



'Through The Garden Gate'

The monthly newsletter of the Englehart and District Horticultural Society
July 2021



**Englehart and District
Horticultural Society was
formed in 1956.**

General meetings:
3rd Wednesday of most months
at 7:00 p.m. in the
St. Paul's Emmanuel
Community Church

- *Speakers, workshops,
demonstrations
- *Civic Improvement
- *Youth Involvement
- *Displays and Competitions
- *Environmental Stewardship

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Double Potting

Here's a handy time saver for busy people: Dig a hole for your seasonal plants and fill with an empty plastic pot. Now you can just drop the pot of new seasonal flowers (or herbs and vegies) in there and easily switch them out once they're past their prime and ready to retire to the compost pile. This is often called using a "Cachepot" (meaning hidden pot). I can see this working well for people who don't have much room for gardening or someone who has an area that is a focal point that they like to change seasonally- ie- spring bulbs being replaced by a pot of marigolds, being replaced by some fall mums. This idea would also work well with an entryway urn. A drawback to this practice is that sometimes the cachepot may hold too much water and may need to be checked often. (Drainage holes needed!)



Mark It on Your Calendar

August... Judging of the Youth Gardens
September... cleaning out the gardens Mary Schippers planted- give her a call if you can help her out with this job. (sorry- dates not set as of yet for either activity)

Eat Your Flowers

Here is an interesting article I came across while looking through some of Jean Wallace's old bulletin files. I actually wrote it for the September 1983 bulletin... nearly 40 years ago. (I must have been a newborn, lol!). I thought it might be fun to share it again...

"Colour your salads and make them more varied and richer in vitamins into the bargain. One of the prettiest salad flowers is the nasturtium. These showy annuals grow well in pots as well as flourishing in the poorest garden soil. You can use nearly every part of the plant- leaves, seeds, and flowers. If you want a good supply of leaves, sow a few seeds in good soil or fertilize a few plants very well. The bright flowers and half-opened buds look as attractive as tomatoes as a garnish for sandwiches or hors'd'oeuvres. Try filling the open flowers with creamed cheese mixed with chopped chives and nasturtium seeds. The seeds are also good chopped and mixed in yogurt as a dip or salad dressing. The seeds and flower buds can be pickled and used as capers. Clean and dry them on paper towels and pack them into small jars. Mix together one pint (570 ml) vinegar, one ounce (25 grams) salt, 6 peppercorns, and a bay leaf. Boil and allow to cool before pouring it onto the seeds and buds. These capers improve with keeping."

To Tickle Your Gardening Funny Bone

"Knee": a device for finding rocks in your garden.

"A favorite of birds" means you should avoid planting near cars, sidewalks, or clotheslines.

"Vigorous" is code for "has a Napoleonic compulsion to take over the world."

"A weed is a plant that has mastered every survival skill except for learning how to grow in rows."



The Magic of Epsom Salts

I grew up seeing Epsom Salts being used for many things...soaking sore feet, being added to a warm bath, treating inflammation and pain, etc. Following are a few other uses for this natural resource:

1. Using Epsom salt as a soil amendment before seeding will give your garden a powerful boost right from the start.
2. Magnesium aids in seed germination and helps to strengthen cell walls, leading to more and stronger seedlings. For best results, incorporate 1 cup of Epsom salts per 100 square feet of tilled soil or mix 1 – 2 tablespoons into the soil at the bottom of each hole before dropping in seeds.
3. Increase Nutrient Absorption: Many commercial fertilizers add magnesium to help plant roots take up vital nutrients (nitrogen, phosphorus, sulfur.) For those using all organic materials to feed their gardens, adding Epsom salt to soil will improve absorption naturally, eliminating the need for processed chemical fertilizers.
4. Counter Transplant Shock: We've all seen how our plants and seedlings wilt when we move them from a small pot to a larger one, from indoors to outside, or from greenhouse to ground. Try feeding transplants with Epsom salt once they're in their new environment to help injured roots overcome transplant shock. Remember to add a layer of soil on top of salt sprinkled in holes so roots don't come into direct contact with these concentrated minerals right away.
5. Green-up Foliage: Plants that aren't getting enough magnesium can be identified by their yellowing leaves. This is because magnesium is an essential component in the production of chlorophyll. Try sprinkling Epsom salt around your plants to achieve healthier foliage. About 1 tablespoon per 12 inches of height once a month will benefit the plants in your vegetable garden, as well as any trees, shrubs, flowers and grasses you want to green up.
6. Prevent Leaf Curling: Leaf curling may also be caused by magnesium-deficiency in plants. Again, add Epsom salt to the soil around the base of the sick plant. Alternately, for faster absorption you can mix 2 tablespoons of Epsom salt in a gallon of water and apply directly to the leaves.
7. Deter Garden Pests: While Epsom salt won't dehydrate slugs and snails like table salt (sodium chloride), it can still be used to deter pests. Hydrated magnesium sulfate crystals are sharp and when sprinkled around plants, they can scratch and irritate the bodies and feet of unwanted critters in much the same way as diatomaceous earth. (Keep in mind that Epsom salt dissolves very easily in water, thus any amount of rain will likely wash them away.)
8. Tomato vines are one of a handful of common garden plants whose fruit to plant size ratio is heavier than average, leading to an even higher likelihood of magnesium-deficiency. For this reason, tomatoes should be fed Epsom salt twice as often as other plants. Also, because tomato vines are prone to calcium-deficiency (blossom end rot), the majority of tomato fertilizers contain calcium which will compete with magnesium for root absorption. Therefore, foliar feeding is the more efficient method for delivering magnesium to these plants. Water tomato vines with dissolved Epsom salt – 2 tablespoons per gallon of water, every 2 weeks.



Ten Tips for Growing Tomatoes (cont.)



8. Watering Tomato Plants: How Much is Enough? Juicy tomato plants need 2.5 to 5 cm of water per week. Water deeply. A soaker hose is an efficient solution; just position the hose in the garden and pile mulch up and over the hose and don't forget to water consistently. Uneven watering can set the stage for blossom-end rot and may also cause fruits to crack open. Stressed plants remove calcium from the fruit and send it to the shoots to keep the plant growing. Along with uneven moisture, excessive nitrogen and high soil acidity contribute to blossom-end rot.

9. Feeding Tomato Plants: Most gardeners have a secret or two up their sleeves. Some treat their plants to crushed eggshells in the planting hole while others use a handful of bonemeal. My mother swore by a ¼ cup of Epsom Salts. (She was from Epsom and was taught to garden by her grandfather.) If you fertilize after planting, side-dress the plants with compost or a dose of liquid seaweed or fish emulsion. Stay away from high nitrogen fertilizers unless your plants have yellow leaves. Too much nitrogen will cause lush foliage growth but give you little or no fruit. If the leaves on your plant are purple, they are calling for more phosphorus. This is the most important nutrient for fruit production. Some gardeners like to feed their tomatoes compost tea to keep heavy-feeding tomato plants happy. Soak one part organic compost in one part water, let sit for 24 hours, filter the "tea," and use to nourish plants.

10. Try Companion Planting: According to the Gardeners' Almanac, they practically invented modern companion planting, following in the footsteps of Native American growing techniques. They've always found that tomatoes seem to thrive when planted with basil, just as they do in the kitchen! Basil and marigolds act as a natural insect repellent when planted amongst tomatoes, helping to ward off whitefly. Borage attracts bees and tiny pest-eating wasps, making it a great companion for tomatoes.

(I hope the information in the past few bulletins will help improve your tomato harvest. Good luck!)



Preserving Flowers... Air Drying

Drying plant material is a great way to ensure you have flowers in your home year round. Some material is easily dried by simply allowing it to dry in the air, with no special treatment. It is preferable to pick the blossoms/leaves when they are dry, but before they have been wilted by full sun. If I intend to use only the blossoms and stems, I strip the leaves before drying. However, some leaves dry fairly well, and may add interest or fullness to an arrangement. It is best to hang material in a dry, warm, dark area if at all possible. If this isn't, an airy closet, or any place out of the elements, including direct sunlight, is acceptable. I prefer to hang large material singly, other smaller material in small, loosely- packed bunches. I find that attaching ends with an elastic band allows the stems to shrink as they dry, without the material falling on the floor. I then use a paper clip or twist tie to attach to a line or hook. Check every few days to see how the process is going, watching for mildew if damp air or crowding is a problem. Some material will retain its original colours, while others may tend to fade to a creamy or paler shade, which can still be useful and interesting, especially if used as filler. If you see some wild or garden materials that you think might be worth keeping, why not try some air drying?

Plant of the Month

Ligularia

Ligularia often have deep green foliage with a purple underside. Foliage ranges from large and round to heart shape to thin and deeply serrated. Flowers are shades of yellow and can look a bit like a black-eyed Susan or have long spikes similar to a delphinium. They prefer at least partial shade. They thrive in rich moist but well drained soil. 'The Rocket' has deeply serrated leaves and deep yellow flowers appear on tall spikes in July and August. Height is 5 to 6' when in bloom. 'Britt-Marie Crawford' blooms in August-September, is shorter (2-3'), and has shaggy daisy-like blooms. These plants are definitely eye-catching additions to a garden and are worth a try. It is always best to deeply water all plants to establish deep roots. Shallow watering (when water only penetrates the top few inches of soil) leads to shallow roots that are prone to drying out quickly.



Common Raised Garden Mistakes You Might be Making

6. Selecting Oversize Plants: When planting within the confines of a raised bed, consider the scale and mature size of what you want to plant to ensure you have enough room for some variety. For example, a single zucchini plant would take up an entire two-foot square plot. If you're tight on space, plant smaller vegetables, opt for dwarf varieties, and practice succession planting.

7. Skipping Mulch: Even though your garden is off the ground, it's still prone to weeds. Make sure to add a layer of mulch to help keep weeds at bay. The mulch also will help retain moisture around your plants' roots so you won't have to water as often. Plus, your produce will be cleaner because mulch will prevent rain from splashing soil up onto your plants.

8. Not Protecting Your Plants: While a raised bed may be enough to keep rabbits away, you've likely just put your precious produce at eye level for a hungry deer. The best way to deter deer is to install fencing you can easily reach over or remove to tend to your garden. You can also sprinkle an odour-based repellent on the soil, but it will need to be reapplied regularly.



Poetry and Prose

*The luxury of all summer's
sweet sensation is to be
found when one lies at
length in the warm,
fragrant grass, soaked
with sunshine, aware of
regions of blossoming
clover and of a high heaven
filled with the hum of
innumerable bees.*

*Harriet E. Prescott,
The Atlantic Monthly,
August 1865*

Published 11 times a year
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