

Patchogue Garden Club's

Garden Gazette

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

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September 2006

Greetings from the President

As the days again grow shorter, our thoughts turn to putting the garden to bed and adding up our successes and failures for the year. Ironically, one year's success can turn into next year's failure for any number of reasons. This year's (on top of last fall's) weather produced, in my garden anyway, something on the order of a spectacular number of failures. I found out the hard way when the river overflowed that I had a number of prized possessions that turned out to be either not salt-tolerant or intolerant of long-term wet feet. This year's heavy spring rains followed by high heat and humidity combined with long drought resulted in a lot of poor performance. Thankfully, the circle will come around again, and, undaunted, we will spend our shortening days yearning for the longer ones and with visions of next year's gardens swirling in our minds.



Mark the Date

- Tuesday, September 26, 7:00 p.m.
September general meeting to be held at the North Patchogue Fire Department. Master Gardener Ann Carpenter will discuss various types of bulbs and how to plant them.
- Tuesday, October 10, 9:00 a.m. until ?
Garden clean-up day.
- Friday, October 13, 3:00-6:00 p.m.
The Garden Club's 10th Anniversary celebration will begin with a dedication of the Terry Street Garden extension, followed by a reception in the Patchogue Theater Lobby. Please RSVP by October 4 to Karen Ferb at 758-2671 or by email to karenferb@hotmail.com
- Sunday, October 22, 4:00-10:00 p.m.
Annual Harvest Dinner at the Domino Yacht Club. See inside for more info.

Time to "Think Spring" Again

Yes, we know winter hasn't yet arrived, but we want members to start thinking about donating baskets for next year's Spring Luncheon. Members can donate entire baskets (which can be done by one or more persons); stand-alone items such as works of art, crafts, or other high-value items; or gift certificates from merchants, restaurants or individuals with a special skill or talent to offer. Let's make it easier for the committee members who have to put it all together by getting our donations in early. For more information, contact Georgia Dulmovits at 289-0867.



Garden Gazette Editorial Staff:

Barbara Aragon
Josephine Brennan
Carolyn Savastano
Ruth Shackelford
Richard Waldman

Please email submissions to
Ruth Shackelford at:
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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.

Hostesses for the September Meeting

Barbara Aragon, Ellen Brandt, Violet Mulligan, Carolyn Savastano and Mary Ann Tchinnis have volunteered to hostess the August meeting. Volunteers are reminded to arrive by 6:20 p.m. to begin preparations.



Byzantine gladiolus

August Meeting in a Flash

- ❖ Well it seems the minutes Ruth Szuminskyj took of the last meeting have gone missing. She promises to track them down and read them at the next meeting, so be sure to be there or you will miss the highlights!

Plant of the Month

The true hardy Byzantine gladiolus is the 2006 Bulb of the Year. It is fully hardy in Zone 6, bearing its elegant deep cerise/magenta flowers on 15-18" stems in early summer. The flowers resemble orchids more than glads and make beautiful clumps over time. But beware! Although the Byzantine glad is widely offered in nursery catalogs, even reputable sources are known to deliver less-desirable impostors. Price is one guide to the real thing: The impostors are enticingly cheap. Another way to avoid disappointment is to ask your source if the corms are American grown. If they're not, there's little chance you'll get the tough, brilliant heirloom form you actually want.

It's Not Too Late!

The Garden Conservancy's Open Days program is winding down, but there are still some local events to come. On September 30 the Garden Conservancy will feature "Nassau County Open Days." Five gardens will be open from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., and the John P. Humes Japanese Stroll Garden in Mill Neck will be open from 11:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. For additional locations, maps, and more, go to the Garden Conservancy's Web site at www.gardenconservancy.org/opendays/events.pl

Something New for Your Lawn

The Neuton Mower is the best-selling lawnmower in the country right now. This cordless, electric lawnmower makes just one-tenth of the noise of a gas-powered mower and starts instantly with a simple squeeze of the handlebar. It features an 1800-watt motor that runs on a rechargeable battery. No more need to deal with the mess of gas and oil and the smelly exhaust fumes! For more information, go to www.neutonmowers.com (you don't need to fill out the request for the video and catalogue, just click on "Submit" and you will be taken to the Web site).



Don't Miss the Annual Harvest Dinner!

This year the Annual Harvest Dinner will be held at the Domino Yacht Club, 484 Roe Avenue, East Patchogue, beginning at 4:00 p.m. Please bring a dish to share. This year members must pay a new, mandatory charge for every attendee: \$8 per adult for beer, wine and soda; \$4 each for soda for those under 21. Please RSVP as soon as possible to Karen Ferb at 758-2671 or by email to karenferb@hotmail.com. To get to the Yacht Club from the center of town, take Main Street east, turn right on South Country Road, cross the railroad tracks and turn right on Roe Avenue. Just before you reach the Great South Bay, the Yacht Club will be on your right.

Serious Dirt from Richard Waldman

New Garden Trends

The thought of fire and the great outdoors might bring to some of us visions of Smokey the Bear, the mascot for the U.S. Forest Service, and to others it reminds them of summer camp and roasting marshmallows on long sticks. Thumb through your garden magazines and catalogues now and you will find a wide variety of outdoor fireplaces where a wood log fire is kept contained and the resultant warmth allows you to stay outdoors just a little bit longer at night for the next month or two. Homeowners are now looking at their back yards not just an expanse of grass but as an outdoor living space. For this green living area, Smith & Hawken (www.smithandhawken.com) offers five different varieties of fire pits/outdoor grills that families can gather around. One of their options is an open, hand-hammered solid copper cauldron, 3 feet in diameter, that will set you back a mere \$459. I don't think they sell marshmallows at Smith & Hawken, which probably is just as well. On the other hand, smartbargains.com also has a hand-hammered copper fire pit—only 30 inches in diameter, it's true, but for only \$99.99. Visit your local garden centers to see more fire pits that might fit within your budget.



smartbargains.com

Tilling and Toiling in October

- ✚ Check the pH of your lawn's soil; if it is acidic, add limestone. Seed bare spots.
- ✚ Plant spring flowering bulbs. For a spectacular spring garden, after planting bulbs, plant violas and/or pansies on top of them. When they all come up next spring, you will have a two-level display.
- ✚ Remove annuals that have faded and replace with fall blooming plants.
- ✚ Dig up summer bulbs, tubers and corms after the first hard frost. Plant bulbs into containers and store in your unheated garage for the winter. Then, in late winter, put the containers out on the patio.
- ✚ To replenish your vegetable garden, plant a cover crop of winter rye. In spring, turn the cover crop into the soil.
- ✚ Add fallen leaves to your compost pile and turn the pile over.

Book Review: Deconstructing Dinner

Karen Ferb recommends *The Omnivore's Dilemma: A Natural History of Four Meals* by Michael Pollan. "It is one of the best books I've read lately," she says. It is a 450-page indictment of the policies and practices of agribusiness that have made America a nation of dysfunctional eaters. The author contrasts this with the philosophy and accomplishments of a new breed of farmers who are revealing the secrets of truly sustainable food production.

Going to Washington D.C.?

The new National Garden opens October 1 in Washington, D.C. Located on a three-acre site just west of the Conservatory in the United States Botanic Garden, the National Garden will be a showcase for unusual, useful and ornamental plants that grow well in the mid-Atlantic region. Major features include a Rose Garden, a Butterfly Garden, a Lawn Terrace, a First Ladies' Water Garden, a Regional Garden and an outdoor amphitheater. For more information, go to <http://www.usbg.gov/gardens/national-garden.cfm>

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Botany 101



There should be no monotony
In studying your botany;
It helps to train
And spur the brain—
Unless you haven't gotany.

It teaches you, does Botany,
To know the plants and spotany,
And learn just why
They live or die—
In case you plant or potany.

From Berton Braley, "Botany," *Science News Letter*, 9 March 1929



Patchogue Garden Club

P.O. Box 3030

Patchogue, NY 11772-0887

"Come grow with us"
Founded 1996

Next Meeting: Tuesday, September 26, 7:00 p.m., at the North Patchogue Fire Department.



The more one gardens, the more one learns; and the more one
learns, the more one realizes how little one knows. I suppose
the whole of life is like that.

—Vita Sackville-West

