestead are tucked away in a hollow about three miles off the highway northwest of Decorah. Owners, Lee Zieke and Lindsay Lee, make their home in a rustic cottage beside a pond in the middle of several acres of nursery display gardens. Willowglen offers a huge selection of perennials—old favorites as well as unusual varieties to tempt avid gar-

deners. Guests at Willowglen are invited to roam freely through the gardens or simply to rest and reflect on the garden furniture invitingly positioned by the borders and beds. Lindsay and Lee have established a reputation in horticultural circles and have presented seminars at the Arboretum. They also hosted a taping of Rebecca's Garden.

I was surprised to see such a unique nursery concept out in the boondocks of Iowa. It proves that city slickers don't have a corner on entrepreneurship and creative approaches to gardening. We of the MGCM learned that lesson long ago at the hands of our own Iowa expatriate, Eldon Hugelen. We reluctantly departed Willowglen after strolling the gardens and visiting with the plant savvy Lindsay and Lee. Our departure was softened by the lure of Seed Savers Exchange Heritage Farm. Just one more essential stop before our arrival in Decorah.

### Seed Savers Heritage Farm

Seed Savers Heritage Farm is about a mile east off Highway 52 and about 2 miles north of Decorah. The 173 acre Heritage Farm is home to a living permanent collection of endangered food crops. The collection includes over 18,000 rare vegetable varieties. Each summer about 2,000 of 40 different crops are grown for seed renewal and evaluation—450 varieties of beans, 300 tomatoes, 125 peppers, 100 peas, and other vegetables and flowers. Seven hundred nineteenth-century apple varieties grow in the Heritage Farms historic orchard. Sharing the orchard area is a vineyard with 160 northern hardy grapes. Most selections were made by Elmer Swenson of Osceola, Wisconsin. About 25 others are traditional named varieties dating from the 1850s to 1930s.

Thirty ancient White Park cattle add to the historical focus of the farm. This breed originated in the British Isles in 1900 BC and has been protected on various castle grounds since the 12th century. Today there are only 300 in existence, with 70 of those in the U.S.

*(Continued on page 9)*



# President's Column

*MGCM President Warren Nordley*

The February meeting felt good. First of all, the attendance was up and we had several guests that potentially could become new members. Thanks to many of you for offering your comments and suggestions on how to increase membership. I'm very excited about implementing some of the strategies that have been developed and look forward to brainstorming with the membership committee on still more ideas to spur growth in our club.

Then there was Bob Livingston and his trip down memory lane, sharing his experiences as president in 1975. Insightful and humorous - another living legend in our midst.

To me, committee reports are of value for two reasons. First, of course, they are informative. Additionally, however, they depict the spirit, enthusiasm, knowledge, cooperation and commitment that this club is all about. Kind of solidifies that "glad to be a member" feeling.

And to top it off, Debbie Lonnee from Bailey's Nursery did a beautiful presentation on new and unusual annuals. Talk about a solid case of "Spring Fever" after that. As a matter of fact, I felt kind of silly out there in the garden doing some neglected fall maintenance in the middle of February but hey, if the Perennial Garden committee can do their thing in December, why not me?

It wasn't until the passing of Ted Olson that I learned what a truly remarkable gentle man he was. Upon reflecting on this, it struck me that this club is made up of individuals, all of whom have a passion for gardening, but that's only one side of their make-up. They came from a multitude of backgrounds, experiences and interests. I think of Dave Johnson from Fridley. Despite his senior

years, he still participates annually in the Vasaloppet cross-country ski race with three generations of family members. Now that's unique. Check out the idiosyncrasies of the people at your dinner meeting table next time. They're gardeners and so much more.

If you haven't had a chance to take a peek at our web sit, it's worthwhile.

[[www.tc.umn.edu/~amarlow/mgcm](http://www.tc.umn.edu/~amarlow/mgcm)]

Andy did a superb job and it was gratifying to discover that two of our prospective members learned of us through our web page.

See you soon.

## Sale & Auction

*By Doug Whitney, Chairman*

On Tuesday, May 7, 2002, MGCM will hold its annual plant sale, auction and country store. The Plant Auction Committee is striving to fine tune the streamlined format that helped make last year's event more interesting, better attended and shorter.

The mission of the auction and country store plant sale is to raise money for the annual operating budget of MGCM. Thanks to the Club membership, last year's effort was the most successful we've ever had. Plus we had fun doing it.

The April, 2002 *Garden Spray* will include the "Pre-Auction Order Form" which worked so well last year. The forms will also be available at the April 9, 2002 Club Dinner Meeting. Incorporated in that April issue will be all the prices, ordering information and other details.

If there are any annuals you would like to see offered this year that were not offered last year, call Ritchie Miller or me. Call Eldon Hugelen or Kay Wolfe if you have suggestions about perennials you'd like to buy at the Country Store. For specialty and premium materials you think would be interesting or exciting for the Silent Auction or Live Auction, we'd appreciate your help in locating the particular material you suggest. Call Bob Stepan, who is coordinating the auction details.



# The February Program

By Tim McCauley

For those of you who attended the February dinner meeting you weren't experiencing *deja vu* during the program. You have seen that woman before. Debbie Lonnee of Bailey Nurseries, Inc. gave us a follow-up to her well-received November presentation on perennials. This time around it was 'New and Unusual Annuals'.

With the surging popularity of perennials the last several years and gardeners guilty of choosing the same tried and true bedding plants time after time, newer annuals have been slow to appear in many garden centers and, consequently, many gardens. However, the breeders have been busy producing plants they hope will change our buying habits. Ms. Lonnee's extensive slide presentation leaned heavily towards what she termed "component plants". Plants that can be used in containers, hanging baskets, window boxes and in some cases mixed in the border.

Some of these plants have already started to gain popularity, like the Million Bells series, that flowers all summer long. Another plant series we've seen a lot of recently are the Wave Petunias - huge masses of color that look fabulous in a hanging basket or cascading over a rock or retaining wall. Look for some of the new Wave series that are coming out (wave after wave, one might say), like the Tidal Wave series, with smaller flowers on a bigger mound. Also look for the new Double Wave series available in lavender, lilac and pink. The trailing-habit *Diascia* 'Sunchimes Red' and 'Sunchimes Coral' are also good fill-in plants that bloom forever.

Container gardening has become very popular and we were shown a wide selection of plants to choose from, starting with 'Blue Showers' the *Bacopa* variety that did the best

in Bailey's trials. *Lobelia* 'Tioga Blue' blooms all summer and would be good in a patriotic red, white and blue combo. The *Helichrysums*, commonly known as Licorice Plant, are popular and come in several variations including the gold leaved 'Limelight' and a new variety called 'Icicle'. Don't forget herbs when shopping for container plants. Colored Sages and *Mentha* 'Frosty Lace' mint contrast nicely with many annuals.

If you like the look of the old-fashioned spike *Dracaena* and *Vinca* vine combination, there are some new choices. Use *Phormium*, New Zealand Flax, rather than the *Dracaena* and look for variegated *Vinca major* 'Maculata' or 'Wojo's Gem' which is a vast improvement over the older variety. Another *Vinca* replacement would be *Iboza*, the Candlestick Vine. A center plant suitable for larger containers would be the yellow and green *Artemisia* 'Oriental Firecracker'.

I have always enjoyed growing annuals from seed and there are some exciting new plants to look for. The Variegated Morning Glories caught my eye. Although not as vigorous as the green varieties, they would be good for hanging baskets. Also look for seeds of pink *Ageratum*, *Cleome* 'Sparkler' series (smaller more compact plants) and of course, Wave petunias.

A new trend that hasn't reached this area yet but probably will soon, is tropical annual gardens. Bold displays of Banana trees, large-leaved Elephant Ears, colorful Cannas, *Caladiums* and masses of *Ipomea*, the popular ornamental Sweet Potato. Look for *Ipomea* 'Ace of Spades', a new dark variety with heart-shaped leaves. The sweet potato vines are also useful in large containers with the chartreuse colored variety 'Marguerite' being the most vigorous.

A Sun *Coleus* and annual grass garden has replaced the grass boulevard at the Lonnee home and it is a good example of plants that will do well in a hot site. If purchasing *Coleus* for a sunny area, 'Florida' in

(Continued on page 10)



# Board Meeting Summary



*Ellyn Hosch Secretary*

Meeting Date: 5 February 2002

## President's Report

Warren gave a brief overview of the status of the Men's Garden Club of America where changes in personnel have occurred. We applied for our non-profit (501c3) status through the national club, and have not received any information on that status.

Our club's financial position is solid, with a reserve of at least \$5,000.

Warren will work with the Membership Committee to develop a recruiting and retention plan for membership.

## Vice President's Report

Nancy Bjerke has confirmed all speakers for this year.

## Membership Secretary's Report

As of 5 February 2002, 113 members have paid dues. This compares to 129 members last year.

## Other Committee Reports

- 60th Anniversary Committee.  
The luncheon at the Arboretum has been scheduled for October 12th, and many other ideas are in the works.
- Biennial Tour Committee.  
We now have co-chairs for the Biennial
- Tour Committee. However, we still do not have a chair for the Members' Garden Tour in August.

## Old Business

We received six (6) Arboretum passes.

## New Business

- Don Morgenweck agreed to coordinate the table set-up for the monthly meetings.
- Warren will discuss the church plantings

with Pastor Judy

- Carole Anne Brekke presented current memorial guidelines. If a member is hospitalized, a plant valued at about \$10 - \$15 is given. A card is usually sent for all other situations.
- It was reiterated that we would have a regular October club meeting in addition to the October 12th luncheon.
- The next board meeting will be held on 5 March at the home of Carole Ann Brekke. The start time is 7:00 PM.



# Ted Olson

*By Chuck Carlson*

Dr. Theodore A. Olson died February 13 at the age of 97. Dr. Olson was born in North Dakota and grew up in Kingston, Minnesota. He went to school at the University of Minnesota and received a degree in Biology. He worked for ten years at the Minnesota Department of Health. He attended Harvard and graduated with a Masters and Ph.D. He was a charter member of the Wood's Hole Oceanographic Institute and, above all, a teacher and a scientist.

But to us in the Minneapolis Men's Garden Club he was Ted, the modest, reserved, friendly, gardener, photographer, and grower of cacti. A member since 1983 when he and his son Bob joined the club. We who entered the flower show remember him even in his mid to late nineties showing his many cacti and winning some blue ribbons. Ted will be missed. We send our condolences to our member Dr. Bob Olson, Ted's wife Grace and the rest of the family. God Bless You All.

# Confessions of a Lazy Gardener

By Mary Maynard

## Plants from seeds

In 2001, my expensive excursions into the realm of ordering live plants rather overshadowed my adventures with seeds. But I'm not going to let that stop me from expounding at some length on my experiences. Here are plants from seed that I tried last year.

Annual grass 'Bunny Tails'. It's kind of cheating to talk about this since I didn't start seeds for this in 2001. But I've grown it before, and I got outstanding germination. (It came up 'like grass'.) Margaret Hibberd gave me a few seedlings in 2001, and they grew out to be so cool! It forms a nice clump about 12 inches tall with round white heads in summer that hold up well through the fall. It's a really nice accent at the front of the border or as a small mound in a big container. I think Jung's offers this seed.

Aquilegia 'Woodside Mix'. This is a columbine with gold variegation in the leaves. Chuck Levine has offered this at his sale, and Margaret gave me a couple seedlings a couple of years ago. They were fabulous — really glowed in the garden, and held up well in the heat, at least until last July. So I ordered seed last year, and got one puny little seedling that expired before it ever got off the light bench. Maybe someone else with better seed germination skills could try these and offer them at the Plant Sale, because they're really good! Got the seed from Thompson and Morgan.

Bellis perennis tasso 'Strawberries and Cream'. This perennial looked really cool in the picture in Park's catalog. And the germination was great—I had tons of these! However, they did nothing in my garden after I



planted them. Warren Nordley says he had blooms on his that he got from the sale, so perhaps I should have asked Warren to write a few words. We'll see if any survive and how they do this year.

Cynara cardunculus (Cardoon). These are annuals — big, silvery, architectural plants, related to artichokes. I started some, and got good germination, and was very happy with my efforts until I saw the outstanding seedlings that David McKeen brought to the sale. But even my pale shadows grew out nicely. Cardoons like good light and cool temperatures, and are very frost-tolerant. I had one in the patio that was going fine at Thanksgiving. I understand they can get flowers but I didn't ever have any.

Eryngium (Sea Holly). This is another thing that I tried for the first time, with good results unless compared to David McKeen's seedlings at the Plant Sale. This perennial formed nice rosettes this first year. Hoping for good winter survival and flowers in 2002.

Golden Ageratum. This is listed under "Ageratum" in Stokes, but it isn't really. The scientific name is "lonas inodora" (as opposed to the regular "ageratum houstonianum"), and it has kind of fuzzy yellow flowers and ferny foliage. About 18" tall. Margaret and I thought it sounded intriguing, so we ordered a packet of seeds. Germination was overwhelming. But the actual flower was not. The plant was a little spindly, and the yellow flowers were unimpressive — the color was kind of muddy and the flower was undersized and not fuzzy enough for my taste. So, I won't be growing these again.

Malva 'Mystic Merlin'. On the St. Louis Park tour a couple of years ago, I saw a cool malva in Junelle Hanks' garden. It was similar to the Malva 'Zebrina' that is almost a weed in my garden, but the background color was a nice medium purple instead of the typical white. I loved that malva, and when I saw 'Mystic Merlin' in the catalogs, I couldn't wait to get it. Unfortunately, my expectations

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# STARTING PLANTS FROM SEED<sup>©</sup>

By Phil Smith

Growing plants from seed is an enjoyable hobby and often an economical way to acquire larger numbers of plants at a lower cost than purchasing container grown plants. However, if one requires only a few plants of each variety, the cost of the seed and effort involved may outweigh the simplicity of merely purchasing the plants from a reliable local grower.

There are numerous excellent growers among the members of this club who grow hundreds of seedlings each spring and who will be able to provide first hand information and tips on growing seedlings. For them, these comments will likely seem elementary, but hopefully these suggestions may prove helpful for some members.

## Containers

Virtually any type of container may be used to start seeds. For a larger sowing, a flat is useful. I normally use standard 4 inch plastic square pots. Some people use discarded milk boxes or tin cans. Whatever is used, it is desirable to sterilize the containers, such as by washing in a 10% solution of household bleach.

## The Starting Medium

Some growers merely use sand, vermiculite, peat moss, or a mixture of such. Good commercial mixes are also available. I prefer to add some screened garden soil to provide a some initial nourishment, such as thirds of soil, sand and fine vermiculite. I normally sterilize by baking the mix in a pan in the oven for a couple of hours at 300 degrees. After filling the pots or other containers, I like to take a another pot or other object with a flat



bottom and press the medium to form a smooth and even surface.

Sterilization is important since so-called damp-off fungus may attack the emerging seedlings and wipe out them all. There are also various commercial damp-off chemicals available which also may be used to drench the medium before seeding.

## Sowing The Seeds

The seeds need to be scattered over the surface so that they are not all in one spot. Some growers mix the seeds with fine sand or milled moss to help in spreading the seeds. Little tubular seeding devices with an angular end are also often sold in seed catalogs. I normally just cut off the top of the packet with scissors, open the packet part way, and carefully tap the packet with a finger while moving it over the surface of the medium. After sowing, the seeds requiring darkness to germinate should be covered with a fine medium to a depth of about 3-4 times the diameter of the seeds. Those seeds requiring light to germinate are left uncovered. Most tiny seeds, such as begonias, also fall in the uncovered category.

## Light and Temperature

A source of light is necessary to grow the seedlings, at least after germination begins. However, one must note that some varieties germinate only in the dark, while others require light. Those that require light may be placed under fluorescent lights or in a bright window. Those requiring darkness should be covered with layers of newspaper, etc. to shut out all light until germination begins. Some varieties also require cooler temperatures for germination. Most seed companies publish a booklet giving special requirements such as light and temperature. Some varieties also benefit from bottom heat, that is a little heat underneath the containers to warm the seeding medium. This can be done by using a germination chamber, which has a false bottom over a low heat source such as a 40 w.

*(Continued on page 9 see Seed Starting)*



# Anniversary Musings

*Compiled By Howard Berg-Historian.  
Theses are clips from past newsletters.*

## 60 YEARS AGO — MARCH, 1942

There was no newsletter or history from March, 1942

## 50 YEARS AGO — MARCH, 1952

The March 11, 1952 meeting was held at the Hasty Tasty on France Avenue. The program was a panel discussion of "Informal Flower Borders". A committee was told to produce an acceptable project for a ten year club memorial, and a means for financing for the next meeting.

## 25 YEARS AGO — MARCH 1977

The March 8, 1977 meeting at Mount Olivet Church at 6 PM, cost \$3.00. — Ken Oshima will talk on Bonsai. Ken had his own Bonsai Nursery at St. Mary's Point on the St. Croix River. — Memories from an article in the newsletter: (1) Remembered was one program we had in the fountain terrace in the Medical Arts Building. (2) Also remembered was a program, "Should we Dust or Spray" This consisted of an interesting argument between our two Englishmen, Archie Flack and Upsher Smith. (3) Another remembrance was the time when a feature writer for Better Homes and Gardens magazine came to Minneapolis to write an article on our club. Almost every member showed up at the garden of Mr. Blackburn in Edina behind the Episcopal Church. Pictures were published in the January Magazine.

## 15 YEARS AGO — MARCH, 1987

The Dayton/Bachman Show was March 24th at 6 P.M. at the Skyroom at Dayton's, cost was \$11.50. Ruth Bachman spoke on the topic "The Magic of the Theater". World renowned set designer Desmond Heeley designed the show and was a salute to the Guthrie and it depicted the mystery, magic, and merriment of the theater. — Seven

past presidents headed up the 1988 convention. Past President Bill Hull is general Chairman. Archie Caple, Chet Groger, Jerry Shannon, Russ Smith, Dave Johnson (GV) and Bob Olson made up the committee

## 10 YEARS AGO — MARCH, 1992

On Tuesday March 17, 1992, 6 P.M. the meeting was in Dayton's Sky Room, Cost \$12.75. Then the group went to the flower show. The theme was "Flowers and Fjords and The Scandinavian Countryside. This was originally designed as a Russian landscape, but with the unrest in the (Former) Soviet Union caused the show organization to shift gears. As Norwegian Fred Glasoe said. "It was a wise choice". In an article in the newsletter, Duane Reynolds wrote about gladiolus. He seems to be able to grow anything with a green leaf and Gladiolus is just one of his specialties. Dr. Bob Olson gave the last month's program about Hostas. He grows almost 200 varieties in his yard and said "Everyone wants the new one or the expensive one and they often are the same." He also said, "Garden visitors can seldom tell the plants that sell for \$100 from those that sell for \$5 or \$10. He also mentioned that a person should go to the Minnesota Landscape Arboretum, which grows about 500 cultivars. An article called "You would have liked Henry Bachman", stated he was a charter member of MGCM and a leader in the floral business. He was a second generation florist in the Bachman business and also the father of Lloyd and others, and grandfather of Todd.

## 5 YEARS AGO — MARCH, 1997

The Dayton's Bachman's Flower Show was March 18, 1997, starting in the Skyroom at 6 P.M. at a cost of \$15. Dale Bachman shared some behind the scenes secrets of the show called The Gardens of Vienna. — The MGCM Board of Directors has approved turning over the garden at 19th and Aldrich to the Pease Academy. The academy is a nonprofit organization run by the Holos Foundation, Inc. The school is a four year alternative high school for high risk students.



## Seed Starting

*(Continued from page 7)*

bulb. The seeding containers are then placed on the false bottom. Care must be taken that not too much heat is used or there will be no germination and any seedlings will cook. A similar condition may be devised for a hot bed or cold frame, by placing a heat tape under a thin bed of soil or sand upon which the containers are placed.

### Pricking Out

This is the term normally used to refer to the task of gently digging out the little seedlings for potting up into separate pots for growing until time to plant in the garden or nursery. A pointed object is helpful, such as a small table knife. The seedlings should not be removed until after they get their first true leaves. The first leaf like parts are the cotyledons or the two half's of the seed. When pricking out, it is helpful to dampen the medium. Then, a depression or hole is made with a dibble in the pots in which the plants will be placed, and the seedling inserted and the soil gently firmed about the seedling. I sometimes think it is helpful to get the seedling in the hole to dip the seedling in a cup of water.

### Hardening Off

If one wants to plant the seedlings into the garden before warm weather and the soil has warmed, it is desirable to harden off the seedlings by removal to a cold frame where they may be gradually adjusted to cooler night temps. When growing perennials, a nursery area is helpful, where the seedlings may be planted in rows and grown for a year before moving to desired spots in the border.

### Plugs

In the last several years, many varieties are available as plugs, wherein the grower starts the seedlings in flats of thimble size cups. Quality is controlled by machine sowing of the seeds, and the cost of the plugs is often not too much more than the cost of the seeds and expense of materials for seeding at

home. It is necessary to buy a whole flat of the same color. The little seedlings are transplanted into pots and grown on until time to plant out. I recall introducing this technique to some club members some several years ago, and I understand that several members now grow many of their seedlings from purchased plugs.

I wish you all success with your growing efforts.

## Decorah

*(Continued from page 2)*

### Hotel Winneshiek

The Hotel Winneshiek in Decorah was the last stop after a day of scenic traveling and savoring the beauty and knowledge offered at two very different gardens. We found this elegantly restored historic inn to be a perfect destination for traveling gardeners who seek elegance and fine service. The 24 rooms, six mini-suites, Royal Victorian Suite, and public rooms are resplendent in period fabrics, wall coverings, carpeting, antiques, and fine reproduction furniture. Some of the 24 rooms offer garden themes and decor. The Victorian Rose Restaurant presents fine dining and gracious service in sumptuous style.

After a restful night, we awoke to crystalline blue autumn skies and spent a leisurely day visiting the sites of Decorah proper. Those activities surely would have won the endorsement of the MGCM Auxiliary in that they were not necessarily related to gardening. A few of the options we sampled were picnicking at Palisades Park atop the cliffs overlooking the town below; the Victorian Porter House Museum; the Broadway-Phelps historic district; and the venerable Vesterheim Norwegian-American Museum, the most comprehensive museum in America devoted to one immigrant group.

Decorah offered more historical, natural, cultural, shopping, and educational experiences than we could absorb in a weekend, but once again we enjoyed a respite from our over-scheduled stressful city life.



## February Program

*(Continued from page 4)*

the name indicates sun tolerance. Ms. Lonnee grows the red ornamental grasses *Pennisetum setaceum* 'Rebrum' and 'Burgundy Giant' but recommends the former. 'Rebrum' isn't as tall but has a more upright habit.

Lonnee encouraged us to monitor the water needs, especially those of container plants, very carefully and recommended a regular regime of fertilizing. She also warned that some of the annuals that were discussed are vegetatively propagated and will be more expensive than seed-grown plants.

The next time you stop at a nursery to purchase annuals, don't head right for the red Geraniums, but check out the other plants that are available. It's always fun to try something new and the selections might surprise you

## Confessions

*(Continued from page 6)*

exceeded the performance of 'Mystic Merlin' in my garden. It was healthy and vigorous, but it was a bit floppy where I planted it. I could live with floppiness, but the leaves grew very vigorously and obscured the nice purple flowers. If the growth habit were more like 'Zebrina', I'd be endorsing this heartily. As it is, I will be digging these out and throwing them away.

*Nasturtium* 'Alaska'. I'm always intrigued by variegation, and this nasturtium sports nice variegated leaves. I don't know what it is about nasturtiums, but I never have any luck with them. And this was no exception. They limped along in our butterfly garden until the frost put them out of their misery. But I blame myself, not the nasturtium.

*Tanacetum Parthenum* 'Nana' (Golden Moss). This is a dwarf form of the 'Golden Feverfew' that I've had for a few years and like quite well. It is a little big bigger than actual moss, but it is very short. The main attraction is ferny foliage that maintains a

strong gold color. These little things, while novel, have limited place in my sprawling gardens, so I probably won't grow this again. But in a more intimate setting, it might provide a nice light touch. Supposed to be a short-lived perennial in Zone 4. Seed is available from Select Seeds.

*Verbena rigida*. The best way to describe this might be "verbena bonariensis heads on short bodies". This gets only about 12-15" tall, with stiff stems and purple flower heads. I got really good germination and good growth from this at the front of our butterfly garden in our little park. The seeds were purchased from Parks in 2001, but it's not offered in 2002 catalog. Planning to do this one again, or perhaps 'Polaris', a white version. Found a seed source at GardenMakers.com, a firm that I'd never heard of before, but what else is new.

*Zinnia* 'Red Spider'. I must not have read the description closely when I ordered this antique zinnia variety last year. I always grow zinnias because I need to display five medium or large zinnias at the State Fair. I thought a nice big red spider flower would get me some points in "distinction". Well, scratch the "big". It turned out that 'Red Spider' produces a lot of small single flowers — about 1 1/2 inches across. They're very nice, neat flowers that do show well and make nice little cut flowers, but they're on a full-sized plant that can take up a lot of space.

I'll probably go back to 'Border Beauty' or some other zinnia for my shows.

OK, that's it. Seeds from A to Z. Happy germination to you!



*Eldon Hugelen  
inducting  
new member  
Elizebeth  
Hamilton at  
February  
Meeting*

*Photo by Lloyd Wittstock*



# Flower Show

## “Provence in Bloom”

Provence in Bloom is a show featuring French floral designer Christian Tortu, depicting a guided tour through the French countryside. The team designed elegant gardens rich in fragrant roses, lavender, and calla lilies, accented with exquisite statuary, fountains and architecture unique to Provence, France. Dale Bachman, president of Bachman’s said “This will be a flower show the whole family will enjoy.”

The show features paths that meander past ancient ruins and olive trees and take guests deep into thick fields of lavender and sunflowers. Guests will arrive at Tortu’s villa and tour his walled formal gardens. Peer through his open French doors and glean inspiration from his dining room, garden room, and sitting room.

After a stroll through Town Square, guests can enjoy freshly-baked bread and a cup of coffee at Les Cafe and browse through a unique gift shop and flower shop for exclu-

sive French-inspired gifts.

Christian Tortu, master floral designer, is a recognized internationally for his mastery of color, texture, light, and shadows. Christian bends the rules of floral design, using his personal connection to nature as his inspiration.

Raised in the Loire Valley in France, Christian was born into a family of market gardeners and developed a passion for plants at a very young age. After apprenticing with several florists in different regions of France, he opened boutiques in major cities around the world, including New York, Singapore, Taipei, and his original shop on Paris’s Left Bank.

In addition to his boutiques, Christian also designs backdrops for great fashion houses such as Armani, Dior and Chanel, as well as the Cannes Film Festival. His unique designs were captured in 98 beautiful photographs as the subject of a recently published book, “Sensational Bouquets, Arrangements by a Master Floral Designer.” He has extended his passion for nature and beauty into home decor with his own line of vases and candles.

### See you March 19

## Field’s-Bachman’s Flower Show

Please reserve a place for my guests and me  
for the Bus and Dinner on March 19, 2001  
(See the front page for the schedule details)

Members Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Guest Name(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Enclosed is my check for \_\_\_\_ dinners and Bus @ \$13.00 each for a total of \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Reservation and payment must be received no later than March 15.

Send to Carole Ann Brekke,  
709 Rushmore Drive, Burnsville MN 55306-5161

# MEN'S GARDEN CLUB OF MINNEAPOLIS, INC.

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Return to:

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