



Evergreen Garden Club

The Wild Iris

Volume 17, Issue 5 February 2005

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EGC 2004-2005 Board Members

President:

Tricia Scott

Vice Presidents:

Karla Briggs

Beth Feldkamp

Secretary:

Joan Reynolds

Treasurer:

Lori Lapp

The **Wild Iris** is a free monthly publication for members of the Evergreen Garden Club.

Meetings are held on the second Tuesday of the month from Sept. to June at Church of the Hills, Buffalo Park Rd, Evergreen at 9:15 am. All are welcome.

For **membership** information please contact Lori Lapp at 303-838-8360 or membership@evergreengardenclub.org

Newsletter Contributions are due by the 20th of each month to Kathi Grider at 303-670-6909 or wegriders@speedtrail.net

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A Word from the President...

Dear Members,

Just got back from British Columbia. It was WET, raining a lot each day. They have had some very mixed weather. In fact both of my sisters had roses in bloom! It was fun to visit everyone and be back there in general.

I must mention about last months meeting what a wonderful job Karla did of explaining pruning to all of us. I left feeling that I could actually take on some jobs out there in the yard with my big trees! Thanks Karla- another lesson learned!

February's meeting we will be learning again. Priscilla Spears, who has a PHD in Microbiology, will be teaching us about the newest system of classifying plants. It will be a great educational experience for all of us.

I will be giving an update on the decisions made at the Garden Tour meeting held Tuesday January 25th. If any of you have missed the opportunity to sign up...not to worry there is still time to sign up.

Membership Meeting - February 8, 2005 *Who's your Daddy?*

PhD microbiologist Priscilla Spears will give us an introduction to the latest system of classifying plants. She will provide a comparison of the old to the new philosophy of plant classification. Join us to learn about the plants' family tree and receive the keys to the kingdom (the plant

We will need everyone in the club to help get this project going. The great thing is there are so many jobs before; during and after the event everyone has a spot to help. This is for such a worthy cause I hope that everyone can help.

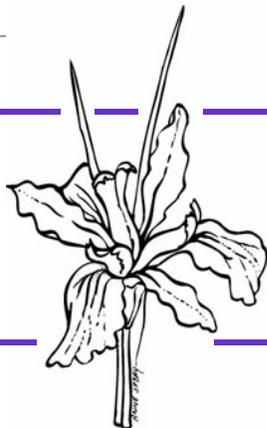
I wish for everyone a Happy Valentine's Day in advance. I will be busy as usual at the flower shop making multitudes of arrangements to make many women happy! Not a bad day at the office!

I will see you at the meeting. My best to all of you.
Tricia

P.S. A short meeting after the meeting for those people involved in the garden tour.

kingdom).

See you at 9:15 at Church of the Hills on Buffalo Park Rd. Remember to bring your plants and cuttings for the World Gardening table, and your coffee mug. See you there!



Garden Club News

My Favorite Plant..... by Lori Lapp

This "Jersey Girl" transplanted to Colorado yearned for the "understory" effect of blooming shrubs and cascading ferns. Tough to accomplish at arid 8000' elevation but as a member of The Herb Guild of the Denver Botanical Gardens I discovered my first selection.

Sweet Cicely

Myrrhis odorata

Don't know what to do with a shady corner or walkway? Want height, interest, and wonderful fragrance? Plant Sweet Cicely.

This herb seems to have fallen from grace and is frequently overlooked by many planting journals.

Sweet Cicely features branching stems of fern-like leaves closely resembling hemlock but of a fresher, green color. A thick, deep rooted perennial, it develops to a height of three feet, though it can reach a height of five feet!



The first shoots consist of an almost triangular, lacy leaf, with a simple wing curving up from each side of its root. The hollow stems grow 2-3 feet high, bearing many leaves, and in early June compound umbels or tufts of white flowers appear followed by inch long crested, black shining seed, pointed at both ends. Sweet cicely prefers shaded, moist conditions and is a great indicator plant. Its fronds will droop and let you know when its time to water. Plant where nature and architecture assist in meeting its water requirements, i.e., base of walls, near downspouts, etc. Beautiful when grouped with columbine and bleeding heart.

The seed is hard to germinate. Seed should be sown in fall as brought to germination through a process of alternate freezing and thawing. Transplanting is difficult as the long, white taproot grows deep in search of moisture. I have had success moving small plants during wet conditions and having a new home dug and ready. Be careful not to crush the root when setting the transplant.

Plant in large groupings close to a path so you can brush by and delight in the fragrance. Its name is derived from the Greek word for perfume because of its myrrh-like smell. Other publications consider it a sweet anise like fragrance. I call it tutty fruity – and can't wait for its bloom each year.

Sweet cicely, despite its difficulty to cultivate, is nice to have around and once established will self-seed vigorously. Be patient as this plant does not come into its own until the third year. Best of all, my plantings have never been eaten by deer, elk or rabbits.

Members familiar with my gardening style may equate me with alpine plants and I could not post my favorites without sharing two selections.

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Minutes of the January 11, 2005 Meeting

President Tricia Scott called the meeting to order at 9:43 a.m. with 33 members and guests in attendance.

Treasurer Lori Lapp reported that the club has \$159.65 in checking and \$7154.44 in savings for a total net worth of \$7314.09. She noted that we have paid our \$2000 to Bootstraps which they will match with \$1000.00 for our 2005 scholarship.

Secretary Joan Reynolds passed around a packet of holiday cards and thank you notes from several of the recipients of the World Gardening Fund donation. She also read a thank you note from Bill Andrews expressing his thanks for the Christmas cookies and the many good wishes that June has received from members. Joan went on to explain that June was having a lung removed to stop the cancer in it. She encouraged members to keep sending cards and positive thoughts June's way as this was a very serious surgery with a three-month recovery period. She added that she will stay in contact with Bill Andrews regarding June's progress and keep the membership informed.

Lori added that the membership books are available for anyone that has forgotten to pick theirs up.

Co-Vice President Karla Briggs announced that Priscilla Spears' program next month entitled "Who's your Daddy?" will be an informative program about the classification of plants and the re-classification system.

Louise Mounsey announced that gloves from last month's meeting were on the World Gardening table and thanked members for their donations. The Evergreen Living magazine contains an article about the Evergreen Garden Club.

Tricia circulated a clipboard for sign ups for March hospitality (FOOD) help and another one for the 40th Anniversary Celebration to be held this summer.

Irma Wolf requested a half dozen or so copies of the *Wild Iris* be brought to each meeting for those that may be visiting and contemplating joining and those that had difficulty downloading. Beth Feldkamp said this wouldn't be any trouble.

Tricia asked that anyone interested or already signed up for the 2005 Garden Tour to please attend an organizational meeting on January 25 at the Library at 10 a.m. Joan agreed to e-mail club members and remind them.

Linda Ringrose arrived late and announced that she had the Club's current scrapbook up to date and was passing it around.

Arlene Fitterer was in attendance and was welcomed. Arlene had been a member for many years, but had not been in attendance for a while due to a conflict with work.

We took our refreshment break and then we were treated to a most informative program presented by Karla Briggs about pruning shrubs and trees. Karla's delightful style made learning fun and amusing. The combination of the Power Point presentation and Karla's easy to understand explanations made this task seem far less bewildering. Those little slashes that are in the Service in Action sheets finally make sense! We applauded Karla's program and then held the monthly door prize drawing. The meeting adjourned around 11:30 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Joan Reynolds, Secretary

(Continued from My Favorite pg. 2)

Our new home in Shawnee has a concrete patio surrounded by over 20' of concrete planters. Removing a layer of pine needles revealed dragon's blood and hens and chicks still clinging to life. Taking their lead and the path of least resistance/expense (can you imagine the cost of annuals - not to mention the water requirements) I transplanted many of my xeriscape/alpine favorites to these planters. Three years and thriving. I've had to remove the Persian catmint (too thirsty and competitive), left the soapwort (only spot the bunnies haven't decimated) and I'm happy to report even the most delicate alpine have thrived. The planters' height truly showcases these miniatures and I highly recommend forgoing expensive, thirsty annuals for these low care perennials.

Tanacetum

Densum v amanum (Partridge Feather) Who can resist this plant? Incredible silver-white leaves at-



Tanacetum (Partridge Feather)

Sempervivum (Hens and chicks)

tract the attention of everyone who visits. The plant forms a dense carpet of foliage topped with clusters of yellow, button flowers in early to mid summer. It will thrive in the sunniest, hottest spot you can find but needs a well drained soil. Once established partridge feather will cascade over the side of planters.

6" x 15" wide.

Cutting propagated.

Beware – visitors can't help but pet the soft foliage.



Concrete planter - third season: soapwort (pink), stonecrop, tanacetum, hens and chicks

Sempervivum = (L.) always living
Common names:
Houseleeks, Hen(s) and Chicks

Don't you just love that – always living! Could any plant be more deserving of the name? These hardy alpine succulents are from the family Crassulaceae with natural habitats 3000' – 8000' above sea level – YIPPIE!

Available in over 50 species and over 3000 named cultivars, "semps" come in many forms and colors: green through browns, yellow, orange, and pink but need to grow in full sun to exhibit their true colors. Some species/cultivars even have hairy rosettes and delight children with their webs.

Plant in gritty, free-draining soil. Likes sun. Drought resistant. Sempervivums generally reproduce vegetatively by offsetting around the base of the rosette. Offsets can be removed when root development has begun and grown on separately. This method preserves the characteristics of named cultivars, which will not come true from seed. Deer resistant although I have had them rip clumps from dry stack walls. Plants can be reset without incident - - wall may need to be restacked. If plants appear to be lost, try soaking in a shallow saucer of warm water overnight before replanting.

Warning - rich, loamy soil, abundant water and shade will not be tolerated!

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Over The Garden Fence *By Karla Briggs*

ORNAMENTAL GRASSES

Recently some friends and I were in Boulder on the Pearl Street Mall. There was a landscaped area with Ornamental Grasses that were at this time of year dried and golden brown with wonderful seed heads. Some species were standing on their own and others, because they were tall--about five feet, were tied to resemble sheaves of wheat. They were beautiful and interesting in a garden space where there was little else to observe. One of my friends asked what grasses could be grown at our altitude and so the idea for this article was born.

Ornamental grasses include true grasses (Gramineae) and their close relatives, sedges (Cyperaceae), rushes (Juncaceae) and hardy bamboos (Phyllostachys). Ornamental grasses that have a USDA hardiness zone of 3 or 4 are adapted to our region. Any plant hardy to zone 5 or higher will not over winter.

Grasses look good in many types of landscapes. They add variety to water gardens and rock gardens. They provide food and nesting material in a wildlife garden, and because they are often xeric and are adaptable to poorer soils they can be planted in harder to maintain areas. Grass seed heads and foliage add fall and winter interest in a garden and two elements not often found: movement and sound.

Grasses are divided into two growing categories: warm season and cool season. Ornamental grasses should be planted in the spring, they benefit from mulching and from cutting back before new growth begins in the spring. Some of the perennial grasses form a substantial root mass and are excellent to use for erosion control. Grasses have few pests, but if they are infested with aphids or mites a strong spray of water from the garden hose solves the problem.

Grasses also are interesting used in container gardening because they add height and texture. Grasses planted in a container will not over winter, so if you want to use a plant hardy to zone 5 or higher, that is the place to do so. Grasses dry beautifully and can be used in wreaths or dried floral arrangements. One final observation is that grasses make great specimen plants standing all by themselves; they don't need an entourage to make a statement.

Grasses are great! For a listing of grasses, their hardiness zone, season, height and comments, go to the CSU website (www.colostate.edu/Depts/CoopExt) and pull up SIA no. 7.232, Ornamental Grasses.

Karla

Winter Watering: The How and Why of It – Santa Fe Greenhouses

Ah, we've heard it many a time – don't forget to winter water. So we'll say it again – don't forget to water during the winter months. And don't be fooled. Just because you can't stick your finger in the ground doesn't mean water can't seep in. And seep in it must.

David Salman, president of Santa Fe Greenhouses, says the most common reason for plants to die off during the winter is not the cold, but the lack of water. "Cold-hardy plants can make it through brutally cold weather," he says, "but they can't go without water."

It's easy to assume plants aren't doing anything during the winter. Especially when it's so cold. But lots we can't see is taking place at the root level.

Dormant plants need moisture to maintain their physiological and biochemical changes that produce high concentrations of dissolved sugars, amino acids and other soluble organic molecules. All of this helps the elasticity of protoplasm, which in turn makes plants resilient during freezing temperatures.

General watering guidelines are:

- *water thoroughly once every few weeks
- *try to water early in the day so the moisture has time to soak into the ground before freezing again at night
- *be sure to water in January and February thaws (like right now!!)
- *drain hoses so you can water again

When watering woody plants that have been planted in the last two seasons, the most important area to water is about a foot from the drip line. It's this area that needs to be kept moist because the root hairs spread horizontally.

Even if soil is frozen, it will absorb water, and often the dissolving ice helps aerate the ground. But make sure your garden soil has good drainage. If not, a lot of soil heaving could take place. This can fracture taproots as well as lateral roots, sometimes resulting in elevated crowns that can quickly dry out a plant.

What all this means is getting out there in mittens, scarf and hat--yes, a crazy get-up for gardening--and pouring a bit of water on those seemingly dead looking plants. They'll love you for it.

Evergreen Garden Club
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Evergreen, Colorado 80437
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Denver Botanic Gardens Schedule of Events www.botanicgardens.org

illuminating Weeds

**Denver Botanic Gardens to Host
First-ever Invasive Species Botanical Illustration Exhibit
February 11 - April 25, 2005**

Weeds as fine art? Invasive species are not generally thought of as worthy of painting, however a new art exhibit at Denver Botanic Gardens titled "Illuminating Weeds" will display unique botanical illustrations from 15 botanical illustration artists and featured artist Annie Chappell in a variety of beautiful mediums, while educating the public about local invasive species.

Bonfils-Stanton Lecture Series 2005 "Gardens Inspiring Style and Substance"

Gardens have the power to heal, delight the senses, act as extensions of the home, provide creative outlets and unite neighbors. Join us in lively discussions about the art of gardening with speakers and panelists who represent the most innovative voices in garden design, implementation and maintenance.

Thursday, Feb. 17, 7 p.m.

Gardens for the Future: Gestures Against the Wild

Guy Cooper and Gordon Taylor, BBC hosts of The Curious Gardeners

View amazing developments in garden design that have inspired the new aesthetic principles and materials in gardens of the 21st century.