

Hello Master Gardeners!

This has truly been a winter for the record books, bitter cold during February and then the infamous March blizzard. Luckily I had seed catalogs to give me visual inspiration until the weather warmed up.

Rabbits have also done much damage to shrubs and trees in our landscapes, even stripping bark from branches that have fallen from trees.

But April is finally here and it is time to get outside and get growing! The theme of our newsletter this month is "Get Growing", whether it be starting seeds, moving plants around, or trying out that new variety of vegetables. Be sure to start working on your volunteer hours this spring, and enjoy all that spring has to offer!

-Betty Hamata



Order Time! Master Gardener Shirts

T-shirts and sweatshirts are available to all active Master Gardeners and Interns. Shirts will be red with the University of Nebraska logo and white lettering. If you would like to order, please contact Sarah with your order. (402) 727-2775, sbrowning2@unl.edu

Master Gardener t-shirts (\$11), and sweatshirts (\$17.50). The shirts are red with white lettering. All men's sizes- S, M, L, XL, and 2XL

Order deadline: April 13th

Inside this issue:

From the Garden to the Table- BeeBalm	2
Sweet Corn- How Sweet It Is...	3
To Prune Or Not To Prune	4
Growing Chrysanthemums	5
Proven Winners	6
Dwarf Plants In The Landscape	7
A Poet's Garden	8
Heirloom Flowers	9
State Flowers	10
Recertification Programs	11

Please Join Us!
**Newsletter Committee
Meeting
April 24th**

7:00-8:00 pm
UNL Extension Office
1206 W. 23rd Street
Fremont, NE

Join us to brainstorm
newsletter article ideas for
our June issue of the
Going & Growing Newsletter.

Additional meetings this year:
July 24
October 23

From The Garden To The Table

Bee Balm

By Bonnie Parrish

Bee Balm (Bergamot), *Monarda didyma*, is a perennial plant with big, shaggy flower heads on top of tall stalks. It is one of the prettiest of the flowering herbs. Some varieties have flowers in a range of colors from white through pink and purple to mahogany. Both the long-blooming flowers and the dark-green, slightly toothed leaves have a citrus flavor and a scent similar to a Bergamot Orange.

Bergamot is favored by hummingbirds and bees, and grows 2-3 feet tall. It prefers full sun and lots of water. It also likes the standard herb mixture of two parts garden or potting soil, two parts peat, one part sand, and one part compost or composted manure.

Check the plants daily after spring blooming, and as soon as the first yellow leaf appears, snip the plants

back to a three-inch height. They'll grow up all summer and bloom again in the fall.

Colonists got the idea to brew up bee balm from Native Americans settled around the Oswego River near Lake Ontario. That's why bee balm is sometimes called "Oswego tea." The Chippewa, Cherokee, Fox, and Ojibwa Indians mainly used bee balm tea to alleviate the symptoms of head colds and coughs.

Bee balm contains antiseptic compounds that can help heal respiratory infections and clear nasal congestion. Steep two teaspoons of fresh (or one teaspoon dried) bee balm leaves in a cup of hot water, covered, for four minutes. Sip a cup three times a day.

Bee balm also contains tannins, which help control oily skin. Combine a quarter cup of bruised fresh bee balm leaves with one cup of boiling water, cover, and steep for about ten minutes. Strain and stir in the juice of one lemon.

Keep refrigerated for up to a week, and use, shaking well, as a facial splash three times a day.



WHOLE ROASTED OKRA

If you think you hate okra, try this recipe. Roasting gives the okra a surprisingly crisp texture.

- 1 lb. fresh okra (all about the same size)
- 1 T Olive Oil
- Heaping Tablespoon minced fresh bee balm
- 1 T freshly grated Parmesan Cheese

Preheat oven to 500°

Combine okra and olive oil in a 9x13 pan, making sure all pods are lightly coated with the oil. Bake in the center of the oven until the pods are roasted and just crisp, about 15 minutes for small pods or up to 25 minutes for large pods. Stir a couple of times during roasting.

Remove from oven and immediately stir in the bee balm and cheese. Serve warm as an appetizer or as a side dish with spicy food; or serve with a sandwich instead of French Fries.

Makes 4 servings; 80 calories per serving, 4gm fat

Going & Growing Newsletter Contributors:

- Mary Svoboda
- Bonnie Parrish
- Nancy Lindblad
- Betty Hamata
- Nancy Hecht
- Sarah Browning
- Helen Beebe
- Rich Apking
- Lorraine Urban

Sweet Corn– How Sweet It Is...

By Rich Apking

You'd think that somebody who has lived in the 'Cornhusker' State for well over a half century, surrounded by seemingly endless corn fields and immersed in the Herbie Husker culture could pencil-whip an article about sweet corn without breaking a sweat. But alas, this did not turn out to be the case.

Ironically, I haven't planted any sweet corn since I lived in Michigan in the late 1960's. As a kid, growing up in central Nebraska, the only jobs were working on a farm, which sort of made you a slave to corn. As you know, you prepared the ground for it, planted it, fertilized it, cultivated it, irrigated it, harvested it, and stored it. Since I was the hired hand with all these activities, I eventually grew to really dislike corn, at least the growing part of the equation.

I guess that I'm pretty much alone in that regard judging from the seed catalogs. They feature page after page of beautiful illustrations showing picture perfect ears of such delicious looking corn, that I'm strongly tempted to plant some. I've been able, thus far, to resist that temptation.

But first a short history lesson. Sweet corn was first documented in 1779 when European colonists acquired 'Papoon' or 'Susquehana' from the Iroquois. By 1900 there were over 60 varieties and now lots more. So, the question is, which hybrids are best suited for this area.

Since I feel totally inadequate to give "first hand" information and advice, I figured the next best thing was to call upon some experts and do some heavy reading. These folks will range from seasoned sweet corn planting veterans, to those who are able to judge what the best strains might be.

The first expert is a long time veteran of the garden wars, a highly educated gen-

tleman, who is soon going to have even more time to perfect his craft. Jim Peterson, UNL Extension Educator in Washington County recently gave a talk about "Heirloom Vegetables".

One of the vegetables he mentioned was a variety of sweet corn called "Shoepeg" or "Country Gentleman" corn. According to Jim, this was a traditional garden favorite that at one time was close to extinction, but has been brought back by heirloom gardeners. The corn is characterized by jumbled kernels on the cob, as opposed to the neat rows we are used to, and the ears are much larger than most sweet corn. The kernels are totally white, and not as sweet as some of the modern corn, and it matures in 100 to 120 days. Jim swears by this corn, and says the yield is well worth the wait.

My next expert is my brother-in-law, Gene Blake. Gene grew up in the Sandhills country around Brewster NE. He has always liked sweet corn, so every place he and my sister have lived, he has planted a garden, sometimes quite small, and now, fairly large. All of the gardens had an area for sweet corn.



Now they live in Southern Kansas and Gene plants numerous patches of sweet corn about a week apart, so his fresh sweet corn season is extended. Gene plants two sweet corn cultivars, "Tremendous" and "Bodacious". Each patch has 4 rows of corn, each between 10' and 15' insuring that he'll have sweet corn on demand all summer long.

The next logical place to look is at what the 'big boys' are doing. Commercial truck gardeners are always trying new and different corn cultivars each year to find new and better hybrids that have low maintenance and high resale value. The tried and true yellow corns are "Merits" and "Kandy Korn". Two of the favorite yellow and white sweet corns are "Calico Bell" and "Peaches and Cream".

After looking at several seed catalogs, the varieties of sweet corn available is positively mind-boggling. All told, in six catalogs I found more than 123 varieties listed. Each one just a little sweeter, a little more tender, a little faster maturing, a little prettier, or just plain better than the rest. How a gardener can pick a certain kind of sweet corn to plant is totally beyond me. I'll bet there are more kinds of sweet corn available than tomatoes, and that's really saying something.

Anyway, my studies have yielded the following facts:

1. Patience is critical to growing a good crop of corn.
2. Corn does not like cold, wet soil, so resist planting it until the soil temperature is 60 to 65 degrees. I suggest you use a soil thermometer.
3. You can get a jump start by starting your plants indoors and transplanting after all danger of frost is past. Around here that's after May 15.
4. Because corn is wind pollinated, plant individual varieties in blocks of 4 rows.

To Prune Or Not To Prune– Herbaceous Perennials

By Nancy Lindblad

My first experience as a novice gardener with pruning was back in 1958 when we bought our first house and inherited a small hybrid tea rose garden. The previous owners gave me all their tips on how to prune, feed and water them and the fun began. Since then, to prune or not to prune has been mostly a "by guess" process and now and then my luck would run out and I'd have to live with what I had done for a season.

Pruning herbaceous perennials is such a variable process, but common sense and experience will develop pruning skills as you learn which plants do better with which techniques. Common pruning terminology includes cutting back, deadheading, pinching, disbudding and deadleafing.

Generally we prune to extend the bloom period or promote repeat bloom, or to encourage lush new growth and to regenerate or extend the life of plants. Selective pruning can stagger or reduce plant heights, keep a plant in its own space, prevent or control pests, and generally enhance the overall appearance of the plant, and by extension, your garden.

Deadheading is beneficial to most herbaceous ornamental plants and it is the technique one uses from spring to frost to keep up with the progress of the plants as they grow and bloom. Deadheading can persuade biennials to behave like perennials. More importantly, it can prevent self-seeding. Seed production can drain a plant's energy and retard root and vegetative growth.

It is best to give a new plant a year to get going in your garden so leave pruning and deadheading to the sec-

ond year. A key thing to look for when deadheading is the presence of new buds or new flowers. If they are present, then deadhead to a lateral bud, flower or leaf.

Further cutting down to the basal foliage may be necessary after all the flowering is finished. Shasta daisies, yarrow, salvia and veronica are plants that require deadheading in this fashion.

Many perennials can be deadheaded by shearing, a less tedious task. Grass shears or small hedge clippers can be used to cut the plant back by at least half to promote a fresh new flush of bloom.



Certain plants such as peachleaf bellflower (*Campanula persicifolia*) require careful deadheading as new buds are produced adjacent to the old flowers along the stem. Tall garden phlox (*Phlox paniculata*) take some close observation also as the

flower head has a second layer of bloom that will come out as the dead petals from the first blossoming fall off. By the way, if you want to retard bloom time or make smaller, more plentiful flowers, tall garden phlox can be pruned back in June for a different effect.

Daylilies, *Hemerocallis sp.*, require careful deadheading as each bloom comes out for one day and then makes an ugly wet, slimy mess on the flower stalk. They gradually dry and fall off, but I like to snap them off so they stay out of the way of buds that are close by.

Some single, bare flower stalks need to be pruned to the ground after blooming, on plants such as coral bells, *Heuchera sp.*, *Hosta* and lady's mantle, *Alchemilla mollis*, and if one wants to have the energy of the plant go to the roots or bulbs, deadheading seed pods as they form is a must. I'm thinking particularly about Asian and Oriental lilies.

There are decisions to be made about letting your plants go to seed. I have certain plants that seed relentlessly despite all the deadheading I do to prevent it.

However, with some plants such as the biennial foxglove, *Digitalis sp.*, reseeding is desirable, so I often cut off the seed head after all blooming is finished and lay it on the ground alongside the other foxgloves. Some-

(Continued on page 12)

Growing Chrysanthemums

By Betty Hamata

Garden mums, *Dendranthema x morifolium*, offer one last burst of color during fall before winter sets in. Mums are hybrids of several species native to China and Japan that breeders have been working with for hundreds of years. Colors can be a deep true red, pinks, lavenders to bright whites and soft creams, yellow as well as multi-colors.

Mums also come in interesting flower forms. Decorative flowers are double with tightly overlapping rows of petals. Daisy mums are single with narrow petals radiating out from the center. Spoon flowers are similar to daisies, but with half of the petals nearest the center quilled or rolled into a tube.

Mums are not difficult plants to grow. For best results, spring planting gives a better chance for plants to get their root systems established well enough by fall to survive the winter. They thrive in a wide variety of soils but require full sun and good drainage.

Their only special demand is attention to pruning at the correct time. Pinching out the growing tips until about July 15 will make the plants bushier and keep them from trying to set blooms too early, so they bloom in September and October.

After they are done blooming in fall, I remove the faded flowers but allow the foliage to stand until spring. This allows the plants to survive winter better because it holds winter mulch around the crown of the plants, which could otherwise easily be blown

away. Also, the dead tops add winter interest and catch the snow to provide moisture for the plant's crown.

Mums are easy to divide, plus vegetative propagation through cuttings and division are great ways to generate new plants. To divide mums, dig up the clump in spring then separate it into smaller sections. If the middle of the clump is dead, discard the center and separate the clump into smaller sections. One clump will produce a lot of plants! All that is needed to start a new plant is a small root division.

Mums are sturdy plants with few problems. The most common pests are aphids and spidermites, although usually a spray of water from the hose will take care of them. Diseases are often the result of overwatering but if the plants dry out too much they lose their lower leaves. They also need good air circulation, so don't plant them too close together.

While garden mums are generally cold hardy in Zone 5-9, some are not as tough as others and may die off in winters colder than Zone 6. The University of Minnesota has bred a number of rugged hybrids such as "Betty Lou" (red), "Wayzata" (bright yellow) and "Royal Knight" (burgundy with silver undersides) that are cold hard to Zone 4. A mail order source is Dooley Gardens, 210 N. High Drive Northeast, Hutchinson, MN 55350.

For pictures and more information about winter hardy mums, developed by University of Minnesota, visit <http://www.maes.umn.edu/MNHardy/>. Click on "Chrysanthemums".



"Twilight Pink" Mum
Developed by University of Minnesota

2007 International Master Gardener Conference

May 2-5, 2007
Peabody Hotel/Statehouse
Convention Center
Little Rock, Arkansas

Celebrate Gardening in the
Natural State!

Official website of the 2007 International Master Gardener Conference:
<http://mg2007.uaex.edu/>

For more information and to be added to our mailing list for the 2007 International MG Conference, email Janet Carson at jcarson@uaex.edu.

Peabody Hotel website: <http://www.peabodylittlerock.com/>
IMGC rate \$130.00/ night double or king accommodations with double occupancy. Good from April 30 to May 6, 2007. Be sure to mention that you are attending the International Master Gar-

Proven Winners

By Mary Svoboda

Proven Winners is the leading brand of high quality flowering plants sold to nurseries & garden centers throughout North America.

The Proven Winners brand is owned by three leading U.S. Plant propagators— EuroAmerican In Bonsall, CA, Four Star Greenhouse in Carlton, MI, and Pleasant View Gardens in Loudon, NH. These companies “founded” Proven Winners 14 years ago and together with 3 licensees in Canada.

Proven Winners group also sells a complementary brand, Proven Selections, which consist of regional favorites.

The fine perennials sold as Proven Winners demonstrate superior resistance and unsurpassed garden performance. A 2-3 year selection and trialing process ensures that only the best plants leave the fields.

Trials are the plant industry's way of measuring how well a particular variety will perform in different parts of the country and evaluating new plant varieties. There are two kinds of trials: University field trials which generally consist of beds where each plant is grown in a small plot (called a row trial), and public gardens, where plants are often put in display beds or pots.

Proven Winners sends plant material to both kinds of trials nationwide, and also conducts their own trials at test sites across North America. Trial sites in the Midwest include the Chi-

cago Botanical Gardens, Colorado State University, Kansas State University and Powell Gardens, near Kansas City. For more information about locating a trial site, visit www.provenwinners.com and click on “Plant Trials” under the Information Center.

The winner of numerous awards, proven Winner varieties meet the highest quality standards and perform beautifully in home gardens.

The goal of the program is to introduce the best, most unique, high performing plants, to produce them under the highest quality standards and to market the plants innovatively. Proven Winner plants are unsurpassed in terms of flowering, growth habit, disease resistance and garden performance.

A few plants being released as Proven Winners in 2007 include the following.

- **Twist and Twirl™** *Solenostemon*—Wild twists and twirls of red, yellow, green and



purple splash the foliage of this sun-loving coleus. Deer resistant and drought and heat tolerant.



- **Soprano®** Vanilla Spoon *Osteospermum hybrid*—Unique spoon shaped petals grace vibrant green foliage all season; low maintenance.



- **Vanso Blue Light®** *Clematis hybrid*—Unique blue-violet and pale blue double flowers. Blooms on old wood and is deer resistant. Can be used in containers and beds; trellis support is needed.

Dwarf Plants In The Landscape

By Lorri Urban

For present-day gardeners, plants come in all sizes. If standard size plants were all we had to choose from it would certainly limit landscaping choices. However, plant breeders have developed dwarf and semi-dwarf sizes of many species, which can be planted and enjoyed in corners and containers. Even when space is not an issue, dwarf varieties can offer a nice contrast.

Trees and shrubs are “dwarfed” in one of 4 ways: by genetic breeding, by selection of plants with naturally occurring dwarfing mutations, by grafting a normal-sized variety onto a dwarf rootstock, or by pruning and training a normal-sized tree, such as in bonsai.

Many dwarf varieties use the word “Nana,” “Pumila,” or “Minima” in their names. For example, *Chamaecyparis lawsoniana* “Minima Glauca” is a dwarf, pyramidal, blue-foliaged cypress reaching 10-13 feet tall and 5-6 feet wide which in its standard size would grow to more than 100 feet.

It pays to be careful when shopping for diminutive plants. There are “false dwarfs,” plants that are really just slow-growing species, that will be too large for your rock garden in a few years. But, it may have put down strong roots and still be difficult to remove.

Patio gardens are spots that call for not-too-large plants. Most standard evergreens are too large for the patio garden. Evergreens that work well in small spaces include the following:

- Arborvitae, *Thuja occidentalis* “Little Giant” (H 3’, W 4-6’)
- *Picea abies* “Little Gem” (H 24-30”, W 12-18”)
- *Chamaecyparis obtusa* “Nana Gracilis” (H 6’, W 4’)
- *Tsuga canadensis* “Jeddeloah” (H 4-5’, W 8-10’)

There are dwarf and semi-dwarf fruit trees and berry bushes. Nanking cherry, *Prunus tomentosa*, (only 8 ft tall) could be used as a hedge. Gurney’s offers 4 varieties of dwarf blueberries suitable for containers. Since blueberries require soil amendment, it would be a whole lot easier to amend the soil in a container than in a ground bed.

While your fruit tree may be a dwarf, its fruit is often standard size and the fruit will need to be thinned to avoid breaking branches after a heavy fruit set. Also, you may need to plant pollinating varieties unless you have a self-fertilizing one.

Dwarf plants may be desirable in the vegetable garden, too...or in the “non-garden” if you are growing your food on the deck or patio. Dwarf tomato, pepper, and lettuce plants can be grown in containers located in sunny spots close to the house.

Often referred to as “baby”, “mini” or “patio” vegetables, they are available from seed catalogs and nurseries. Some cultivars to look for include “Elisa” cabbage, “Bush pickle” cucumber, and “Jingle Bells” peppers. On some plants the fruits are normal sized, but the plants stay small, as in the case of “Patio” tomatoes. Or in other cases, the plants get large but

the vegetables are meant to be harvested when small...“Thumbellina” button-sized carrots, mini romaine lettuce, or “Baby Boo” pumpkins.

If you are an indoor gardener, you might like to try growing miniature rose bushes, dwarf or miniature African violets, or “Dwarf bush” basil (both pretty and useful).

Don’t be surprised if some “dwarf” varieties suddenly develop long stems after they’re done flowering. Poinsettias, hibiscus, and chrysanthemums are often treated with a dwarfing chemical called B-9, which keeps them compact and flowering. Those plants will resume their standard size after the chemical’s residual effect has worn off.

You don’t have to grow “bigger” plants to get “better.” A dwarf variety may be just what you’re looking for.



A Poet's Garden

By Helen Beebee

The image held of Emily Dickinson, 1830-1886, is that of a great American poet. What might surprise is that she was also a Master Gardener-so to speak.

She was born into and grew up in a gardener's home with a gardening family. She gardened there for forty years of her life, and died there at age 55.

The Dickinson Homestead is located in Amherst, MA, 80 miles from Boston. Emily once told that Amherst seemed to be "a bit of Eden." In Emily's first published poem, a valentine, she wrote:

Put down the apple Adam
And come away with me
So shal't thou have a pippin
From off my Father's tree!

Her father, Edward, an Amherst attorney, was mostly interested in planting trees and kitchen gardens.

Emily's grandfather, Samuel Dickinson, laid out and planted an apple orchard by Emily's flower garden. At the time, orchards were laid out in squares, or in a quincunx pattern, which her grandfather used. If you look at dice, the faces with five dots show the quincunx pattern.

Her mother, also named Emily, grew prize-winning figs. She would place arrangements of flowers, from her daughter's garden, throughout their

home. Her love of horticulture was passed on to her children. Emily, her daughter, once said, "I was reared in the garden, you know." In her later years, she wrote, "I was always attracted to mud."

Emily was the middle child of three. Brother Austin was born in 1829, Emily in 1830, and Lavinnia (Vinnie) in 1833. They were very close and shared a lifelong occupancy of the Dickinson property. Austin planted trees as his father did. Vinnie trained vines and created borders.

Only a few of the trees the Dickinson men planted remain. A 1938 hurricane took over 100 of their trees. However, to this day, Emily would recognize her flower gardens. The

(Continued on page 9)

State Flowers

By Helen Beebee

Iowa- Wild Rose

Adopted May 7, 1897. Although Iowa legislators did not designate a certain species of wild rose, the wild prairie rose is given the honor. The blooms produce red fruits, or hips, most of which are edible. During World War II they were often used as a source of Vitamin C. Some are used for making preserves, but mainly are left for the birds. The wild rose has proven itself quite resistant to herbicide drift. Dr. Roger Landers, a professor of botany and plant pathology at Iowa State University, believes "the wild rose will dig deeper and keep growing in spite of sprays and urbanization."

Kansas- Sunflower

Adopted March 12, 1903. Kansas is known as the "sunflower state" and its state flower symbolizes their history, past

and present. It speaks of frontier days and pride of the present. A sunflower, *Helianthus annuus*, plant grows 3-10 feet tall. Their yellow flowers may measure over a foot wide. During the day sunflowers turn towards the sun. The sunflower is probably the most secure of our state flowers. Its commercial impact is great. The petals are a source of dye, its seeds can be ground into flour for bread, or fed to birds and poultry. Sunflower oil compares to the best vegetable oils. The stalk is used for rope, paper, fabric, fuel and fodder. When burned, the ash contains 62 % potash, a vital plant nutrient.

Kentucky- Goldenrod

Adopted March 26, 1926. Some floral societies think the goldenrod should be our national flower. It is known as *Solidago gigantea* by botanists, an appropriate name as it grows tall. Before the selection,

(Continued on page 10)

Nebraska Statewide Arboretum Rare & Native Plant Sale

NSA Greenhouse on East
Campus in Lincoln, NE
Saturday, June 9th
10:00 a.m.- 3:00 p.m.



Heirloom Flowers

By Helen Beebee

Perhaps the idea of growing heirloom flowers, such as Emily Dickinson's garden contained, appeals to you. If so, here's a few tips to select seeds and bulbs for your own Victorian garden.

Your garden probably contains examples of 19th century favorites already, such as lilac, *Syringa vulgaris*, daffodil, *Narcissus spp.*, lily-of-the-valley, *Convallaria majalis*, and bleeding heart, *Dicentra spectabilis*.

Others that could be added include:

- Crown imperial, *Fritillaria imperialis*
- Forget-me-not, *Myosotis sylvatica*
- Foxglove, *Digitalis purpurea*
- Mignonette, *Reseda odorata*

- Stock, *Matthiola incana*
- Sweet sultan, *Centaurea moschata*

Three popular roses of the day included:

- Damask rose, *Rosa damascene*
- Cinnamon rose, *R. cinnamommia*
- Calico rose, *R. gallica* "Versicolor"

Also try other the open pollinated flower varieties as additions to your Victorian garden. These produce seed that is true to type, unlike hybrids.

Gardeners have their favorite sources and purchase seeds and bulbs from them usually, but it is also fun to discover new resources. However, heirloom plants are not always available at local nurseries.

The following nurseries are know to offer them.

Antique Rose Emporium
9300 Lueckmeyer Road
Brenham, TX 77833
(800) 441-0002

Cook's Garden
PO Box 65
Londonderry, VT 05148
(802) 824-3400

Old House Gardens- heirloom bulbs
536 Third Street
Ann Arbor, MI 48103
(734) 995-1486

Select Seeds- antique flowers
180 Stickney Hill Road
Union, CT 06076
(860) 684-9310

A Poet's Garden, continued

(Continued from page 8)

Dickson Homestead is now owned by Amherst College and is open to the public.

Emily's flower garden was more of a cottage style with different plants mixed together rather than in a ribbon pattern (parallel single color strips) common to Victorian gardens.

She applied regular additions of manure from their stable, ash from the fireplaces and soap suds from the dishes. She worked the soil well. If the ground was damp, Emily would kneel on a red army blanket. Emily planted all her bulbs three times the depth of the bulb itself.

Emily would share her flowers. She

like to bake gingerbread and decorate the flat tops with edible panisies. She would include pressed flowers in her letters. She often picked bouquets to give to friends. Often, one of her poems would accompany the floral gift.

As a teenager, Emily attended the Amherst Academy. She had her first formal lessons on botany there. The study of botany was considered a genteel subject for women in those days. While studying botany, Emily assembled over four hundred plant specimens. She pressed and dried, then mounted and labeled all of these specimens. She included vegetables, trees, and two algae samples- one freshwater and one from the sea.

In this leather-bound herbarium, she also left a list of her garden beds. Emily left instructions that upon her death all of her papers were to be destroyed. Vinnie did burn all she found at the time. Later she discovered a box filled with hundreds of Emily's poems. She could not bear to destroy them, and fortunately did not do so.

Emily died from Bright's disease, a kidney ailment, in May 1886. Her funeral was held in the Homestead parlor on May 19th. She was dressed in white with violets, a pink *Cypripedium* orchid at her throat and two *Heliotrope* flowers by her hand. Violets and pine boughs were arranged on her white casket.

State Flowers, continued

(Continued from page 8)

many Kentuckians considered the blue-grass seedhead as their unofficial state flower. The goldenrod is a wildflower that grows in clusters, toward the top of its thin straight stem, usually bright yellow or deep gold in color.

Louisiana– Magnolia

Adopted August 1, 1900. In the 1950's the Louisiana Iris Society's attempt to have the blue iris replace the magnolia as the state flower was defeated. Although the blue iris primarily grows there, it was pointed out that it can be found in swamp areas. When the legislature voted on the matter the magnolia won. It helped that the state capitol building is trimmed with bronze magnolias.

Maine– White Pine Cone and Tassel

Adopted February 1, 1925. In 1894 the Maine Floral Emblem Society held a contest to pick a state flower. Ballots were printed in state newspapers and people were urged to vote. The pine cone and tassel was the popular winner. Eastern white pine, *Pinus strobus*, usually reaches a height of 50-80 feet, but one of the national champion trees is over 200 feet tall. The genus name "Pinus" possibly derives from a Celtic word for rock, referring to the habitat of pines.

Maryland– Black-eyed Susan

Adopted April 18, 1918. The goldenrod was a close runner up for state flower honors, even though both favorites have always been classified as weeds in a farmer's mind. According to a September 18, 1960 Baltimore Sun issue the "Susan came to Maryland as a migrant from the Midwest mixed in clover and hayseed."

Massachusetts– Mayflower

Adopted May 1, 1918. In other parts of the country this plant is usually called the trailing arbutus, *Espignea repens*, but in New England it is known as mayflower. Some say its named after the pilgrims' ship that brought them to Plymouth, MA. It is an endangered plant and it is illegal to injure or to dig up this slow growing trailing evergreen on public property. Its 5

petal blossoms are white or pink and very fragrant.

Michigan– Apple Blossom

Adopted April 28, 1897. Michigan orchards add beauty to the state's landscape. Apples have been associated with this state since the early 1700's, at the time of the founding of Detroit by explorer Cadillac in 1701. It is likely the American Indians brought Michigan's first apple seeds to this area. Michigan apples are well known for their delicious taste. The state ranks as one of the nation's leading apple producers.

Minnesota– Lady Slipper

Adopted February 19, 1902. The pink and white lady slipper is an orchid, *Cypripedium reginae*. It favors wet and swampy areas. Growing them takes time, as they usually will not bloom until they are 20 years old. If picked improperly, they will not reproduce. They are endangered, so are protected by a state law that was passed on April 25, 1925. It is legal to cultivate the lady slipper on your own property, even to sell it. However, intention to do so must be registered with the Agriculture Commissioner of Minnesota. The lady slipper is also called a moccasin flower.

Mississippi– Magnolia

Adopted February 26, 1952. In 1900, school children voted to name *Magnolia grandiflora* Mississippi's state flower. The cotton blossom came in second. The election was state sanctioned, but it took over 50 years for the legislature to give the magnolia its official designation as the state flower.

Missouri– Hawthorn

Adopted March 16, 1923. Hawthorn, *Crataegus spp.*, grow profusely throughout its native range in Missouri. Some horticulturists proclaim the hawthorn the ancestor of the apple. This thorny small tree or shrub has pretty spring flowers, which unfortunately smell quite bad.

Montana– Bitterroot

Adopted March 19, 1895. Bitterroot,

Lewisia rediviva, is a survivor able to live for more than a year without water and bounce back after drought earning it the name of "resurrection" flower. The flower's root was an important food source for the American Indians. It is attractive, has a pink blossom and grows close to the ground.

Nevada– Sagebrush

Adopted March 20, 1917. Possessing a sweet odor and yellow flowers, sagebrush, *Artemisia tridentata*, grows from 1-12 feet tall and has grey-green foliage. It thrives in dry desert conditions where other plants are not able to live. Early Nevada pioneers would settle among the sagebrush, thinking the land would be fertile.

New Hampshire– Common Lilac

Adopted March 28, 1919. Common lilac, *Syringa vulgaris*, is admired for its fragrance and color. The lilac has bloomed in this state for well over 200 years. They were brought over from England in 1690 by the grandfather of the first Royal Governor of the New Hampshire Province, Benning Wentworth. These are thought to be the first lilacs in America.

New Jersey– Native Violet

Adopted March 28, 1913. The violet, *Viola sororis*, is small, as is the state of New Jersey, and grows in profusion there. It is a sturdy plant and has a lovely flower, deep blue in color.

New Mexico– Soaptree

Adopted March 14, 1927. School children in New Mexico were asked to pick a state flower and soaptree, *Yucca elata*, won by a landslide. Yucca flowers have been called the "Candles of God" because of their appearance. They bloom from dusk to dawn for several weeks in the spring, and reach a height of 9-12 feet. The flower is bell-shaped and creamy white. Yucca cannot pollinate itself, depending instead on the yucca moth as an obligate pollinator. The moth larvae in turn bore within the trunk of the plant, using it as a food source. Native Americans used the fiber of the yucca's leaves to weave baskets.

Upcoming Horticulture Programs for Recertification Hours

Grape Pruning Workshop

Gather at Falty's Vineyard in Tekamah, NE to start the day's tour. Two additional vineyards will be visited through the day.

Date: April 7

Time: 10:00 a.m.—3:30 p.m.

Cost: \$15.00 per person

Contact Donna Michel to register.

Email: dmichel@unl.edu

Phone: (402) 472-8747

Acreeage Insights- Rural Living Clinic

Management of Small Ponds (1/2 acre and up)

Date: April 17

Time: 7:00-9:00 p.m.

Location: UNL Extension in Dodge County, Fremont, NE

Cost: \$5.00 for Master Gardeners

Program descriptions and additional information available at: <http://acreeage.unl.edu>

Spring Affair Plant Sale "Gardens For Green Living"

Date: Saturday, April 28

Time: 9:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m.

Location: Agriculture Hall, Nebraska State Fair Park
Lincoln, NE

Phone: 402/472-2679

<http://springaffair.unl.edu>

Spring Affair Program Schedule

- 10:00 "Plants from Home and Afar: On the Move and into Your Garden", Harlan Hamernik, Nebraska Certified Nurseryman, Morton Building
- 11:30 "Planning a Sustainable Landscape: Rain Gardens and Waterwise Techniques", J. B. Dixon, Stormwater Specialist Lower Platte South NRD, Morton Building
- 12:30 Tour of State Fair Park Gardens, Teri James, Landscape Designer/Curator, State Fair Park. Meet on east side of Morton Building
- 1:00 "Green Side Up: Rooftop Gardening", Kim Todd, UNL Assistant Professor Agronomy and Horticulture, Extension Horticulture Specialist, Morton Building
- 2:30 Panel Discussion. Moderator Bud Dasenbrock. Panelists: Jeff Culbertson, George Edgar, Harlan Hamernik and Gladys Jeurink. South end of Agricultural Hall.

Lauritzen Gardens- Rose Show

Featured speakers will be Mary and Ruby Buck, daughter and wife of the late Dr. Griffith Buck. Developer of the very cold hardy and disease resistant "Buck" roses.

Date: Monday, June 11

Time: 10:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m.

Location: 100 Bancroft Street, Omaha, NE 68108

Phone: (402) 346-4002

University of Nebraska- Lincoln Extension educational programs abide with the nondiscrimination policies of the University of Nebraska-Lincoln and the United States Department of Agriculture.

Sweet Corn, continued

(Continued from page 3)

5. Space rows 25 to 30 inches apart and make row furrows 6 to 8 inches deep.

6. Spread 6 pounds of complete fertilizer per 100 square feet, then backfill the furrows until they are 1 to 2 inches deep.

7. Sow 3 seeds per foot and cover with sifted soil or compost.

8. Days to emergence are from 7 to 10 if the soil is 60 to 65 degrees.

9. When the seedlings are 4 to 5 inches tall, thin to a final spacing of 8 to 12 inches.

10. Water regularly and deeply, up until the corn begins to tassel, fertilize with fish emulsion or a high nitrogen fertilizer as a foliar spray every 7 to 14 days.

11. Harvest when the ears are full and 'milky'. A drying and browning of the ear silks is a good indicator of readiness. Ears should be cooled as soon as possible and stored at 34 degrees.

By writing this article, I've become reacquainted with some things I knew but had forgotten, and have learned more in the process. I never realized that there

were so many kinds of corn on the market.

With all that variety, you shouldn't have too much trouble finding the perfect kind to plant. However, as interesting as this was, I still don't think I'll plant any sweet corn this year, mainly because my neighbors grow such a great product. You see, I've found that I truly excel in the 'eating' part of the sweet corn saga.

Happy Gardening! *Rich*

University of Nebraska- Lincoln
Extension
1206 W. 23rd St.
Fremont, NE 68025

Phone: (402) 727-2775
Email: sbrowning2@unl.edu

We're on the web, at <http://hortparadise.unl.edu>. Click on 'Master Gardener Program.'



To Prune Or Not To Prune, continued

(Continued from page 4)

times instead of letting the seed such as columbine, *Aquilegia sp.*, fall I gather it so that I can give it to friends, plant in another area or plant at another time, such as early spring.

Certain plants can be left alone for winter interest. I leave a number of the more attractive *Astilbe* stalks to hold snow in the winter. Many of the ornamental grasses can be left as well, but there are some of these that seed aggressively so if you don't deadhead before winter, there will be lots of grass to pull out the next summer.

Certain silver-leaved perennials such as *Artemisia* have foliage that will deteriorate if allowed to go to seed. Deadheading allows the plants energies to be directed to foliage production.

Birds are another consideration when deadheading. Certain plants such as *Echinacea*, *Heliopsis* and *Rudbeckia* are attractive to gold finches and juncos, so the seed heads can be left.

Other techniques such as pinching, thinning and dead-leaving can be used to control height, bloom time, and the general overall look of your garden. We associate

pinching mostly with garden mums (*Dendranthema x morifolium*) but this is a valuable technique to influence the growth habit and flowering of innumerable other perennials.

If in doubt about pruning, or cutting back, one can always pinch. Pinching allows for experimentation since you can pinch just a few stems on a plant, observe and then decide what approach to take in subsequent years.

Frequent walks through your garden with pruner in hand can give you a heads up on pest problems, plants that are not happy where they are, and things that need to be dug up and divided.

You might find just the spot for that new plant you've been wanting, or get an idea for a great combination of foliage or flowers and you may be surprised by something very special that you wouldn't have noticed if you hadn't been paying such close attention.

