



The Express

VOLUME II ISSUE IV

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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 Make Plant Labels

Garden literacy is a combination of learning to read and write and about how to take care of the garden. The more time you and your loved ones spend together in the garden, the more the kids will feel like the garden is truly theirs and the more they'll want to take care of it. Encourage children to share in all of the garden chores with you including: feeding plants, planting seeds, staking, thinning, watering, weeding, pest patrol, and organic pest control.

Now is the time to evaluate the success of this year's garden. Make notes that will help improve the garden for next spring. New

Heirloom Plants and Seed Preservation

Every so often, a news article appears describing the discovery of some seed found in a pyramid or other ancient place, and how that seed miraculously germinated. But normally, seeds of most plants will only survive for a few years and sometimes they remain viable to sprout for shorter periods of time. There is a plant that comes to mind, Canada thistle - *Cirsium arvense*, an invasive plant that produces seeds that will remain viable for at least 20 years. There are always exceptions.

Saving your own seeds saves money; it's fun and reward-

ing. If you like the way a particular variety tastes or grows, it is worth saving. If it has resisted disease and local pests, it is also worth saving. Farmers who have been using traditional crop seeds for generations can no longer get their seeds because seed companies want to market patented varieties or hybrids. Farmers find it difficult to buy these "heirloom" seeds because they've gone out of favor. There is a movement to save heirlooms by home gardeners, universities, and agricultural and horticultural institutions. As gardeners, we can save and use our own

seeds without a whole lot of trouble. It is a good idea to grow only one variety of a plant in a small garden to prevent cross-pollination. Hybrid seeds are not to be saved as such plants will not be the same in the next generation.

Preparing seeds: - Allow seeds to fully ripen before harvesting. Choose the healthiest, most flavorful plants to save. Tomatoes and cucumbers are specially prepared for storage. Cut the fruit and squeeze pulp into a container. Add some water

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York had extended drought conditions. 19+ days of 90° temperatures and high humidity. Some plants had a difficult time surviving the weather. Discuss with the child(ren) the hits and misses. Many gardeners had to put in 'extra hours' just to keep their garden landscape alive. Soaker hoses helped deep water our plants, shrubs and trees. My container plants and hanging baskets survived only due to the benefits of compost tea and mulch that helped to keep them in flower and prevented wilting.

There is still a small window for planting cool sea-

son crops such as leaf lettuce, radishes, spinach, and other short season crops. This is the perfect time to have your beginning readers look for the number of days to harvest printed on the seed packet label. Let them write the planting and harvesting dates on the plant labels.

It's time for you and your literacy partner to start herb seeds: basil, chives, marjoram, oregano, parsley, rosemary, tarragon, and (English) thyme to grow inside as houseplants. Keep them in a cool, sunny spot, and allow the soil to dry out between watering. Clip off the top leaves as needed for cooking,

do not strip them off. You can make your own plant labels cheaply and easily to mark your plants.

Do you remember what's growing in your garden and where? Do you remember the scientific plant names of every thing you've grown? As perennials fade away, make sure to mark their locations. Some might not be apparent after the winter and may be disturbed by spring cultivating. If you start plants from seed, swap plants with gardening friends, or simply want to replace a broken or faded label, make your own. There are several types of materials to choose from and each has its'

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President's Message

Returning from Vermont this summer, my wife and I stopped at a small roadside flea market where I couldn't resist buying a not very antique sickle. This implement was used in earlier days mainly to cut down ripe wheat and other kinds of grain in many parts of the world. What I would do with the sickle still remains a mystery.

Harvest season is upon us but I do not grow any grain. Weeds and tall grass may be dealt with in more effective ways, but I still wanted that sickle. Perhaps because it's representative of agriculture or harvest or hand tools, it has some sort of appeal to me. I decided to sharpen it, running it across a stone many times before being satisfied with the edge.

Direction and purpose is a good thing to evaluate from time to time. Now that we are a federal tax-exempt 501 (c)(3) organization and public charity, we also need to evaluate our direction and purpose. While keeping our original mission in mind, we have to use our resources as effectively as possible.

This summer and early fall saw us involved in a series of workshops dealing with natural pest control, soil quality, composting, and pruning. We guided visitors through pansy repotting at the Brooklyn Botanic Garden's Brooklyn-Greenbridge Harvest Fair. We received two grants from Citizens for NYC, which was very gratifying. We hosted an interesting and edifying King's county president's meeting of

the Federated Garden Clubs of New York State held at Brooklyn Botanic Garden and we welcomed two new members, Roberta Kilkenny and Barbara Pace.

All and all in taking stock of things, we've seen some accomplishments, in spite of a few obstacles, and, we keep looking toward making the club not only more effective, but more creative as well.

Robert Florin, President



Featured Plant Cattails

Botanical name: *Typha angustifolia*, *T. latifolia*

Pronunciation: TY-fah an-gus-tih-FOE-lee-ah, lat-ih-FOE-lee-ah

Family: Typhaceae

Common Name: Narrow leaf Cattail, common cattail

Native to: Europe & North America, Asia & Africa

In spite of the fact that this plant is not unfamiliar to me, I found myself becoming fascinated with it while driving down Interstate 95 this past summer. It started with my not remembering its name and moved on to my liking its form and vertical structure. Then I decided that I wanted to use it as the vertical element in my three-foot container water garden.

Now you already know how we get when we decide that we must have a plant and it littered the interstate. I

wanted to stop immediately to dig some up but I was not allowed to succumb. I ended up digging three up from our friends yard and had my first up close and personal encounter.

This semiaquatic to aquatic perennial monocot with basal erect leaves was not easy to dig up. It had one quarter to half-inch thick rhizomatous roots and I later learned that these roots can get up to one and one quarter inch thick and up to four feet long. It grows in the shallow water of lakes, ponds, rivers and in roadside ditches in soil that is high in organic matter content. It will also grow as any other container plant would if kept evenly moist.

I did not expect them to live after getting them home, because I had to hack through the roots to get them up. In addition, the flower heads had already turned brown and beige col-

ored tufts of cotton like puffs were already separating from the flower heads. It was going to seed. The leaves started to dry up; I started to mourn and then..... You would never guess, so I have to tell you....New basal shoots started to grow out of each of them and the mourning became a celebration. Thus the fascination continued.

Please bear in mind that this plant is considered invasive in many areas but it is at the root of the food chain for several species including humans and thus considered the producer. The flowers, leaves, oil, pollen, roots, seeds, and stems are all edible. The central part of the roots and lower stalks are starchy and was dried and ground into a flour by early Native American tribes and other early settlers. They contain ten times more starch than an equivalent amount of potatoes. The lower parts of the leaves can be used in salads. The young, green flowers can be roasted, boiled or pickled. The stems are edible both raw and boiled. Before the flower forms the stem and tips can be peeled and eaten in soups, salads, and stir-fries, prized in Russia, it is called Cossack's Asparagus. Oil




is extracted from the seeds but this is not considered economical because the seeds are too small. The pollen is used as a protein rich additive

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**it is called
Cossack's
Asparagus**

Olympus Garden Club Word Scramble

Fall Focus

Compost bin	T	X	Z	X	B	F	W	X	T	T
Deadhead	S	E	V	A	E	L	T	J	P	P
Die back	M	C	S	E	W	A	Q	Q	C	J
Frost	U	G	L	V	D	T	S	O	R	F
Harvest	M	N	E	U	U	E	R	K	C	L
Late bloom- ers	D	H	X	L	B	B	H	D	R	C
Leaves	D	W	L	L	W	L	F	A	R	O
Mums	L	Q	Q	Y	D	O	Q	E	G	M
Rake	L	S	R	D	V	O	I	H	G	P
Winter hardy	C	S	X	R	V	M	J	D	L	O
R. Murray	S	J	U	A	J	E	J	A	S	S
	D	J	I	H	A	R	V	E	S	T
	S	D	N	R	R	S	F	D	Q	B
	S	H	A	E	B	N	O	A	G	I
	C	K	X	T	F	X	O	S	P	N
	E	R	R	N	N	M	A	K	M	D
	R	P	D	I	E	B	A	C	K	D
	Y	P	W	W	Q	V	J	A	L	B
see pg. 4	F	L	T	R	R	Q	K	C	P	D
	J	L	N	B	Q	K	K	V	V	A

(Cattail cont'd from page 2)

to flour and cereals.

The leaves are used for weaving, padding and stuffing boat seams. The fluffy, cottony stuff that carry the seed on the wind has been used as stuffing for mattresses, as padding for baby diapers, because it is very absorbent, and it is most suitable as insulation material.

The food chain continues with the birds, animals and fish. Hawks eat ducks, which eat water bug beetles, which eat crayfish, which eat cattails. Muskrats eat cattails and lastly, fox, bear, and coyote eat blue gill fish, which eat cattails. Many shore birds nest among cattails and the muskrats use them as nesting material.

Cattails are most definitely part of a complex food chain with multiple, edible, medicinal, and economic uses. My fascination is still in high gear!

S. Stephens



Tip Time



It is the season for preserving your harvest and the time for drying your herbs is here.

To retain the highest flavor and quality air drying is the least inexpensive form of preservation.

Cut the best stems of your herbs in bunches of 5 and wrap a rubber band around the stems. Use the same rubber band to attach the stems to a wire hanger. The rubber band will shrink with the stems and keep them in place.

Cut air holes into a brown paper bag and cover the herbs on the hanger using the bag to keep off the dust. Hang in a cool, dark place.

When herbs are brittle to the touch, usually between one to two weeks, put them in a dark jar, label and store in a cool place.

Mint is one of the easiest herbs to dry. Dry it and use it to flavor your hot cocoa through the winter. Sage, thyme, oregano, rosemary, and bay leaves are also easily dried.

Chop chives, and tomatoes and freeze them for later addition to soups and stews.

Cut air holes into a brown paper bag

Dried herbs are best if used within a year.

Sage is the only herb that grows stronger in flavor during storage.

Basil can be pureed with oil and then frozen for future use in your sauces, stews, and soups.

Before storing your dried herbs, check them for molding. Toss the entire bunch if you find mold.

When using dried herbs, add to soups and stews during the last half-hour of cooking or follow recipe directions.

If you have extra cucumbers, and fruit, make relishes, pickles, jams, and jellies. Many recipes are available.

Hot peppers can be dried the same way you dry herbs. Don't forget to use gloves and to wear a mask when handling them or you will be one sorry soul.

You can also dry some of your favorite flowers to keep you company through the winter in potpourris, and dried arrangements.

Roses dry well, fragrant roses are especially wonderful because they add natural fragrance to your potpourri.

Cockscomb, baby's breath, larkspur, lavender, yellow yarrow, strawflower, celosia, cattails, Chinese lantern, hydrangea, liatris, globe amaranth, heather, queen anne's lace, sweet annie, golden rod, grass plumes, and money plant, all dry well, make small bunches with rubber bands and hang them up in a cool dark place. Most of them will dry in 2 weeks.

(Labels cont'd from page 1)
pros and cons.

Materials depend upon the type of labels you prefer:

- Wooden labels use popsicle sticks or tongue depressors
- For plastic labels use plastic knives
- 8-oz. yogurt cups
- Scissors
- Metal labels (Steel, Zinc, Copper)
- Permanent marker

If you prefer wooden labels, craft stores carry large popsicle sticks or tongue depressors at low cost. Using the seed packet as a guide, have your beginning writer copy the letters as they print onto the label.

Pros: Wooden labels are inexpensive and you can write on them with just about anything. **Cons:** They are biodegradable, and rarely last longer than one season because they begin to rot soon after coming in contact with soil and water. As they live in the weather, they often fade and become difficult to read. When the growing season is over, just add them to the compost pile.

Teach your beginning reader and writer about recycling. Recyclers can make their own labels from things otherwise thrown away.

NOTE: Adults, either do the cutting or supervise youth carefully. Yogurt cups are a good example. Cut off the bottom of an 8-oz. cup with scissors or a Mack or utility knife (box cutter). Next, cut the side into strips. Depending upon the thickness of the cuts, it'll make 8-10 labels.

Pros: Plastic labels are inexpensive, and generally last longer than wood. Friends tell me that their plastic labels have lasted up to three years. **Cons:** exposure to weather made them brittle or fade. Write on them with a permanent marker. After a year or two, you'll need to write names again as they fade in sunlight. White plastic makes the ink easy to read but detract from the beauty of the plants. Quite by accident, I found that plastic knives (used at picnics or with take-out meals) make excellent labels. Write the

plant name on the handle and stick the cutting edge into the ground.

Labels made of metal: zinc, steel, or copper, with steel prongs often get misplaced before they wear out.

Pros: You can write on them with either a marker or a pencil. Copper labels are soft enough that you can make an imprint on them using a ballpoint or roller ball pen. **Cons:** The cost. If you have a large garden with a variety of plant material, it can be quite an expensive venture.

Make it a good day.

C. L. Charles-King

(Heirloom continued from page 1)
and let ferment 2-4 days, stirring occasionally. When seeds settle out, pour off pulp and spread seeds in a thin layer to dry thoroughly.

There are three basic rules for storing seeds.

1. Make sure seeds are well dried before you store them.
2. Store them in the dark and the coolest place possible; a refrigerator is often the most practical.
3. Protect the seeds from moisture, put silica gel packets in with the seed to help keep them dry.

R. Florin

News

This past summer our members participated in the Garden Mosaics six week internet forum with community activists and green educators from all

over the country. Garden Mosaics is a children's education gardening program created at Cornell University. In the next year we plan on implementing what we learned during the forum.

If you have a group of children you would like to involve in gardening, the Garden Mosaics format is a wonderful educational tool.

If you have any interest in starting a gardening program for your kids and need guidance, please contact us.

Our Monthly Meeting Schedule

October 13, 2005

Soil Amendments & Garden Cleanup

November 3, 2005

Canning Demonstration

December 8, 2005

Clothes Pin Crafts Activity

Please check our website for last minute changes or cancellations.

Olympus Garden Club
P.O. Box 531
Uniondale, NY 11553

Website: <http://www.olympusgardendclub.org>
Contact us: info@olympusgardendclub.org

Editor: S. Stephens
Assistant Editors:
A. Cushion & E. Villanueva

Word Scramble Answer

T	X	Z	X	B	F	W	X	T	T
S	E	V	A	E	L	T	J	P	P
M	C	S	E	W	A	Q	Q	C	J
M	G	L	V	D	T	S	O	R	F
D	N	X	U	U	E	R	K	R	L
D	H	L	L	B	L	H	D	R	C
L	W	Q	Y	W	A	F	A	R	O
L	Q	R	D	D	O	Q	E	R	M
C	S	X	R	V	O	I	H	G	P
S	J	U	A	J	M	J	D	G	S
S	J	I	H	A	R	V	A	L	S
S	D	N	X	R	S	F	A	S	S
S	H	A	R	B	N	O	C	A	S
C	K	X	R	F	X	O	A	K	C
E	R	R	D	N	M	A	A	A	C
R	P	W	D	E	B	A	A	A	C
R	P	D	W	N	V	J	A	A	C
Y	L	T	R	Q	Q	K	A	A	C
J	L	N	B	Q	K	K	V	V	A