



The Express

VOLUME II ISSUE II

Spring 2005

Our Mission

The mission of the Olympus Garden Club is to promote and support the love of gardening, floral arranging, landscape design, horticulture, plant research and environmental improvement by providing education, resources, networking and leadership opportunities to our members and the community.

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Literacy Project Terrarium and Picture Book

Springtime is the season when the earth seems to wake up from a frosty sleep. Things begin to greenly pop their heads up from the soil. Spring is the time to plant new seeds, both in the ground and in the heads of our children. Looking in seed catalogs and on the backs of seed packets, one can find the opportunity to teach reading, science, social studies, mathematics, and more with a little bit of imagination and patience.

Using the garden catalog let a beginning reader learn that large words are made up of smaller words. For example: snapdragon =

How many times have you inhaled the perfume of a rose, the aroma of peaches, the intoxicating odor of herbs and not have it appeal to our senses? These sensory experiences are intrusive, so intrusive that they stop us in our tracks, every time, no matter the circumstance and force us to recall associated memories.

How many times do you drink water, throw it away, keep our plants alive with it, and not think of it as our most valuable resource?

How many of us think of gardening as work instead of

exercise, punishment instead of pleasure, tedious instead of joyful?

How many of us started the war on bugs or the war on weeds without ever once thinking of the connectivity of our existence. How about the competition for that perfect lawn, while forgetting that dandelion roots bring nutrients to the upper soil surface and that clover adds natural nitrogen to the soil. As a result of that war, the birds, butterflies, and bees are dying and

seeds or a small plant, let the child take care of the plant. This can teach many important things including the responsibility of taking care of another living thing (the earth, plants, people), patience, and maybe a love of plants or gardening.

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our water is becoming more and more contaminated.

Have you ever once stopped to think that if we do not have bees, we might not have food? Did you realize that by poisoning the bug you are



July in the Garden

transferring that poison to the birds or that by poisoning the bugs you are reducing, for example, the butterfly population.

How many of us do not clean

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For children in kindergarten or younger, a simple gardening literacy project follows:

Make a small terrarium using two clear plastic cups or a clear plastic soda bottle cut in half. Put sand, gravel, or pebbles in the bottom and enough soil to come to about halfway up the cup. Let the child push four or five seeds into the soil, using their fingers up to about the first knuckle. Make sure to place one seed against the side of the cup so that you can watch the roots of the baby plant grow. Add about ¼ to ½ cup of water. Turn the second cup upside down (or the top half of the bottle), and put it on top of the other. Let the child write the name of the

(Continued on page 4)

President's Message

As I write during one of the grayest days of late winter, with a weather forecast of another 8 inches of snow, I can only console myself with the fact that the season will soon be past. Gardeners like to use this time of year to pour through catalogues and plan new projects, perhaps hoping to produce results just a little bit better than the previous year's.

In March the club exhibited at the Green Thumb "Grow Together" as well as at Brooklyn Botanic Garden's BrooklynGreenbridge "Making Brooklyn Bloom". Some members will attend the fourth annual Federated Garden Clubs of New York State, District II flower show being held at Hofstra University **April 15, 16, 17, 2005**. This year's theme is "In Tune With

Nature"

A new endeavor for some of us (others have already joined), is participation in training sessions with "Just Food". From my personal experience, this organization has very important and exciting goals. We've been learning new techniques to help transmit food growing, food processing and many other related areas of information to members of the community who would not necessarily be exposed to it. In the kind of work that they do, Just Food's work supports our own mission.

In March we also gathered for our annual anniversary dinner. The event marked, (it's hard to believe), the end of our second year of existence. We

enjoyed a wonderful meal as we celebrated one more year of achievement, while gathering our energy for our move forward towards another enriching year.

Robert Florin, President



News

Our Executive Director, Solita Stephens, is the new Kings County Chairperson for Federated Garden Clubs of New York State, District II for the 2005–2007 term.

Garden Invocation

May the warmth of the sun bring you bliss
May it shine upon you each and every day
May it illuminate your thoroughfare along the way

Feel the wind as it travels across space
Feel the wind as it cover the universe
Feel the wind as it brings the sap of life in to the brand new leaves

Rain come banish away winter blues
Rain, we have set out barrels to catch your glorious dew
Rain, your soft sprinkle of mist washes away old man's winter cold

Earth, we have put in spring's compost, manure, coffee and tea waste
Earth, the bushes, trees and plants, are in greenhouses growing
Earth, warm up with velocity
Soil tilling needs to be done with speed and haste

Sun, the seeds are waiting for your bright light

Winds warm breath of spring delight
Rain, mist and dew we need you to wash away the last of ice and snow
Earth, old, young and in between, hands, arms, feet, legs minds and hearts are willing

Your friends, the gardeners, are gathering together in the northern hemisphere to help begin the environmental rebirth of gardens once again everywhere

Ilithuba Ukachuma

Featured Plant Sorrel

Botanical name:

Hibiscus sabdariffa

Pronunciation:

hi-BIS-kus

Common Name: Sorrel, Roselle, Karkade, Jamaica

Native to: Africa & India to Malaysia

Naturalized in: Central & South America and the Caribbean

Did you know that sorrel, a favored red colored Caribbean beverage is made from the calyces (the red or yellow cup like base of the flower) of a hibiscus plant?

It is an annual, growing to about 10 feet tall with a deep taproot that would have to be started indoors in our area because of its long growing season. It will grow under varied extremes of weather, soil, and drainage conditions in full sun. Like other hibiscus in our area, flowers appear in the fall and calyces can be picked after

the flowers drop and seeds start to form.


Calyces are used in jams, jellies, sauces, wines, and to color rum. The tender stalks and leaves are used in salads, as an herb, and for seasoning curries. The mature stalks are used for fiber that is a substitute for jute in the making of burlap. The seeds are oil producing and used as an "aphrodisiac" coffee substitute. Historically in many countries, sorrel has a wide range of medicinal uses.

With its contributions to our economic, culinary, and medical wellbeing, this valuable, multiuse plant also has ornamental value in the garden. The species with red colored leaves would serve as an attention getting background plant with multi-season interest. Seeds can be found doing a search on the internet.

(Continued on page 4)

Olympus Garden Club Word Scramble

Signs of Spring

Blooms	M	X	X	M	N	M	A	M	M	D
Bud	F	F	H	D	D	H	I	F	N	T
Crocus	F	H	G	D	R	V	H	L	E	T
Equinox	Z	T	J	L	T	A	T	J	T	O
Forsythia	Z	C	M	V	B	V	Y	Q	A	J
Germinate	L	G	J	V	D	Z	S	Q	N	V
Leaf	L	N	I	U	U	E	R	K	I	L
Seedlings	L	I	L	V	B	L	O	O	M	S
Showers	L	W	B	L	W	W	F	T	R	T
Sowing	L	O	Q	L	D	K	Q	Q	E	E
	L	S	E	E	D	L	I	N	G	S
	D	J	Q	R	Z	E	T	F	N	U
	S	J	U	U	A	A	J	D	L	C
	D	J	I	B	Z	F	T	H	L	O
	S	E	N	W	R	I	F	H	Q	R
	S	H	O	W	E	R	S	W	T	C
	C	N	X	R	F	X	O	O	R	C
R. Murray	G	S	M	W	J	Z	Z	X	T	B
see pg. 4	C	V	M	E	O	J	D	N	N	D

Spring Garden Preparation

There are various ways to help your garden get a good head start on the growing season. Tidy up the garden a bit, sweep away all of last year's debris. Pull up all of the old annuals and cut back perennials. (Make sure not to prune any spring flowering shrubs or you'll be certain to lose their blooms). If the material removed is not diseased, you can add it to your compost pile.

Feeding perennials is another worthwhile activity for spring. The safest thing to use is compost. This is an excellent amendment for your beds (and other plantings) that will slowly be absorbed by your plants. A generous amount of well-rotted manure can also be beneficial and some gardeners like to use triple super phosphate (pure phosphorous), which can help to produce lots of flowers. No more than 3-4 tablespoons of this

(Continued on page 4)

Tip Time

Clean up your garden by removing left over leaves, twigs and dead material.

Now is the time to spread an organic pre-emergent weed killer on the lawn.

Plant cool season annuals like pot marigold, snapdragons, sweet williams,

Test the pH of your soil with our recommended Cornell pH test kit.

Add your first fertilizer lawn application Memorial weekend.

If you did not divide your perennials in the fall do so now.

Start potting up the summer bulbs you saved over the winter if they started sprouting.

Spread a 3-4 inch layer of compost to the vegetable bed before turning it over.

If you buy bare root plants, place them in a bucket and give them a good overnight drink.

Prune apple, plum, and cherry trees when buds start to swell. Don't forget to remove any dead, diseased, broken or crossing branches.

Place pruned cuttings in a vase to force early flowering

Don't forget to include names and dates on your labels when you start your seeds.

When planting balled and burlapped trees/shrubs, please, do not forget to remove the burlap after you place the plant in the planting hole.

Don't throw away your cuttings, they can be brought indoors and placed in a vase to force into bloom earlier.

Prune early-flowering shrubs, like forsythia and lilac, as soon as blooms fade because new buds start to set in about 10 days after flowering.

If your roses are still dormant, prune them now and gradually remove the protective mounds you built last fall.

Sharpen your tools, and lawnmower blades and keep them sharpened throughout the season.

Cool season vegetables like spinach, lettuce, broccoli, kale, collards, cabbage, cauliflower, beets, carrots, swiss chard, mustard, radish turnips, and peas can be planted out doors now.

Start fertilizing your roses as soon as the buds break with a balanced fertilizer and continue through July.

Happy Spring!



(Terrarium continued from page 1)

seed, the child’s name, and the date planted.

Put the learning terrarium on a windowsill that gets morning sunlight, if possible. Explain that the baby plant will grow as soon as the sun gets the soil warm enough and the water keeps it from being thirsty. As the plant begins to grow, it will be easy for a youngster to draw what appears. The excitement of the first leaf breaking the soil is worth the wait. This drawing can become part of a picture book or diary and the new words can be printed underneath each picture.

Remember to work with the children. Let them help or do it.

Explain what you’re doing, and why, as you work together. Let them ask questions. Research the answers

together if you need to.

Ask them to help water the garden, plant or terrarium on a daily basis. Most children love water and it can be fun to help with the watering!

As the garden or plant grows, ask your child what he or she notices happening to the plants you’ve planted together. Make a garden journal.

Children’s Books about Seeds

- Bear’s Bargain by Frank Asch
- The Berenstain Bears GROW-IT! by Stan & Jan Berenstain
- The Carrot Seed by Ruth Krauss
- I’m A Seed by Jean Marzollo
- Jack and the Beanstalk
- Pumpkin, Pumpkin by Ruth Titherington
- The Seasons of Arnold’s Tree by Gail Gibbons
- The Tiny Seed by Eric Carle

C. L. Charles-King

(Magic continued from page 1) up after our dogs? Do you realize that animal waste harbors bacteria that can be transferred to humans, that it leaches into the soil, and eventually into our water and leads to contamination.

How many of us realize that we need to foster a bond of cooperation between the environment, nature and ourselves to ensure that we build safe havens for our future.

In this web of connectivity lies the magic of gardening. Whether, it is grown on a windowsill, in containers, in raised beds or through the garden gate, we cannot resist the urge to commune with our sense of touch, smell, taste, feel and sight in the garden. It raises our consciousness, engenders sharing and promotes a sense of community. Plant A Garden!!!

S. Stephens

(Spring continued from page 3) per plant should be used.

Also, if you intend to transplant any of your perennials, this is an ideal time to do it, before the plant wakes up and puts out new growth.

Finally, if your trees and shrubs show signs of disease or pest damage from the previous year, this would be a good time to research the problem and take appropriate measures. Getting a handle on a pest or disease problem early in the season is the best time to deal with it and could save you a valuable plant or two.

R. Florin

(Sorrel continued from page 2)

Dried sorrel can be found in many supermarkets and vegetable stores. Buy some and try making sorrel drink. If you find it fresh try this simple recipe.

Bring 2 quarts of calyces, a teaspoon of cloves and 1 quart of water to a boil and simmer for 10 minutes, then strain and use the juice with sweetener, cinnamon, and vanilla to make a refreshing drink.

S. Stephens


Our Monthly Meeting Schedule

- May 12, 2005**
Victory Gardens
 - June 9, 2005**
Houseplant Summer Vacation
 - July 14, 2005**
Unusual Garden Containers
- Check website for last minute changes or cancellations.**

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Signs of Spring

Word Scramble Answer

M	X	X	M	N	M	A	M	N	D
F	H	H	D	D	V	V	L	R	R
Z	T	G	L	L	V	V	V	L	L
L	C	Z	L	L	B	B	L	L	L
L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L
L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L
D	S	J	W	D	D	A	Z	R	E
S	J	J	J	A	Z	R	E	F	J
S	J	J	J	A	Z	R	E	F	J
C	G	S	W	F	J	O	X	Z	D
C	V	S	E	O	J	D	N	N	B