

# The Express

**'thank** 

goodness, I



**VOLUME VI** 

ISSUE II

Spring 2009

#### **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 com-

#### Inside This Issue

President's Message, Word Scramble

Book Review, Tip Time

ls Your Garden Bee'n Friendly to Bees

Weather Alert!

Water, Water Every Where; Meeting Calendar. Word Scramble Answer

### Natural High

Can you feel it? I stepped outside And BAM! Instantly! Instantly! I am energized I want to skib I want to jump I want to dance I want to sing Instantly, I am energized Can you feel it?

Can you smell it? I stepped outside Taking my first breath And BAM! Backing up I breathe again Deeply, Deeply, this time Crist, Clean, Sweet Air spreads thru my body Rejuvenating Air Of earth and sky Can you smell it?

Can you see it? I stepped outside

### JUMP STARTING MY GARDEN STARTING SEEDS INDOORS

garden thaw out through the been collecting a variety of seeds small window in the backdoor, I from last year's harvest, as well daydream about what the new as seeds that we gardeners

garden will look like this summer. This time around I

have been saving seeds just for that. There is a corner shelf in my room full of houseplants that live outside in the summer, but under artificial sunlight during the winter. These plants will be joined by the recycled flats from last year's purchases, and some expandable peat pellets, that a friend gave to me, (they swell to form a cylindrical container filled with peat moss, ready for seeding or transplanting. I will need to use the pellets in trays so they are easily watered and held upright).

These containers will be full of seeds and a good starting mix as

And BAM! Colors, Vibrant colors The invasion is back Hot Pinks, Lime Greens, Oranges, Yellows Colors abound Stopping to absorb them Hands reaching for the sky Turning slowly I am overwhelmed Can you see it?

Yeah Baby! Go Baby! Skip with me! lump with me! Dance with me! Sing with me! Spring is in the air!

S. Stephens

**As** I watch the small back yard soon as I get them ready. I have

share with other. There is basil, assorted beans, plan to start my own seedlings. I Was corrected' pumpkin, corn, marigolds, etc. I am

> nearly ready to plant the seeds. But I must do my homework. I need to know how much time it takes each seed to germinate inside so that they will be ready for the raised beds when the weather is warm enough for them outside.

My worms have been producing a bumper crop of Vermicompost. I have seen seeds sprout in the outside composts bin, so I assumed that I could blant seeds in worm compost. I thought that I could use Vermicompost for starting seeds; thank

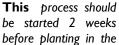
goodness, I was corrected by the Master Composters of Olympus Garden Club.

**It** is a good thing that I brought the subject up at our last meeting. If I had used the worm compost I would not have a garden this summer. Because the worm compost straight up is too strong for the seeds. They suggested that I mix the compost with potting soil; not soil dug up from the garden, but sterilized potting soil or seed starter soil, and that is what I will do. I will mix the compost with equal parts of potting soil and vermiculite and sand and peat moss. After filling the trays, and placing two or three seeds in each cell, I will water them, cover and watch closely until germination.

**As** I said this would be the first time that I am trying to grow my own seedlings, so I did a little research on line. The information below is copied from the Purdue University's Cooperative Extension Service: Purdue University's Department of Horticulture, Starting Seeds Indoors, Michael N. Dana, and Rosie Lerner

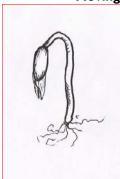
#### **Moving Plants Outdoors -**

Hardening - Plants, which have been growing indoors, cannot be planted abruptly into the garden without danger of injury. To prevent damage, they should be hardened before planting outdoors.



garden. If possible, plants should be moved to cooler temperatures outdoors in a shady location. A cold frame is excellent for this purpose. When first put outdoors, keep in the shade, but gradually move plants into sunlight for short periods each day. Gradually increase the length of exposure. Do not put tender seedlings outdoors on windy days or when temperatures are below 45°F (7°C). Reduce the frequency of watering to slow growth, but do not allow plants to wilt. Even cold-

(Continued on page 2)



Roberta's Artwork

## President's Message

March 7th, 2009 was a wonderful sprouts for food to the indoor garday for Olympus as we participated deners. in the annual Making Brooklyn backets with written instructions to Bloom event held at Brooklyn Botanic Garden. It isn't always the case in early March, but that day was unusually mild with temperatures in the 60's and everyone present seemed to have been in a glorious spring-has-arrived mood. Olympus members welcomed visitors to our information table in the Palm House while Executive Director, Solita Stephens, gave propagation tips for the "frugal" gardener in a morning workshop which I was told was very well received. Club members distributed various pieces of literature on the environment and I gave brief instructions on growing

I distributed some seed reinforce the verbal directions.

A highlight of the day for me was hearing and briefly meeting the renowned keynote speaker and activist on urban agriculture, Maurice Small. Mr. Small is the voice and mainstay of a group called "City Fresh", (see their website), and his mission seems no less than to change the world starting with his part of it in Cleveland. His vision as presented that day emphasized the role that young people can and must play in our own adult lives. How many in the audience have mentored a young person he

asked and a sprinkling of hands went up in the air. He went on to talk about the natural optimism young people have and that it's up to us to help by giving them the means to do great things. He reinforced that all is possible for the young, as he illustrated some impressive photos in his powerful presentation of teen projects in Cleveland. Maurice Small took my breath away with his energy and inspiring call to do better.

**The** world is filled with no small number of problems, the thing at stake being nothing less than our children's future, our own legacy and the future of our planet. This was the message that I took with me that day. Help a child to learn, to create and to believe in the future. That's what really matters.

> Robert Florin, President W W

### Olympus Word Scramble - Fish

z xAtlantic Cod Bass Bluegill **Brook Trout** Catfish Flounder C Ζ Herring Minnow O Mosquito Fish Ζ D D Perch Pike NWQS S Salmon Q Q DΖ Sebago ZLXX Smelt Sturgeon D Ε Walleye В Т 0 R K O FGOQR D Ans. on pg. 4 RGGN R. Murray Ζ G G Ε G G TCQHLPGPNS

(Jump Start—Cont'd from page 1) hardy plants such as cabbage and pansy will be hurt if exposed to freezing temperatures before they have been hardened. After proper hardening, however, they can be planted outdoors and light frost will not damage them.

Planting into the garden - When plants have grown large enough to handle easily and hardening is complete, they may be planted into the garden when weather conditions permit. Carefully remove plants from the growing flats, retaining as much soil as possible around the roots. Dig the hole about twice as large as the soil mass around the roots. Set the plants at about the same level they have been growing in the pots. A few plants such as tomato and marigold are able to develop roots along the stem. If they have become leggy, they may be planted deeper than they were previously growing. Place

(Cont'd on page 3)

(Jump Start Cont'd from page 2)

soil loosely around the roots, and apply about one cup of a starter fertilizer solution. This solution is made by dissolving one tablespoon of high-phosphorus fertilizer in one gallon of water. A 15-30-15 or similar analysis is satisfactory.

Plants grown in clay and plastic pots must be removed from them before planting. Those growing in peat pots or peat pellets can be planted intact. Breaking the base of the peat pot often helps improve root penetration and drainage. Make sure that the top edges of the pot are thoroughly covered or removed. If not covered, the edge may act as a wick and evaporate moisture from the root ball. This evaporation delays root penetration or even causes the plant to dry up on hot sunny days.

**If** possible, transplant on cloudy days. In warm, sunny weather, cover the newly planted seedlings with newspaper tents or some other type of shading for 2 or 3 days until they are well established.

**So** I will take the advice of the professionals and my seedling should be fine. Look for pictures for show and tell in the next edition. Have a good summer.

R. Raysor

a picture'

### **Book Review**

Along with the great productivity of industrialized agriculture is another story, one of a new kind of farming in this country. Author, Michael Abelman tells a tale of farmers who are in some ways remaking an ancient science or at least changing the way it was supposed to be done.

**Abelman** himself a farmer, takes us with him on a summer road trip around the U.S. to check out some farmers and their farms. He asks these farmers about their land, their methods, and their problems. All must deal with the age-old uncertainties of weather and disease, but unique things like the way in which government mishandles small farmers and conflicts with suburban neighbors make us aware of additional problems facing people who never had it too easy to begin with. A new feature of these small farmers is found in the products they are producing and the markets they're trying to reach. On small amounts of acreage they can produce what is often referred to as "artisan" crops or products. These are high quality foods that agri-business cannot easily compete with and so they don't bother with them. (One exception is their growing involvement with organic foods.)

This is "niche" farming, where each farmer finds suitable crops or animals that he can best produce. There are also independent women farmers who are doing the same thing.

**From** great profits to disheartening struggles, each farm and farmer deals with a unique set of circumstances, but what they all have in common is having to make a living, to produce a better product free from the captive agri-business model. Some are more high-tech than others, but all are struggling to succeed against great odds. Surprisingly, many are really making it. Whether earning a comfortable living or providing a wholesome and involved life for their families, these small farmers are doing it. In this day and age where few can say that they've used their talents and hard work to make a first rate product, farmers know what they've done and their customers know it too. This book is a fascinating read for anyone who really wants to know about good food and its production. Many farmers' recipes are also included.

#### Fields of Plenty

A farmer's journey in search of real food and the people who grow it Chronicle books

R. Florin



## Tip Time

**After** more than twenty years the USDA is revising the plant hardiness map in response to global warming. This map divides North America into 11 zones, each representing a 10°F range of "average annual minimum temperature," that is, the coldest lows that can be expected in that area. Each of zones 2 through 10 is subdivided into two sec-

tions - "a" and "b" - that represent 5°F ranges. Zone II (southern Mexico and much of Hawaii) is tropical; winter lows are above 40°F. Keep watch for the new map later in the year.

**Cut** back your ornamental grasses to 6-12 inches now.

**Remove** the protective layer of mulch from your plants.

**Leaving** clover in the lawn is bee friendly and nutritious for your grass. Be more tolerant of it. Many other beneficial insects use it for cover.

**It** is time to turn over the cover crops you planted last fall.

**Not** all the stems on my red twig dogwood are bright red. Some are a grayish brown color, these are the old stems and they can be pruned back to the base of the shrub

Fertilize your fruit trees now, fruit drop occurs when you fertilize them during flowering.

**Now** is the time to apply dormant oil spray if you have trouble with your fruit trees.

**If** you are going to rearrange your plants, do it now before they leaf out.

**Get** a jump on the weeds and start pulling them as you see them since the roots are shallow now.

**Spread** a few layers of overlapped newspaper under your mulch to better control the weeds.



**Poison** Ivy will start growing now too, walk around with a picture until you can easily identify it.

When opening your seed packets, open them from the bottom so that you can protect the instructions written close to the top.

**Don't** forget to label your seeding containers the very second you pick up the next packet of seeds to plant.

**Pratt** is having a pumpkin competition this fall for Brooklyn gardeners and we have a few giant pumpkin seedlings to share. Get in touch if you want a couple of plants.

Don't make the same mistake I made last season when preparing my containers. Container grown plants need a lot more fertilizer. I added an organic fertilizer and because I did not read carefully, most of my transplanted seedlings struggled and some of them died. I did not realize that the chicken manure was dehydrated and not composted. Read every word on your labels.

## Is Your Garden Bee'n Friendly to Bees?

**Most** of us have heard about the plight of bees and their numerous problems - viruses, mites, and colony collapse disorder. While we don't have definitive reasons for these problems, we do know that bees in particular and pollinators in general are in decline.

As with most species, decline is usually initiated by some form of stress. If we examine the way most of our urban and suburban landscapes are managed, it's not at all surprising that pollinators would be suffering from habitat loss, chemical contaminants, polluted water and an inadequate supply of forage.

**Given** the importance of bees to so many of the plants/foods we hold dear - roses, apples, strawberries, almonds, asters, sedums - it behooves good gardeners to offer bees and other pollinators a friendly, hospitable

**Let's** take stock of what putting out the bee welcome mat entails:

1. Fresh water - bees need a source of fresh water within their normal 2-mile radius foraging range. Starting in early spring, provide fresh water

daily such as a birdbath or a large shallow dish.

2. Forage - bee forage is divided into two categories - pollen and nectar. Pollen is a bee's sole source of protein and trace minerals and it is used to feed the brood. Nectar provides bees with carbohydrates and it's the raw material of honey. An ample supply of both nectar and pollen is crucial to bees' well being.

**There** are some important criteria to use in selecting plants that will add to the amount of pollen and nectar forage for

- a. provide a diverse range of local native flowering plant species which should in-
- an assortment of "bee" colors blue, pur ple, violet, yellow, orange, white
- different shapes and sizes of flowers for a wider variety of native bees
- a succession of flowering to cover the

entire growing season

- the selection of single flowering varieties or cultivars - double flowers are often sterile
- **b.** plant bee forage plants in clumps to attract bees better
- c. survey the flowering plants in your garden, then use these online bee forage resources to determine what forage is there and what you could add:
- http://www.ars.usda.gov/Main/docs.htm? docid=12052
- http://ohioline.osu.edu/hyg-fact/2000/index. html - listed in numerical order - scroll to: Some Ohio Nectar and Pollen Producing

Plants, HYG-2168-98 (there are additional bee and pollinatorrelated resources posted at this website) http://www. pollinator.org/guides. <u>htm</u>- follow instructions to select your region

3. Nesting sites native bees are often solitary nesters, nesting in the ground or in ground wood. For nesters, leave a little used, well-drained

(preferably sloped) area with somewhat bare ground. For the wood nesters, take limbs that have died, drill holes, as deep as possible,

ranging from 3/32" to 5/16" and arrange the limbs so they stand upright. There are also wood nesting bee boxes available for sale. For more suggestions on nesting habitat and habits, visit http:// www.xerces.org.

Photo - Eric Mader/The Xerces Society

4. Chemical contaminants - last but not least is the need to protect bees and all pollinators from the onslaught of the P.S. beekeeping is illegal in the City of New "cides" - insecticides, pesticides, herbicides.

a. Insecticides and pesticides were designed to eliminate insect and pests. Their active chemical ingredients are usually either fast acting or slow but both have a wide range of toxicities to bees and other pollinators. Think proactively: - eliminate stress! - It's usu-

ally stress that opens the door to problems; learn what your plants like, not just what they'll tolerate - make certain that your plants are located where they like to be, in a pH that they want and receiving the amount of water that works for them; don't over mulch - 2-3 inches deep and away from stems; don't fertilize if your plant is stressed or it has problems - plants have management strategies to deal with problems but fertilizing overrides those strategies - use compost to support healthy soil which then provides the nutrients that plants require

- identify the pest and which plants or situation are instigating the problem(s)
- try a more pest-resistant species or variety or resolve landscape issues
- diversify the plant too much of a single genus or species can invite problems
- explore the entire world of alternative management strategies, e.g. compost tea companion planting

**b.** Herbicides are used to eliminate plants we don't want in our landscape but those "cides" might also target bee forage, forcing bees to search further for food. Think about hand weeding if the problem is small - pollinators and the soil food web will thank you. The fewer chemicals in our soil and water supply, the better off all inhabitants of this Earth will be. If your problem is such that you must use an herbicide, try spot treating rather than a broader treatment approach.

**Those** of us that garden have a first hand opportunity to be stewards of our little patch

> of this planet. Remember that a garden's benefactors are many and bees rank at the top of the list. Your bee friendly actions will inspire them to dance and their presence in your garden will provide you with hours of pleasure as they move from flower to flower.



Flowers planted in clusters

York. Yes, I said it - illegal. If you think this is misguided, go to the link provided by Just Food - http://www.gopetition.com/petitions/ legalize-beekeeping.html - and sign the peti-

> N. Zurcher Chairperson of NYC Root Zone

## Weather Alert!

hot and sunny summer day or you hear are they referring to? (Did you think that we only had to worry about the ozone

NY

ughkeepsie

Philadelphia

layer being depleted up there?) Well, they are referring to Ground Level Ozone. It is formed PA right here in the air immediately surrounding us - the troposphere, and it is BAD. The good ozone that protects us on earth from the sun's harmful ultraviolet radiation

is way up there, 10 - 30 miles above the earth in the stratosphere. So, on weather alert days stratospheric ozone depletion is not the ozone we should be concerned about.

Ozone  $(O_3)$  is a gas and when formed at ground level, it is a key ingredient of smog, it is a health haz-

ard, it is harmful to our plants (according to the USDA, BAD ozone damages our blants more than any other bollutant) and it is a major pollutant. Ground Level Ozone, BAD ozone, is formed when volatile organic compounds (VOCs) and nitrogen oxide gases (NOx) react with sunlight to form ozone. VOCs are popular ingredients in household products such as paints, varnishes, wax, fuels, cleaning and disinfecting supplies, to list a few. Nitrogen their primary source is fuel consumption. In combination with VOCs and NOx, cloud cover, wind direction and speed, ground level ozone forms in harmful concentrations and then we get the weather alerts. Even rural areas can be affected because bad ozone is transported long distances by wind. We are all responsible for contribut- In the New York City Area, Suffolk County, ing to this toxic soup and we need to bestart to introduce changes.

arning! "Air Quality Alert: Mem- It is dangerous. It is a problem. It affects our bers of sensitive groups may lungs; it aggravates asthma and chronic lung experience health effects. Stay indoors, disease. Over time, it causes permanent lung minimize activity." Warning! "Ozone damage and while this is happening you are Alert" When you hear these warnings on a for the most part unaware because the signs are unnoticeable and symptoms like shortness the word ozone what do you think? What of breath, pain when taking a deep breath, coughing and sore or scratchy throat tend to disappear, while the affects remain. So, even

\* Hartford

when you don't have obvious symptoms, and you are in the group of people with heart, lung, upper respiratory, allergy and asthma trouble, to safeguard vour health

2 New York	_	on to the warnings	el . r
Air Quality Index Levels of Health Concern	Numerical Value	Meaning	ti
Good	0-50	Air quality is considered satisfactory, and air pollution poses little or no risk.	ti
Moderate	51-100	Air quality is acceptable; however, for some pollutants there may be a moderate health concern for a very small number cf people who are unusually sensitive to air pollution.	t
Unhealthy for Sensitive Groups	101-150	Members of sensitive groups may experience health effects. The general public is not likely to be affected.	io
Unhealthy	151-200	Everyone may begin to experience health effects; members of sensitive groups may experience more serious health effects.	k
Very Unhealthy	201-300	Health alert: everyone may experience more serious health effects.	u
Hazardous	> 300	blealth warnings of emergency conditions. The entire population is more likely to be affected.	s h

and take precautions. Enviroflash, a free service, can alert you via email when your local air quality is a concern. Sign up at www. enviroflash.info. Or if you are like me, every day before you leave home you watch the weather report.

The Air Quality Index (AQI) is a scale developed by the EPA to report air pollutants that include ground level ozone. You need to take the necessary precautions when the index oxide gases are odorless, colorless and gets higher. Six colors are assigned to the range of values so that you can visualize the severity of the alerts. Take a look at the color table placed here. Green as seen on the map indicates a good air quality day for our region. The other colors, yellow, orange, red, purple, and maroon indicate progressively worse con-

Richmond County, New York County, & come aware of its effects before we can Queens County are in the Red or Unhealthy range with numbers residing in the top 10 for

the state. Suffolk County has the second worse levels in the state. Staten Island is third, Manhattan is fifth and Queens is sev-

On Alert! Days, some times you will hear that an Air Quality Action Day is indicated. On those days we need to take certain precautions. Out door activity should be restricted, especially for children and seniors with sensitive conditions. Motor vehicles should be refueled after dusk because after the sun is gone, one of the components for bad ozone creation is eliminated. Delay using gas powered garden equipment and household, workshop, and garden chemicals until air quality is healthy again. We are encouraged to take public transportation.

Some of the other things we can do to help ozone levels should al-

> ready be on our list of things to do as we make our commitment to stem the tide of global warm-

Conserving energy, turning off lights, not idling those engines, not topping off the gas tank, keeping your engines properly tuned and tires at optimum pressure, using environmentally safe paints and household cleaners, and following manufacturers' rec-

ommendations for controlling smog-forming chemicals when we use paints and cleaners so that these chemicals cannot evaporate are included in that global warming reduction list we should already have.

Finally, a quick mention about how our plants are affected by this threat. Ground Level Ozone burns the leaves to a crisp. When leaves are damaged, a plants ability to make its food is disrupted. This disruption creates susceptibility in the plant to disease, other pollutants, insects, competition and harsh weather. Crop yields are disrupted, and our green spaces are put at risk. All of this can lead to severe impacts on species diversity and ecosystem balance.

Ground Level Ozone is real. It is harmful and can even be dangerous under the right conditions. Be Aware! Be Alert! and Be Careful!

S. Stephens

### water, water everywhere.....

but not a drop to drink?

**Ever** wonder what it would be like to have to go outside your house to get water? Go to the town square pump with your buckets, your pails or your jugs. Or to the river that dried up months ago. But that only happens in the most remote or isolated areas of some third-world countrv. Or does it?

We have become so accustomed to hearing about drought in other places and having water at our very fingertips, we fergot that it was is not as renewable as we like to think. But, wait a minute, you say that there are vast oceans and wide rivers and overflowing streams everywhere. How could we run out of water?

Since the beginning of global climate change, fresh drinkable water is one of the first unrealized victims to suffer. This leads to other victims who depend on freshwater suffering also. That would mean everyone and everything. This realization over the fact that our water has a finite life is leading us to water wars, water refugees and the emergence of powerful corporations bent water to fill their coffers.

Conflicts over water are already happening in the "civilized" world. Along the U. S.-Mexico border, many farmers and companies on both sides have been sucking the Rio Grande dry, which is lead-

ing to lawsuits, parched lands, abandoned farms and forced migration. Parts of Nevada and Southern California have had a population explosion leading to more demands on Lake Mead and Lake Powell which is losing about I million acre feet of water each year. It is believed that if the water table drops extremely low, hydroelectric power provided by the Hoover Dam, which forms Lake Mead, would be severely affected.

**In** Europe, the Netherlands

on taking over every facet of are polluting and devastating the beautiful waters of Kenya's Lake Naivasha just to sell flowers. The flower farms have nearly surrounded the lakefront of Naivasha leaving the native Maasai very little access to gather water. But now that Lake Naivasha is in danger of

> has been thorinfested oughly with pesticides and pollutants; these same farms are now running off to other pristine lakes in Africa, Kenya leaving with a polluted

drving up and it

lake and high unemployment.

**There** are already plans to build desalination plants along many of the America's coastlines, as well as other foreign counties. Unfortunately, many of these plants are to be powered by nuclear power, which has its own devastating problems, in addition to the fact that many of these plants run up a bill. Massachusetts just built a \$60 million reverse-osmosis desalination plant. This is a great idea, but who is going to pay for it and who is going to benefit from it. Yes, you can have a glass of water but first you have to pay for it.

**There** are many ideas and theories on how to get drinkable water. There is the idea that we can turn sewage water into drinkable water; that we can manipulate the clouds to get water. We are even drilling deep into the water table to get water, which in turn destabilizes the land above; causing volcanoes to erupt and mud slides. Getting fresh drinkable water has become the problem of the 21st century. And it's happening now.

**So** what is the solution? To tell you the truth, I just don't know. But I do know that the politicians are not talking about it, that mainstream media is silent on this subject and the corporations will not tell you anything. So it's up to us to be vigilant in educating ourselves about it and forcing our leaders into action. Because next time you turn on your faucet, nothing may come out but air. And if you think this can't happen to you, think again.

### **Our 2009 Monthly Meeting Schedule**

**April 27, 2008** 

Video - Native American Medicine

May 25, 2009 Discussion

June 22, 2009 Plants For Wildlife

July 27, 2009

Activity - Making a Birdbath

Please check our website for last minute changes or cancellations.

Brooklyn, NY 11202-1808 Federated Garden Club of NYS, District II P.O. Box 21808 Olympus Garden Club

Website: http://www.olympusgardenclub.org
Contact us: info@olympusgardenclub.org

Editor: S. Stephen

© 2003-2009

#### Word Scramble Answer S Z X G S D C G C N S w D Ō U С С UNDER Q Z S С X P H S R L N I T F R B D X Y Z Z Q J J w B **A** Z X Y D D P E R C H S K T Q **K** W D T Y K Z L S R G E O N G G L V T Q G D P L K T G ï R N T G N J K X T G L L S Ġ D Τ L S X R T L M O N J P R Ν