

Patchogue Garden Club's

Garden Gazette

"All the dirt you need to know . . . and a whole lot more!"

August 2007

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Or mail to:

Garden Gazette

P.O. Box 3030

Patchogue, NY 11772-0887

Submissions must be received two weeks before the general meeting in order to appear in that month's edition of the *Garden Gazette*.

Greetings from the President

Thank you to Paula Murphy, for hosting what has now become an annual Garden Club event—a pot luck dinner and fireworks. We had a very nice turnout of members and even some of our gardeners from the tour came. The food was wonderful as was the company. Even though drifting smoke obscured much of our view, the fireworks were still spectacular.

Are you all enjoying REAL tomatoes as much as I am? Whether you grow them yourselves or purchase them from farm stands, as I do, nothing beats a tomato ripened on the vine and eaten out of hand. Those red marbles that are available year 'round in the supermarkets can't compare.

If you didn't sign up to housesit during the Holiday House Tour, please consider doing so. You don't have to stay the entire time—even an hour would help us. You can sign up at this month's meeting or call Maryann Tchinnis at 289-8122 or email me at sciencecat@optonline.net.

See you at Guy's on the 28th. Remember, the meeting begins at 6:00 p.m.
Carol



Mark the Date

- Tuesday, August 28, 6:00 p.m.

August general meeting to be held at the home of Guy Vitale and Mark Jeffers, 36 Grove Ave., Patchogue. From Main St., turn south onto Grove; No. 36 is the first house past the LIRR tracks on the right. Carla Steward will demonstrate herbal cooking using fresh herbs from her garden, and her talk will be videoed.

- Sunday, December 9

"Homes for the Holidays" Christmas house tour. More details to come.

Book Review

The Oxford Companion to the Garden edited by Patrick Taylor (Oxford University Press, \$65) may be a bit steep but could be a great gift—or use it as a reference at the Patchogue-Medford Library. Hailed as a vast improvement over the first edition of 20 years ago, it is an illustrated compendium of all aspects of the garden, featuring 1,750 alphabetical entries that encompass a survey of the world's great gardens, biographies of garden designers and landscape architects, horticulture and plant cultivation, garden elements and styles, a history of gardens, and more.

July Meeting in a Flash

- ❖ Paula Murphy reported on our earnings from the Seventh Annual Garden Tour. Paula and the other committee members were applauded for another great tour. The pot luck dinner at Paula's house on July 28 was another winner. Thanks, Paula, for all of your hard work!
- ❖ The holiday house tour was discussed and a sign-up list was circulated for members to volunteer to staff the homes. The date of the tour was set for December 9. The sign-up sheet also will be available at this month's meeting.
- ❖ Carolyn Young thanked all the members who have helped her clean up her extensive lily gardens, and invited all members to visit her gardens that week.
- ❖ Diane Voland circulated a sign-up sheet for T-shirts and sweatshirts. Two colors were chosen, chestnut and pistachio green. The color that receives the most orders will "win," becoming the color of the year for our garments.
- ❖ Karen Ferb discussed changing the daffodil logo. Members concurred with the change, which can be seen in this month's newsletter. We hope everyone likes it as much as we do!

Hostesses for the August Meeting:

Karen Ferb
Paula Murphy
Guy Vitale
Diane Voland

Please call Arlene Lamberti at 289-3667 to coordinate when and where to meet.

Plant of the Month

As a groundcover, edging, mini-hedge or border plant, wall germander, *Teucrium chamaedrys*, has few equals. Famed for its prominence in knot and parterre gardens, it grows well in sun or part shade and is evergreen from Zone 6 south. It will thrive in poor soil as long as there is good drainage. Its small leaves are a dark lustrous green; in summer, spikes of lavender flowers attract birds and butterflies. It will grow 12-18" tall, but frequent shearing will make the plants denser and as low as 6". The cultivar 'Prostratum' grows about 8" tall, but spreads as much as 36" with rose-pink flowers; it runs underground, but is not invasive. Besides growing this as a hedge, it can be harvested and made into an aromatic wreath that acts as an air freshener for a room. Leaves and flowers can be dried for use in crafts. It makes excellent bonsai material too. *T. chamaedrys* makes a good replacement for the slower growing boxwood (and smells better!) For a knot garden or as a hedge for an herb or rose garden, this plant is a knockout, especially as a looser hedge when allowed to flower.



Winterizing the Vegetable Garden

Be sure to remove all crop residue as this takes away the places where pests and diseases can overwinter. Remove any weeds you missed earlier before they set seed and cause problems for the next growing season. Cover crops will hold precious topsoil in place over the winter, and they add organic matter, too. An excellent fall cover crop for home gardens is annual oats, which can be sown anytime in September. It is inexpensive and will reliably winter-kill so next spring all that will remain is the dead residue. To plant it, first clear the soil, then rough it up and lightly rake in at least four or five pounds of oats per 1,000 square feet. Higher rates will give an even thicker cover crop, which helps with weed suppression. Use certified seed or triple-cleaned feed oats to assure that the seed is free from weed contamination.

Serious Dirt from Richard Waldman

With Gratitude

A very stately tree with arching branches, Elm trees had been planted along many roadways and college campuses across the country. Then Dutch Elm disease made its appearance in the United States in 1930. Since then millions of Elm trees have died, victims of a fungus spread by beetles. Now, in 2007, this disease once again has been found in New York's Central Park. Currently 35 Elms are infected and 21 have been removed. The Central Park Conservancy is asking for monetary contributions to help stop the disease and to aid the daily ongoing monitoring of all remaining Elms in the park. An expensive fungicide is injected into the trunk of the Elm tree and affected branches are pruned to help save the tree. Funds that had been earmarked for Central Park improvements have been diverted to saving the Park's Elm trees. You can help stop this disease by making a tax-deductible contribution on their Web site, www.CentralParkNYC.org



Web site to Watch

Especially created for budding gardeners to discover the joys of gardening, www.thegardenhelper.com provides a wealth of information from the basics of creating a new garden to plant lists by category, problems and solutions, as well as free screensavers and desktop wallpaper.

Tilling and Toiling in September

- ✚ Stop pruning and fertilizing.
- ✚ Start fall clean-up in the beds—cut back anything that has finished blooming or is diseased.
- ✚ Take cuttings to overwinter indoors.
- ✚ Divide and move perennials.
- ✚ Dig and store tender bulbs like dahlias, caladiums, cannas and tuberous begonias.
- ✚ Start planting spring flowering bulbs.
- ✚ Harvest remaining vegetables, including green tomatoes.
- ✚ Wait for a hard frost before harvesting brussels sprouts.
- ✚ Mulch asparagus beds with a thick, loose layer of hay.
- ✚ Pick herbs for drying or freezing.
- ✚ Cure winter squash for storage. Place in a cool, sheltered, shady spot for about one month.
- ✚ Clean up fallen fruit.
- ✚ Plant trees and shrubs. Keep well watered, if there isn't sufficient rain.



Did You Know . . .

that the Svalbard Global Seed Vault is being installed nearly 400 feet deep under a mountain almost 600 miles north of Norway to provide safe storage for three million seed samples? The vault will protect the world's most important crops from being lost due to war and natural catastrophes. Permafrost and thick rock ensure that, even without electricity, the samples will remain frozen. The project is being funded by the Norwegian government and Global Crop Diversity Trust. For more information, go to their Web site, www.croptrust.org.



Some Fall Alternatives to Flowers

For an instant garden and a blast of color as summer turns into fall, fill your flowerbeds and empty spaces in your landscape with chrysanthemums. They come in a wide range of autumn colors from white, yellow, and gold to bronze and maroon. Lighter colors tend to bloom earlier than the darker reds and purples, so select different colors for a longer display of color. Flowering kale and cabbage also make nice fall plants to replace annual flowers. Both will turn a beautiful color with the cold and will last until covered with snow. Or try fall asters, which are grown in pots by many garden centers for sale at this time of year. They provide good color, and many are hardy as well.



Patchogue Garden Club

P.O. Box 3030

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"Come grow with us"

Founded 1996

Next Meeting: Tuesday, August 28, 6:00 p.m., at the home of Guy Vitale and Mark Jeffers, 36 Grove Avenue, Patchogue. See inside for directions.



"Gardening is a matter of your enthusiasm holding up until your back gets used to it."

~Author Unknown"

