

WEEDPATCH

Missoula Garden Club Newsletter

June 2009

GREETINGS AND SALUTATIONS TO MEMBERS & FRIENDS OF THE GARDEN CLUB

The next meeting will be on June 16th, Eckstrom's at Rock Creek. We will meet at the First Christian Church, front parking lot at 12:00 Noon, to car pool together. The club will be buying your dinner. In July, we will be having a picnic at the Flathead with Jo Daniels. In August, we will be participating in the Western Montana Fair.

Dues are \$20.00/person or \$32.00/couple

BIRTHDAYS THIS MONTH

Jean Macaraeg June 9

Linda Sadler June 22

Happy Birthday, Ladies.

A MESSAGE FROM OUR PRESIDENT, LINDA

All things must come to an end. This is my last note. It has been fun and a wonderful two years as your president. As members you have been very supportive. The club has done many interesting projects over the last two years. The new officers will be installed in June. To those elected, thank you for willingly taking your office. Club members will be very supportive and willing to help you.

I am becoming the new District Director, and will still be active in our club.

Miss Bella and I are so glad to see the change in the weather. The garden is beautiful with the tulips and iris blooming. Miss Bella and I invite you to stop by for iced tea this summer. Miss Bella loves company. Thank you.

Chocolate Covered Strawberries

"This is the simplest version of chocolate covered strawberries I know. Paraffin was originally used instead of shortening. Turn the strawberries upside down and insert by the toothpicks into a piece of styrofoam for easy cooling, or simply place them on a sheet of wax paper. White chocolate may be drizzled over the milk chocolate for a fancier look. They are perfect for weddings when decorated with frosting bow ties, bells, butterflies, roses, etc."



- 16 oz. milk chocolate chips
- 2 tablespoons shortening
- 1 pound fresh strawberries with leaves

Insert toothpicks into the tops of the strawberries.

1. In a double boiler, melt the chocolate and shortening, stirring occasionally until smooth. Holding them by the toothpicks, dip the strawberries into the chocolate mixture.
2. Turn the strawberries upside down and insert the toothpick into styrofoam for the chocolate to cool.

CONTAINER GARDENS

You don't need much space to have a garden; in fact you don't even need a yard. As you can attest containers are sufficient for growing many plants. The fundamentals for success are the same no matter how you garden - soil, plant selection and maintenance.

Use good quality potting soil. Container garden soils are blends that are designed to help plants thrive in conditions unique to that environment. Many are pre-mixed with water retentive polymers, those small granules that look something like rock salt. When they are wet they become soft, full of water and gelatinous. These granules can expand over 10 times their original size as they hold the moisture. They are great for plants in containers because as the plants need moisture they can draw from the water held in the granules. They act like a water storage system.

Next, there are some plants that do better than others in hot, dry environments. Here's a list of some you might want to consider.

1. Agave americana (Century Plant) - This is a bold plant that is exceptional as a focal point because of the large, fleshy leaves. Perennial in zones 7b - 10. Needs good drainage. Full sun.
2. Bracteantha bracteata (Strawflower, Paper Daisy) - These little daisy like blooms will bring super saturated color to your container gardens. Colors include white, pink, yellow, orange and bronze-red. Annual. Full Sun.
3. Diamond Frost® Euphorbia - This plant has a deceptively delicate appearance; it's one tough cookie. It has the same ethereal quality as baby's breath, but it's much easier to grow. It is a compact grower reaching a mature height of 12 to 18 inches. Perennial in zone 10; treat as an annual in cooler climates. Full sun to partial shade.
4. Gaura lindheimeri 'Siskiyou Pink' (Wand Flower) - This Texas native plant has star shaped blooms borne on long wispy stems that are a dark pink highlighted with lighter pink edges. When a breeze blows the blooms look like shimmering pink stars. Perennial zones 6 - 9. Full sun.
5. Ornamental Grasses - There are a wide selection of grasses that are suitable for container gardens and even though they are graceful in appearance, grasses are quite resilient, low maintenance plants. It's surprising how many sizes, colors and variations are available.
6. Lantana - This plant LOVES hot weather. In fact, it doesn't really start blooming until the heat of summer. The blooms are quite colorful and butterflies love them. Perennial zones 7 - 11; treat as an annual in cooler climates. Full sun.
7. Herbs - Lavender, thyme and rosemary all thrive in hot, dry environments. They don't require much maintenance and you can harvest them for use indoors.
8. Plumbago - This tropical shrub sports a bright, baby blue flower which are well complimented by bright green foliage. I often recommend this plant for poolside containers. Perennial zones 8 - 10; treat as an annual in cooler climates. Full sun to partial shade.
9. Cordyline - Cordyline is a sensational container plant. It's similar in form to a yucca, without the sharp tips. I like 'Red Sensation', which is burgundy. Perennial zones 8 - 11; treat as an annual in cooler climates. Partial shade.
10. Salvia - You just can't beat a salvia when it comes to plants that can take the heat. There are a number of varieties available so you will easily be able to find one to suit your needs.
11. Succulents - Echeveria, aloes, and sedums have seen a recent resurgence in popularity. The funky shapes and colors make for a fun container garden. They are very easy to grow in hot, dry environments.

And finally, here are some important tips about caring for your container gardens. Plants in container gardens need to be checked every day because the soil dries out quickly and they need more water than in-ground plantings. Just stick your finger into the soil and if the top few inches is dry; it's time to water.

If daily watering doesn't fit into your schedule or you would like to conserve water usage select drought tolerant plants, consider a drip irrigation system on a water timer. There are kits available that let's you water several containers on the same hose connection. Also look into plants that are native to your area. Native plants will be adapted to your growing conditions and stand a better chance for survival.

Container gardens also need to be fertilized frequently. Feed flowering annuals weekly with a liquid fertilizer. Apply a slow release fertilizer to container grown perennials and shrubs in spring.

Some Events in June

- June 3 Out to Lunch Summer Kick-off, and each Wednesday, 11:00, Caras Park
- June 11 Ask the Experts, Weed & Poisonous Plants, 6:30-8:30 PM, Lee Metcalf Refuge, 777-5552
- June 6 Springtime Mushroom Hunt, 1-5 PM, Mt. Natural History Center, 120 Hickory, 327-0405
- June 13 Iris Median Show, Southgate Mall
- June 14 Flag Day, Flag Retirement Ceremony, 7 PM, behind the Msla. County Rural Fire Station, corner of Reserve & South Ave. Bring your tattered, torn, worn out or dirty flags to the American Legion Hall (Ronan St.), Missoula Textiles, or the Fire Hall, so they may be disposed of in the prescribed manner.
- June 20 Garden City Quilt Walk, 10:00AM - 4:00PM, sponsored by the Missoula Quilter's Guild. Walk through some of Missoula's finest gardens, featuring local quilts and artisans. Check with the Guild Website. No phone listed.
- June 20 Herbal & Medicinal Plant Walk, 2:00, Mt. Natural History Center, 327-0405
- June 22 Caregivers, Alzheimer's Project, 6:00PM, St. Pat's Hospital, call Msla. Aging Services, 728-7682
- June-August Downtown Tonight, 5:30, Caras Park, Music and Food
- June 25 Ask the Experts, Insects & Disease Pests, 6:30-8:30, Bitterroot Nursery, Hamilton, 961-3806
- June 25 Mt. Jumbo Wildflower Walk, 7:00 PM, Mt. Natural History Center, 327-0405
- June 26-28 Under the Big Sky Fine Arts & Crafts Festival, 10:00 AM, Msla. County Fairgrounds, free admission, 207-6502
- June 26 9th Annual Garden City River Rod Run, 12:00 PM, Caras Park
- June 27-28 Gems of the Bitterroot Quilt Show, 9:00 AM-4:00PM Sat., 9:00-3:00PM Sun., Ravalli Cty Fairgrounds, 1st Interstate Center
- June 27-28 **Sleeping Beauty**, Missoula Children's Theatre, 3 and 5 PM, 728-PLAY

"People travel to wonder
at the height of the mountains,
at the huge waves of the seas,
at the long course of the rivers,
at the vast compass of the ocean,
at the circular motion of the stars,
and yet they pass by themselves without wondering".~St. Augustine

Gloria