

Confessions of a Lazy Gardener

Issue #8: Learning Along the Way

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At our last meeting (*September 2003*), we heard from twelve of our senior members who have been in the club for more than 25 years. We heard wonderful stories about the club and some of the outstanding mentors that have belonged to the club. We heard names like Dr. Leon Snyder, Dick Lehman, Otto Nelson, and many more. I wish I had known them. They sound like wonderful people.



After the meeting, I started thinking of all the things I've learned from club members over the years. We have our famous experts now, of course: Jerry Olson* for roses, Jerry Shannon for breadth of knowledge on all types of plant materials, Dave and Delores Johnson* for fabulous display and cultivation techniques, Bob Livingston* for dwarf conifers, Bob Olson for hostas, Rodger Seefeldt for hydrangeas, Archie Caple* for scientific gardening, and more. I have learned a lot from all of these people.

But I have also learned a great deal from many other people in the club.

- I learned to pay attention to foliage color and plant form from Kay Wolfe.
- I learned how to take cuttings and keep them over the winter from Lee Gilligan's* presentation to the club.
- I learned how to display flowers at the FFF from a presentation by Duane Reynolds*, and how to get up the nerve to try it from Margaret Hibberd.
- I learned about *coir*, which makes container planting possible for me, from a presentation Bob Stepan made to the club.
- I learned that anything is possible if you have a big space from Bob Voigt*.
- And I learned that a big space is not at all necessary from Ada Hegion*, John Dahl*, Kent Petterson, Kay Wolfe and Elizabeth Hamilton.
- I learned to show my personality in the garden from Bob Redmond*.
- I learned to have fun in the garden from Gary Geister.
- I learned how a wonderful natural setting can be enhanced from Warren Nordley.
- I learned that there are always more new plants to try from Eldon Hugelen.
- I learned how peaceful and soothing a garden can be from Len Brenny.
- I learned about tree peonies and music from Henry Halvorson*.
- I learned what a rock garden should look like from Chuck Carlson and Lee Shannon.
- I learned what a hedge should look like from Don Morgenweck*. (I already knew what a hedge should not look like from observation at home.)
- I learned everything I know about tree care from Jackie Overom.
- I learned that even when one moves into apartment living it's still possible to garden from Stan Crist* and Phil Peterson*.
- I learned that it's possible to garden with deer from Maury Lindblom* and Nancy Bjerke* and Henry Orfield* and George McCollough*.
- I learned that it's possible to make a valuable contribution to the club from hundreds of miles away from Phil Smith*.
- I learned that orchids will grow outdoors in the summer from Russ Smith*.
- I learned how to fight off iris borers from Lloyd and Patti Webber.
- I learned how striking bold architectural features can be in the garden from Rog Koopmans.
- I learned about the challenges and rewards of gardening in public places from the Fragrance Garden and Perennial Trial Garden committees.
- I learned to welcome newcomers to the club from Lloyd Bachman* and Charlie Proctor*, who were so gracious to me when I joined the club 14 years ago.

And those are just the things that I remember off the top of my head. Every conversation at a club meeting, every tour, every new member offers another opportunity for us to learn more. I look forward to many more years.

* Sadly, these fine members are no longer with us. You would have liked them.