



The BACK FENCE

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illustration by
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Developing community gleaning gardens: Growing food to help feed the hungry in Kansas City

By Mary V. McClure, Master Gardener Intern Class of 2005

Editor's Note: This is the First Place Essay from the 2005 Master Gardener Class.

"To laugh often and much; to win the respect of intelligent people and the affection of children; to earn the appreciation of honest criticism and endure the betrayal of false friends; to appreciate beauty and find the best in others; to leave the world a bit better whether by a healthy child, a garden patch, a redeemed social condition; to know even one life has breathed easier because you have lived – this is to have succeeded."

-Ralph Waldo Emerson

In this famous quote on what it means to have truly succeeded, Ralph Waldo Emerson's elements of success include three of the benefits of a gleaning garden: a garden patch, a redeemed social condition and the appreciation of beauty. Based on scriptures from the Old Testament, gleaning is a harvesting method to feed the poor, widows, and orphans. Gleaning gardens are created by members of an organization working together to create a garden to grow food to

help feed the hungry.

An urban environment can be surprisingly productive for gardening. In Havana, 90% of the city's fresh produce comes from local urban farms and gardens.¹ Cities more northern than Kansas City are also friendly to urban gardeners. Polls in 2002 found that 40% of people in Greater Toronto and 44% of people in Greater Vancouver live in households that produce some of their own food.

The amount of food that can be grown on even relatively small plots of urban land is impressive. A 1989 study of 905 community gardens in Newark estimated the average plot of 720 square feet generated \$504 in food with a \$25 investment for a savings of \$475.² This equates to \$750 in today's dollars from a small backyard plot in Kansas City.

When considering green space and uses for vacant or public land, urban planners frequently think first of a park. But the investment cost for a garden versus a park shows a strong payoff for a community's citizens besides the food produced.

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A study of a community garden adjacent to a park in Sacramento found the park cost twenty times more to develop than the garden. Yet the park received less than one-quarter of the use the garden did.³

In downtown Kansas City, DST employees have tended a gleaning garden since 1993 at 10th and Jefferson.⁴ Over fifty raised beds are included in the DST garden, which occupies a 60 foot by 130 foot area. Approximately 100 volunteers are organized into seven teams to manage different sections of the garden. The garden produces nearly a ton of donated vegetables each season to feed the hungry while building teamwork and employee morale at DST.

At St Peter's Catholic Church in Brookside, members of the church tend a gleaning garden at 65th and Charlotte. The garden's 12 beds (each approximately 16 feet by 4 feet) are located on a small city lot. Volunteers grow vegetables for 50 families served by the parish's food pantry.

Even those who otherwise might be served by a food pantry are participating in growing produce to donate to the hungry. In Austin, the Sustainable Food Center created the "Spread the Harvest" program to encourage low-income gardeners to share produce with friends and local food pantries. In exchange for recording how much food they share, the gardeners may receive gardening materials such as seeds, tools, compost, discounts and training. In one recent year, "nearly 100 low-income gardeners shared approximately 6,000 servings of vegetables, eggs and herbs."⁵

In Kansas City, children at Guinotte Manor, a subsidized housing complex, have created a vegetable garden.⁶ The children are developing the elements of success Ralph Waldo Emerson described—they've created a garden patch, are appreciating its



beauty and have suggested redeeming a social condition by donating some of their vegetables to the City Union Mission, a homeless shelter.

Steps for starting a gleaning garden in your organization

1. Form a Steering Committee. Jack Hale, executive director of Knox Parks Education in Hartford, Connecticut, recommends that a minimum of 10 gardeners commit to starting a garden before planning starts. "Jack says his organization uses this rule of thumb regardless of the size of the project, because in his experience at least half the initial group will fade away."⁷
2. Ask volunteers why they are interested in the project and their goals for the garden. Discover if they have special interests in helping start the garden, e.g. site planning, materials sourcing, construction, or communication. At least one person should have gardening experience. You may also be able to get gardening advice through the Master Gardener program in your local county extension office.
3. Recruit a well-organized coordinator for the garden.
4. Develop a sponsor: a department in your organization who will sponsor the effort and give it a "home" within the organization.
5. Choose a site: Make sure the site

gets at least 6 full hours of sunlight daily⁸ and has limited slope.

6. Have the soil tested for nutrients and heavy metals through the county extension program. The test will tell you if heavy metals make the site undesirable as well as what amendments you need to make to the soil. You should plan to till in at least 3 inches of compost in addition to amendments recommended from your soil test.

7. Find an easy-access water source for the garden.

8. Draw up a map of your garden space, including location of beds, paths and a compost area.

9. Develop a plan for a fence that will keep out dogs, rabbits, possums, raccoons and deer if they are a potential problem. Consider how you would deal with vandalism if it occurred.

10. Consider insurance and other budget needs and secure funding.

11. Gather materials. In the K.C. metro area, low cost recycled building materials are available from Habitat Restore, <http://www.restorekc.org/>, located near Front Street and I-35. Missouri Organic Recycling will deliver bulk compost and topsoil and also offers a materials calculator at their website, <http://www.missouri-organic.com/>. You may also need to buy mulch for garden paths.

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12. Include plans for a storage area for tools, hoses and supplies.

13. Develop a name and signs for your garden so others may be inspired and educated by your efforts.

14. Arrange for initially plowing or tilling the garden area.

15. Develop agreements on approaches to organic gardening and expectations for volunteers. Develop a set of written rules.

16. Plan a work day or two to build the garden and till in compost, ideally in the fall so the garden will be ready for early spring planting. Recruit additional volunteers to help if needed.

17. Designate a local agency to receive your produce and arrange for delivery. For agencies near you needing produce, contact Harvesters, Kansas City's only food bank at <http://www.harvesters.org> or 816-929-3000. Harvesters also has an urban demonstration garden your group can visit for ideas.

18. For a low-cost source of plants and seeds, join Kansas City Community Gardens, <http://www.kccg.org> or (816) 931-3877.

19. Develop a planting plan by bed, by month. Consider crops in the greatest demand by the agency who will receive your produce. The DST garden donates to the Kansas City Community Kitchen, operated out of Grace & Holy Cathedral. The three crops most needed by the Kitchen are tomatoes, peppers and lettuces, which account for 40 to 50 percent of the total harvest annually.

20. Assign plots to teams of volunteers. The volunteers will be responsible for all care of their plot: planning, planting, watering, weeding and harvesting. Develop a plan for maintenance of common areas, such as along fences and sitting areas. Consider agreeing to standing work times each week and standing group meetings throughout the year, e.g. the first Tuesday at lunch. This will sim-



plify scheduling and communication.

21. Celebrate your first season with a pot-luck that recognizes the number of meals volunteers provided through their green thumbs!

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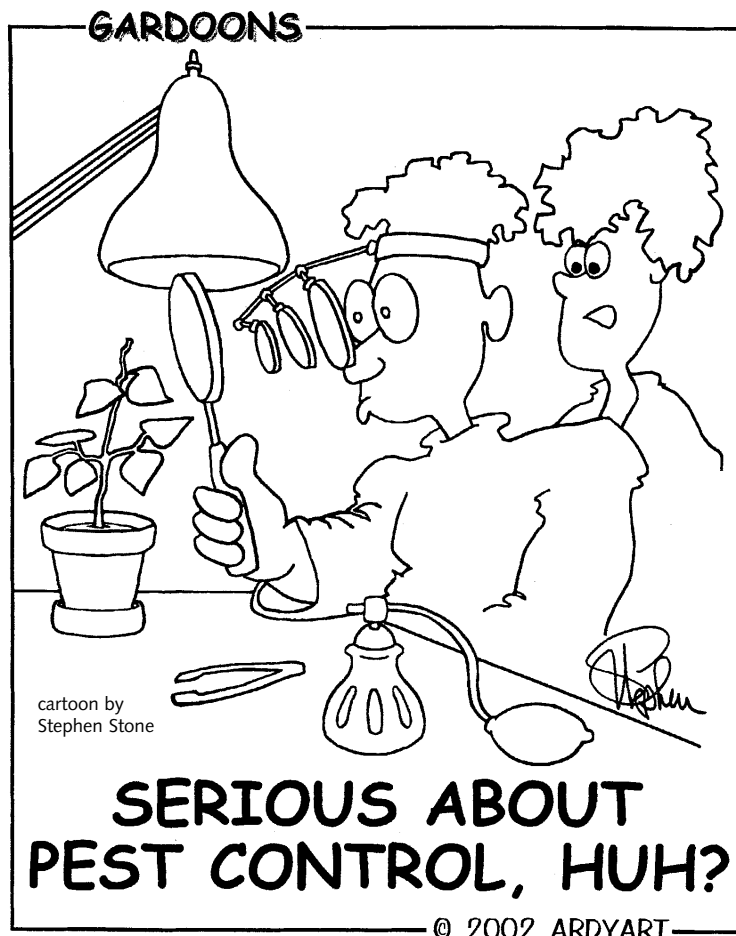
⁴ Personal site visit by the author

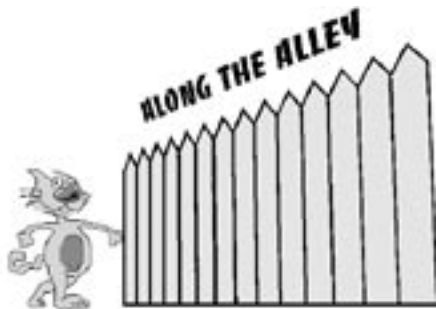
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by Joanne Couture, Class of 1991

PLAY GARDEN JEOPARDY: *This native shrub, with its late summer-fall rosey-pink blooms, was named for a Native American “medicine man.”* **WHAT IS? ... (Solution at end of article)**

By now, your mailbox has been bulging with garden catalogs, and dark winter days whet your imagination for your 2006 gardening plans. But how did your garden grow in 2005? What bloomed or produced proudly for you? Did any make your “I’ll-never-plant-that-again!” list? Here are some “bests” and a few “worsts” from your fellow MGs.

Lisa Ann Britz (‘04) had “wonderful luck” with *Nicotiana sylvestris* ‘Only the Lonely’ (A.K.A. Woodland tobacco). Lisa wishes “you could see this plant grown at its peak ... and smell the beautiful fragrance. I can’t live without it now!” Her transplants from Powell Gardens thrived in part sun/shade and reached 6’ in height, with an avalanche of slender, long white trumpet blooms. Although an annual, it self-sows enthusiastically. Another “awesome annual” is ‘Heirloom Giant Burgundy’ cockscomb. Planted from seed from a New Bloomfield, Missouri nursery, it is really spectacular! (For free catalog: www.HeirloomAcres.net) Check out great photos of these plants on Lisa’s e-mail: LBritz5645@aol.com. Lisa had one disappointment, though: the new coleus, ‘Kong.’ (Did anyone else have problems with it?)

Rosemary Boudreaux (‘01) put in

a small “English garden” with steppingstones and a border of lavender surrounding the new hot pink rose, ‘Knockout.’ Although her spring asparagus and strawberry crops were excellent, her summer veggies were disappointing. “Every single tomato had a hole in it.” Plus she had a mystery: Three times she replanted eggplants that “just disappeared.” Jan Vinyard, owner of Longview Gardens, suggested that “the blackbirds snip them off and put them under their wings to get rid of itchy mites.” (If Jan were not a recognized local garden authority, we’d think that’s an “old wives’ tale”!)

Bev Albertson (‘01) started a “Grandma’s Garden” full of the “old-time flowers I remember from my grandmother’s garden” —old-fashioned zinnias, iris, hollyhocks, and cuttings from ancient lilacs. From her husband’s grandmother’s yard, Bev added an old rose, and her ancient wash tub planted with herbs. And from his great-grandmother, she positioned her old rocking chair as a point of garden interest. Bev entices her first (and only) grandchild to explore the sights and fragrance of his Grandma Bev’s garden. “I hope this will be a spot where he and I will come often to touch and pick the flowers...admire the butterflies and Mother Nature.”

Cass Sullivan (‘02) has a suggestion for container drama: red caladiums with dark red begonias, which did very well in her front north side pots. She also likes to group blue lobelia and silver-green licorice plant (*Helichrysm petiolare*) in containers. (Note: this is not the plant from which licorice roots are taken. But it does have a faint, licorice scent when crushed.) And have you tried one of her favorites, Persian shield (*Strobilanthes dyerianus*)? It’s amazing iridescent purple/silver/green foliage does best in shade/part shade—harsh

afternoon sun fades its colors.

Although an annual here, it can winter inside successfully; prune it if it’s too big and unwieldy. Let it go semi-dormant and drop its leaves. Like most house-wintering plants, give it a drink about once a month, but keep it in a cool place.

Cat fanciers—Take the advice of Reba Adkins (‘02) and plant catnip from sowed seed—she said it performed much better than the purchased plants. It’s the favorite garden spot naturally, for her white cat, Tippy. For winter interest, Reba suggests ‘Emerald Green’ arborvitae, which “can take a lot of water,” and holly.

Barbara Harris (‘04) says you can’t beat tall, ornamental grasses for hiding “eyesores.” She’s enthusiastic about Zebra grass (*Miscanthus sinensis* ‘Zebrinus’). Its dark green, lanceolate leaves sport horizontal gold stripes and send up silver-white to pink plumes, though not quite as showy as other miscanthus. Turning golden in winter, it is very hardy and virtually care-free, like her Japanese bloodgrass. Like many gardeners, Barbara wages war with that bulb-stealing rodent, the squirrel. But one particular rodent has a taste for landscaping—three gladiolas from “transplanted” bulbs sprouted smack in the middle of her circular rose garden! Barbara was also frustrated with last summer’s dahlia display: only 20 out of 30 tubers planted came up; of these, 15 became a rabbit entree. And none of the remaining five dahlias matched the spectacular bloom of the previous year.

Carolyn Chambers’ (‘98) garden is the envy of many MGs. Not only was it featured on the MG tour several years ago, but also is slated for the 2006 tour. (Mickey, her part-pomeranian/schnauzer, will be ready to welcome guests.) Some favorite perennials: *Campanula punctata* ‘Cherry Bells’; its stems tilt, allowing it’s

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longlasting blooms to dangle like slim bells. Keep these deadheaded, and they'll provide sporadic bloom until frost. Carolyn is going to get rid of her tall monarda in favor of a mini variety about 6-8" tall, which not only performs better, but also resists mildew. Monarda attracts bees, butterflies and hummingbirds, but can be invasive like its mint relative. Carolyn plans to add more annuals for continuous bloom this year: purple fountain grass, Angel-wing and wax begonias ("they performed much better than tropical begonias"). Carolyn also "loves conifers," especially the spruces: her garden features 'Fat Albert,' a weeping Norway spruce, and a short, round globe blue spruce.

Kathy Vedder ('96, and keeper of our MG volunteer hours) really likes the hydrangea 'Limelight'. The blooms of this taller variety (3') change from white to lime green to pink. She and Carolyn Chambers both found no favor with the much-touted mum, 'My Favorite' —it didn't return for either of them last year. And apparently many gardeners besides Carolyn and Kathy were chagrined with the floppy habit of the popular new hydrangea 'Endless Summer.' In *The Kansas City Gardener* (Sept. 2005) Dennis Patton, Johnson County horticultural specialist, suggested staking the blooms early for support. Or, prune them harder in the spring for a more compact plant. Or, transplant them to a sunnier location (with afternoon shade). Or, "Live with this problem and enjoy what showy blooms you can see."

Reminder: this spring, apply aluminum sulfate, two times to keep your blue hydrangeas in good color.

Beverly Godwin ('03) loves plants that attract butterflies -- but finds they also lure bees. Which she wouldn't mind, except that they line her main, brick walkway, creating a problem for her toddler and passers-by. So, she's

in the process of moving them to the back garden. She's also whacking out all but one of her rugosa rose shrubs, with the "meanest thorns I have ever tackled." What she loves: the less-invasive Echinacea 'White Swan,' Russian sage, and varieties of Shasta daisies for bloom at different times. Also favorites are ornamental grasses, whose winter plumes she adds to her silk flower arrangements.

In my own Midtown garden, these plants from Park Seeds all did well: the tall snapdragon 'Rocket Hybrid,' whose white spires held up even in hot midsummer, until the killing frost. Ditto the new tall red salvia, 'Whopper Lighthouse.' And the purple, red, and white strawey blooms of the dependable globe amaranth attracted butterflies, defied drought and neglect, lasted past frost, and even looked great in dry flower arrangements. In the veggie line, the tall pole bean 'Kwintus' sent out its flattish, stringless pods in only 45 days, and bore till frost. Beats bending over! And the container-grown mini green pepper 'Jingle Bells' produced prodigiously until a killing frost. (Thanks, Sheila Shinn, who recommended it last year.) But Park's 'Whopper' tomato had a stingy production, though the neighboring 'Jet Stars' did fine. And (indoor) seed germination was very poor on the new gaillardia, 'Arizona Sun,' and only a few struggled through the summer.

Soybeans, anyone?

Our MG trial garden guru, Don Bjuland ('92), wondered what to test in 2005. "Edamame Soybeans," suggested Lala Kumar. No problem! Field soybeans were a crop on the Minnesota farm where Don grew up, and Google revealed that Edamames have been grown in China for 2000 years. Don ordered the soybeans over the net and planted them in the Community Gardens demo site on

May 11. (Eventually the big question: When to harvest them?) Through the local net, Don sought info and became known as a local expert. In August, a Leawood, Kansas, restaurant owner e-mailed Don of an interest in edamames—he imported them from China, but was trying to find a local grower. He came out to take photos of the test garden and invited Don and his wife to taste them in his restaurant. And no, Don did not become the local supplier. (Think of all the money you could raise for the MGs, Don!) These nutritious legumes are best picked green—they lose their sweet nutty flavor when mature. To prepare Edamames, boil the pods about 7 minutes, then squeeze out the beans. Recipes for interested chefs are on the Net.

Who doesn't enjoy nature photos? For the many MGs who have inquired about Jim Braswell's ('02) great photos, check out these websites: **www.showmenaturephotography.com** for amazing nature shots, including eagles, burrowing owls snacking on snakes and spiders, and extraordinary photos of brown bears from last summer's Alaskan trip. In fact, some German journalists touring Alaska, after seeing his bear photos from the Katmai (Alaska) region, contacted Jim for reprint permission in a German Sunday newspaper's travel section. Also, take a look at Jim's 2006 Great Plains Nature Calendar (**www.lulu.com**) with the dramatic zebra butterfly on the cover. No guessing what Jim plans to do on retirement in late 2006!

JEOPARDY solution: What is Joe Pye weed (Eupatorium purpurea)A. K.A. Joe-Pye's weed and Purple bone-set. The native herbalist concocted a tea from its roots and flowers to combat fever—plus kidney stones, rheumatism, and pelvic inflammation!

Roses: To winterize or not?

By Walter Fulps, MG Intern, Class of 2005

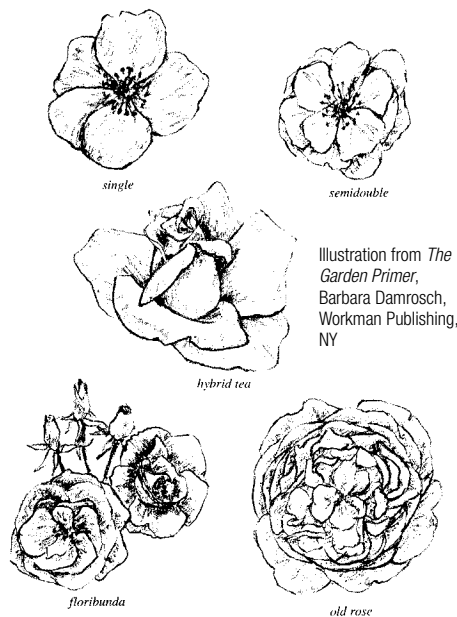
Roses have been my flower of choice since I can remember, and I can remember a long way back. Growing up in California, one of the few things I had in common with my father was his roses. Often we'd have blooms until after Thanksgiving, then we'd cut them back in early spring. They would start blooming again by March or April. Aside from feeding and insect control, that was all we did for them.

Imagine my shock upon moving to the greater Kansas City area. My daughter said, "You have to winterize your roses dad." Considering that Brenda was a Master Gardener and Landscape designer, I winterized my roses that first year, and lost 50% of them. Well, that wasn't going to work. I did some reading and found that I had probably winterized them too soon. She had said, "Winterize when it gets cold." Well, I came from California and cold to me was not exactly cold to Missouri. I tried again, waiting until the first freeze before winterizing the next year. This time I only lost about 20% of my roses—better, but not good enough. I did some more research and looked at different opinions, vastly different opinions. It seems that winterizing or not has been argued by many and for a long time. So let's look at the opposing points of view.

To winterize: The winterizing factions all agree that grafted roses, the hybrid type needs to be winterized. The crown/union or graft point needs to be protected in zones 5 and colder. The consensus also says that dormant spray is necessary and that mounding is the winterizing method of choice.

If you have one or two roses mounding is not a problem, but

Rose Types



what if you have twenty or thirty roses? Then the mounding of roses becomes a chore. There are different methods of mounding, using a rose cone, mound and tie or a dirt mound. The oddest of these is the rose cone in which the rose is cut back and completely enclosed in a cone made of plastic or an inverted ceramic pot and filled with mulch and soil. The dirt mound is a common method, the rose is cut back, sprayed with dormant oil, and the crown/union is completely covered with dirt and mulch. Then, some think that the canes should be tied when mounded.

Most proponents of winterizing agree that winterizing should not take place until after the second hard freeze. Another important point is that the mulch and dirt must be removed in the spring and any dead wood trimmed. Does winterizing work? Yes and no—in my experience, it works 80% of the time.

Not winterizing: Friar G. Degenhard writes in an American Rose Society article that winterizing is

not necessary. He has done extensive research and although the only major studies done seem to muddle the issue. In Chicago where 8,500 records of over winterizing roses seemed to prove that winterizing was not necessary. The best type of winter protection resulted in over twice the percentage of roses lost when no protection at all was used. But a study done in Cincinnati of 2,700 roses during the same time frame seemed to prove the opposite. What a dilemma.

Fr. Degenhard goes on to say that for 14 years he grew roses in PA, zone 5. He was "hooked" and soon had 538 plants. He planted them so the crown/union was at least 2" below ground, he cared for them in accordance to good rose-growing practices and never winterized. Sometimes he would lose a rose, but of the 538 over 14 years he lost less than 10 plants. And he was not convinced that it was always due to the cold.

Douglas Green in *Tender Roses for tough climates*, writes that on a visit to the U.S. his wife fell in love with some roses and asked him to grow her some. Easier said than done since they lived in Canada, he began to experiment and after several attempts he concluded that deep planting was the answer. He planted the roses so that the crown/union was 8" below ground, yes I said 8". Then, when winter came, he cut the canes back to ground level and in the spring the roses returned. Quite an accomplishment for the cold winters of Canada.

I decided to try the Friar's method, but instead of uprooting my plants, I built a raised bed and added enough soil to bury the crown 2". That was last year and I still lost one rose, out of 12. I've replaced that rose with a cold hardy bush, perhaps the best solution if you're just getting started, although there are many beautiful varieties that are grafted and not available in cold, hardy varieties.

Garden book review

By Gloria Jenkins, former Horticultural Assistant and Honorary Master Gardener

If you have ever dreamed just how your perfect garden would be, or if you have ever had problems with your neighbors nurturing the same gardening views that you cherish, or wished that beloved trees and favorite plants would never change, then you may empathize with the author of this book. Author Dominique Browning writes about her personal challenges, woes and joys of her own garden in an older established neighborhood of New York in her non-fiction book, *Paths Of Desire: The Passions of a Suburban Gardener*.

Browning is the editor-in-chief of *House and Garden*. She defends aluminum lawn chairs, tries to save her dying hemlocks, lets her sassafras grow into a jungle, and tangles with her wisteria. She engages the advice and assistance of some non-helpful and helpful men. "Children Are Useless" is the title of one chapter, as some of us may agree when we try to force our gardening passions upon our sons or daughters. However, by the end of the book when she plans a big garden party and it rains, she gains a new insight.

You may get lost in some of her analogies and metaphors about her true love. You will find your way back to the garden with some of her beautiful descriptions and say "ah-h-h!"

Seed germination made quicker

By Jim Braswell, Class of 2002

With spring just around the corner, it is time to think about our gardens for 2006. If you start your plants from seeds, now is the time to decide what you want to plant for your gardens and to get things ready for sowing those seeds. Having several acres of plantable land, several gardens, and needing plants for selling at our local farmer's market, I usually start a large variety of seeds. I have found that a "seed warmer" is a great little device to get things off to a quick start.

A seed warmer is simply a device that maintains a temperature of approximately 70-72°F, which is the optimum temperature for most seeds to germinate (note: you should always check the seed package, as some seeds need a cooler temperature to germinate). When you sow seeds at their optimum temperature, they will usually germinate much quicker and often the germination rate will be greater. You can purchase heating mats that your seedstarting tray sits on, or you can fabricate your own. I have used the purchased heating mats and have had great luck with them. However, since I start such a large quantity of seeds, I needed more heating space. The solution I devised was to make my own seed-warming box.

There are many ways to make a seed-warming box, but this article will concentrate on how I built mine. First, I purchased a heating cable that was specifically made for gardening applications; you can readily find these on many gardening supplier websites or in various mail order catalogs. The one I purchased is a fixed-temperature cable that has its own, built-in thermostat to control the temperature at its designed temperature setpoint. Next, I found some scrap lumber around the house, some clean sand, a few large staples, some nails, a hammer, a tape measure, an electric drill, and a saw. The instructions in this article were taken from the instructions that came with my heating cable, but yours may be different. Also, always read and follow the directions that accompany the heating cable.

Since I start so many seeds, I decided to fabricate a seed-warming box that would hold two seedstarting trays at a time. Consequently, the box I fabricated measures approximately 45-inches long and 21½-inches wide, which accommodates two standard, seedstarting trays placed end-to-end. However, you can fabricate a box to any size, depending on your needs (if you need to fabricate a box to different dimensions and need help, please contact me via e-mail or phone). To fabricate this box, I cut 2 pieces of 1 x 4 inch boards, each one 43-inches long (the 2 long sides of the box) and 2 pieces of 1 x 4 inch boards, each one 21½-inch long (the 2 end pieces). I nailed these four pieces together to form a box, nailing the 2 long pieces inside the 2 end pieces (Note: It is best to place the pieces together, on the floor, then check the fit to be sure the seedstarting trays will fit the box, before nailing it together).

Then cut a bottom for the box. The easiest way is to lay the nailed box onto a piece of plywood and then trace around the box. Remove the box, cut out the bottom piece, and nail it to the box. Now the box is ready for installing the heating cable. First, add some sand to the box. Spread the sand around until it is level and the sand is approximately ½-inch in depth. Starting in one corner, lay the terminal end (the end opposite the plug-in end) on top the sand. Lay out the cable, running the length of the box to the other end. When you reach the end,

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Porcupines, angels and lady bugs

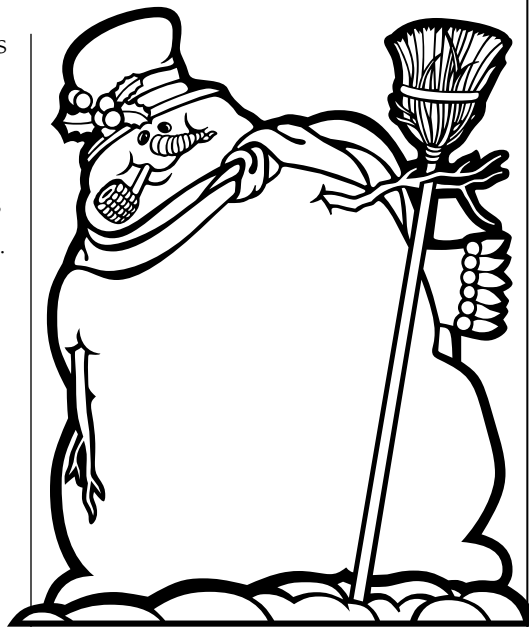
By Becky Peck, Class of 2003

What requires gloves, stakes and hand tools and is done outside? Nope, it isn't gardening. You can do it in the dead of winter, it brings the neighbors out and impresses your grandchildren. Give up? It is snow sculpting! When we encounter a winter with snow, there is much more that you can do than just roll and stack balls to make snowmen. It isn't hard, and decorations come from your garden remains, kitchen or the clothes closet.

As you survey the new-fallen snow in your yard, try to imagine what would fit in your landscape and catch the passer-by's eye. How about snow bugs marching up a fallen tree trunk? A bluff with comical heads popping out of it, or a really cute porcupine? I know: three snow rabbits on your deck railing?

Here are some generalities about snow sculpting:

- Start small before attempting the bigger figures.
- Larger-sized projects generally require more hands and more time.
- Fresh, wet snow is easier to pack and mold (see terms below)
- Old snow is easier to sculpt
- Some common tools for sculpting come from the kitchen and the gardeners' tools: Shovels dig out undercuts around the base of the sculpture to give it more definition. Metal spoons and blunt butter knives are good to scoop out holes and carve. Rimless cookie sheets cut through snow like a saw. And don't forget your hand trowel. You can shape a face easily with it.



Your spray bottle with water in it for your plants is a necessary tool to mist and cement pieces of your sculpture together.

- Don't forget your camera!

Here is some snow sculpting terminology and what it means:

Massing: Build up a large mass, bigger than you think you will need, in the shape of a mountain. It is much easier to carve this down than build it up.

Packing: Wet snow does this well. Other types may need some of your spray bottle's water. If you want to build a structure, stack blocks of old snow, fill the cracks with new powdered snow and spray. Hard packed snow is the easiest to carve.

Carving: Carve the rough shape out first with a trowel or spade, and save serrated edges for the detail carving. Tools don't have to be sharp.

Molding: Press wet snow into smooth-sided nonstick containers like baking pans, mixing bowls, plastic

bowls, plastic cups or molds. Unmold by turning the container upside down and stacking the molds to build sculptures such as forts.

Rolling: Experts recommend the pack and roll method: roll in your palms, pack with more snow and roll again.

Staking: Use wooden stakes to build upon for things like outstretched arms on a snowman. Moisten wood before packing the snow.

Framing: Use small boards to outline your sculpture, wet the wood with the spray bottle, and start packing.

To make **ladybugs**, shape a ball for the main body section. Sculpt to create a more elliptical shape with a domed top. Save your sculpting shavings to shape a round head and attach it on the end. A pine needle works for each antenna, and one laid down the middle of the back looks like the meeting point of the wings. Raisins make the eyes and sticks make the legs. Slice colored gum drops for the spots.

Here is what I plan to make to impress the neighborhood: a **porcupine**. Roll a snowball about three by two feet and smooth it to an oval. Put a smaller ball one-third the size of the main body on the front end as a head. Use your screwdriver on the body to poke two-inch deep holes throughout the main body. Fill the holes with clusters of pine needles. Press four pinecones to the bottom sides for feet. Use almonds for eyes and stick a pine cone branch at the back, bottom for a tail.

Create your own Hollywood stars by hammering some stakes into the hillside. Pack snow in a ball around the top for a head, and then smooth a packed neck beneath it. Shape the heads with your hand trowel to define

Sculpture continued on page 9

Sculpture continued from page 9

where facial features will go. Here are some ideas of “head parts” from your home kitchen:

Hair: Boughs of pin needles, green beans, Licorice Whips, kale

Ears: Dried fruit, lettuce

Mouth: Apple wedge, tomato wedge (with the pulp stripped out), candy corn

Nose: Carrot, chili pepper

Eyes: Small mirrors, marbles, or for aliens, use unfurled pinecones, pointed end center on the head, with the big end horizontal with a slight upward lift

How about showing the neighborhood youngsters a higher level of snow sculpting by adding light for the evening hours? An **angel** can easily be created by making five-inch balls of snow that you stack in a circle, getting one ball smaller with each level. This is the angel's flowing robe. Put a larger head on top. Use the spray bottle to help glue the balls together. Use twigs for the wings with a group pointing up and another pointing down on each side. Now, slip a flashlight inside or perhaps a string of extra Christmas lights.

Balls of cold can also be found on ice cream cones. Put three progressively smaller scoops of ice cream on a waffle cone. Grab your readied supplies and add a gumdrop hat, raisin eyes, mini-M&Ms for buttons, Twix arms, a licorice mouth and a sour strip scarf.

Special thanks to the authors of *Snowmen*; Peter Cole, Frankie Frankeny and Leslie Jonath. Send us pictures of your creations for a future edition of *Backfence*! Something tells me Lidge is already out in the yard.



Seeds continued from page 7

carefully bend the cable (**Warning! If you bend the cable too sharply, it may break the heating element inside the cable**) and run the cable back down the length of the box to the other end, keeping the cable approximately 4-inches from the previous run of cable. At the end, again carefully bend the cable and run back to the other end of the box (keeping this run approximately 4-inches from the previous run). Continue this pattern until the cable is evenly spaced throughout the box. Once satisfied that the cable is positioned properly throughout the box, carefully staple the cable to the box's bottom, every foot or so. This will keep the cable in position. If you wish, you can now drill a hole through the side (or end) of the box, and run the remaining length of the cable outside the box to an electrical receptacle. Now, place more sand into the box, covering the entire length of heating cable. Spread the sand level, to about 1-inch over the heating cable. The box is now ready for use. For safety reasons, always place the box on a nonflammable surface (my boxes are placed on a galvanized metal shelving unit, placed in the basement and away from any flammable materials).

To use the box, plug the cable into an approved 110-v outlet. This should be done a couple of days before you are ready to place the seedstarting



tray(s) into the box; this will allow the sand to warm up and stabilize at the optimum temperature. After sowing seeds into the seedstarting tray(s), place the tray(s) into the box and onto the sand. Now, sit back and watch the seeds germinate!

Note: use of the seed-warming box, with its increased temperature, will cause the seedstarting trays to dry out quicker than normal. Be sure to check the seedstarting trays for dryness often, at least daily, and mist the seedstarting mix as necessary to keep it just damp. When germination is complete, remove the seedstarting trays from the heating box and grow the seedlings under proper lighting

Seeds continued on page 16

New seeds for 2006

By Becky Peck, Class of 2003

I e-mailed a few of the frequently-used seed suppliers and looked at the online sites of others to get a feel for the new seeds to be offered for 2006. Summarizing only five suppliers produced a number of exciting new seeds. I have prepared a list from information I received from Jung, Thompson & Morgan, Nichols, Gurney's and Renee's Garden to get a feel for what we might find to try in our gardens next year. Some information was only catalog numbers, and others were entire paragraphs that I extracted the major "selling points." I have divided the seed information into

three categories: veggies, flowers and herbs. Remember that what is new for one supplier might not be new to the market.

What did I notice? More heat tolerance and disease resistance (let's hear a cheer!). The vegetables are changing colors. The carrots come in purple and the cauliflower comes in yellow. Profusion zinnias have now gone from orange to red, white, and now, apricot. There are lots of new sunflowers; many are short and branching and perfect for a pot. Kong coleus with leaves the size of a man's hand are available at reasonable prices. There

are more varieties of sweet peas. There are many more peppers and tomatoes. Some contain extreme heat! My favorite? Annual millet grass now comes in a shorter version with wider leaves.

If you try any of these new varieties, please let us know which ones you tried and how they worked for you (we try to run a summary of "good" and "bad" experiences in our winter edition of *Back Fence*. In no way is inclusion of these five suppliers an endorsement of their seeds over others. Some were just more able to produce a separate list for me that gave only their 2006 introductions. You will also find many new plants (in addition to seeds) offered by these vendors, particularly in the herb family.

G Gurneys, www.gurneys.com

J Jung Seed Company, www.jungseed.com

TM Thompson & Morgan, www.thompson-morgan.com

R Renee's Garden, www.reneesgarden.com

N Nichols Garden Nursery, www.nicholsgardennursery.com

Type	Name	Supplier	Additional Information may include catalog numbers
Artichoke	Purple Italian Globe	N	More tolerant of heat and cold than green globe.
Bean	Bush, Royal Burgundy	G	70029 and 70030
Bean	Flavor Sweet	G	69931, 69932 and 69933
Bean, pole	Anellino 'Green and Gold Mix'	N	Italian, curved, stringless green and gold green beans with rich Romano flavor. 72 days.
Beet	Pronto	N	Baby beets
Broccoli	Coronado Crown, Hybrid	G	69951 and 69952
Broccoli	Romanesco	N	From Northern Italy.
Broccoli	Super Blend	N	3 premium green broccoli varieties with different maturity dates, harvest over several weeks.
Brussel Sprouts	Falstaff	G	69938
Cantaloupe	Little Sweetie Hybrid	J	Early ripening, excellent disease tolerance.
Carrot	Envy Hybrid	G	69953 and 69954
Carrot	Envy Hybrid	G	70021 and 70022
Carrot	Sweetness III Hybrid	G	69955, 69956 and 69957
Carrot	Sweetness III Hybrid	G	70033 and 70034
Carrot	Atomic Red	N	Red, high lycopene content.
Carrot	Lunar White	N	Refined Belgian White with shoulders below the ground surface.
Carrot	Minicore	N	Baby carrot, nearly coreless.
Carrot	Prodigy Hybrid	J	High levels of vitamins and minerals, up to 10" long and 1.5 pounds, 120 days to maturity.
Carrot	Purple Haze Hybrid	J, N	Purple exterior with bright orange center. Purple dissolves with cooking, 70 days to maturity.
Cauliflower	Cheddar Hybrid	J, N	Orange color due to beta carotene, good cooked or raw.
Chard, Container	Pot of Gold	R	Easy to grow with golden stems and veins.
Chili	Pimiento de Padron	N	Spanish roulette. One in twenty will be very hot.
Cilantro	Delfino	J	Harvest leaves 4-5 weeks from sowing, slow to bolt and holds quality longer.
Corn, Sweet	Northern Xtra-Sweet Hybrid	G	70035 and 70036
Corn, Sweet	Gotta Have It Hybrid	G	69948 and 69949
Corn, Sweet	Marvel Hybrid	N	Yellow, sweet, high yields.
Cucumber	Mexican Sour Gherkin	J	1 to 2" fruits, sweet cucumber flavor followed by a surprising sourness, needs trellis or fence, fruits fall off the vine, fruits 60 to 70 days after planting.
Cucumber	Suyo 'Brocade'	N	Asian, long, thin, and sweet.
Cucumber	Sweeter Yet Hybrid	G	69946 and 69947
Gourds	Goblin Eggs Small	N	Mix includes egg gourds, Jack Be Little and colorful spoon gourds.
Gourds	Medium Winged	N	Brightly-colored, mostly crook-necked, six to eight inches.
Kohlrabi	Early White Vienna	G	70038 and 70039
Lettuce	OSO sweet	N	Small butterhead, slow to bolt and heat tolerant.
Lettuce	Paris Island Cos Lettuce-Organic	N	Classic Romaine for Caesar salads. Resistant to tipburn and mosaic, slower bolting.
Melon	Hannah's Choice	N	Three-and-a-half to five pounds, powdery-mildew resistant.

Melon	Summer Dream	N	White rind with deep salmon flesh. Long shelf life.
Mesclun	Showtime Mix	N	Bright colors and bold flavor.
Mini-Vegetables	Many	TM	For small spaces, TM offers many varieties for container growing
Okra	Little Lucy	N	Consider using as a tropical plant in pot. Purple foliage and three-inch yellow-purple blooms.
Onion	Big Daddy II Hybrid	G	70040 and 70042
Onion	Savannah Sweet Hybrid	G	69958 and 69959
Pea	Alderman or Tall Telephone	N	Five to six foot tall, indeterminate, 75-days.
Pea	Sugar Lace II	G	69944 and 69945
Pea	Sugar Snap	N	The original.
Pepper	Fat 'N Sassy Hybrid	G	14136 and 70045
Pepper	Hot Pepper Mix	G	69942
Pepper	Super Cayenne II Hybrid	G	69963
Pepper	Super Heavyweight Hybrid	G	66282 and 69943
Pepper	Sweet Bell Pepper Mix	G	66283
Pepper	Sweet Spot Hybrid	G	70026
Pepper	Banana Bill Hybrid	J	Disease resistant, harvest 65 days from transplanting, avg. 6.5" long by 1.75" across top.
Pepper	Mariachi Hybrid	J, N	Mildly hot, high-yielding, early ripening.
Pepper	Tabasco	N	Very hot. Classical Louisiana hot sauce pepper.
Pepper	Carmen Hybrid	J	Early, sweet, Italian-style horn-shaped fruits about 6" long, wide tops taper to a point.
Pepper, Banana	Sweet Spot	N	Very productive and multiple disease resistance.
Pepper, hot	Gigantia Japapeno	N	Extra-large, medium-hot
Pepper, ornamental	Black Pearl	J, N	Black leaves when grown in full sun, shiny black, pearly-sized pepper. Peppers mature to dark red and fiery hot. Good contrast plant.
Pepper, Mild Habanera	Suave	R	Habanera flavor without the heat.
Potato	All Blue	G	69939
Pumpkin	Wyatt's Wonder	G	69962
Pumpkin	Wyatt's Wonder	G	70046
Pumpkin	'Ghost' F1 Hybrid	TM	Exclusive white jack-o-lantern size.
Pumpkin	Bumpkin	N	Semi-bush, powdery mildew resistant, small pumpkins.
Pumpkin	First Prize	N	Vibrant orange, weighing between 50 and 300 pounds!
Pumpkin	Jack of All Trades	N	Early, small fruit on vigorous, semi-bush vines.
Pumpkin	Jamboree Hybrid	J	9 to 11 lbs with diameter of 10 to 12". Flavor compares to buttercup squash, freezes well, resistant to Cucumber Mosaic Virus and Papaya Ring Spot.
Pumpkin	One-Two-Many (PVP applied for)	J	Color resembles bloodshot eyeball, 20 lbs, 75% round with the rest oblong, mildew tolerant plus some virus tolerance.
Pumpkin	Three in One Mini	N	Some orange, some white, some striped.
Radish	Lady Slipper	N	Globe-shaped with small tap-root.
Radish	Relish Cross-Daikon	N	Fifteen inches long and 1.5 pounds each, the top selling daikon carrot in Japan.
Salad Leaves	Niche Oriental Mixed	TM	Adds oriental flavors, colors and textures to salads in only 25 days from sowing.
Salad Leaves	New Rocket "Apollo	TM	Fast-growing; larger, rounded more succulent leaves than traditional Rocket, peppery taste.
Salad Leaves	Sorrel "Blood Veined	TM	Colorful salad leaves with a sharp but pleasant taste.
Soy Bean	Edamame	R	Japanese favorite, imported.
Spinach	'Bordeaux' F1 Hybrid	TM	Visually different with red stems and red veins, superb bolt resistance.
Squash	Queensland Blue	N	Deeply ribbed blue squash about seven pounds each.
Squash	Table Treat Hybrid	J	Acorn-type winter squash, early, sweet flavor, higher sugar level, black skin on 1.5 to 1.75 lbs. fruit, disease resistant especially powdery mildew, bush plant with high yields.
Squash	Tromboncini	N	Italian heirloom shaped like a trombone.
Squash, Crookneck	Supersett	R	Pick at four to six inches for best flavor.
Squash	Cashflow Hybrid	G	70023 and 70024
Squash, Summer	Medley Blend of Hybrids	G	69935 and 69936
Squash, summer	Tinda Gourd	N	From India.
Squash, Winter	Argonaut Hybrid	G	66325
Squash, winter	Bon Bon	N	Semi-bush form with two to four-pound fruits.
Squash, winter	Marina di Chioggia	N	Heirloom from Italy that sweetens as it stores. Bumpy glue-green flesh.
Squash, winter	Sibley	N	Dry, with its own peculiar flavor.
Tomato	Better Bush Hybrid	G	69928, 69929 and 19930
Tomato	'Sugary' F1 Hybrid	TM	High-yield, high sugar content, crack resistant, grape variety.
Tomato	Cupid Hybrid	J	Grape tomatoes, indeterminate, tie to stakes or trellises, high level of disease resistance.
Tomato	Fresh Salsa	N	Plum-shaped, holds well on or off the vine.
Tomato	Harlequin F1 Hybrid	TM	New and Exclusive, grape variety.
Tomato	Heartland	N	Lots of eight ounce tomatoes. Claims that Master Gardeners request it!
Tomato	Juliet F1 Hybrid	TM	Tangy bit to the taste, grape variety.
Tomato	Pruden's Purple—Organic	N	Like Brandywine, only earlier and heavier producer.
Tomato	Roncardo F1 Hybrid	TM	Early ripening large beefsteak type with high sugar content.
Tomato	Ultimate Operner Hybrid	J	Early tomatoes, 1/3 larger than Early Girl, great flavor, indeterminate.
Tomato, Container	Super Bush	R	Three feet tall with heavy yield, flavorful taste.
Watermelon	Crimson Sensation Hybrid	G	69960 and 69961
Watermelon	Gurney's Delight Hybrid	G	69937
Zucchini	Salmon	N	This is a popular variety in Egypt, Israel and Greece. Light green and mature early.

Flowers and herbs on pages 12 and 13

FLOWERS

Type	Name	Supplier	Additional Information may include catalog numbers
Agastache aurantiaca	Apricot Sprite	N	Perennial, fragrant anise, drought tolerant, deer resistant
Aguilegia	Chocolate Soldier	TM	Sweetly-scented, chocolate-colored, tubular blooms.
Aguilegia	Clementine Formula Mix	TM	Upward-facing clematis-like blooms, from white to soft pink, burgundy, powder blue, deep pink and violet-blue. 12 to 14" tall. Good in containers.
Amaranthus	Hot Biscuit	G	69965
Aster long	Hulk	J	22" flower stems with golden-yellow disk with collars of green bracts. Disease resistant, vase life.
Astrantia	Prima Donna	N	Sow in February for first year blooms. Loves moisture, long-lived cut flower.
California Poppy	Summer Sorbet	TM	Fluted, semi-double, bi-color blooms in shades rarely seen.
Chinese Aster	Starlight Rose	G	70037
Coleus	Kong Mosaic	N	Leaves the size of a man's hand. Cream centers with irregular deep red and green edges.
Coleus	Kong Red	N	Leaves the size of a man's hand. Red centers with green exterior edges.
Coleus	Kong Scarlet	N	Leaves the size of a man's hand. Deep scarlet with bronze centers.
Cosmos	Double Click	TM, J	Double and semidouble flowers in pink, carmine, rose and white, 4' plants that are 20" wide.
Delphinium	Blue Mirror™	R	Handles more heat than the traditional delphinium.
Delphinium	New Zealand Doubles Mixed	TM	First double mixture ever offered from seed. Strong stems with flower spikes up to 5' high. Mildew-resistant, blooming from pink to blue, including white and cream.
Delphinium	Tall Black Knight	TM	Large-flowered, single, deep-purple blooms, each with deep-black center.
Dianthus	Elegance Lavender and Elegance Pink F1 Hybrids	TM	Bushy annuals, scented semi-doubles.
Dianthus	Russian Skies	TM	Perennial, blooms the first year from seed, 12-14 inches tall.
Dianthus	Super Parfait Raspberry	TM	Dwarf annual, with unusual flower shapes. Coloration is raspberry with deep crimson eyes.
Dianthus	Supra Purple Hybrid	J	Improved heat tolerance and prolific bloom, mounding 10 to 12-inch plants.
Diascia	Diamonte Coral Rose Hybrid	J	Denser, better-branched, no pinching required. Full sun and cooler temps. Perfect pansy companion. Also available in lavender pink and apricot.
Grass	Angel Hair Grass	G	69964 and 70041
Hellebores	Washfield Doubles	TM	Doubles with wide color range including yellows, greens, blacks, blues, reds and apricots.
Hollyhock	Appleblossom	TM	Exclusive. Heavily double, powder-puff blooms in delicate shades of appleblossom pink.
Impatiens	Encore Hybrid	J	Largest flowers (2" across), on 24", bushy, heavily branched plants. Available in a mix.
Impatiens	Tutu Red Bicolor Hybrid	J	Early, double impatiens in red and white.
Lady's Mantle	Thriller	N	Hardy perennial. Transplants in 4-6 weeks.
Lamb's Ear		N	Perennial ground cover
Larkspur	Splash Splash	TM	Violet and white splashed and striped blooms. Easy to grow, best sown outdoors*
Lavender	Multifida "Fernleaf"	R	Fernlike, silver foliage is highly aromatic.
Mahonia	Creeping Oregon Grape	N	Perennial to zone 5, holly-like foliage. Ground cover
Mallow	Party Girl Checker	N	Perennial, 36", pink, blooms first year from seed.
Marigold	Frances Hoffman's Choice-Organic	N	Bright yellow and red circles, long-stemmed, hedge-type plants.
Marigold	Starfire Mixed	N	Dwarf, mixed colors
Meadow Mix	Song Bird	N	Perennials and annuals loved by songbirds
Millet	Jester Hybrid	J, N	Shorter version of Purple Majesty with wider leaves and more basal branches.
Morning Glory	Mailbox Mix	R	Mixture of blue and white.
Morning Glory	Chocolate	N	Chocolate undertones of old rose
Morning Glory	Grandpa Ott's	N	Deep purple with white eye
Nasturtium, climbing	Spitfire	R	Hummingbird magnet. Don't let it dry out during blooming season.
Nicotiana	Perfume Deep Purple Hybrid	J	Delicate evening fragrance, abundance of deep purple 1", start-shaped flowers held above the foliage. Needs full sun.
Nigella	Persian Violet	R	"Love in A Mist," blooms open white with blue edges and turn indigo violet.
Penstemon	Rocky Mountain	N	Drought resistant, draws bees, good for erosion-control
Petunia	'Limoncello' F1 Hybrid	TM	Pale yellow bi-color with intense lemon centers.
Petunia	'Purple Velvet' F1 Hybrid	TM	Trailing petunia.
Petunia	Easy Wave Rosy Dawn Hybrid	J	Deep rose with wide cream throats, maturing to a lighter shade of coral pink.
Poppy	Fruit Punch and Coral Reef	TM	Large, ruffled blooms in plum shades
Poppy, California	Tropical Sunset	R	In sunset colors, some with pleated petals.
Punella	Grandiflora Freelandier	J	Perennial. First punella to bloom dependably the first year from seed. 7" tall with profuse whorls of blue, rose or white flower clusters in spring and summer if sown in March. Excellent ground cover, resistant to frost, attracts bees.
Salvia	Farinacea Evolution	J	Annual with thick 6 to 7" flower spikes in violet, abundantly produced on shorter, better-branched and more compact plants.
Scabiosa	Japonica var. alpina Ritz Blue	J	6 to 8" tall with sky-blue pincushion flowers above a bed of glossy green leaves. Flowers the first year from seed sown in early spring.
Sculcap		N	Perennial, small blue flowers
Sensitive Plant		N	Leaves close when touched
Stevia			Tender perennial from Paraguay. Leaves contain steviaside, one of the sweetest substances known.
Stocks	Anytime Mix	G	69934
Sunflower	Cherry Rose Hybrid	J	Cherry-red 3" flowers with lemon-yellow tips, 5' branching plants in only 40 days.

Sunflower	Moulin Rouge	G	69922 and 69923
Sunflower	Petit Bouquet	N	Knee-high, multibranching, pastel shades
Sunflower	Ruby Eclipse	G	69926 and 69927
Sunflower	Starburst Blaze	G	70047 and 70048
Sunflower	Sundown	G	69924 and 69925
Sunflower, edible	Snack Seed	R	Heavy heads of large seeds for eating.
Sweet pea	Explorer	N	Two foot long and good for window boxes and hanging planters
Sweet pea	Horizon Mixed	N	Many unique colors that are normally recessive are included
Sweet Peas, Designer	Lipstick	R	Bred in Britain and bright red.
Sweet Peas, Perennial	Garden Orchids	R	9 to 12' vines, drought tolerant.
Sweet William	Lace Mantle	R	Day length neutral variety that blooms the first year.
Zinnia, container	Apricot Profusion	R	18 to 24" tall, good heat and mildew resistance.
Zinnia	Cool Crayon Colors	R	Doubles in cool colors.
Zinnia	Hot Crayon Colors	R	Doubles in warm colors.
Zinnia	Magellan Coral	G	70044
Zinnia	Swizzle Scarlet & Yellow	G	70025
Zinnia	Uproar Rose Hybrid	J	Twenty 8 to 36" tall, bushy, 2' wide with double 5 to 6.5" blooms. Blooms in 5 to 7 weeks.
Zinnia	Zowie TM Yellow Flame Hybrid	J, N	Semi-double with scarlet-rose centers surrounded by yellow petal edges. Easy to grow and rarely bothered by pests or disease.

*Discovered by a TM customer. TM offers a free booklet called *How to Discover New Plant at Home*.

HERBS

Type	Name	Supplier	Additional Information may include catalog numbers
Basil	Napoletano Bolloso	N	Frilly, heavily-textured leaves are great for mini-wraps.
Basil	Sicilian Basil di Sorrento	N	Intensely flavored and fragrant.
Cilantro	Culantro Eryngium	N	Holds flavor when cooked, moist, partial-shade.
Cilantro	Delfino	N	Finey-cut flavor, excellent in cooking.
Rosemary	Billy Jean	N	Compact, creeping, close to the ground.
Rosemary	Blue Gem	N	Sky-blue flowers and glossy leaves.
Sage	Bicolor	N	Perennial, useable as a culinary sage, bicolored leaves.

Stonescaping & the flower garden

By W. Doug Lenz, Intern, Class of 2005

This is one of two, second place essays from the Class of 2005. Due to insufficient space, we will run Bridgette Marzluf's second place essay as our featured article in the next issue of Back Fence . . . don't miss it!

“Plants and stones are natural partners. When they're combined properly, they continue to complement each other season after season. A grouping of stones, whether arranged by Mother Nature herself or by hand, can provide a perfect niche or backdrop for green and colorful growth. Sometimes, plants and stones look so congenial together, it's hard to decide which showed up first.”

The quotation used above is a statement that to me sums up the reason to create a landscape set-

ting that has a natural appearance.

By selecting complementary flowers, foliage, or trees and stones you arrange an environment that is aesthetically pleasing and blends into the surrounding landscape. Creating an area of plants and stones that blend together and accent the qualities of the area will give many years of satisfying and peaceful viewing.

“Stones by their very nature are the perfect compliment to bedding plants. They are immutable, remaining as solid, unmovable features of the landscape, whereas plants will grow, bloom, and fade according to the whims of nature; they are hard by nature, existing as strong and durable monuments, while plants are soft, bending and swaying with every passing breeze or rain shower; and, unlike

plants, they require no maintenance.”

Making a stonescape does not limit one to the use of just flowers and one type of stone. Plants can be a variety of colors, shapes and sizes, using herbs, vegetables, ornamental grasses, specimen plants, etc. The stones used come in a variety of colors, shapes and sizes, and they can be man made materials or natural. So designing and building your own landscape with stone and plants is only limited by the imagination.

Types of stonescapes to create

Varieties of uses of stone and plants in the landscape:

- Rock garden & Natural setting arrangement
- Planters and Tree Wells
- Terrace and Retaining walls
- Raised garden
- Garden path
- Water garden

Stonescape continued on page 14

Rock gardens and natural setting arrangement

A rock garden can be arranged to give more freedom in the location of plants. For example having a sloped area with existing stone outcroppings can give different habitats for a variety of plants. If there are no existing rocks then you can locate and place your own stones. See **figure 1**. The arrangement for the rock garden does not need to be large to be effective. The same natural effect can be developed in a small and simple design.

Another type of stone or rock garden could be dry-stacked (without mortar) stone placed together to form a stone wall. See **figure 2**. The soil in front or above the wall creates a good area for a flower bed. Flowers planted at the base of the wall tend to tie the wall down to the ground, and flowers planted in the wall and above it can add a spot of color to a otherwise continuous pattern. Some gardeners prefer to have the stone pattern more pronounced and formal, and do not plant as many flowers that interrupt the lines of the wall.

Planters and tree wells

Tree wells are nothing more than a dry-stacked stone retaining wall. The purpose of the tree well is to move soil away from the tree trunk to keep from smothering the tree. See **figure 3**. When excavated soil is left against a tree trunk the tree will slowly suffocate, placing a retaining wall and pulling the soil away from the trunk will provide room for the tree to grow.

Planters are similar to a dry-stacked wall, possibly in the shape of arc or circle. Inside the stones soil is placed and lightly tamped down, which helps with future settling.

Terraces and retaining walls

Terraces are sloped areas that have been leveled in stair step fashion using

figure 1

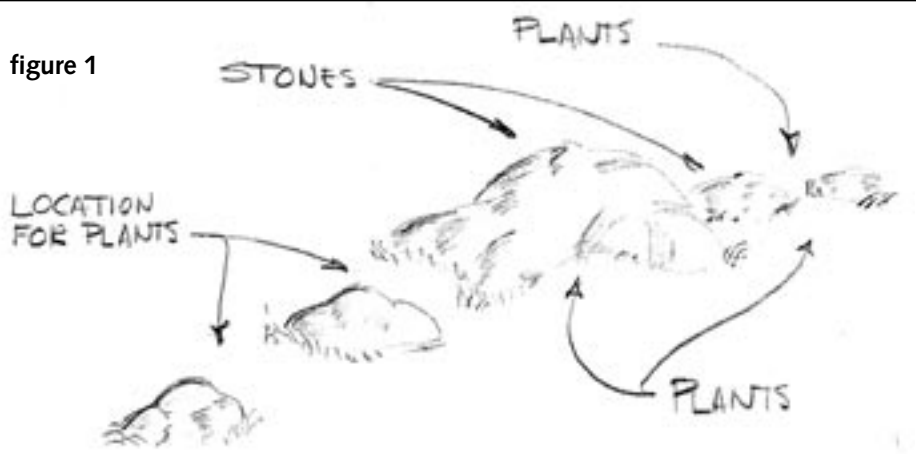
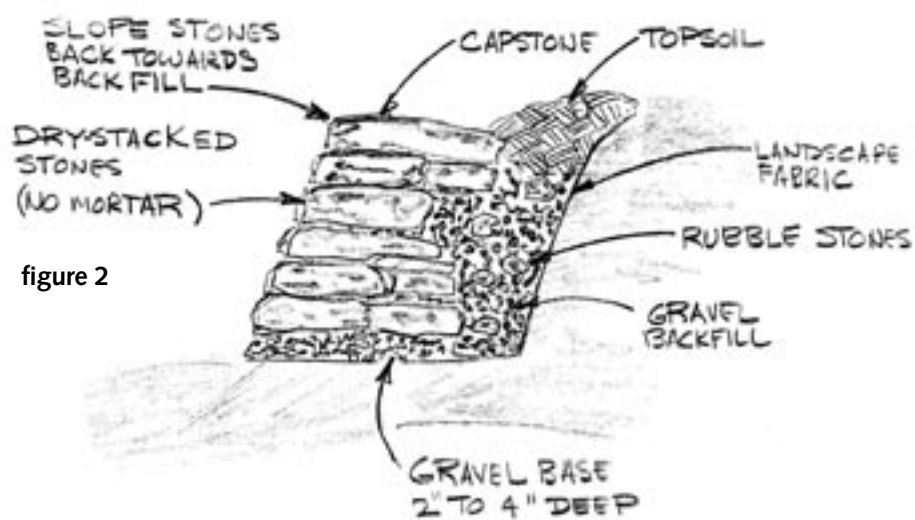


figure 2



dry-stacked stone to create retaining walls for holding back the soil. See **figure 2**. This method has been used for centuries all over the world to create level areas for growing crops. Small sloping landscapes can use this same method to develop a previously unused area for planting ornamentals, vegetable gardens or flower beds. With this type of a useful construction soil erosion can be reduced or eliminated. This method of stonescaping serves a purpose, and creates a more functional environment.

Raised gardens

Raised garden beds give the plants being grown the benefit of good drainage, and warmer soil in the cooler months of the growing season. Using stone to build your raised bed gives the benefit of warming and holding the heat longer. The stones also give

some mineral affect to the surrounding soil. Using stone rather than landscape timbers or railroad ties prevents the possible leaching of chemicals into the soil from the treated wood.

Stone borders and raised walls around an herb, or vegetable garden give the garden a more organized and clean look. Raised beds are also easier to maintain and weed because of the easy access.

Garden paths

A basic garden path can be accented well with stone pavers laid in a meandering pattern. See . The stone pavers can be set in place by excavating a hole the size of each paver and fitting it in place. Soil conditions should not be loamy or the paver will not be solid in damp weather, it may be necessary to place a gravel base under each stone.

If possible when placing the stone

pavers try to blend the pavers into the surrounding vegetation. The more subtle location of the stones gives a more pleasing appearance. Placing the stones to close together will prevent you from planting a low growing ground cover, for example creeping thyme, chamomile and winter savory. With the plantings between the stone pavers it creates competition for any unwanted weed growth.

This is a description of a basic garden path, the process for building a more involved design like flagstone path with a gravel base and fitting the stones with chisel and mason's hammer is better explained in the many books available on basic stone work.

Water gardens

This type of stonescape is used mainly for creating an atmosphere of relaxing tranquility and relief from the everyday life of work and stress. The sound of a waterfall is a soothing peaceful rhythm that helps push away the daily worries.

Creating a watergarden/waterfeature is more involved to construct than most of the previously mentioned stonescape projects. Selecting a site, designing the project, selecting and buying the materials and then maintaining the garden is a large undertaking. Before deciding to build the water garden do a lot of research and understand how involved it is before continuing. It is best to have done your homework before there is a hole in your yard and realize this is not for you.

A water garden does not need to be a huge undertaking, the sounds of a soothing waterfall can be created with a small water fountain situated on a patio with the surrounding backyard flowers and garden. So you can build your own peaceful getaway without all the work by just keeping it simple.

Water gardens, whether large or small, provide a different environment for the opportunity to use water plants

figure 3

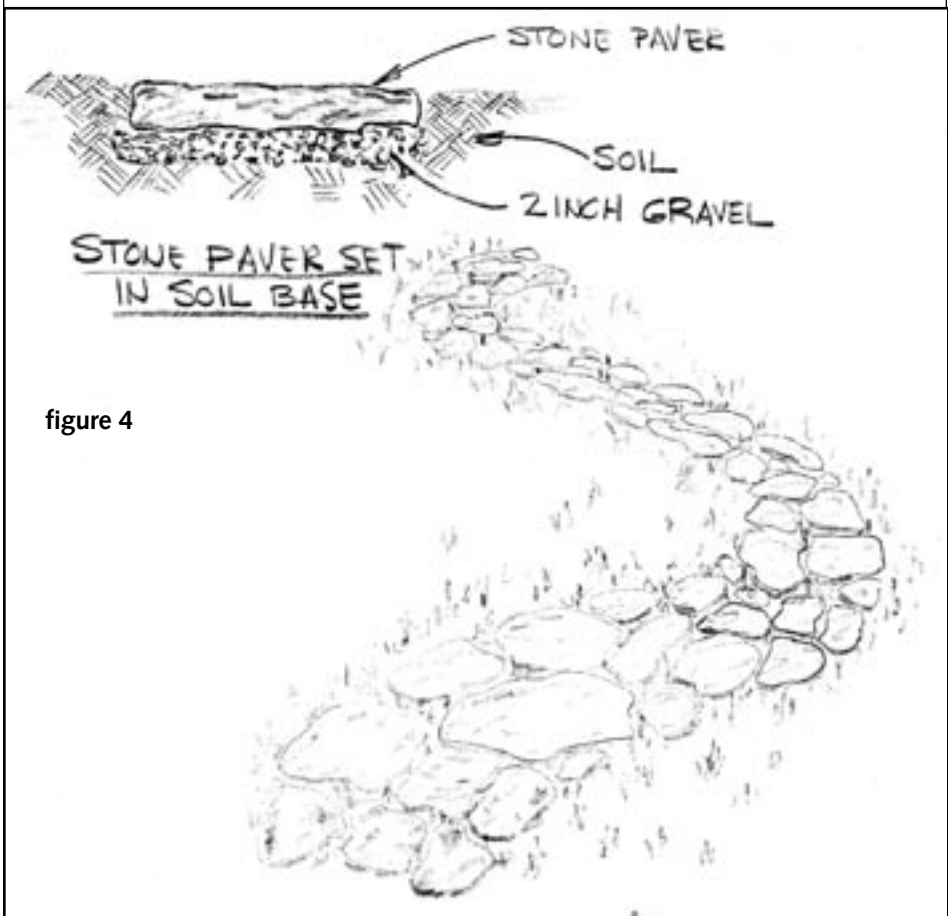
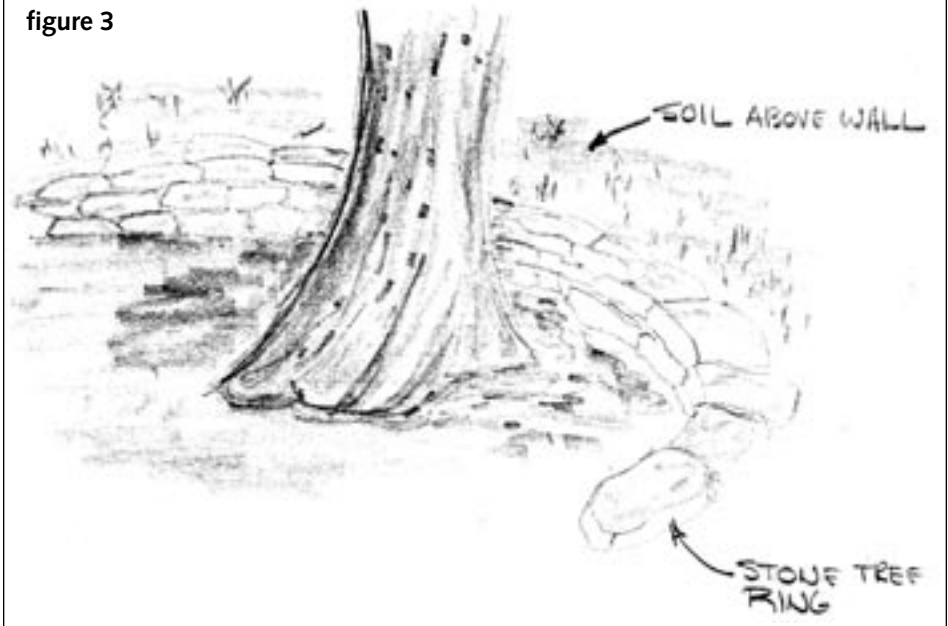


figure 4

and flowers that you would not get to grow and enjoy in a normal garden.

Stonescape location

The location of the stonescape will help determine the type of plants and flowers chosen to include with the stones. You need to ask questions like; will there be a lot of sunshine,

is there partial shade, will the wind be very continuous, does the location have good drainage? Soil ph will need to be considered, and research needs to be done to determine the native plants that do well in the location you plan to use.

There are several native Missouri

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illustration by
Laurie Chipman

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conditions, watering as needed.

Materials for Seed-Warming Box

- Lumber, 1 x 2 (recommended)
- Sand, enough to cover the entire surface of the box at approx. 2"
- Metal staples (prefer plastic-coated)
- Nails
- Hammer
- Saw
- Tape measure
- Electric drill with bit

Stonescape continued from page 15

flowers like Missouri primrose (*Oenothera macrocarpa*) that grow well in a rock habitat, also Missouri Coneflower (*Rudbeckia missouriensis*), and Purple Poppy Mallow (*Callirhoe involucrata*) that grows along the ground and would enhance a retaining wall structure. In a more shaded area with moist soil, plants like Columbine (*Aquilegia Canadensis*) or Cardinal Flower (*Lobelia cardinalis*) would do well.

When positioning your stone arrangement be sure you leave areas to place amended soil for plantings. Having a well arranged stonescape, enables the plants to fill in areas around the stones and develop a natural setting.

Water garden plants open up another world. The number of plants that can be grown in water gardens is only limited by the imagination. There are many aquatic plants that can be grown in a basket, but they must be maintained or they will get out of control. The type of aquatic plants will vary with the location in the water and what they provide for the aquatic environment. There are deepwater, free-floating, oxygenating and marginal plants. A few of the plants I am familiar with are waterlilies, water iris, cattails, and lotus. The references in the bibliography are a good start for information about plants used in the

water garden. Growing plants when you use water and stones involves almost opposite ends of cultivation compared to a standard flower garden.

The topics that I have explained involving stonescapes and the flower garden are very basic, these are just the beginning ideas and plans to get started with a stonescape project. There are plans and details to work out as you develop your own personalized design. The information and references that I have covered should be enough to guide you in the right direction to create a satisfying stonescape and flower garden.

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