

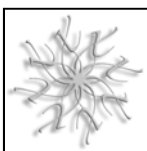


I am still accepting 2007 volunteer hour log sheets from those who may have kept them at home or just need to total them for the year. Our records show we are behind last year in hours worked and I hope you understand how important it is to turn these in. There are new sheets for 2008 in each of the volunteer log books for you to use this year. There are some slight changes to help with record keeping. These changes will help us categorize the different areas of volunteering that is needed for fundraising such as sponsorships and grant writing. Please call or see me if you have any questions.



A big **THANK YOU!** to all volunteers who helped with the Winter Wonderland Walk. From those of you who helped with the organizing to those who helped set up the displays

all the way back in October, those who helped facilitate the actual event as greeters, ticket takers, gift shop and trail walkers, on calls, Santa's workshop and those who are still taking down lights; hats off to you!



**GIFT SHOP/VISITOR CENTER VOLUNTEER BREAK-FAST FEBRUARY 14, 2008**



**9:00 AM**

All current gift shop workers and anyone who would like to learn more about this volunteer niche please join us at the Parker Education Center for food and fellowship. RSVP your attendance to Julie please.

**UPCOMING VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES**

- \* Winged Wonders March 1-16<sup>th</sup>
- \*Work Day April 12
- Youth Work Day April 19
- \* Earth Week April 21 to 25

Ongoing volunteer needs; Gift Shop/Visitor Center, Tour Guides, Education, Administration, Phone Calls, Data Base Entry, Flyer Distribution.

See the **Big Book of Volunteer Opportunities** on my desk to sign up today.



**"THE SECRET GARDEN"**

February 26, 2008 - 2 performances  
(1 p.m. & 7 p.m.)



The MacDowell Music Club of Janesville, Wisconsin was given a National Award of Merit in the Folk Music program category recognizing Freda Treder's program based on THE SECRET GARDEN by Frances Hodgson Burnett.

The program will be a public service offering from Freda and her Red Hat chapter, "A Red Extravaganza." Freda Treder is a well-known local contralto soloist will present an inspiration program of song and story based on the beloved children's story "The Secret Garden". It tells of an orphaned girl who struggles to regain love and hope with her new family, while they are also searching for the same things. Freda will be on stage surrounded by scenes from this long-time favorite book while she sings and narrates the story.

Reservations suggested for limited seating.

For 1 p.m. notify Sandy (608-752-1644) or Carolyn (608-756-2616) For 7 p.m. call Fern (608-752-5684) Suggested donations (\$3-\$5) will be accepted at the door. Light refreshments will follow the program.



## THE DIRTY DETAILS

MARK DWYER TELLS US WHAT REALLY GOES ON IN THE GARDENS



### Winter Wonderland Walk

Thanks again to all the volunteers that helped set up and facilitate the Winter Wonderland Walk this past December. However, equally as important, the recent efforts of volunteers in taking down, processing and putting away the show should be recognized. Some warm weather has allowed us to proceed with the monumental task of finishing this event by efficiently putting everything away. Thanks for the great team effort!



### Perennial Plant of the Year – 2008

The Perennial Plant Association has announced Geranium 'Rozanne' as the 2008 Perennial Plant of the Year. Large, jewel-tone, violet-blue flowers are combined with deep green, lightly marbled foliage, making this a "must-have" for any garden. This perennial, while tolerating part shade or full sun, will reach 20" in height and have a similar spread. Ideally suited for moist, well-drained soil, this long-season blooming plant may be used as a ground cover, specimen, or in mass planting situations. RBG has had lots of success with this perennial. Look for it this year!

### Continued Trialing for 2008

Rotary Gardens will continue with all of its wonderful relationships this year. Be sure to examine "year 2" of our new Easy Elegance shrub rose collection from Baileys Nursery (MN) located in the formal rose garden near the pergola. We will have some new varieties this spring to add to the existing 28 original varieties. Rose variety evaluations from the 2007 season have

been sent to Bailey and we look forward to our continued relationship with such a fine nursery.

We will also continue to display All-American Selection and Fleuroselect (Europe) winners out in the garden and are excited about the continued opportunity to grow and display future introductions for both Ball Seed Company and PanAmerican Seed. Our relationship with the Hardy Fern Foundation will continue as well with fern evaluations and the addition of even more species and varieties to our current collection.

### Mushroom Compost Returns

We will again be selling bagged mushroom compost this spring. Bags (1.5 cubic feet or roughly 45 lbs.) of blended compost will be offered every Saturday in April and May from 8 am until 2 pm at the Horticulture Center. This soil amendment is wonderful when used as a light top-dressing or when worked in to the soil. Demand for this product has increased dramatically over the years so we will bulk up on supply and encourage you to try (or continue to use!) this wonderful, organic amendment.

### Spring Plant Sale Clarification

May 17<sup>th</sup>! This is the one and only day for our spring plant sale. Held from 8 am until 4 pm at the Horticulture Center, this sale will be a hodge podge of "offerings." Working in conjunction with the Rock Prairie Master Gardeners, Rotary Gardens will feature over 200 varieties of hot pepper plants and 50 varieties of heirloom tomato plants at this sale. In addition, thousands of perennial plant divisions (varieties to be determined) from the gardens will be offered as well. Bagged mushroom compost will also be available. Volunteers and Friends member receive a 10% discount! Please call Julie Gibes (752-3885) if you are interested in helping

prepare or facilitate this sale as a volunteer.

### Hot Peppers

Hot peppers (*Capsicum*) have a long culinary use around the world. Some varieties have also become very popular bedding plants or what are termed "ornamental edibles". There will be a display of 200+ varieties of hot peppers over at the Horticulture Center trialing beds this year. Almost 50 of the varieties will be featured as effective ornamentals. The remainder of the collection will contain some of the mildest and some of the hottest peppers in the world. Come observe or purchase some of your own at our May 17 plant sale. These peppers will also be utilized at the Heirloom Vegetable Festival on September 6.

### Wish List Items

Special thanks to those donors that responded to our wish list needs. Your generous donations have helped defray looming expenses for the grounds budget and your support is much appreciated. Some wish list items that still need "sponsorship" are listed below:"

- Six new tires John Deere Gator (\$600)
- Two new backpack sprayers (\$200)
- Two heavy duty, flat spades (\$150)
- Five Felco 5 hand pruners (\$100)
- Three heavy duty, triangle hoes (\$100)
- 3 Steel Digger bars (\$100)
- Ten new leaf rakes (\$100)



# February 2008

Hours: Office 8:30-4:30 weekdays

Visitor Center closed weekends

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7 Vol Cmte- 11 am	8 WPT Garden Expo 4:00-9:00pm	9 WPT Garden Expo 8:00am-6:00pm
10 WPT Garden Expo 10:00am-4:00pm	11	12 Garden Dev-9am	13 Exec Cmte- Noon Dinner Dance Cmtee 5:00 pm	14 Gift Shop Volunteer Breakfast 9:00 am	15	16
17	18	19 Board Mtg.-4pm	20	21	22	23
24	25	26 The Secret Garden 2 performances 1:00pm & 7:00pm	27	28	29 Endowment Committee 10-noon	

# March 2008

Hours: Office 8:30-4:30 weekdays; Visitor Center re-opens 10 am -4:30 pm weekends

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
2 Noon-4:00 Pm Winged Wonders	3	4	5	6 Vol Cmte-11 am 5:30 pm Public showing GardenSmart	7	1/8 Noon-4:00 Pm Winged Wonders
9 Noon-4:00 Pm Winged Wonders	10	11 Garden Dev-9:00am	12 Exec Cmte-Noon	13	14	15 Noon-4:00 Pm Winged Wonders
16 Noon-4:00 Pm Winged Wonders	17	18 Board Mtg.-4:00pm	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29 5th Annual Spring Symposium 9am-4pm
30	31					

# Rambles & Brambles

HORTICULTURE EDUCATION & EVENTS WITH MIKE MADDOX

Prepare for starting seeds indoors by gathering supplies and equipment. The three most crucial elements for successful seed starting are using sterile media, supplemental light and bottom heat of about 70 degrees.

Plan to get your children into the garden this year. Start with projects indoors like a pan of grass for their Easter baskets or oats for the cat. Start a sweet potato or an avocado pit. If you have supplemental lighting, plant a tub of lettuces and garlic cloves and herbs.

Remove built-up dust and grime from the leaves of houseplants with a shower. Plants with large leaves can be wiped clean by hand with a cloth or a pair of clean, soft gloves. Use one hand on the upper surface and one below. Water works just fine to clean and shine leaves. Some but not all leaf polish products contain oils which will clog leaf pores.

Start seeds for the very first vegetable crop in mid-February - onions. Keep the foliage cutback to about 4" until time to transplant outdoors in April. Use what you clip off in salads or soup to add some zip.

Cloves of garlic can be planted in pots indoors to sprout for zesty seasoning.

Sow seeds indoors for impatiens, begonias, petunias, nemesia, dusty miller, and snapdragons.

Fresh cut Valentine's bouquets should be placed in warm water with floral preservative after having the stem ends re-cut. Wash vases with soap and water every time you replace the water. Remove any foliage that is below water level to prevent rot and clogging of stems. Place vase in a cool location (down to 35 degrees) for at least one hour or overnight so that they can re-hydrate before bringing into room temperature.

Drooping roses can be revived by completely submerging them in warm water and re-cutting the stem ends while under water. Leave them in the water to re-hydrate for a half hour before returning them to the vase.

Start garden woodworking projects like coldframes, trellises, arbors and benches. A makeshift but functional coldframe can be set up using a few bales of straw on which an old wooden storm window is propped. Slide back the window to vent heat on sunny days being certain to close it again before sundown.

Being the end of the dormant season, now and throughout the month of March is the best time to prune most woody landscape plants and fruit trees. You can delay pruning birch, maple, black walnut, and elm since these tend to "bleed" when sap starts to move again due to snow melt and thawing soil. The dripping sap does not harm the trees but it is unsightly.

You can also delay pruning of spring flowering plants like forsythia, lilac, flowering almond, pussywillow, quince, cherry, Corneliancherry dogwood and crabapple until after bloom if you can't bear to lose the flowerbuds you prune off.

Seed of larkspur, nigella, and poppies can be sown directly in bare ground to germinate as soon as the snow melts away.

Keep feeding the birds until spring bloom since they have come to depend upon you for food. Even greater success at attracting birds to your property can be assured by providing a fresh source of water at all times. This must be kept free of ice and available until spring thaw. Stake up a discarded Christmas tree near a feeder to provide some protective cover but far enough away so that dogs and cats can't hide there to ambush your feathered friends at the feeder.

In March, tender bulbs of tuberous begonias, caladiums, dahlias, and canna lilies can be potted up in well-drained soil rich in organic matter. Discard any that have rotted in storage.

If you have been storing geraniums in cool, dark conditions, its time to pot them up, cut them back and start watering again.

Cut back geraniums and coleus that you have kept growing indoors through the winter to only a few buds. This will stimulate new growth and a fuller plant by the time summer arrives.

The longer days and shorter nights of March will stimulate houseplants to grow more rapidly again so you may resume fertilizing. Use fertilizers at only half-strength and only every other watering. If the month is cloudy plants will still use less water and therefore less fertilizer.

Continue feeding your holiday plants like Christmas and Thanksgiving cacti, poinsettias, cyclamen, azalea and amaryllis. After flowering they start actively growing again and therefore need more nutrients.

The end of the dormant season—February, March-- is the best time to prune almost all trees and shrubs. Pines are about the only exception. Let their new growth expand until young needles are half of full size before pruning.

Branches cut from spring flowering shrubs and fruit trees can be brought in and put in warm water to force them into bloom.

Do not use tree wound dressing or paint on pruning cuts. These can actually slow the healing process.

Elm, maple, birch, and black walnut ooze sap when pruned in the spring due to water pressure from the moist soil. It will not harm the plant but you can prune these in early summer or late fall instead if you are bothered by it.

*Continued on Page 7*

## SAVE THE DATE

**March 29, 2008**

***Fifth Annual Garden Symposium***

\$50 Early-bird registration received on or before March 1, 2008.; \$60 Registration received after March 1, 2008.; Less \$5 for Rotary Botanical Gardens' Friend-Members

Registration materials available

