Sow and Tell

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Member of the National Capital Area Garden Clubs, Central Atlantic Region, District III

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President's Message

What makes Five Hills Garden Club stand out above all the others? Of course, it is our members. As we worked together to get all our treasures organized and priced for our yard sale, it was evident that we are a special group of friends. Everyone who could possibly participate did so. Even if someone couldn't help for many good reasons, they gave donations. And did we have stuff! Many wonderful items adorned my garage, family room, dining room and living room. But the best part was just being together.

The old adage "wind, rain, hail, sleet and storm can't keep the postman from his appointed rounds", well, that also applies to Five Hills Garden Club members. Although the weather was a challenge, we persevered. It was chilly and wet at times, but we did it! And didn't we look sharp in our Five Hills shirts. Thanks Anne Nelson for all your work to make sure our shirts were here on time for us to wear them for our yard sale.

Despite all the challenges, we still made almost $1,700 and with the items on Ebay, possibly more. Thanks, everyone, for your efforts. We started Saturday morning with the early birds at 6:00 AM and finished about 3:00 PM. SUV's were filled with items that didn't sell, and made their way to charities. To each of you who spent your rainy Saturday helping with our fundraiser – you are the best.

Our next time together is our plant exchange. My first meeting was at a plant exchange, and I was hooked. We all have beautiful gardens and lovely plants to share. My favorite plants in my garden are the ones from my Five Hills friends. Anne Nelson is hosting us again in her lovely home.

Cultivate what grows, and that includes friendships. It is a beautiful time out in our gardens and in our hearts.

Fondly, Noreen

MAY CALENDAR

Tues May 2 Meadowlark Gardens Volunteers
Tues May 9 Board Meeting, 10 am
Tues May 16 General Meeting, 10 am
Tues June 6 Meadowlark Gardens Volunteers

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Upcoming Events

Annual May Plant Exchange at Tuesday's General Meeting

The plant exchange is a Club favorite, and this year it will again be held at the home of Anne Nelson. Thank you, Anne. The plants have been put up in containers and labeled for shade, sun or deer resistance before being brought to the event. Many of the plants we have blooming in our gardens are plants shared by our friends at previous exchanges, often with stories to accompany them. After the conclusion of our meeting, the exchange takes place and affords us a chance to share the bounty of our gardens and to take home something we have not yet tried. It's always fun!

Anne's address: 10409 Stone Ridge Lane, Vienna, VA Phone: 703-281-2877
cell: 703-403-0244 email: annevnelson7@gmail.com

Communications

Meadowlark Gardens Volunteers

Please join us in volunteering at Meadowlark on June 6 at 9:30 a.m. The Gardens rely greatly on the volunteer support of members of clubs such as ours. It's a lovely place to work, and we enjoy the opportunity to socialize while we work.

Calendars for Military

Please remember to bring in your 2017 calendars. They are collected each month for the military members in appreciation of their services. Janet Kremer will deliver them to the Army's Fairfax Family Health Center. Thank you!

Club Parking

Please continue to find parking near the Church, but not in the Church parking lot. Thank you all for your continued cooperation.

Our Yard Sale Wrap-Up

Despite (or maybe because of) the raindrops on Saturday, our yard sale was a huge success. Thirty-six members (that's 61%) participated in some way. All throughout the week, people donated items. All Friday we organized and priced. Bright and early Saturday morning, many set up, and the people came. We offered treasures galore, including a 4-foot-high velvet high heel chair, potted-up plants, baked goods, homemade jam, and two succulent dish gardens! Noreen and her husband Hugh welcomed us into their home for warm pizza, treats and cookies. Even though it was chilly and drizzly, we showed a cheerful and inviting atmosphere which several customers commented upon. Trish Phillips is selling a few more valuable items online, but our net total so far is $1,760. Five Hills showed wonderful team work! Well done, friends!

Kathy Nebhut

Kathy Nebhut and Trish Philips
Yard Sale Co-chairs

RAIN, RAIN,
STAY AWAY !!!

Thanks to Willow Prall for her yard sale photography

Five Hills 'Adorables' doing what they do best!

Recently, members turned out to work in the gardens at the Oakton Library. Thanks to Maureen for sending in the photos: Willow Prall doing some pruning, Kathy Nebhut pausing from her clipping chores, and the group assembled for a group photo op: left to right, Willow Prall, Karen Thompson, Ann Balch, Rosemarie Jaksetic, Joanne Menke and Kathy Nebhut. On the bottom row, Karen Thompson is wrestling with a hose, Ann Carter, happy to dig in, and Ann Balch cheerfully gathering up the clippings.
Photos: Maurine Thomas

WHAT IS IT?!

That strange-looking pollinator flitting around in your garden may fool you for a moment – is it a hummingbird? It may be the hummingbird mimic – a moth called a hummingbird clearwing or a hawkmoth; it's Latin name is Hemaris thysbe. It is a migratory species having two broods a year. The one in this photo was just a little larger than a bumblebee and could easily have been mistaken for one.

Make the Most Out of your Perennials!

As garden nurseries fill up with new plants and the weather has warmed I find myself pulling out my copy of "*The Well-Tended Perennial Garden"* by Tracy DiSabato-Aust, Timber Press. I will give you a small taste of the contents of the book. I just looked online and copies are available (used) as low as $1.99.

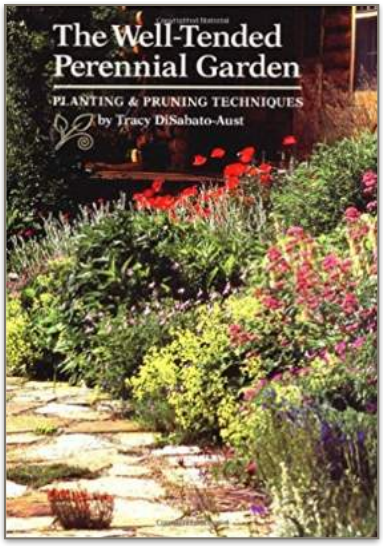
It is my "go to" book when I am:

1. Looking for a special plant for a special place.
2. Looking how to care for a "spur of the moment" plant purchase.
3. Looking for ways to improve the perennials in my garden.

In her first Chapter she states

"There is no question that the planning stage of any perennial garden is thrilling; there are so many great plants from which to choose. The fact that many perennials require maintenance to one degree or another usually is overlooked at this stage, placed far away in the back of one's mind behind the fantastic colors, cut bouquets, butterflies, fragrance and other anticipated attractions Such selective memory is not just the province of beginners; this thinking is true of my mindset as well when I am planning gardens"

After covering the basics of site selection, soil prep, planting and division she begins on several chapters **Perennial Pruning.** I have had classes pruning but never connected it with perennials. She lists the whys we prune:



1. To extend bloom or promote repeat bloom
2. To encourage lush growth
3. To regenerate or extend the life of the plant
4. To stagger bloom heights or bloom times
5. To reduce plant height
6. To keep plants own space
7. To increase flower size or number
8. Prevention or control of pests
9. To enhance the overall appearance (Habit) of the plant
10. To remove unsightly or insignificant flowers
11. To clean up the garden
12. To bond with your plants
13. My (KZL) addition- To control spread of seeds if birds don't do the job.

To accomplish these goals she explains in detail deadheading, cutting back, pinching, and thinning.

The next part of the book is a list of perennials and there individual care including types of pruning.

Lastly are two sections. First is a month-by-month maintenance schedule. Second is an aide to use when planning or filling in your garden. There are thirty-six lists of plants that tolerate dry soil, are clay buster, deer resistant, that may require division every ten years, those that need pinching, those that need deadheading, etc.

I hope just reading this short review will get you thinking about perennial pruning!

I will bring my copy to the meeting for you to look at, but I must take it home with me as I will be using it most every day. *Karen Lucas, Horticulture*

Is Using Epsom Salts Worth a Try?

From the Soil Sense leaflet 8/92. Agdex 531, produced by Rebecca Lines-Kelly, formerly soils media officer, Wollongbar Agricultural Institute, AUSTRALIA, for CaLM and NSW Agriculture, North Coast region, under the National Landcare Program, October 1992

In their studies, Australian researchers applied Epsom salts directly to the soil. Foliar applications, such as those our test gardeners used, appear to be a better way to guarantee that the plants get the benefits of the added magnesium.

Before you try Epsom salts, test the soil to determine its magnesium content. Don't rely on Epsom salts to correct large soil magnesium deficiencies, but rather use it as a supplement to soils with adequate or slightly low magnesium levels to boost plant growth, flowering, and fruiting. For severely magnesium-deficient soils, use dolomitic lime or Sul-Po-Mag. Foliar applications of Epsom salts seem work better than adding it, dry or mixed with water, directly to the soil. Plants may not efficiently take up magnesium sulfate in granular form, especially in alkaline soils or soils that already test high in potassium, calcium, or magnesium.

If you have tested your soil and know it has those qualities, a foliar application of 1-2 tablespoons to a gallon of water in a sprat is a faster way to get the nutrients to the plant, see below.

Roses

Many rosarians agree that Epsom salts-treated plants produce more new canes at the bottom of the plant (bottom breaks) and darker green foliage. Recommendations on how much to use vary, but generally you can apply 1/2 cup of granules in spring before buds first begin to open and 1/2 cup in fall before leaves drop. Apply a foliar spray (1 tablespoon per gallon of water per foot of shrub height) after the leaves open in spring and again at flowering.

Tomato and Peppers

Magnesium deficiency in the soil may be one reason your tomato leaves yellow between the leaf veins late in the season and fruit production slows down. Test your soil every 3 years or so to check on nutrient levels. Epsom salts can keep plants greener and bushier, enhance production of healthier fruit later in the season, and

potentially help reduce blossom-end rot. Apply 1 Tablespoon of granules around each transplant, or spray a solution of 1 Tablespoon Epsom salts per gallon of water at transplanting, first flowering, and fruit set.

Epsom salts is available in drug and grocery stores.

Epsom salts works best on soils that are...

- Slightly deficient in magnesium
- Alkaline (show high pH) as in western areas
- Old, "weathered," and acidic (with low pH) soils of the Southeast and Pacific Northwest, Australia
- High in calcium and potassium (western soils)

Charlie Nardozzi is a senior horticulturist at National Gardening.

Plant nutrients in the soil
Soil is a major source of nutrients needed by plants for growth. The three main nutrients are nitrogen (N), phosphorus (P) and potassium (K). Together they make up the trio known as NPK. Other important nutrients are calcium, magnesium and sulfur. Plants also need small quantities of iron, manganese, zinc, copper, boron and molybdenum, known as trace elements because only traces are needed by the plant. The role these nutrients play in plant growth is complex, and this document provides only a brief outline.

Major elements

Nitrogen (N)
Nitrogen is a key element in plant growth. It is found in all plant cells, in plant proteins and hormones, and in chlorophyll.
Atmospheric nitrogen is a source of soil nitrogen. Some plants such as legumes fix atmospheric nitrogen in their roots; otherwise fertiliser factories use nitrogen from the air to make ammonium sulfate, ammonium nitrate and urea. When applied to soil, nitrogen is converted to mineral form, nitrate, so that plants can take it up.

Soils high in organic matter such as chocolate soils are generally higher in nitrogen than podzolic soils. Nitrate is easily leached out of soil by heavy rain, resulting in soil acidification. You need to apply nitrogen in small amounts often so that plants use all of it, or in organic form such as composted manure, so that leaching is reduced.

Phosphorus (P)
Phosphorus helps transfer energy from sunlight to plants, stimulates early root and plant growth, and hastens maturity.
Very few Australian soils have enough phosphorus for sustained crop and pasture production and the North Coast is no exception. The most common phosphorus source on the North Coast is superphosphate, made from rock phosphate and sulfuric acid. All manures contain phosphorus; manure from grain-fed animals is a particularly rich source.

Potassium (K)
Potassium increases vigor and disease resistance of plants, helps form and move starches, sugars and oils in plants, and can improve fruit quality. Potassium is low or deficient on many of the sandier soils of the North Coast. Also, heavy potassium removal can occur on soils used for intensive grazing and intensive horticultural crops (such as bananas and custard apples).
Muriate of potash and sulfate of potash are the most common sources of potassium.

Calcium (Ca)
Calcium is essential for root health, growth of new roots and root hairs, and the development of leaves. It is generally in short supply in the

North Coast's acid soils. Lime, gypsum, dolomite and superphosphate (a mixture of calcium phosphate and calcium sulfate) all supply calcium. Lime is the cheapest and most suitable option for the North Coast; dolomite is useful for magnesium and calcium deficiencies, but if used over a long period will unbalance the calcium/ magnesium ratio. Superphosphate is useful where calcium and phosphorus are needed.

Magnesium (Mg)

Magnesium is a key component of chlorophyll, the green coloring material of plants, and is vital for photosynthesis (the conversion of the sun's energy to food for the plant). Deficiencies occur mainly on sandy acid soils in high rainfall areas, especially if used for intensive horticulture or dairying. Heavy applications of potassium in fertilizers can also produce magnesium deficiency, so banana growers need to watch magnesium levels because bananas are big potassium users.

Magnesium deficiency can be overcome with dolomite (a mixed magnesium-calcium carbonate), magnesite (magnesium oxide) or epsom salts (magnesium sulfate).

Sulfur (S)

Sulfur is a constituent of amino acids in plant proteins and is involved in energy-producing processes in plants. It is responsible for many flavor and odor compounds in plants such as the aroma of onions and cabbage.

Sulfur deficiency is not a problem in soils high in organic matter, but it leaches easily. On the North Coast, sea spray is a major source of atmospheric sulfur. Superphosphate, gypsum, elemental sulfur and sulfate of ammonia are the main fertilizer sources.

Trace Elements

Iron (Fe) Iron is a constituent of many compounds that regulate and promote growth and is readily available in the North Coast's acid soils.

Manganese (Mn)

Manganese helps with photosynthesis. It is freely available in the North Coast's acid soils, often in toxic amounts in very acid soils, but can be deficient in sandy soils. Toxicity is remedied with lime.

Copper (Cu)

Copper is an essential constituent of enzymes in plants and is readily available in North Coast soils, although it can be deficient in red soils. Overuse of another trace element, molybdenum, can cause copper deficiency in animals. Toxicity can be a problem for horticulturists who regularly use Bordeaux mixture or copper oxychloride sprays to control diseases on horticultural crops.

Zinc (Zn)

Zinc helps in the production of a plant hormone responsible for stem elongation and leaf expansion. It is readily available in acid soils, but combines easily with iron in the North Coast's red soils. This is easily cured with the addition of zinc sulfate or crushed zinc minerals. Fruit trees can be sprayed with zinc.

Boron (B)

Boron helps with the formation of cell walls in rapidly growing tissue. Deficiency reduces the uptake of calcium and inhibits the plant's ability to use it. It is chronically deficient in North Coast soils used for horticulture but this is easily remedied with borax applied to the soil.

Molybdenum (Mo)

Molybdenum helps bacteria and soil organisms convert nitrogen in the air to soluble nitrogen compounds in the soil, so is particularly needed by legumes. It is also essential in the formation of proteins from soluble nitrogen compounds. Molybdenum deficiency is prevalent in the North Coast's acid soils, but can be remedied easily with applications of Mo super, molybdenum trioxide (applied during inoculation and lime pelleting of legume seed), or sodium molybdate (sprayed on young emerging plants).

Elizabeth Huebner, Conservation