

Gettysburg Garden Club News

November 2020



**OUR NEXT MEETING is Thursday, November 19, at 1 pm
THIS IS EARLY DUE TO THANKSGIVING HOLIDAY**

Gardener to Gardener

What fantastic fall weather we are having! It has been a joy to take care of seasonal chores with this mild weather.

Our November program has been changed since we will not be having our Christmas Greens and Gourmet Gift Sale due to the pandemic. Multitalented club member, Linda Golembieski will demonstrate how to create a holiday planter. She will use holiday greens to decorate the two large outside planters at the lobby doors of the Gettysburg Fire Department. I will hold a brief business meeting inside (wear your mask; chairs will be spaced 6 feet apart) and then Linda will present outside. Please wear your mask outside as well, keep your distance and dress appropriately for the weather.

Linda is also taking the lead on designing holiday greens for the eight planters in Lincoln Square. I will be lending a hand with this project, but she will need many more hands to make this work light. Please contact Linda G. or me if you would be able to assist with this project. More information to follow.

As we continue to respect the restrictions of the COVID pandemic, please know that I miss seeing everyone's smiles and the comfortable fellowship we have shared. I know a vaccine is coming soon, and in time, this scourge will end and we will be able to enjoy life as we have in the past. Until then, I would like to encourage each of you to reach out to one another to catch up and connect, 'gardener to gardener.' We have a 60 year legacy to preserve!

I wish each of you a very happy, safe and relaxing Thanksgiving.

Karen

"Gardens grow fleeting flowers but lasting friendships" Beverly Rose Hopper

*The Executive Board meets at 11:15 am.

NOVEMBER AND DECEMBER BIRTHDAYS

November: Marty Qually (10), Alta Harris (14), Cindy Wilcox (15), and Joe Richardson (25).

December: Jan Christensen (2), Karen Szoke (10), Patricia Green (12), and Victoria Nakpil (29).

HORTICULTURE

Garden Journaling – Trips Down Memory Lane

For gardeners, the coming January and February can be months of retrospection and contemplation in addition to planning for the upcoming season. Most outdoor work is done and the winter weather usually prevents any more until early spring arrives. No matter how good our gardens were last year, we always plan for a better next year, and we reflect on how things were this past season. A good way to remember your garden successes and failures is to simply record what you did and subsequently what happened. Journals can be very simple. I use notebook paper and tabbed dividers for each garden bed. Each section has pages listing what is growing in the bed, any new plants, including where purchased and their cost. I usually avoid adding up my purchases each year. Some data are best not known!

My garden records started in 1985 while living in Houston, Texas. Having relocated from the northeast, horticultural curiosity and the desire to monitor my spending fostered my documenting landscape and vegetable plantings for the garden plus how they performed. Each season there was a listing of every plant by botanical and common name, my cost, location where planted, and whether those plants grew to my expectations. At season's end, I evaluated plantings as "keepers or killers" showing no mercy to those that failed to do what I expected. Successful gardening demands a keen sense of discrimination and a firm resolve to discard all things that do not measure up. Reading a plant's label and understanding its ideal growing conditions are the keys to success.

Some of my more interesting observations about gardening in the hotter climate of Houston illustrated just how different it is from that of the northeast. Peak springtime occurs in March, not May. Foolishly I tried spring tulips, getting only two of twelve to bloom despite pre-chilling the bulbs. My tomato plants were well developed by mid-March when temperatures reached the 80 plus degree range. Lettuce and spinach bolted by May. By early summer, tomatoes were done.

Now many years later, I still keep very detailed records by year. Having numerous large flowerbeds with differing sun exposures requires making certain plants are growing in the right spot. I find that listing my plantings by light requirement works best for me; ferns are shade loving plants, Some shade loving spring bulbs prefer to live in beds under trees, and my watermelon and vegetable gardens require full sun as well as the peonies surrounding them are just a few examples. My motto is "buy a pot and put it in the right spot".

I enjoy walking around my gardens at season's end noting what worked, what did not, what was a mistake, and believe me, there have been some good mistakes. It actually is fun to go back and read previous years' journals. Before I knew better, early on I planted apple mint that spread like crazy infiltrating an entire bed and growing over a foot tall. Another wild-spreading mistake (given to me by a friend) was *Houttuynia cordata* 'Chameleon', a lovely tri-colored perennial whose roots grow over six inches deep and still come up sporadically after years of removal. My best-recorded mistake was carelessly glancing at an herbicide label to go after some dandelions and applying a "kills-all herbicide" instead of the desired broad leaf herbicide resulting in spots of dead turf.

I hope this article encourages journaling your gardening experiences. No matter how good our gardens were this year, we always plan for a better one. Keep changing your garden, improving it, adding to it. Never be satisfied with your garden because when it reaches that stage you may lose interest in it. A garden that changes never loses interest. Every gardener dreams of a garden far better than their garden will probably ever become. Each spring finds gardeners anticipating the unfurling of some new horticultural treasure and planning some new garden feature. We dream of better color schemes, more perfect blooms and, in our mind, see next year's garden as perfect. Maybe we will not quite achieve our wintertime dreams but those thoughts are very worthwhile just the same. Every real garden was at one time a dream in the mind of someone and, without that dreaming, it never could have been.

Connie Holland