



The Express

VOLUME II ISSUE III

Summer 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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GARDEN LITERACY 'for toddlers and the young at heart'

Summer means different things to people: hot weather; beach trips; picnics; school's out...graduations, promotions, vacations...no more classes... no more books... No more teachers' dirty looks. Ach! What am I going to do with the kids!!!

The garden is an excellent way to introduce toddlers to nature. In the garden, children learn that soil is a good thing; vegetables and large, colorful flowers grow from tiny seeds; birds splash in bird-baths; butterflies sit upon flowers; and that they can grow food. They can experience new tastes from the bright bounty of lettuce, tomatoes, carrots, eggplants, spinach, squash, etc. and form healthy eating habits.

During the past twenty or so years there has been quite a bit of discussion with regard to the value, absence and reintroduction of native plants into public and private growing space. The discussion boils down to some basic questions by gardeners and other concerned individuals.

Is it possible to reverse or at least discourage the trend towards foreign plant species? Can native wildlife populations be restored or made more vigorous by restoring native ecosystems? Can we encourage the use of more native plants to offset the tremendous number of introduced plants? I believe this last course holds the most

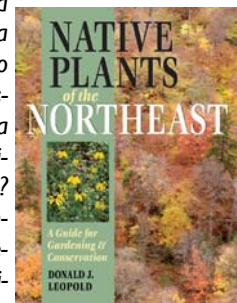
Warning - Have plenty of seedlings. Plan for rough handling by planting extra seeds, as tiny fingers often mangle a few flowers. Serene, one year old, loves to be part of planting and sometimes digs holes in a freshly tilled bed that I'm not yet ready to plant. She loves wheelbarrow rides and picks rocks and rides them in her wagon or apron.

CONTAINER GARDENING PROJECTS

Children enjoy seeing things growing. Label coffee containers and let the child decorate the "pots". Allow the child to do the work. Have the child write his/her name on their container. Help the child form the letters and say each letter and letter sound, while it is being written. Spills can be

Using Our Own Native Plants

promise, but even so it is a difficult sell to many people. How many suburbanites would ever consider replacing their finely trimmed and weed free lawns with a meadow of Buffalo grass? Who would discard their tulips for a bed of native perennials and wild flowers? People might well enjoy native replacements but they anticipate and love those tulips each spring, with all of their lavish color. Our once abundant native chestnut trees and Elms are now a tiny numerical shadow of what they once were, having become the victims of diseases and pests, at



Review on page 2

least one of which was introduced from abroad. It is my own point of view that I would like to see the increased use of our natives for a number of reasons. They were produced here and so are vigorous in their native setting. Selectively they are (at least to me) as beautiful and useful as plants found anywhere. If only because they are underrepresented in their own backyard, there is sufficient reason to use them. Just as wolves have been reintroduced to various places on this continent and just as the

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wiped up easily but the lessons learned will last forever.

Materials: seeds, soil, styrofoam coffee cups, indelible markers or pens, water and labels. For recycling the root vegetables, use four toothpicks to hold each plant in place.

Plant a child's container garden using styrofoam cups and filling with soil up to one inch from the lip. Pick seeds that are easy to handle and plants that are easy and reliable to grow such as Nasturtiums, Marigolds, Zinnias, Runner Beans, Sunflowers, etc.

Grow a carrot top by cutting off all but one inch of the carrot. Stick four toothpicks into carrot around sides and place over a cup of water with the carrot slightly into the water

(potatoes, sweet potatoes, other root vegetables work as well). Wait until roots begin to form and get at least 1/4" long before transplanting to soil.

Plant citrus seeds to start an orange (grapefruit or lemon) tree.

Water regularly but don't overdo it.

Garden safety:

Some plants and/or bulbs are poisonous or irritating to the skin. Examples include: capsicum species (hot peppers), crocus, Bleeding Heart (*Dicentra spectabilis*), tulips, daffodils, hyacinths, hydrangeas, irises. Learn what and where they are in the garden. Know how these plants look during all seasons.

Don't let the children eat petals

(Cont'd on page 4)

President's Message

After an uncooperative and chilly mid-spring, area gardeners were finally able to gear up for a more weather friendly season.

Temperatures soared into the 90's in early June, followed by tropical periods of scattered showers. With sudden temperature changes our lot in spring, at last, our gardens are under way.

Olympus welcomes new members Victoria Ehrlich and Pauline Green. We know that they will be great assets to our club.

We congratulate members who have completed various projects such as courses in floral design, the "Training of Trainers" program of Just Food and Master Composter training at Brooklyn Botanic Garden.

New member, Victoria Ehrlich's Ike-

bana design was displayed to great acclaim at Sakaru Matsuri in April at Brooklyn Botanic Garden.

Of particular note is a possible project to construct an ornamental/teaching garden in front of the historic 1857 Friends Meeting House downtown Brooklyn, NY. The theme will be native plants (also called indigenous plants) which are plant species naturally occurring in North America prior to European immigration. In addition to being a display garden, the garden will expose children and adults to various aspects of horticulture including conservation and restoration. We intend to make it an instructional garden for neighboring students so that they will be able to see and learn about some of our native plant species such as ferns,

grasses, ground covers, fruits, and flowers.

Here's wishing you all a great summer and a glorious growing season.

Robert Florin, President



Donations

We must voice our appreciation to Ena Nemley of Fordham Bedford Lot Busters community garden in the Bronx for donating \$25.00 to help us with our newsletter.

A Book Review

Native Plants of the Northeast: A Guide for Gardening and Conservation, by Donald J. Leopold; Timber Press, March 15, 2005

This is a great book! Actually, it's several books in one. For those of us who want to grow native plants that are actually from our area of the Northeast – 700 species are discussed here. I discovered this book as I was trying to identify several native ground covers for a current project. I found that most of the available cultural information pertained to the Pacific Northwest or to the more southerly Atlantic states. Plants identified as "native" were native to the Americas (rather than Europe or Asia), but were not identified by region of origin. In fact, some plants introduced to our country earlier in history are now included in wild seed mixtures and plants for sale. I was feeling quite frustrated and time-challenged until I found this new book from Timber Press.

A quick read through *Native Plants of the Northeast* will reveal many candidates for your upcoming plantings. I would start at the back of the book. On page 278: "Plants that Tolerate Wet Soil" will get you off to a good start. Follow up with "Plants that Tolerate Dry Soil" and "Plants that Tolerate Shade." Check out "Plants with Flowers that Attract Butterflies and Hummingbirds", "Plants with Fruits that Attract Birds" and "Plants with Fruits that Attract Mammals." Once you have a few names, turn to the middle of the volume: 700 native trees, shrubs, vines, ferns, grasses, and wildflowers are included.

The pictures are gorgeous! Indeed, one could use it as a casual field guide to identify plants and plant communities while hiking. I particu-

Featured Plant Yellow Raspberries

Botanical name: *Rubus idaeus*

Pronunciation: ROO-bus eye-DAY-ee-us

Family: Rosaceae

Common Name: Raspberry

Native to: Europe, North America, the Tropics & Artic

I have been growing yellow raspberries in a recycled plastic look-alike whiskey barrel in the back yard for the last three years and they are the best. While planting containers over the past several weeks, they started to ripen and I would stop to treat myself every so often by picking a few.

I kept on tasting the reds and the blacks, but I always found them tart. Then, one afternoon in my friend Clarice's garden I tasted one of her yellows and I was hooked. She gave me a few plants but they died. I found some bare root replacement plants in a mail order catalog, placed an order and I did not breathe again until they started to grow. When I tasted them last year for the first time, I was on cloud nine. I found that I liked them best when they start to blush with

just a hint of red. Mine bear fruit from June 'til frost. Many varieties are available on the web. The yellow varieties are mutant forms of the red.

Raspberries are members of a family of small fruit called Brambles (means 'envy' in the language of flowers) and they bear fruit on canes that are two years old. The first year canes are called "primocanes", and in the second year when they flower, "floricanes" After fruiting, those canes die and you have to prune them out. The

"I like them best when they start to blush."

canes can grow to six feet. You will need to support them with a trellis.

OUCH! I forgot to tell you! They have

thorns, are not as mean as roses, however, they can take over. So if you would like to try them put them in a container.


Perfect for growing in a small space! Plant in acid, well drained, compost rich soil. They contain a potential anti-cancer gent, ellagic acid and are high in Vitamin C.

S. Stephens

(Continued on page 3)

Olympus Garden Club Word Scramble

Native Trees

Chestnut	S	A	S	S	A	F	R	A	S	T
Green Ash	U	T	J	L	T	A	T	J	Y	P
Hackberry	G	C	M	V	B	V	Y	Q	C	J
Linden	A	G	J	V	D	N	S	Q	A	V
Post Oak	R	N	H	U	E	J	R	K	M	L
Red-Spruce	M	H	L	D	B	L	H	F	O	S
Sassafras	A	W	N	L	W	C	F	T	R	T
Sugar Maple	P	I	Q	L	D	H	Q	Q	E	J
Sycamore	L	S	R	R	V	E	I	G	G	Z
Tamarack	E	C	U	R	P	S	D	E	R	X
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	R	H	S	A	N	E	E	R	G	D
R. Murray	Y	P	W	X	Q	V	J	A	L	B
see pg. 4	F	Y	R	R	E	B	K	C	A	H
	J	L	N	B	Q	K	K	K	V	A

(Book Review—cont'd from page 2)

larly enjoyed the section on ferns and fernlike plants such as scouring rushes. The pictures are very clear and the text sufficiently illuminating that I felt little need to key out any of the plants I saw on a recent hike (even though I had two other field guides in my pack).

The cultivation information for each species includes: climate zones, soil and light requirements, attributes and propagation methods. The author has hands-on experience in his own garden and includes many growing tips and personal observations.

Appropriate plants for habitat restoration projects are identified. The author shares his experience with site analysis and plant community development. We now have some tools to look beyond our own garden projects and can consider how the ecology of the planet can be improved.

The author is a Distinguished Teaching Professor at the College of Environmental Science and Forestry, State University of New York at Syracuse. His areas of interest include: old-growth forests and wetlands, rare plant

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Tip Time



When you deadhead roses, be sure to go back until you find a stem at least as thick as your smallest finger, cut at that point where you find an outward facing bud. Cutting off just the flower heads encourages new shoots to grow on thin stems and this helps to create weakness.

Urushiol (pronounced oo-roo-shee-ohl) is the chemical in poison ivy that causes us to dream of being in a different body when we become exposed. If you are unfortunate enough to come in contact with poison ivy this summer, use rubbing alcohol within ten minutes to wash of the area and not soap because soap can spread it to other areas. Better yet, wear long sleeves, boots, and socks when walking through wooded areas.

How often have you thought "I should have had tomatoes already". In reality, that label that says 45 days to maturity actually means 45 days to maturity from the day you transplant to the garden. So, be patient! If your tomatoes taste too tangy you might

be giving the plants too much nitrogen and potassium—ease up!

Some bacterial tomato diseases can be carried from year to year on the tomato cages. If this is a problem for you, wash your cages with a ten percent bleach solution and rinse after with clean water.

Planting disease resistant varieties is a primary method of reducing the use of chemicals in the garden. The letters following the names of your favorite plants indicate type of hybrid and type of disease resistance. For example—Cherry tomato (F1, VFN, TMV) indicates the tomato is an F1 hybrid, resistant to Verticillium, Fusarium wilt, Rootknot nematode and Tobacco Mosaic virus. You will find a key in the catalog.

French marigolds, when planted as a cover crop and then turned over, help to control nematodes.

If you have a never ending battle with weeds, try smothering them with black plastic for 4-6 weeks. It is the easiest way to prepare a weedy area for planting.

Marigolds help to repel aphids, whiteflies, cabbage maggots, corn earworms, Mexican bean beetle, rabbits, some nematodes, and plum curculio.

Cool Summer Suggestions

Mint is a wonderful summer freshener!

Before going on trips this summer, put some mint in your recycled water bottles, fill them with water, turn the bottles on the side and freeze. Add them to the cooler, and lunch boxes. The bottles will keep the food cool and by the time you start to get hot it would have melted enough to give you a cool drink.

You can also use this cool mint water to rinse your face and hands to stay cool.

Fold mint in strong wet paper towels, place in freezer bag and freeze, then add to cooler, now you have an inexpensive, refreshing cleanup.

Fresh mint added to your fresh fruit salads gives the fruit salad a nice zip.

Ilithuba Ukachuma

"tomato cages can transmit disease"

(Toddlers cont'd from page 1)

or leaves or any plants.

After picking fresh vegetables or fruit in the garden, please wash it carefully before allowing the child to eat it.

Buy child size garden tools and model proper use while working together. Discount stores often sell them at reasonable prices, especially at season's end. Put them away, when not in use. Empty standing water in bird baths, plant containers, or buckets. It only takes a few tablespoons or inches of water to drown a child.

Put long sleeve shirts, caps or gardening hats with wide brims, and sunscreen on tender young skin to prevent sunburn and bug bites. I tend to use eucalyptus oil or lemongrass to chase away bugs but experiment with what works best for you. **Teach** your child that a squirrel is not tame, like a kitty and not to chase either.

Lock organic pesticides and fertilizers in garden sheds.

Don't let small children wander around the gar-

den. Remember: An unsupervised child can be an accident in waiting.

Teach children to respect nature, gardens, and other people's property and to admire plants in their natural settings but to not destroy or waste them.

Enjoy your summer with the children. Share your love of gardening. If teaching a person to fish feeds him or her for a lifetime...consider how teaching gardening will add to the menu.

Make it a good day.

C. L. Charles-King

(Native cont'd from page 1)

bison and bald eagle have been saved from extinction, so should our versatile wild ginger, beautiful Amelanchier, and unique Trillium be seen, known and enjoyed by all who are interested in botanical history.

I am listing a few useful native plant sources for those who wish to learn more.

New England Wildflower

society: <http://www.newfs.org>

Wild ones: <http://www.for-wild.org>

Planting Noah's Garden: Sara Stein, publisher: Houghton Mifflin, 1997.

Native species planting guide for New York and Vicinity: Natural Resources Group, City of New York Parks and Recreation, 1993.

R. Florin

(Book Review cont'd from page 3)

species, biodiversity and ecosystem restoration. He is the co-author of Trees of the Central Hardwood Forests of North America: An Identification and Cultivation

V. Ehrlich

Community Activities



Tamica James

Olympus had an information and fundraising table at the Ruby Weston Manor Health Fair in June.

Young, Tamica wanted one of our flower hair combs. After her mom bought one and placed it in her hair, she had such a gleam of pleasure in her eyes that we just had to take her picture.

Another Olympus member had the unexpected opportunity to deliver compost to the C.A.U.S.A Festival Garden, community garden on Blake and Van Siclen Avenues, in Brooklyn. After being invited in, she found treasure, in the form of fresh cherries from their cherry tree. What a thrill it was, to be invited, to pick and eat sweet, fresh, yes I said fresh-picked cherries. ❀❀❀

Olympus members with on left, the new District II Director, Joan

Prior and on right the new Federated Garden Clubs of NYS President, Barbara



Campbell at our annual District II Spring Luncheon.

Our Monthly Meeting Schedule

July 14, 2005
Unusual Garden Containers

August 11, 2005
Drought Resistant Plants

September 8, 2005
Grandma's Organic Plant Health

Please check our website for last minute changes or cancellations.

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Word Scramble Answer

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