



Evergreen Garden Club

The Wild Iris

Volume 18, Issue 12

June 2006

A Word from the President...

Inside this issue:

Club News.....	2
Minutes	3
Garden Fence	4
Horticulture.....	6

EGC 2005-2006 Board Members Presidents:

Jean Todd
Meredith Bossert

Vice Presidents:

Kathi Grider
Nan Spence

Secretary:

Chris Gray

Treasurer:

Priscilla Chapin

The **Wild Iris** is a free monthly publication for members of the Evergreen Garden Club.

Meetings are held on the second Tuesday of the month from Sept. to June at Church of the Hills, Buffalo Park Rd, Evergreen at 9:15 am. All are welcome.

For **membership** information please contact Priscilla Chapin at 303-697-4140 or Pris4430@aol.com

Newsletter Contributions are due by the 20th of each month to Karla Briggs at karla@tuppersteam.com

Newsletter Editor & Website

Beth Feldkamp 303-679-9465
brucebethf@comcast.net

What a successful "Spring Clean-Up Day" we had last month! Maintaining this many public gardens is a real service to the Evergreen community. In addition, these gardens provide a valuable demonstration of which plants can co-exist with our deer, elk, and other critters. Many thanks to all who worked so hard. We certainly appreciate the non-members and newcomers who joined for the first time. Most of all, thank you to Irma Wolf who has been planning and organizing this for months.

The pot luck afterwards was a fabulous spread of a wide variety of food. Thanks to all who contributed. Extra special thanks to the hospitality committee who worked so hard to organize it all and clean up afterwards—great job.

This is my last "President's

Message." Again, I want to thank the many club members who have kept things running smoothly. This is a special group. Keep up the good work. A very special celebration of the EGC 40th anniversary is planned for Sunday, June 25. (Call Bev Wickland if you can volunteer to help.) Hope to see all of you there. The new Board is already making plans for an interesting 2006/2007 year.

All Aboard for Vail!

Meredith

June 13, 2006 Mountain Splendor

We will tour the world-renowned Betty Ford Alpine Gardens in Vail and hold our final meeting of the year. Don't miss this opportunity to gather ideas and inspiration for our own mountain gardens!

Installation of officers

President: Nan Spence
Co Vice Pres.: Sheila Henriksen
Chris Gray
Treasurer: Priscilla Chapin
Secretary: Kim Stark



Garden Club News

The garden club is taking a special field trip to the Betty Fort Alpine Gardens in Vail on Tuesday, June 13. The Club has paid for a special private tour with one of their best tour guides and has also reserved the picnic pavilion at Ford Park next to the gardens for our last meeting of the year.

At our May meeting/luncheon following the garden clean-up day, several members requested group transportation to Vail rather than carpooling in private cars. We have contracted with Golden West Commuter for a 20-person van at a cost of \$20 per club member (the club is picking up the additional transportation costs). Those who already signed up to go on the trip have been given the first opportunity to reserve a seat on the bus. But we still have a few spots available. If you would like to go, please call Kathi Grider at (303) 670-6909 ASAP!

Louise Mounsey's daughter is making arrangements to have a cake and drinks to celebrate the end of the year and the installation of the new board. We are asking that you bring a sack lunch. The tour and refreshments will be free for members, but we are asking for any non-member guests to pay \$5 to help off set costs.

Those riding on the bus will be leaving from the RTD parking lot in Bergen Park at 8:30 a.m. and will be back home around 3:30 to 4 p.m. Please try to arrive at the RTD lot 15 minutes early...and don't forget your sack lunch!!

Evergreen Garden Club's Members
 Plant sale Saturday June 3rd
 Heritage Grove at Hiwan Homestead
 10 am—3pm

Evergreen Garden Club's 40th Anniversary Tea Party
 Sunday June 25th
 1-3pm
 Heritage Grove at Hiwan Homestead



Minutes of the May 9, 2006 Meeting

There was an abbreviated meeting after clean up day at the community gardens. President Meredith Bossert welcomed all 32 members who came to COTH for a potluck lunch.

Treasurer's Report as of 5/4/2006 given by Priscilla Chapin.

EGC Checking: \$1,970.73

EGC Savings \$6,516.70

Total Bank Accounts \$8,487.43

Motion to accept the treasurer's report was given, a second motion was made and the treasurer's report was accepted.

Secretary's Report as given by Chris Gray

A thank you note was sent to Jack Alkin of Wells Lamont for the gloves he so generously gave EGC.

A sympathy card was sent to Nan Spence on the loss of her brother in law. Nan sent back a thank you note to the club for the support she and her family were given during the recent family loss.

Chris read a letter from Bootstraps cordially inviting benefactors to attend the presentation of scholarships to graduating seniors.

Old Business.

Plant Sale: Lori Lapp asked for members assistance in putting up posters throughout the community for the June 3 plant sale. Lori informed members that Trish Scott had sent members an email detailing the times the activities for the plant sale would take place.

Trip to the Betty Ford gardens in Vail on June 13. Much discussion was had on the transportation issue – car-pooling vs. hiring a bus. Nan and Kathi will again look in to this issue. They asked that members read emails and respond quickly to any info they send out.

40th Anniversary celebration: Bev Wickland told members that the sign up sheets were again being circulated.

World Gardening. Louise showed members the two scarves that EGC had received in the past as thank you gifts from world gardening recipients. These scarves will be on display at our 40th anniversary celebration.

Planting at the Fire and Rescue Garden: Nan told members that she anticipates 10-12 people will be needed on June 5 to begin planting this fire wise garden. Nan asked people to email her with suggestions of plants that take dappled shade and which do well here in Evergreen into September.

Clean up at the community gardens: Irma told members that several gardens had people from the community who came to help with clean up day. A suggestion was made by Marilyn Kaussner that a donation can be used. People in the community are grateful that the community gardens look nice and want to donate money.

Door prizes were distributed and the meeting was adjourned.



Over The Garden Fence

By Karla Briggs

EXPERIMENTATION

Last summer I decided to experiment with a problem area that I was never sure would ever grow a living thing. The site is north facing, has poor soil, needs to be hand watered and is used as a throughway by man and beast. In addition, every winter the site is buried under five to six feet of snow that has been plowed from the driveway. I have attempted to seed the site with grass and wildflower seed to no avail. Last summer I set to work with a new plan of action. First, I killed the existing weeds with Round Up. Second, I spread a thick layer, four inches or so, of crusher fines. Third, I planted two inch pots of Lamium and Mother of Thyme 8-10 inches apart. We had a lovely wet spring and I supplemental watered the new plants to help them get established. The plants survived, grew and bloomed during the summer months. I left the site unmulched--that's right, me not mulching--but I didn't want to smother the plants knowing that they would be buried from the first significant snowfall to the last.

Then the first snowflake fell. Last winter turned out to be mild. Even so, the site was buried under three to four feet of snow well into April. As the snow melted, things were not looking great. The plants were very wet and brown. As the weather warmed up and dried out, the plants started greening up and growing again. As of this date (May 26, 2006) they look terrific and not one perished. I haven't watered them, only raked off the pine needles and picked up the dog poop. My plan is to see how well the plants do without supplemental water. Hopefully they are established well enough to get along like the natural ground covers in the area like kinnikinick and pussy toes.

The lesson learned is to never give up on those hard-to-grow sites. I got my inspiration for my experiment from the DAM Garden. Peggy and Dale planted an area with Thyme to create a "carpet". After a few years of waiting for the plants to grow together to form a mass, Peggy said to heck with this and started planting additional two inch pots of thyme and away it grew.

My choice of using Lamium in addition to the Thyme came from seeing how the Lamium I planted in the garden beds would spread itself around to untended areas and grow just fine. I bought flats of both plants which are a bit more cost effective and I didn't add any amendment to the soil. I wanted them to have a rough go of it right from the start knowing that life wouldn't get any easier as time went by. The plants tolerate both foot traffic and being pooped on. The hounds are having a hard time recognizing the area as a garden.

Time will tell if my experiment is successful, but for now I am pleased with the tenacity that these little plants have shown. I will continue to update you with the progress of this garden and I am taking a cue from the plants, to grow where I am planted, no matter how hard the growing gets!

Happy Spring,
Karla Briggs

Gardening
From Mama Makes Up Her Mind
By Bailey White submitted by Frances Sorensen

About six years ago, like so many romantic gardening fools, I fell for it: The wildflower meadow. I don't know whether it was the pictures on the seed packets, or the vision I had of myself, dressed all in white, strolling through an endless vista of poppies and daisies.

"A garden in a can," the seed catalogs said. The pictures showed a scene of rolling hills and dales, an area about the size of Georgia and Alabama combined, covered solid as far as the eye could see with billowing drifts of lupine and phlox.

But I wasn't born yesterday. I had been tricked by those pictures before. I come from down south, where vegetation does not know its place. Honeysuckle can work through cracks in your walls and strangle you while you sleep. Kudzu can completely shroud a house and a car parked in the yard in one growing season. Wisteria can lift a building off its foundation, and certain terrifying mints spread so rapidly that just the thought of them on a summer night can make your hair stand on end.

I knew what Lady Bird Johnson was talking about when she gave the wildflower romantics a look and said, "You can't just scatter the seeds around as if you were feeding chickens." Even the more responsible plant catalogs, in their offer of wildflower seed mixes for the various regions of the country admitted, "We have not been able to develop a mixture suitable for Zone 9." So I knew it wouldn't be easy.

But it's hard to squash a romantic. I made a plan. I would prepare my ground, about a half acre, and plant the wildflowers in rows. I would keep the weeds out for five years, by cultivation between the rows with a push plow and a hoe, and weeding by hand within each row. By the end of those five years, I figured I would have eliminated any perennial weeds and weed seeds. Then the garden would be on its own. The wildflowers would spread, eventually taking up the spaces between the rows, and I would get out my white dress and begin my leisurely strolls.

My garden's first spring: the seeds arrived. I planted by hand. The rows, neatly set out with stakes and string, seemed endless. I crawled up and down and up and down every afternoon examining each seedling as it sprouted. Was this spotted spurge or sweet Annie? Red-root pigweed or showy primrose? I recognized most of our common weeds and tweaked them out.

After every rain I hoed between the rows. My hands got hard and callused. They took on the curve of the hoe handle so that everywhere I went, I looked as if I were gripping a ghostly hoe.

The first summer, my annual plants bloomed. The *Coreopsis tintoria* was spectacular, a glowing red, and the cosmos was shoulder high. It's lavender petals brushed my face as I scritch and scritch up and down each row. I loved the sight of the clean brown earth stretching away from the blade of my hoe. On my hands and knees I weeded between plants. My knees ached, but the smell down there was nice, damp ground and bruised atremisia. I developed a gardener's stoop and a horticulturist's squint.

That first winter, I could relax only a little. Bermuda grass can establish itself during a winter and get away from you're the following spring. So every evening at dusk, I

(Continued on pg. 6)

(Continued from Horticulture pg. 5)

would stalk up and down my garden like a demented wraith, peering at the ground for each loathed blue-green blade, my cloak billowing in the wind and my scarf snagging on the bare gray branches of last summer's sunflowers.

At night, I would lie in my bed under the quilt listening to the wind outside and pinching and sniffing the little branches of sweet Annie I had harvested and dried in July. I dreamed of that summer, only four years away now, when the garden would be finished. My white dress would be linen, I decided.

The second summer was very fine. Some of the annuals had reseeded, and the perennials and biennials bloomed for the first time. But I had a real problem with something called Old Horrible Snakeroot, one of the terrifying mints, creeping in around the edges. Every afternoon, dressed in a wild straw hat, big boots, and little else, and pouring sweat, I violently hoed the perimeter of my garden. I wore out my first hoe that year with sharpening the blade, and the handles of my Little Gem cultivator became as smooth as ivory.

During the third and fourth years the rows began to close in. There were great irregular patches of gaillardia spanning several rows, with Queen Anne's lace and moss verbena weaving themselves among clumps of black-eyed Susans. When I stood up to ease my back and looked across the garden, I could see that it was truly as beautiful as the picture in the Park's seed catalog. I wiped the sweat out of my eyes and washed my face in the watering can. My white linen dress would have lace.

The fifth summer, I had to go to the doctor about my knees. "You've got to quit squatting down," he told me. "I can't quit squatting down," I said. "I've got a garden." He sighed and gave me a pair of elastic bandages.

I had a problem with thistles that year. The seeds must have blown in from somewhere. I wore gloves to pull them out, and every time I took out a thistle, I would transplant a wildflower in its place. Every one of the transplants thrived and multiplied, and by the end of that summer, there was not a spot of bare ground for a weed seed to settle in. My garden was complete.

That winter I bought the linen and the lace and sewed my white dress.

In March I went out to the garden. The linaria was the first thing to bloom. I knew it would be. I knew that a week later the verbena would show up, then the shasta daisies and the gaillardia – a clump here, here, and here. In midsummer the Queen Anne's lace would begin to bloom. I knew exactly how it would be. I knew the name of every plant. I could recognize each one even before it got its true leaves.

I sighted down the length of the garden. There was no trace of the neat rows I had worked and worked for all those years. The garden had taken over itself, just as I had planned.

I walked back to the house. I looked at my soft, limp hands. I looked at my white linen dress, with lace. It seemed like the stupidest thing I had ever thought up. "The fact is," I said to myself, "I want something to hoe."

I've started reading about intensive gardening. It involves double digging and raised beds. Every season you pull out the old plants and put in new ones. It's a garden that never gets finished.

I gave the white dress to my sister, Louise. Sometimes she comes for a visit and strolls in the wildflower meadow. She ooohs and aaahs and brings her friends to see it. They pick armloads of flowers. I sit on the edge and draw diagrams of my next season's garden in the raised beds. I'm learning about companion planting.

In the wildflower meadow, the Queen Anne's lace waves its filigree heads over the marsh pinks, and the sweet alyssum tucks up neatly around the clumps of painted daisies. But I hardly notice. I've got a new garden now.

Best of the Best



Going to see annual trial gardens is always a treat! The Colorado State University Annual Flower Trial Garden Site located at 1401 Remington Street, Fort Collins, is such a valuable asset to everyone who loves to garden. The ability to see how a plant performs in our high light, low humidity, alkaline, clay soils, and high altitude conditions and to judge for yourself how exciting a new introduction is before it is released is a great opportunity. It is also good just to

view the colorful beds and containers, soak in the beauty and get excited about these new varieties.

Petunias are one of the best annuals for Colorado’s climate. They are one of the most popular annuals in the Mountain region. As a result of this popularity there are several categories of petunias: Double Petunias, Spreading Petunias, Mini-spreading Petunias and Seed Petunias.

The highly coveted, overall award “ Best of Show” went to a petunia this year. The iridescent hot pink flowers of Petunia ‘Supertunia Vista Bubble-gum’ caught everyone’s eye. It was voted “Best of Show”.

For more information on Colorado State University’s Trial Garden Site visit www.flowertrials.colostate.edu/2005/Bestof.htm



Jeffco Garden Events

June 10-11th
Wildflower Festival and Native Plant Sale
Lookout Mnt. Nature Ctr.
303-526-0594

Aug. 12-13 Flower Show
Golden Community Center
303-279-5388

Evergreen Garden Club
PO Box 1393
Evergreen, Colorado 80437
www.evergreengardenclub.org



*Celebrating our
40th Anniversary*

Denver Botanic Gardens Schedule of Events

www.denverbotanicgardens.org

Colorado Watercolor Society
Contact: Terrey Harrod, 303-788-1811
Show or Sale Date: May 25 - June 2, 2006
9 a.m. - 5 p.m. Mitchell Hall

American Iris Society
Contact: Steven Blecher 303-798-9103
Show or Sale Date: June 3 - 4 , 2006
Mitchell Hall
12:30 - 4 p.m. (3rd), 9 a.m. - 4 p.m. (4th)

Rocky Mountain Bonsai Society
Contact: Don Osborne, 303-428-6230
Show or Sale Date: June 17 - 18, 2006
9 a.m. - 5 p.m. (17th), 9 a.m. - 4 p.m. (18th) Mitchell Hall

Colorado Mycological Society
Contact: Norm Birchler, 303-440-7123
Show or Sale Date: August 13, 2006
Mitchell Hall
Contact: Linda Quade, 303-841-8024
Show or Sale Date: August 26-27, 2006
10 a.m. - 5 p.m. Mitchell Hall

Japanese Garden Demonstrations - July 29, August 26, September 30, October 28, 2006