

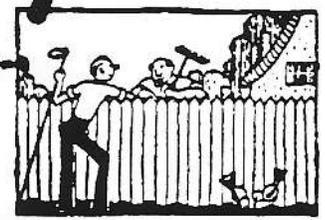


# The Garden Spray

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

Affiliated with Gardeners of America and the Minnesota State Horticultural Society

November 1994, Volume 52, Number 11



## November Dinner Program:

# Rock Gardening with Alpine Plants

Harvey Buchite, Extension Educator  
University of Minnesota

Harvey is a member of the North American Rock Garden Society. He travels every year to the Alps to observe plants in their native habitats. His presentation will include basic information for those just starting a rock garden, as well as a challenge for the experts. Yes, Alpine plants do grow here in Minnesota. Harvey is interested in a number of different perennial plants and belongs to several international seed exchanges.

- Date: Tuesday November 8
- Time: 6:30 p.m. Dinner followed by Business Meeting and Program
- Place: Lake Harriet United Methodist Church  
49th and Chowen Avenue South, Minneapolis
- Cost: \$7.00 if reserved in advance, \$8.00 without reservation

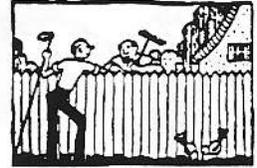
If you are on the permanent reservation list, please notify Secretary Eldon Hugelen if you are unable to attend (or you may be responsible for the cost of your meal). If you are not on the permanent reservation list, please mail the attached reservation card to Eldon as soon as possible.



**Klier's Nursery and MGCM member Howard Klier cordially invite you and your family to enjoy fellowship and make Holiday decorations at Klier's Nursery, 5901 Nicollet Avenue South in Minneapolis.**

- Date: Friday November 25
- Time: 5:30 p.m.
- Cost: Materials and your time

Klier's will provide the refreshments and instructions, you'll provide the labor, and materials will be available at low cost. Come and make wreaths, centerpieces and other holiday decorations, plus have a very good time!



## Coming Attractions

November 1 - 7:30 p.m.  
MGCM Board of Directors  
Bob Voigt's House

November 8 - 6:00 p.m.  
MGCM Dinner Meeting  
Lake Harriet United Methodist Church  
49th and Chowen Avenue South

November 25 - 5:30 p.m.  
Wreath Making Party  
Klier's Nursery  
5901 Nicollet Avenue South  
Minneapolis

November 29 - 7:30 p.m.  
MGCM Board of Directors  
Eldon Hugelen's House

December 6 - 6:00 p.m.  
MGCM Holiday Party  
Lake Harriet United Methodist Church  
49th and Chowen Avenue South

## You're Invited!

MGCM members are invited to a

### 50th Wedding Anniversary Open House for Russ and Janet Smith

Russ is a past president of MGCM and has also served for a number of years as North Star Region Director for The Gardeners of America/Men's Garden Clubs of America. The open house is hosted by the couple's children, including MGCM member Greg Smith.

The open house will be Sunday November 19 from 1:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. at Wayzata Community Church at Ferndale Avenue and Wayzata Boulevard in Wayzata. Please plan to attend.

*The Garden Spray* is published monthly by the Men's Garden Club of Minneapolis, Inc., for its members and friends. The Men's Garden Club of Minneapolis is a not-for-profit, equal opportunity organization.

Editor.....Andrew J. Marlow  
Staff.....Ed Biren, Chuck Carlson, Dale Fisher, Carolyn Hayward, Mary Maynard, Derrill Pankow, Merle Pulley



# The President's Report

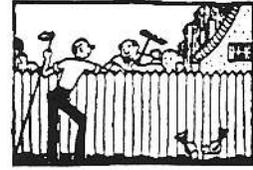
Clyde Thompson, President, MGCM

I have never had the luxury of watching leaves fall. You will recall that Thoreau spent a whole fall, winter and spring watching ice freeze and melt. Watching leaves fall is much more exciting!

I had just finished clearing the patio of a major leaf assault when a new wind from the neighbor's side brought on the equivalent of a leaf storm. What made the interlude different was a chipmunk who was watching the whole affair. He then stuffed his cheeks with some freshly fallen leaves and took off for his new winter home under the patio.

By this time you have either missed or enjoyed the Fall Home and Garden Show. Being a volunteer early this year meant moving some 20 cubic yards of bark mulch, while a couple of other experts from the Garden Club placed about 600 mums in proper fashion. What made the whole exercise worthwhile was watching four of the Northern Water Garden staff create an entire waterfall and pond right in the middle of the mulch pile.

It's October 15 as I write this and I am nervous about the roses still above ground. Yet the warm weather lingers delightfully on. The choice, of course, is to delay and run the risk of burying roses in a cold rain mixed with snow. I'll let you know what happens next month, if I don't have pneumonia.



# Fragrance Garden Report

by Chuck Carlson, Co-chair

This will be the last Community Garden report for the year. I hope you are not too disappointed, or maybe you're glad.

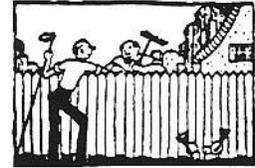
Cleanup was completed, including the removal of a few tree limbs. The lawn was sprayed for broadleaf weeds, plus a killing spray was applied to the patch of "creeping charlie". Thanks to all who have helped throughout the year. A special thanks this month goes to Don Nybo. He graciously did the tree trimming and took pickup loads home for chipping.

I hope to see all of you next year at the garden. Thanks again to all for this year's efforts.

## Dues Due

By now you should have received a mailing asking you to renew your MGCM membership for 1995. Please return the membership form with your dues check as soon as possible, but no later than November 15.

MGCM must submit a list of renewing members to the Minnesota State Horticultural Society by November 30 to insure uninterrupted delivery of *The Minnesota Horticulturist*.



# Monthly Program Report

by Derrill M. Pankow

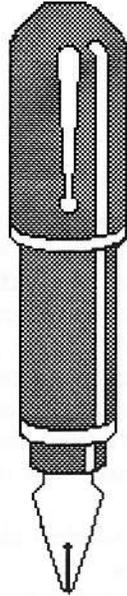
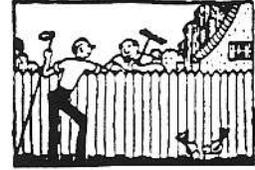
Ask most Minnesotans what first comes to mind when someone mentions New Zealand and you'll probably get responses such as kiwi fruit, sheep, or a hazy recall of a U.S. nuclear submarine which wasn't exactly welcomed there several years ago. Fred Glasoe, well-known horticulturist, MGCM member and featured speaker at the October 11th meeting, added a wealth of additional, surprising images to that brief list with a slide show of his February, 1994, garden tour to New Zealand. Although the original Scotch, Irish and English settlers discovered on the South Island only one native species of tree, five native shrubs and little variety in native wild flowers, the temperate climate (average high 78°, average low of 58°), apple supply of water and lack of harmful insects or plant diseases within the valleys created nearly ideal conditions for the cultivation of a wide range of imported vegetation. As Fred says and amply demonstrated with his slides, wherever the British settle throughout the world, they have that insatiable desire to recreate whatever they left at home. And that means gardens, gardens, gardens everywhere!

Each year in February, the city of Christchurch on the South Island celebrates its love for gardening with a spectacular Floral Festival. This is a time in which the city's 80 garden clubs, four horticultural societies and numerous plant specialty clubs "strut their stuff," one might say. However, gardening is such a

year-round passion for the ordinary citizens of Christchurch, one would be hard pressed to single out true winners.

In a typical homeowner's garden, flower, miniature yellow and green evergreens, flowering shrubs and a lawn created from creeping fescue and brim (instead of grass) are featured in the front of homes. Although Minnesota gardeners would recognize most shrubs and flowers, annuals seem to predominate. Dahlias, fuschias, roses, cannas and begonia are special favorites. Many new varieties of dahlia have been hybridized in New Zealand. Behind many homes one would typically find small water gardens, lush vegetable gardens and the specialty collections of flowers. Lest one assumes that only homeowners are gardeners, Fred found factories, automotive garages and hospitals equally surrounded by weed-free, formal gardens, as well as highways and city streets lined with hydrangea bushes, azalea and rose hedges.

Besides the spectacular gardens of Christchurch, Fred also showed slides of the group's visit to the first sheep ranch in New Zealand, a vineyard, and Queenstown, a holiday area for skier, hanggliders, river rafters, bungee jumpers and hikers. Best of all, Fred agreed to show additional slides of this spectacular tour at an MGCM winter meeting, when 10 foot high, black-encrusted snow is lining our streets and one can only dream of front and back yards filled with growing flowers and vegetables!



## Board Meeting Notes

At their August meeting, the **MGCM Board of Directors:**

- approved membership applications from Richard Allen, Sören Ryberg and Jerry Kennedy
- approved awarding 1994 MGCM Scholarships in the amount of \$1000 each to Margaret Redalen of Dakota County Technical College,

Kathy Klonecky of Dakota County Technical College and Kathleen Wilson of Hennepin County Technical College

- decided to include \$20-40 in next year's budget to prepare a slide show of MGCM Foto contest winners for exhibit with MGCA slide shows, the amount to be offset by income from showing the slides to various groups

At their September meeting, the **MGCM Board of Directors:**

- approved placing \$5,050 from the MGCM Scholarship fund into a certificate of deposit
- approved a donation of \$50 to Arneson Park in Edina for use of the park and picnic tables for the August Garden Tour and Pot Luck
- set 1995 dues the same as 1994 (\$39 per individual, \$19 for second member in a household)
- approved membership application of Donald M. Troske (sponsored by Clyde Thompson)

*(continued next column)*

At their October meeting, the **MGCM Board of Directors:**

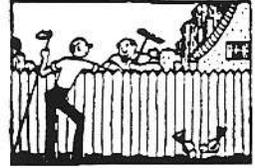
- heard a report that 830 MGCA calendars had been sold to date
- learned that MGCM member Floyd Ashley, who passed away in late summer, designated that all his gardening materials be given to MGCM
- approved applications for membership from Fred Wuest (sponsored by Bob Voigt) and Ryan Langseth (sponsored by Mel Anderson) bringing the club to 119 members

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## Thanks and Kudos

MGCM has received thank you letters from the Minnesota State Horticultural Society for our donation of \$250 toward operational support for the MSHS, and from the Minnesota Landscape Arboretum Foundation for our donation of \$350 to the Arboretum's Annual Guarantee Fund. Peter Moe, Acting Director of the Arboretum, noted that contributions such as ours, memberships and interest from endowments provide one third of the Arboretum's operating budget.

The Arboretum has also agreed to let MGCM continue to sell plants in conjunction with the annual Flower, Food and Foto Show. MGCM sold \$144 worth of plants at this year's Show. Peter Moe noted that he visited the show this year and "was impressed with the quality of the exhibits". He continued, "This show provides a good educational and artistic display for Arboretum visitors each year."



# Chuck's Chestnuts

by Chuck Carlson

## The Chestnut

This month the *Brooklyn Botanic Garden Quarterly* had some items that I thought might also be of interest to you.

(1) The University of Minnesota developed the following tough shrubs; Persian lilacs, Chinese lilacs, Glossy Buckthorns, Siberian Pea Shrub & Pekin Contoneasters.

(2) China cultivates earth worms for orchards and vineyards in order to increase yields. They realized a 30% increase in yield for grapes, 40% for some nuts and 10% for oranges.

(3) Do not apply manures to the soil less than 60 days before the harvest of vegetables which are to be eaten raw. Do not use cat, dog, or pig manures for gardens or compost piles since they contain parasites which can infect humans.

(4) If you store potatoes (and everyone does to some degree), use herbs to suppress sprouting during the storage period. English lavender is the best but Penny Royal, spearmint, rosemary and sage also work.

(5) The Habaneo Chili pepper is considered the hottest in the world. It is 50 times hotter than the Jalapeno. I wonder who needs that much spice.

(6) BT (*Bacillus Thuringiensis*) is widely used to control cabbage and potato beetle larvae, but a new insecticide called "Mimic" has been developed. It results in a new skin being formed inside the old skin, causing starvation. It may also be used to control the gypsy and coddling moths.

(7) A little boron instead of a lot of lime can be added to the soil to raise the pH. It was tested on alfalfa but it is hoped to generalize to other plants.

(8) A climbing rose called Sombrenil was found to survive Brooklyn's winters with little or no damage and with no cover. It has a fragrant tea type flower. I wonder if it would be worth trying here in Minnesota.

*The Avant Gardner* also had some interesting items:

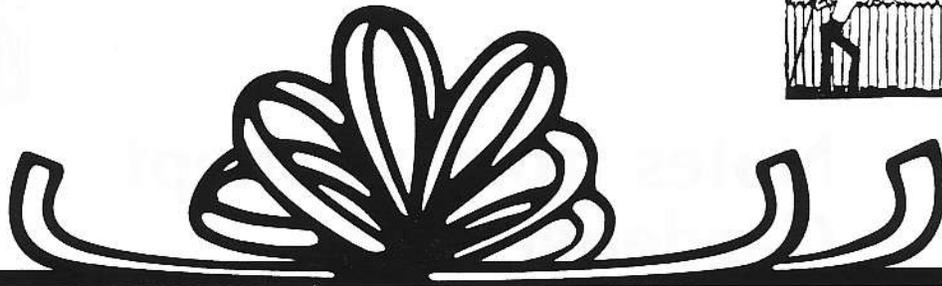
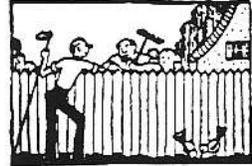
(1) There are two new Alliums to consider. 'Globemaster' has a 10" violet globe and *Allium thunbergii* 'Ottawa' has a red-violet flower that turns orange in late fall.

(2) Growing raspberries in raised beds practically eliminates phytophthora root rot and doubles the yield. Also, planting in rows 15" apart controls most of the weeds

(3) A way to root cuttings is by subirrigation. Place the cuttings in a perlite filled container which is then placed in another container of nutrient solution. The solution is kept at a level to keep the lower half of the perlite saturated.

## The Tip

Read about about gardening and try new things. You may make some mistakes, but we all have the capacity to learn from them. Former Vice President Dan Quale said, "If you don't succeed you run the risk of failure". I don't know if this was taken out of context but he should have added, "If you don't try, you never will succeed."



*MGCM Announces...*

## **the 1994 Holiday Party**

- Tuesday, December 6, 1994
- Lake Harriet Methodist Church  
Chowen Avenue South at 49th Street, Minneapolis
- Social Get-Together 6:00 p.m.
- Dinner, featuring the PARADE of TURKEYS
- Entertainment: The Limelighters
- Price: \$14.00 per person

*Poinsettia for every lady in attendance*

*Drawing for wreaths and poinsettias*

*Reservations by December 1. (Complete reservation form below)*

*Please bring an unwrapped toy, article of clothing or non-perishable food item for foodshelves. This is an opportunity to help others in this holiday season.*

*\*Be a carver: Call Mary Maynard (phone numbers below) to volunteer. No experience necessary. Bring your own tools. Hats provided, if needed.*

\*\*\*\*\*Tear off and Return\*\*\*\*\*

Reservation Form

(attach extra paper if necessary)

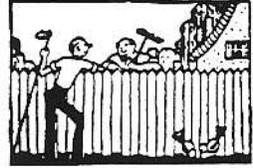
Member Guest Name(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Total in party \_\_\_\_\_ x \$14.00 = \$ \_\_\_\_\_

(Enclose check payable to MGCM)

*All parties are assigned to tables. If you'd like to sit at the same table as another group, please specify here:*

*Mail to: Mary Maynard, 4375 Dart Ave., St. Louis Park, MN 55424  
Telephone: 931-6372 (work) or 926-7506 (home)*



# Notes from an Inept Gardener

by Alex Troedsson

*(Alex Troedsson is a prominent, but reclusive member of the Midwest Regional Hosta Society and a frequent contributor to the Midwest Hosta Leaves newsletter)*

Earlier this year I decided to split off a division from 'Sweet Bo Peep' to bring to the auction at one of the hosta gatherings. It's hard to know what to bring to auctions. Most of us want to donate a plant that everyone doesn't have and will be of interest. Better yet is to bring something that will start a bidding war. I hoped 'Sweet Bo Peep' would start such a fracas (it didn't—these Midwesterners are so parsimonious).

The plant was clearly big enough to stand a single division being split from it. It had almost a dozen crowns (never bring more than a single division from a plant you're trying to pass off as "rare"). This should be no trouble for an experienced and savvy gardener. However, to be on the safe side, I dug up the entire plant and washed the roots in water so that I could view the entire root structure and choose the best angle to make the cut. Ideally one would just "wiggle the plant" back and forth and a natural division point would appear. Unfortunately, this is not always possible and sometimes you must actually cut into the root mass to separate some tight growing clusters. 'Sweet Bo Peep' was in the latter category.

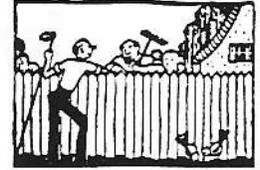
I held the plant to the light and studied it like a diamond cutter examining the cleavage planes. Once the best angle was determined, I got out the new Swiss Army Knife and carefully made the cut. Not too carefully, however, because in the process I gashed my thumb, and ended up

with a division with a huge leafy crown and only two or three tiny roots. There I was holding a blood streaked Potemkin plant. In the pot it looked pretty, but the poor fellow who bought it would be unhappy to say the least. So I put Don Dean's name down as the donor on the card. Then the original plant (with almost its entire root mass intact) was returned to the garden. It was a humbling experience.

After a while, I was able to convince myself that it was a fluke. The Yuppie knife my wife had bought for me was way too sharp and I wasn't familiar with it. This would never happen again. To be sure, the next time I had a "crucial division" to make I went back to the tried-and-true kitchen paring knife I had used in the past. This time I was splitting a beautiful yellow-centered wide-blue-edged shoot sporting from a seedling of 'Crepe Suzette' x 'Blue Moon.' This is the thing you wait to see if you're watching seedlings evolve. You'll be old and gray if you're hoping to get a good-margined blue-edged-yellow-centered plant directly from seed. You have to look for the good sports and split them off.

Once again the plant was lifted and the roots carefully washed. After studying the planes and angles carefully, a cut was made into the crown—this time the knife wasn't too sharp, the cut was controlled and no blood was drawn—and a good piece was wedged out. At least I thought it was a good piece. Turned out this was worse than the earlier catastrophe—virtually no roots remained on the wedged out piece once the loose ones fell away.

*(continued on page 9)*



## Inept Gardener

(continued from page 8)

And believe it or not, it happened a third time—but it wasn't so bad because I was braced for an unhappy result (and although one of the divisions from a hard-to-come-by little blue plant was left with but a few small roots the other was a splendid division with a root system to make you proud). This was not a good situation—I had lost my touch, or more likely, never had much touch at all.

But God tends to smile on certain helpless factions in this hard world, and he often smiles on the inept gardener—particularly the ones who grow hostas. Hostas are very forgiving plants. In each of these cases the plant was saved if there were any roots at all left. Carefully tended plants placed in favorable locations (usually morning light only) and with good potting material survive and grow new roots if the crown and even the smallest amount of root remains—but you may have to remove many of the leaves because a tiny root system can't support many.

It can be done. You can rescue your mistakes and miscues, but obviously it would be better to avoid making errors. No one wants to be known as "an expert in resuscitating poorly-divided-plants." You're much better off learning how to divide plants well from someone clever and careful. But even the experts have a mistake or two. I was out at my friend Hideko Gowen's in Minnetonka last summer and marveled at how she could cut into a plant still in the ground and remove a single stout division. She did it time after time as I was watching. But finally she missed and got one of the rootless divisions, too. I asked her what happened, why had she missed. She told me with the difficult hostas it happened

regularly to her, too, unless she planned ahead and "Rossed" the plants the year before. Hideko felt one of the better reasons to Ross the plants is because *they divide so readily the next season*—the crown cuts are already there. I went home and immediately tried it on a valuable plant with visions of a half dozen rare cultivars by the end of next season. My heart was in my throat as I stabbed all the way through the crown a couple of times as she had shown me. In this case it was in August (but a fairly cool day) and I didn't take the plant out of the ground—just dug the soil from around the base of the crown and replaced it. Nothing seem to happen as I went out and looked at it expectantly each day. So I became more bold and started slashing other plants, including some in pots. That worked, too—or at least it didn't hurt them. Perhaps an occasional one got a leaf or two which became stressed and looked brown, but nothing more.

The next spring when the hostas were just coming up through the ground and starting to unfurl their leaves, I dug them up and divided the plants. It was exactly as she had said, they divided cleanly along the planes through the crown made the summer before. You could just "wiggle them apart"—even the usually difficult-to-divide ones.

Others have written and given lectures about how you can merely cut the surface of the plant at or around the basal plate (anything to stimulate the dormant root buds that abound there) and you can get a huge number of shoots the next year. It isn't necessary to cut all the way through the crown to stimulate growth—but it sure makes dividing the plants easy. (Ed's Note: Next month you will learn the secret of Troedsson's recent successes in a companion article by Henry Ross of the American Hosta Society)

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## MEN'S GARDEN CLUB OF MINNEAPOLIS, INC.

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4429 Dunham Drive, Edina, MN 55435  
**Vice-President:** Bob Voigt  
4934 Aldrich Ave. So., Minneapolis, MN 55409  
**Secretary:** Eldon Hugelen  
7473 W. 142<sup>nd</sup> St., Apple Valley, MN 55124  
**Treasurer:** Melvin C. Anderson  
5701 35<sup>th</sup> Ave. So., Minneapolis, MN 55417  
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### DIRECTORS:

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1001 Hackman Circle, Fridley, MN 55432  
Mary J. Maynard  
4375 Dart Ave. So., St. Louis Park, MN 55424  
Donald A. Powell  
346 13<sup>th</sup> Ave. No., Hopkins, MN 55343  
Robert Stepan  
7717 Riverdale Dr., Brooklyn Center, MN 55444

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# The Garden Spray

Men's Garden Club of Minneapolis, Inc.  
Andrew J. Marlow, Editor  
10700 Minnetonka Boulevard  
Hopkins, MN 55305-4404

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