

Hortiscopia

Carver County
Horticultural Society
(CCHS)

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NEWSLETTER OF THE CARVER COUNTY HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY, JUNE, 2004

"In search of my mother's garden – I found my own." -- Alice Walker

Tetanus? ME??? When is the last time you had a tetanus shot? (*What is she talking about? This is a garden club newsletter, not a solicitation from HealthPartners??*) Believe it or not, this IS a gardening question! We often associate tetanus with the "rusty nail," but tetanus can enter the body through any simple wound. This potentially fatal infectious disease is caused by bacteria found in dirt, potting soil and manure – the natural habitat of gardeners! Many adults don't realize that their childhood Td (tetanus and diphtheria) vaccine is no longer effective in protecting them, and that everyone should receive a booster vaccine every 10 years. If it's been more than 10 years since you've had a tetanus shot, you could be at risk. So make sure your tetanus immunization is up to date.

What's Blooming in the Hentz Garden? The tulips have all faded, but the daffodils are still strong. The 'Rosy Lights' azalea is just opening (which reminds me, I have to get to the Arboretum to catch the fireworks display of all their citrusy-colored azaleas in bloom!). My little guy blooms reliably every year, yet it doesn't appear to have grown an inch since I first planted it three years ago! (Well, you know the adage about herbaceous and woody perennials – the first year they sleep, the second year they creep, the third year they leap! Maybe it will leap this year.) The polemonium (Jacob's ladder) really stunned me last week. One day I had a nice tidy little mound of a plant, and literally the next day I had 10" flower stems reaching up getting ready to bloom, which it is doing now. Some of the salvia varieties are in bloom, as are the linum (blue flax), aremeria (thrift), arabis (rock cress), dianthus barbatus (Sweet William) and, of course, nepeta (cat mint). Many of the iris are just barely showing color on their buds, so we should be seeing them very soon.

June To-Do List

This is it! The season we've waited for is in full swing! Work hard now, and you'll be able to sit back and enjoy the summer!

- Now is the time to get those warm-season vegetables (tomatoes & peppers) in the ground.
- Fertilize those faded tulips while they're storing up energy for next year!
- Go ahead and plant your cannas, dahlias, begonias, gladiolas and caladiums.
- Stop picking rhubarb after 8-10 weeks of harvesting, so it has a chance to replenish its energy for next year. Give it a top dressing of composted manure.
- Pull those spring weeds, then mulch your beds with 1-2" of organic mulch.
- Keep roses fertilized and watered – they're heavy feeders and drinkers!
- Put out your fruit and thistle feeders – the orioles and goldfinches are out, looking for a tasty treat.
- Prune out the oldest forsythia and lilac stems as soon as they're done blooming.

Cottage Garden

Although it is a vegetable, most people consider rhubarb to be a fruit. It wasn't until around 1800 that cottagers discovered, possibly by accident, that rhubarb made a delicious filling for tarts and pies. Until then, they grew it for medicinal purposes only. It is a vigorous plant and looks very impressive in a larger cottage garden. It is best grown in a separate bed at least 3 feet square, to prevent it from swamping other plants, but the colorful stems make it well worth the space it needs. Never harvest more than 1/3 of the plant in any given year, and be sure to cut off any flowers down to the base as soon as you see them appear. Put it to bed every fall with a blanket of composted manure.

from Cottage Garden, A Journal, by Jackie Bennett

Vanilla-Stewed Rhubarb

1 pound rhubarb, sliced into 1-inch lengths
1 cup sugar
1/2 vanilla bean

Put the rhubarb in a pot and add water just barely to cover, then add the sugar. Split the vanilla bean lengthwise and scrape the seeds into the pot and drop in the rest of the bean. Bring to a boil and simmer over low heat until the rhubarb is tender, about 5 minutes. Remove from the heat and allow to cool.

Carver County Horticultural Society (CCHS) is a non-profit organization founded to expand our members' knowledge and horticultural skills while promoting civic beauty, community involvement and conservation of natural resources.

Membership is open to all genders, ages and skill levels.

Garden of Weedin'

This column will highlight some common garden weeds -- what they look like, what they're called, and what you can do about them!

Garlic Mustard *Alliaria petiolata*

Garlic mustard is a cool season (i.e., flourishing now) biennial herb with leaves that give off an garlicky odor when crushed. It reproduces only by seed, which can remain viable in the soil for up to five years. First-year plants appear as a rosette of green kidney shaped leaves with scalloped edges that grow close to the ground. In the second year, they become mature flowering plants, producing long stalks in spring that can grow $\frac{3}{4}$ inch per day. Flowering occurs in mid-May through June.

Garlic mustard is a severe threat to woodland wildflowers and tree seedlings, outcompeting native plants for light, moisture, nutrients, soil, and space. Hand removal where possible is the best remedy, taking care to remove the entire root system. For large infestations, cut the plants to ground level to prevent seed production. For details, check out this site: <http://www.ipm.msu.edu/garlicMge.htm>



Drought Update for May 15

Mark Seeley, Extension Climatologist, is predicting we'll stay on the cool and damp side for the remainder of May. The threat of frost has greatly diminished for the southern half of the state.

Much of the state received welcome rains earlier this month. (And Roseau received some unwelcome rain because it came all at once.) Southwest and west central Minnesota remain in severe drought, while much of the rest of the state still has an accumulated deficit from last year. To put the dent in the deficit, we would need 150% of normal rainfall from May through August. Average rainfall for May is 3.5-4". Many of us have received up to 2" so we need a continued pattern of regular rainfall to maintain plant health this summer.

Check out the latest issue of Yard and Garden Line News (<http://www.extension.umn.edu/projects/yardandgarden/YGLNews/YGLNews.html>) for great articles on the following:

- Tree Cavities: To Fill or Not To Fill
- Managing Vegetable Diseases of the Home Garden
- Black-legged Tick Reminder
- Cicadas in Minnesota
- An Urban Legend: The Camel Spider

The Art & Science of Container Gardening

Container gardening is perhaps the fastest-growing area of consumer horticulture today. According to a nationwide survey conducted for the Garden Writers Association in April, 79% of respondents said they already grow plants in containers, and 15% of them indicated they'd like to increase the number of container-grown plants in their household environment.

On May 15, I participated in the first half of a certification course on container gardening sponsored by the University of Michigan, Proven Winners (the company that provides those great plants in 4" pots) and the American Horticultural Society. Master Gardeners from across the state gathered at the Arboretum to hear Deb Brown, our local U of M "garden guru," talk about container gardening basics; Kerry Strobe, from Proven Winners, preview some of the latest releases of terrific annuals; Arla Carmichael, head gardener at Noerenberg Gardens, share some of her secrets on combining plants in stunning combinations; and Carl Rosen, professor of soil science at the U of M, discuss his analysis of commercial synthetic soil mixes available in our garden centers.

The second half of this certification course is actually provided online, through the Horticultural Gardening Institute of the University of Michigan. In this second phase of the program, participants submit plans for four container projects, which are reviewed and critiqued by a panel of Master Gardeners.

So far this has just been a great learning experience for me. While I'm only 1/3 of the way through the online course, I'm already anxious to test what I've learned on some new and unique container gardens for my yard. And I look forward to sharing this information with CCHS members at one of our meetings next year. If you'd like to check out a few web sites in the meantime, go to www.gardeninginstitute.com or www.provenwinners.com, two great online resources for container basics and plant combinations ideas.



Don't miss our **early August** meeting!

(No meeting in July, due to Independence Day)

Turtle Rock Gardens Tour

3190 Autumn Woods Drive, Chaska

Monday, August 2, 2004, 7:00 pm