

'THE SAGE'--MARCH 2011

Klein's Floral & Greenhouses On-Line Newsletter

THIS MONTH'S HIGHLIGHTS:

Our "Mad Gardener" Is Ready for Your Questions!

Forcing Branches for Indoor Color

How To Clean Your Home's 10 Germiest Places--Naturally

'Nursery Tales'--The Truth about Working at a Garden Center

The 2011 CSA Open House Now at Monona Terrace!

An Indoor Seed Starting Primer from A to Z

Favorite Seed , Bulb & Plant Sources

New To Klein's: Grow-A-Head™ "Grow Me, Trim Me, Love Me"

Favorite Horseradish Recipes (2011's Herb of the Year)

Notes from Rick's Garden Journal--February 2011

--A Reminder about Elephant's Ears

--Microclimates in My Yard

--Naga Jolokia Peppers--the World's Hottest

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You Asked the Mad Gardener About a Hydrangea That Won't Bloom

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The City of Madison Recycles Used Plastic Pots

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Plants Harmful to Kids and Pets

THE MAD GARDENER

"Madison's Firsthand Source for Expert Gardening Advice"

Ask any of your gardening questions by e-mailing them to us at madgardener@kleinsfloral.com. Klein's in-house **Mad Gardener** will e-mail you with an answer as promptly as we can. We've also posted a link to this e-mail address on our home page for your convenience. Your question might then appear in the "**You Asked**" feature of our monthly newsletter. If your question is the one selected for our monthly newsletter, you'll receive a small gift from us at Klein's. The **Mad Gardener** hopes to hear from you soon!

Sorry, we can only answer those questions pertaining to gardening in Southern Wisconsin and we reserve the right to leave correspondence unanswered at our discretion. Please allow 2-3 days for a response.

Please note that our **Mad Gardener** is not only an expert gardener, but can answer all of your indoor plant questions as well.

FOR NEIGHBORHOOD EVENTS OR GARDEN TOURS that you would like posted on our web site or in our monthly newsletters, please contact Rick at (608) 244-5661 or rick@kleinsfloral.com or Sue at sue@kleinsfloral.com. Please include all details, i.e. dates, locations, prices, brief description, etc. Our readership is ever-growing so this is a great opportunity for free advertising. Events must be garden related and must take place in the immediate Madison vicinity.

A QUICK NOTE:

We would like to thank all of you for making the Wisconsin Public Television Garden Expo at the Alliant Energy a great success for us at Klein's this past February. Your feedback and support were above and beyond. Attendees commented often that they appreciated the burst of spring we brought to the expo with our spring blooming plants and fresh herbs. Plant sales again surpassed our expectations. **We also welcome all of you who newly subscribed to our monthly newsletter** at the show. The Garden Expo is Klein's biggest gardening event of the year. We enjoy talking with all of you and sharing our love of gardening with you.

Thanks again! The Staff at Klein's

MARCH STORE HOURS:

Monday thru Friday: 8:00-6:00

Saturday: 8:00-5:00

Sunday: 10:00-4:00

CALENDAR OF EVENTS:

March 9--Ash Wednesday (Easter is April 24)

March 13--Daylight-Saving Time Begins.

March 17--St. Patrick's Day. From shamrocks to green carnations--we have it!

March 19--Full Moon

March 20--First Day of Spring!!!! It's still too early to plant, but you'll notice spring bulbs peeking through the cold soil, trees buds bulging and maybe even that first robin. Keep in mind that Madison's average last frost date is May 10 so there's usually still lots of cold and snow to come.

‘THE FLOWER SHOPPE’:

Forcing Branches for Winter Color

By B. Rosie Lerner and Michael N. Dana

Does the bleak, cold dullness of winter sometimes get you down? Then why not bring springtime into your home by forcing tree and shrub branches into bloom? Branches can be used as background for an arrangement or for an entire floral display, and you can prune your shrubs and trees as you selectively remove branches for forcing.

Early spring flowering trees and shrubs form their flower buds in the fall before the plants go dormant. After a period of at least 8 weeks of temperatures below 40°F (usually after January 1), branches can be cut and forced into bloom.

Most flowering shrubs are fairly easy to force, while trees are more difficult. The later in the winter you cut the branches, the shorter the forcing time becomes.

Gathering Branches

Select healthy, young branches with numerous flower buds, which are usually larger and more plump than foliar buds. When cutting fruit tree branches, choose those that have many spurs, the short compact side shoots which bear the flowers. Choose branches from crowded areas of the plant when possible, since you will be removing some of the plant’s natural spring display.

Follow good pruning principles when cutting the branches. Cut about 1/4 inch above a side bud or branch so that no stub is left behind. Cut the branches about 6-18 inches long; longer branches are easiest to use in floral arrangements.

Getting Branches to Bloom

After bringing the branches indoors, make a second cut on a slant just above the previous cut. If temperatures are below freezing when you cut the branches, immerse the branches full length in cool water for several hours or overnight. A large tub or basin may be helpful. This keeps the buds from bursting prematurely. If the weather is above freezing, there is no need for a soak.

Next, put the branches in a container which will hold them upright. Add warm water (110°F) no higher than 3 inches on the stems. A flower preservative will help prolong the vase life of the branches (see homemade recipes that follow). Allow to stand for 20-30 minutes, and then fill the container with additional preservative solution. Place the container in a cool (60-65°F), partially shaded location. Keep the water level at its original height.

Finally, when the buds show color, move the branches to a lighted room. But don’t put them in direct sunlight. At this time they can be removed from the storage container and

arranged in the desired manner. Be sure the arrangement has an ample water supply at all times. To prolong its beauty, place the arrangement in a cool location, particularly during the evening. The following homemade preservative recipes are usable for most cut flowers.

Homemade Preservative #1

2 cups lemon-lime carbonated beverage
2 cups water
1 /2 teaspoon household chlorine bleach

Homemade Preservative #2

2 tablespoons fresh lemon juice
1 tablespoon sugar
1/2 teaspoon household chlorine bleach
mix with 1 quart water

Homemade Preservative #3

2 tablespoons white vinegar
2 tablespoons sugar
1/2 teaspoon household chlorine bleach
mix with 1 quart water

Rooting

Rooting may occur on the branches of some species during the forcing period. If the rooted branch is desired for a new plant, remove the branch from the water when the roots are 1/4 to 3/8 inches long. All branches should be trimmed to a length of approximately 6-8 inches. Then pot individually, and keep moist until permanent roots are formed. When warm weather arrives, the new plant can be planted outdoors. However, protection may be needed for 1-2 years.

Best Branches for Forcing

The best blooming shrubs for forcing branches indoors include:

Bridal Wreath Spirea (Spirea prunifolia)
Cherry (Prunus sp.)
Crabapple (Malus sp.)
Flowering Almond (Prunus glandulosa)
Flowering Quince (Chaenomeles sp.)
Forsythia (Forsythia x intermedia)
Honeysuckle (Lonicera sp.)
Lilac (Syringa sp.)
Mockorange (Philadelphus coronarius)
Pussy Willow (Salix sp.)
Redbud (Cercis canadensis)
Redtwig Dogwood (Cornus sericea, C. stolonifera)
Rhododendron (Rhododendron sp.)

Source: www.hort.purdue.edu

DID YOU KNOW. . .

. . . that by the end of February or the beginning of March, we've done most of our seasonal hiring for the up coming spring season?

Yes, it's true. Long before winter ends and the first signs of spring appear, Klein's goes furiously into hiring mode; seeking out the best of the best to work the counters, staff the sales floor and help with production out back. We have no shortage of great applicants who have dreamed about working at a garden center. The following tongue-in-cheek snippet offers some very true insight as to what it's like to work at a garden center. Long stored in a file on one of our staff member's computers, we no longer know the original source of the article.

Nursery Tales by Heather Lockman

"Ahhh," sighed my friend Dana, with more than a touch of envy. "You know you've landed my dream job."

Dana and I are both writers. The work is mostly rewarding, but sometimes when we get fed up with deadlines and sparring with editors, we'd joke about getting jobs at a garden center--spending a summer outdoors amid flowers and getting in touch with our souls. Now, to Dana's astonishment, I'd actually gone and done it.

"Lucky you," she said

I pictured myself counseling thoughtful customers, suggesting lesser-known bulbs and perennials for their borders. I would help beginning gardeners discover the joys of texture and foliage. I would share bits of gardening folklore. My days would be very peaceful and Zenlike.

Alas, I soon discovered there is nothing even remotely Zenlike about a nursery in springtime. In spite of appalling May weather, customers stormed the garden center to fill their shopping carts with common-as-dirt petunias and fought over which hanging basket to buy and who got the last white lobelia. I didn't have time to share folklore. I barely had time to breathe.

Every twenty minutes or so, Annabel, the nursery's chief grower, zoomed up from the growing fields and greenhouses behind the property in a golf cart hauling a trailer full of plants. She had waistlong blond hair, piercing Icelandic blue eyes, a wiry frame fueled by coffee, and the mouth of a stevedore. Annabel wouldn't have recognized Zen if it crawled off the back of her cart.

"Help me unload this trailer, sister, or I'm gonna break your fingers!"

Somehow I'd never imagined the back-straining, knee-bending, shin-bruising tasks involved in this line of work. I ran like a rabbit unloading trailers and restocking empty tables. I wrestled sacks of potting soil and bales of peat moss into cars full of groceries and golf clubs. I swept and reswept the greenhouse floors.

"What a great place to work," at least one customer said to me every day. "There's nothing more peaceful than being around plants."

I had always thought of gardening as a democratic pastime open to everyone. But I soon began to suspect there were people who simply shouldn't be permitted to garden-- people who asked questions like, "Do you have a spray that will kill all the weeds but won't hurt the flowers I planted?" "What's wrong with the basket of annuals I bought here a month ago? It was beautiful, but now looks like rubbish." These were the folks who wanted to garden without ever bending over. They were looking for lawns that didn't need mowing and trees that changed color in autumn but wouldn't drop their leaves.

Even the veteran staffers could be stumped by customer questions. "What do you call those tiny containers plants come in?" one woman asked earnestly. My coworkers gave their best guess. Flower pots? Cell packs? Nursery flats? No, she said, none of those sounded right. Exasperated, someone offered, "Seeds?"

"That's it!" the woman cried happily. "Have you got any of those?"

In spite of the grueling physical chores, grumpy customers, and endlessly goofy questions, there were some sweet surprises. A tattooed man with a ponytail bought six different hardy fuchsias because, he told me cheerfully, they reminded him of his auntie. A gardener who'd lost his vision fell in love with chocolate cosmos because of their candy-box fragrance. Elderly shoppers often asked which summer flowers were best to grow for cemetery bouquets.

Best of all were the wild things that lived on the grounds. "When customers really get to me," a long-time employee admitted, "I go out and pet a frog." Dozens of bronze tree frogs lurked beneath the benches and in the buckets of pond plants. We found garter snakes snoozing inside sun-warmed pots, chipmunks behind the gift-wrapping counter, and dim-witted killdeers nesting in the parking lot.

In August, the last of the bedraggled petunias were replaced with chrysanthemums, fall pansies, and flowering kale. By September, tulip and daffodil bulbs spilled from the retail shelves. Soon Annabel was shouting for help with the Christmas poinsettias and threatening us bodily harm if we busted so much as a stem. The days grew shorter and colder. Finally it started to rain. I wasn't made of stern enough stuff to slog through a nursery winter. It was time to give up the dream job and find my way back to my desk.

Before I left the garden center, I rang up an order of fall bedding plants for a woman who owned a local historic inn overlooking the bay.

"I'm so jealous!" she told me. "I've always wanted to work here!"

"Be careful what you wish for," I said. "It's not nearly as rosy and idyllic as everyone seems to think."

The innkeeper signed her credit card slip and flashed me a knowing smile.

"Yeah?" she said good-naturedly. "Try running a bed-and-breakfast."

NOTES FROM MY GARDEN JOURNAL--Tips and Observations from My Own Garden by Rick Halbach.

ENTRY: FEBRUARY 6, 2011 (A Reminder about Elephant's Ears)

Today I moved my huge tubs of dormant elephant's ear bulbs from the root cellar to a warmer part of the basement. That reminded that we get a lot of calls this time of the year asking about elephant's ears. The new season's bulbs arrived at Klein's just this week and should be started in pots as soon as possible. The following is an article I wrote for our newsletter in late January of 2009:

"Spring must be getting closer! Today I moved some of my stored and dormant elephant's ears (*Colocasia esculenta*) from the cool root cellar to the warm part of the basement. There's no need to put them near any light source. After all, they're still dormant and new foliage won't appear for a couple of months yet. For now, I simply move the tubs to a warm spot and start watering them. Elephant ears are a tender tuber native to the tropical portions of the world. Their woody and bulbous roots store food and energy much like a potato. In fact, they are edible (taro root) and used in Polynesian and Southeast Asian cuisine, most notably poi from the Hawaiian Islands. In my own garden, the now dormant tubers will produce their familiar gigantic foliage by the end of summer, given heat, humidity and plenty of water. In the fall, I simply allow the plants to freeze off. Before the ground freezes, I cut off all foliage and dig up the massive tubers, leaving as much of the root and soil ball in tact as possible. I place the roots on a layer of peat moss in the large and handled plastic "muck buckets" available at Menard's or The Home Depot. After a few weeks of curing in the garage, I top off the roots with a thick layer of dry peat moss and move the tubs to my basement's root cellar where temperatures are in the low 50's for most of the winter. Because the soil ball has been allowed to dry out and the peat moss is dry, the tubs are fairly easy to move. Now I let them rest, completely ignored, until late January or early February. Once I move them to the warm part of the basement and start watering them, new growth will appear in about 8-10 weeks. By the time I put them back in the garden in late May, many 2 foot sprouts will have emerged from the peat moss. With our short summers, this 3-4 month jump start is invaluable. Alocasias (also called elephant's ears), unlike colocasias, prefer not to go dormant. They do best when treated as any houseplant during the winter months. Not only do I overwinter 3 huge tubs of common elephant's ears, but

also some stunning favorites including; *Colocasia esculenta* 'Elena' (large chartreuse leaves), 'Red Stem' (also called 'Rhubarb'), and 'Coal Miner' (similar to 'Illustris' but bigger and bolder)".

NOTE: I've added some stunning new varieties to my collection since I wrote that article including; 'Mojito', 'Lime-aide' and 'Nancy's Revenge'.

ENTRY: FEBRUARY 14, 2011 (Microclimates in My Yard)

After many weeks of cold and snow, including one of the largest blizzards to ever hit the Midwest, we're in the midst of an amazing thaw. In just days, the many foot tall snow piles and drifts have been reduced to practically nothingness; revealing a few surprises. Among the surprises in my yard is a small patch of 1 1/2-2" tall daffodils along the foundation on the south side of the house. The microclimate in this teeny patch gives me blooms up to a month earlier than patches of the very same variety located out in the yard and away from the house.

By definition, a "microclimate" is the climate of a small, restricted area, that differs from the climate of the surrounding area. In gardening we usually talk about microclimates that are warmer than the norm, rather than cooler. We're talking about areas where we can grow plants meant for farther south, rather than farther north or, like my daffodils, an area where a plant's growing season comes earlier or is extended. The growing seasons of some microclimates in southern Wisconsin can be extended by up to a month or more, both in the spring and in the fall. The best examples are the immediate Lake Michigan shorelines of both Racine and Kenosha Counties where some Zone 6 plants can be grown with ease, while areas just blocks from the lake are Zone 5. The effect is even more pronounced on the eastern shore where, due to prevailing winds, some pockets of Zone 7 exist along the southeast shoreline of Lake Michigan.

Even the small lakes of Madison can have an effect on the microclimates of their shores. Though very, very rare, Maple Bluff has experienced early season lake effect snows off Lake Mendota before the lake freezes. As a floral delivery driver and a gardener, I get the opportunity to witness microclimates all over the city. For example, spring bulbs sometimes bloom up to a month earlier on the isthmus downtown than in the open in the surrounding suburbs. And just a few years ago, annuals along a west facing wall in front of a business on Park Street were blooming beautifully well into December--long after mine met their demise by a hard freeze here on the east side of Madison in early October.

Just weeks ago at the Garden Expo I got into a bit of a debate with two patrons about the hardiness of rosemary. Of course, rosemary isn't hardy in Wisconsin, but there was nothing I could say to convince those two women otherwise. They were being rather argumentative with their opinion. Just because they have rosemary that comes back in their gardens due to an extreme microclimate, doesn't mean I should misinform our customers by telling them that rosemary is hardy in Wisconsin. In their gardens, they are witnessing the extreme, rather than the rule. Their success with rosemary is all

about microclimates and not my apparent lack of knowledge. (By the way, Arp, considered one of the hardiest of the rosemaries, is only reliably hardy to Zone 7 and hardy to Zone 6 with protection.)

Another example of the impact of a microclimate on extending a plant's range is the fact that I have a friend in Madison (Zone 5) who didn't dig up her canna rhizomes that grew close to basement foundation along the south side of her house. Cannas are a tender tropical hardy into Zone 7 (and only then with winter protection). The northern edges of Zone 7 are a line from about northern Oklahoma to Virginia. Her clumps thrived, unprotected, growing ever larger with each subsequent season. Her lucky cannas were in microclimate heaven.

ENTRY: FEBRUARY 27, 2011 (Naga Jolokia Peppers--the World's Hottest)

Today was the day I revved up my heated seed starting mats in the basement to get an early start on some of those seeds and plants that take a little bit longer to get going. Among them are my Naga (aka Bhut) Jolokia (Ghost Pepper) seeds.

A number of years back, one of our ex-employees stopped by Klein's in the fall with a paper bag of dried peppers. He told us that these were Bhut Jolokia seeds from plants that he had grown in his own garden. He said that the seeds for his plants were brought here directly from India where this very old heirloom pepper had been found. His seeds germinated perfectly the following spring and Klein's was able to sell (and at a premium price) a fair amount of what was then the hottest peppers in the world at over 1,000,000 SHUs (Just this past December Bhut/Naga Jolokia was replaced by Naga Viper.). I grew a few of the plants myself and though I love very hot food, I can attest to their extreme and unbearable heat. Just a small amount used fresh in some of my recipes was hotter than many of my friends could handle. Peppers are 400 times as hot as Tobasco sauce. The flavor and fragrance is wonderfully smoky. In addition to being extremely hot, the peppers and plants are among the most beautiful I've seen. Plants are sturdy, bushy, very well branched and make excellent container specimens. The abundant fruits are smallish, wrinkly and ripen through shades of orange and red. Fruits of all colors are on the plant throughout the summer.

I was able to overwinter my initial plants for a couple of seasons before they finally became too woody and odd shaped. For a number of years, we were unable to find seeds through our seed sources (though they were available through the Chile Pepper Institute in New Mexico). Then in the spring of 2010, Thompson and Morgan began offering seeds through their catalog. I grew Naga Jolokias again in my garden last summer for the first time in years and I was reminded how much I missed this pepper in my collection. Besides the plants beauty, they are a great conversation piece with fellow gardeners. My plants produced so many peppers that I was giving them away all summer. In fact, one of my coworkers sold the peppers at her roadside booth in Fort Atkinson and couldn't keep up with the demand.

For this spring, we've ordered enough Naga Jolokia seed from Thompson and Morgan that we should be able to keep up with the demand. Seeds are very expensive at just ten for nearly \$7.00. If all goes well, we'll probably be selling individual plants for \$7 or 8 per plant. The price is well worth the experience of growing it. These are the seeds I'm now starting over the heating mat in my basement.

Many of the chile peppers, including habaneros, for example, require more time for germination and more time to grow before moved outside for our very short summers. If started too late, plants may not produce before summer's end. Growing them in containers encourages earlier flowering and fruiting. When grown in garden beds rather than in pots, they spend much of their energy rooting, rather than flowering and setting fruit. If you're planning on saving the seed for subsequent years, keep plants away from other peppers in order to avoid possible cross pollination. Plants grown in containers can be overwintered indoors as a houseplant in their pots.

KLEIN'S RECIPES OF THE MONTH--These are a selection of relatively simple recipes chosen by our staff. New recipes appear monthly. Enjoy!!

Introducing The International Herb Association's 2011 Herb of the Year: Horseradish! The following comes from their website at www.iherb.org

The Oracle at Delphi told Apollo that the radish was worth its weight in lead, the beet its weight in silver, and the horseradish its weight in gold. We don't place such values on our plants today, but it's hard to imagine Passover or hot roast beef without grated horseradish or cold seafood without cocktail sauce. Actually, horseradish only appeared in the Passover seder as maror in the Middle Ages (ca. 1215-1293) as Jews migrated north and eastward into colder climates. Horseradish provides a unique pungency different from that of black and red peppers, and the tall, broad leaves provide a textural contrast in the herb garden. Horseradish is also notably high in vitamin C and has anti-microbial activities to preserve meat. The root of horseradish is considered GRAS (Generally Recognized As Safe). Excessive doses of horseradish may lead to diarrhea or night sweats. One case of a heart attack has been recorded—the patient survived.

Once you grow horseradish, you'll have this hardy perennial forever; even the smallest piece of horseradish root can grow a new plant, and whenever you are absolutely sure you've eradicated the horseradish bed this time, 'lo and behold, it comes back. Superficially, horseradish resembles dock (*Rumex* spp.) with tall, stalked, slightly ruffled leaves.

Armoracia rusticana is one of three species in the genus, and may be an ancient hybrid of the other two species [*A. lacustris* (A. Gray) Al-Shehbaz & V. M. Bates and *A. sisymbroides* (DC.) Cajander]. All are smooth-leaved, perennial herbs with deep roots or rhizomes. The leaves are strap-like, either simple or dissected, and the flowers have four sepals and petals. *Armoracia* was the old Latin name for horseradish, while

rusticana means rustic or of the country. The most primitive name seems to be chren, still common to Slavic languages and introduced into German and French dialects in variations. The German Meerrettich means literally sea-radish, as it sometimes naturalizes near seashores, and this name provided the later English name horseradish; meer seems to have been misunderstood by the English for mähre, an old horse, as if for the rankness and toughness of the roots. Some have made the apocryphal claim that horseradish, an herb of northern Europe, was cultivated prior to the Exodus of the Hebrew slaves (c. 1500 B.C.E.) from Egypt. In England, it only became popular in England in the late 1600s. From there it was transferred to North America. In the past, commercial cultivation of horseradish in the U.S. was centered around Chicago; plants were brought to this area about 1856 by a German family named Sell, who gave roots to the Sass family. St. Louis was another commercial area, where horseradish has been grown since the 1890s. Today, the majority of horseradish is grown in Illinois, in the three counties closest to St. Louis.

If you grow horseradish in the home garden, early spring is the best time to plant the pencil-thin branches trimmed from larger roots. If you cannot plant the roots immediately, store them in plastic bags in the refrigerator until ready to plant. Choose a sunny location and work in plenty of rotted manure or compost to a depth of 10 inches. Depending upon your needs, plant one or two dozen roots, spacing them 12-to 18-inches apart. Set each piece so that the top is at ground level in a trench 3-to 5-inches deep. You may dig the roots as you need them, but after fall's first heavy frost is when the flavor is at its peak. In areas where the ground does not freeze, you may harvest throughout the winter! Remove only the largest roots, leaving the small ones to survive another season; roots that are more than three years old should be discarded as too tough.

To prepare horseradish sauce, scrape the roots, grate (with good ventilation to avoid asphyxiation), and combine 1/2 cup white vinegar and 1/4 teaspoon salt with every cup of grated root. Bottle tightly and refrigerate for up to two months; grated red beets or various mustards may also be added. For longer storage, freeze the grated horseradish. **Mix the sauce with ketchup to taste for shrimp cocktail sauce.** If you harvest too many roots in the fall, store them in damp sand or in the refrigerator for grating later. Serve horseradish only in porcelain or glass, never silver, which blackens on contact with horseradish.

Klein's will be carrying both the roots and potted plants this spring.

APPLE HORSERADISH GLAZED SALMON--A fantastic and simple recipe from the pages of the May 2004 issue of Cooking Light magazine.

1/3 cup apple jelly

1 TBS. fresh snipped chives

2TBS. prepared horseradish

1 TBS. champagne vinegar

1/2 tsp. kosher salt, divided

4 x 6 oz. salmon fillets (about 1" thick)

1/4 tsp. pepper
2 tsp. olive oil

Preheat oven to 350°. Combine the jelly, chives, horseradish, vinegar and 1/4 tsp. salt with a whisk. Sprinkle the salmon with 1/4 tsp. salt and the pepper. Heat oil in a large, oven-safe, non-stick skillet over medium heat. Add the salmon and cook skin side up 4 minutes. Turn the salmon and brush with half of the apple jelly mixture. Bake for 5 minutes or until the fish flakes easily. Brush with the rest of the apple mixture and serve. Serves 4.

BLOODY MARYS FOR A CROWD--Horseradish is an integral part of any great Bloody Mary recipe and for many, their only encounter with the herb.

4 cups tomato juice
1 cup vodka (or tequila or rum for a twist)
2 TBS. fresh lemon juice
1 to 1 1/2 TBS. prepared horseradish
2 tsp. Tobasco
2 tsp. Worcestershire sauce
1/4 tsp. pepper
1/2 tsp. brown sugar
1/4 tsp. ground celery seed or celery salt to taste if a saltier drink is desired.
Celery sticks, sliced pickles, lemon slices for garnish

Combine all ingredients and mix well in a pitcher. Serve over ice and garnish. Serves 10.

GERMAN BEET SALAD--This is a family favorite from the "old country". Enjoy!

1 lb. beets, peeling on and greens removed
1 TBS. prepared horseradish
1 medium onion
5 TBS. vegetable oil
3-5 TBS. vinegar
1/2 tsp. caraway seed, lightly crushed
salt and pepper to taste
pinch of sugar or to taste
1/2 tsp. mustard seed, lightly crushed
chopped parsley

Boil the beets in plenty of water for 40-60 minutes, depending on the size of the beets, until tender. Once tender, plunge into cold water and let cool. Trim the roots and tops and slip the beets from their skins. Dice or slice the beets as desired. Chop or slice the onion. In a bowl, combine the beets, onion and horseradish. In a small bowl, whisk together the oil, vinegar (to taste), caraway, salt, pepper, sugar and mustard seed. Pour over the beet mixture, toss lightly and allow to stand at least 1 hour before serving, or overnight. Garnish with parsley. Keeps at least a week in the refrigerator and freezes well. Serves 4.

ROAST VEGETABLE GRATIN--From Vermont Valley Farm's CSA newsletter, Plow Shares, of October 17, 2002.

8 cups root vegetables of choice (potatoes, sweet potatoes, carrots, daikon radish, turnips, rutabaga, leeks, beets, onions, etc.), cut into chunks

2 TBS. olive oil

1/4 cup white wine, sherry or broth

1 TBS. fresh snipped or 1 tsp. dried rosemary

1 TBS. chopped garlic

salt and pepper

2 TBS. butter

3 TBS. flour

1 1/2 cups milk

2 TBS. horseradish

1 cup shredded smoked Swiss or cheese of choice

3 TBS. dried bread crumbs

Heat oven to 400 degrees. Toss veggies, oil, wine, rosemary, garlic, salt and pepper together in a very large bowl. Spread into a large baking dish. Cover tightly with foil and bake 25 minutes. Remove the foil, turn the veggies and bake until the veggies are tender and browning, about 20-30 minutes more. Meanwhile, melt the butter in a saucepan. Stir in the flour and cook over low heat for a few minutes. Gradually whisk in the milk and bring to a boil, whisking constantly. Lower the heat and cook gently 10 minutes. Season with salt and pepper. Stir in the horseradish. When the veggies are tender, stir the sauce into the veggies. Sprinkle with the cheese and bread crumbs and continue to bake for 15-20 minutes. Serves 6-8.

COLE SLAW WITH HORSERADISH AND DILL--This recipe comes to us from the International Herb Association's own website.

5 cups coarsely grated or finely shredded green cabbage

1 medium grated carrot

1/3 cup diced grated red or yellow onion

About 1/2 to 1 teaspoon salt

Freshly ground black pepper

Scant 1 cup good-quality mayonnaise

2 tablespoons freshly grated or prepared horseradish, or to taste

About 2 to 3 tablespoons chopped dill (about 1 tsp. dried)

About 2 tablespoons apple cider vinegar

About 1 1/2 tablespoons sugar or pure maple syrup

1/2 teaspoon Hungarian-style paprika, optional

Combine the cabbage, carrot and onion in a large bowl, season with salt and pepper (start with about 1/2 teaspoon of salt and scant 1/2 teaspoon pepper), and toss well. Add the mayonnaise, horseradish, dill, vinegar, and sugar or maple syrup. (I find if you use the syrup--you need a little more than when using sugar.) Sprinkle with the paprika if desired.

Cover and refrigerate for at least an hour. Remove from refrigerator, stir, and taste for seasoning. Adjust with a little more horseradish, vinegar, sugar, salt and pepper, or mayonnaise according to taste. Keep refrigerated until ready to serve; keeps about 3 to 4 days. Serves 6.

NEW PRODUCT SPOTLIGHT--Each month we will spotlight some new product that we already carry or one that we've taken note of and plan to carry in the near future. Likewise, if you would like to see Klein's to carry a product that we don't currently, please let us know. Our goal is to be responsive to the marketplace and to our loyal clientele. If a product fits into our profile, we will make every effort to get it into our store. In addition, we may be able to special order an item for you, whether plant or hard good, given enough time.

This month's spotlight features: **Grow-A-Head™ “**Grow Me, Trim Me, Love Me**”**

A very pleasant surprise at the recent Wisconsin Public Television Garden Expo held at the Alliant Energy Center was the popularity and interest in **Grow-A-Heads** at our booths. **Grow-A-Heads** are a fun and silly way for both adults and children to watch plants grow and are a very simple way to teach children about plants with very quick visual results. Yesterday's chia pets are today's **Grow-A-Heads**. The following comes from the Grow-A-Head website at www.grow-a-head.com.

“Grow-A-Heads are a fun way to watch plants grow and change before your eyes. They are living examples demonstrating several important scientific principles. The minute you add water to your Grow-A-Heads, you set in motion a series of complex organic processes.”

GROWING YOUR HEAD

Submerge your Grow-A-Head completely under water until thoroughly wet and the air bubbles stop. Fill the vase with water. Place your Grow-A-Head onto the vase making sure the wick is in the vase. This is how your Grow-A-Head drinks!

Turn the plastic container that comes with your Grow-A-Head upside down and place it over the vase and head, creating a “mini greenhouse” effect. Once the grass seed begins to germinate (about 5-7 days) you will see white “fuzz” (this is NOT mold.) Keep your Grow-A-Head covered until several seeds start to grow. Remove the plastic container. Your Grow-A-Head will continue to drink through the wick. Always make sure your Grow-A-Head has plenty of water to drink. Every now & then you can change the water in the vase or as a treat don't be afraid to give the entire Grow-A-Head a bath!

Soon the Grow-A-Head “hair” will grow longer and thicker. You can then cut and style the “hair” or just watch it grow. Use tweezers to remove any unwanted grass or root growth.

Your Grow-A-Head will grow in regular home or office light. Before use, store your Grow-A-Head in a cool dry place and out of the sun.

WHAT YOU WILL LEARN ABOUT FROM YOUR GROW-A-HEAD:

COIR DUST

Your Grow-A-Heads is made up of coir dust . Coir dust is a renewable resource made from coconut husks. Formerly a waste product left behind during coconut processing, coir is often used as an alternative to peat moss.

PERENNIAL RYE GRASS SEED

Grow-A-Heads also contains Perennial Rye grass seed. Perennial Rye is noted for its quick germination time and strong roots; it is a popular choice for golf courses and lawns throughout the world. All seeds contain the building blocks of what will grow into the roots, stems and leaves of a plant. Seeds are considered “dormant” (sleeping)until they receive water and light.

ABSORPTION

Before a seed sprouts it must absorb water. Water helps transform stored food into energy needed for growth. Water is pulled up through the wick on the Grow-A-Heads which starts a process called absorption.

CONDENSATION

Another process you will observe is condensation. This is when a gas vapor turns into a liquid. While your Grow-A-Heads is under it’s plastic cover for the first few days,water droplets may form on the inside. In an enclosed environment like this, the amount of water vapor in the air can easily exceed the capacity of the air to hold it, so the vapor turns back into actual water droplets. These droplets are what you see inside the cover.

GERMINATION

The combination of water and light help the seeds to geminate. Germination is the sprouting of a seed, and can take anywhere from a few hours to several weeks, depending on the plant. With proper light and moisture, your Grow-A-Heads should sprout in just 5-7 days. Once the seeds have sprouted, roots begin to form. Roots not only help support a growing plant, they also carry nutrients to all the different plant parts. A number of forces help to move liquids through the plant’s circulatory system.

TRANSPIRATION

Transpiration is a major force in this process. Transpiration is the release of water through the leaves of a plant. Since dry air seeks moisture, it pulls liquid all the way up through the plant until it comes out of the leaves through stomata, which are tiny pores on the leaf surface. The rate of transpiration (how much water is evaporated as it comes

through the stomata) is affected by other environmental factors such as sunlight, humidity, wind and temperature.

PHOTOSYNTHESIS

Plants are able to make food using energy derived from light. This process is called photosynthesis. Light provides the energy that helps change water and carbon dioxide into oxygen. Chlorophyll is the substance found in plants that helps them to absorb energy from light. Of all the colors in the color spectrum, chlorophyll absorbs mostly blue and red light. Since green and yellow light are not effectively absorbed by chlorophyll, light from these colors are either reflected by leaves or pass through them, which is why most plants leaves are green.

NATURAL NEWS--

How To Clean Your Home's 10 Germiest Places

By Robyn Griggs Lawrence

At this point in the season, most of us know at least one person who's fighting a cold or flu. We can't do much about the germs flying around in schools, workplaces and stores, but we can do a lot to make sure our homes aren't making us sick. In the March/April issue of Natural Home magazine, health editor Amy Mayfield gives a great rundown on how to keep our home's 10 germiest places germ-free.

1. Sponges and rags. Wash sponges and rags with soap and hot water between uses or replace these items often; wash your hands after touching sponges. Zapping a wet sponge in the microwave for four minutes will kill most disease-causing germs.

2. Cutting boards. Don't chop vegetables or other ready-to-eat foods on a cutting board used to trim meat, poultry or fish. Wash boards thoroughly with dish detergent and hot water after each use. Replace boards that become deeply scratched.

3. Kitchen surfaces. Spray down countertops with a solution of equal parts warm water and white vinegar and wipe dry using a soft cloth. Thoroughly clean the faucet, sink and knobs, too.

4. Doorknobs. Wash your hands after touching a public doorknob, and regularly clean your own doorknobs with a nontoxic all-purpose cleaner (store-bought or homemade) diluted in hot water.

5. Toothbrushes. Brushing transfers plaque, bacteria and more to your toothbrush. After each use, rinse the toothbrush with tap water and shake several times. Store upright to allow the toothbrush to air dry. Replace it every three months.

6. Shared phones. Unplug or turn off the phone, then spray a cloth with all-purpose cleaner and wipe down the phone. Thoroughly clean the mouthpiece, the germiest part. Use a cotton swab dipped in isopropyl alcohol to clean the number buttons and the spaces between them.

7. Washers and dryers. To thoroughly clean the washer, start a warm wash cycle (with no clothes) and add 5 cups of white vinegar. Run the cycle as normal. Repeat every six months.

8. The remote. Dilute all-purpose cleaner or white vinegar in warm water, then wet a soft cloth with the solution. Wipe the remote, then dry with another soft cloth.

9. Shower curtains. Spray down vinyl curtains regularly with a solution of equal parts white vinegar and warm water; wash cloth curtains according to label instructions at least once a month.

10. The vacuum. Change the bags often, and remove the brushes and filters for a quick cleaning monthly. Clean the cavity of a bagless vacuum with all-purpose cleaner and let it air dry.

Source: www.motherearthnews.com

MARCH'S PLANT OF THE MONTH:

WINTER BLOOMING JASMINE (*Jasminum polyanthum*)

It's only for these few months and weeks in late winter and early spring that winter-blooming jasmine becomes readily available at retail outlets here in the north. Their intoxicating fragrance is unsurpassed for brightening one's spirit as we await the onset of spring in just a few short weeks. This vining member of the olive family is equally attractive scrambling up a trellis as it is cascading from a hanging basket when placed in any bright location. In the south, this lovely and easy-to-grow vine is available year round as a garden plant. Even here in the north, winter-blooming jasmine makes for an exceptional annual vine, growing to 6 or more feet and sometimes treating us to a few fall blooms as the weather cools and the days shorten. Once it gets too cold outside, place indoors in a bright location. By late winter, your plant will be ready to put on another intoxicating display.

To get winter-blooming jasmine to bloom properly, it must be allowed to follow its natural rhythms. Once the weather warms in May, place the plant outdoors in a very sunny spot where it will scramble vigorously up any support. In the fall, the jasmine must be exposed to 6 weeks of very cool, but not freezing, temperatures. These cool temps force the plant to set buds. Because the flower buds are set, plants cannot be pruned back at this time if they are to bloom in late winter. Flower buds may remain on the plant all winter without blooming. Then suddenly in February or March, buds enlarge and turn pink and plants burst into bloom with star-shaped pure white flowers. The

cooler the plant is kept, the longer the plant will continue blooming. The fragrance is strongest at the end of the day. It's only after the plant has finished blooming that it can be pruned back hard to start the cycle anew.

Winter-blooming jasmine is a very easy-to-grow houseplant with very few requirements. Plants like to be kept moderately moist while actively growing and then on the dry side during their dormant state after blooming. Fertilize regularly during the summer months then lightly, if at all, during the winter and while blooming. Plants are easily propagated by stem cuttings when pruning the plant or in early summer. Healthy plants can live for many years and will eventually form a substantial trunk. Winter-blooming jasmine is a native of China.

Winter-blooming jasmine is currently available at many flower shops, garden centers and even home improvement stores. They are also available on-line almost year round.

YOU ASKED THE MAD GARDENER. . .

Hello, I have a question about my Nikko Blue hydrangea. I would like to know how to get more blooms out of this hydrangea. Last year I only had one bloom on the plant. It does die back every year. I hesitate to add fertilizer as it may change the pH of the soil after I have added aluminum sulfate for the acidity. Can you help? Sue

Hi Sue,

Sadly, "Nikko Blue" is not the best hydrangea for this area in that it is only borderline hardy here in southern Wisconsin. Even if plants make it through our winters, they oftentimes die back to the ground as you've experienced. They then resprout very nicely in the spring, but are then nipped by late spring cold snaps that can stunt or even kill the growing tips and the forming flower buds. The past few springs have been especially bad because we've had early warm spells followed by cold weather and frost in May. A better "blue" hydrangea choice for our area is "Endless Summer". It was developed in Minnesota, so is exceptionally hardy; though the plant must still be protected from late April and May frosts. I have an "Endless Summer" in my garden and I, too, was at first very disappointed by even its performance after being so highly touted. Later I learned from experience that I had to protect even this very hardy hydrangea from those late cold snaps in order for it to bloom well. Now I have the most amazing blue flowers (with the added aluminum sulfate) early every summer. And because "Endless Summer" is a rebloomer, I'm treated with sporadic blooming for the rest of the season instead of just early summer. I now cover my plant each winter and am ready to throw a blanket over it on nights when the weather gets below freezing in late April and early May. Until "Endless Summer" "Nikko Blue" was the only blue hydrangea that even came close to being hardy here in Wisconsin and there are beautiful specimens around town in perfect microclimates.

Another reason hydrangeas don't bloom well, is too much shade. Though hydrangeas are shade tolerant, they prefer (minimally) full morning sun to bloom well. The plants will look beautiful and healthy in more shade, but usually fail to bloom.

As far as fertilizer goes, feel free to use a "bloom booster" higher-in-phosphorous fertilizer on your plants during the blooming season. It won't much affect the aluminum sulfate you're using around the plant(s) in the spring. Apply the correct amount of aluminum sulfate just once each year early in the spring and work in well. I also drench my plants with the occasional watering can of Mir-acid (or something similar), to give the plants a quick shot of acid. Always follow container instructions and never overuse any fertilizer. Following all of the tips above, I've been very happy with my blue hydrangea.

I hope this was of some help and please let me know what happens this season.
Thanks for your question.
The Mad Gardener

AROUND TOWN:

For neighborhood events or garden tours that you would like posted in our monthly newsletter, please contact Rick at (608) 244-5661 or rick@kleinsfloral.com or Sue at sue@kleinsfloral.com. Please include all details, i.e. dates, locations, prices, brief description, etc. Events must be garden related and must take place in the Madison vicinity and we must receive your information by the first of the month in which the event takes place for it to appear in that month's newsletter. This is a great opportunity for free advertising.

Dane County Winter Farmer's Market

Saturdays, January 8 thru April 19, 8:00-noon
Madison Senior Center
330 W. Mifflin

For details visit www.madfarmmkt.org

Olbrich's Garden's Bolz Conservatory Exhibit - From Bean to Coffee Cup

January 8 through March 20, 2011
Daily from 10:00-4:00, Sundays 10:00-5:00
In the Bolz Conservatory

The history of the coffee bean is as rich as double espresso and dates back to the 6th Century. Whether you call it java, mud, or a shot in the arm, and estimated 2 billion cups are consumed every day around the world - making coffee the most popular beverage

in the world. Discover the source and story of the coffee bean in this Bolz Conservatory exhibit.

Olbrich Botanical Gardens
3330 Atwood Ave., Madison
608/246-4550 or www.olbrich.org for details

Olbrich Garden's Spring Show: Tour de Fleur

March 5 thru March 20
Daily from 10:00-4:00
In the Olbrich Atrium

Instead of the Tour de France, Olbrich's 2011 Spring Flower Show is the Tour de Fleur - featuring gorgeous spring flowers and travel by bicycle.

Immerse yourself in the splendor of spring and take a journey through the history of bicycles. Start with one of the earliest bikes - a pedal-less velocipede, on which the rider sat and walked or coasted. Another well-known historical bike, the penny-farthing, with its very large front wheel, will be featured too. Visitors can also see the evolution of triangle frame bikes that are most common now. Be amazed by a sculpture made of bike parts, and a 'living' bike covered with micro greens.

Meander through an array of spring flowers and leave the stark winter landscape behind. Relish in the fragrance of hyacinths and admire the delicate petals of elegant tulips and the sunny hues of brilliant daffodils.

A \$2 donation is suggested. Proceeds benefit Olbrich Gardens.

Select flowers from the show will be available for purchase on Monday, March 21 at 12 pm until supplies last.

During the members-only preview party on Saturday, March 5, members receive 20% off in Olbrich's Growing Gifts shop from 8 am until 5 pm!

Olbrich Botanical Gardens
3330 Atwood Ave., Madison
608/246-4550 or www.olbrich.org for details

The Wisconsin Gardener "Mistakes We have Made"

Sunday, March 6, 5:30 p.m.
on Wisconsin Public Television

Check local listings for the station nearest you.

Host Shelley Ryan takes a lighthearted look at gardening mistakes we have all made. At Mayflower Greenhouse in Hobart, Jan Wos helps correct common mistakes made to container plantings including underwatering, overwatering and poor pruning. In Egg Harbor, visit a shopping mall where the trees and shrubs were planted too close to the road and buildings. The site is currently in the process of being re-landscaped. UW-Extension Plant Pathologist Brian Hudelson fesses up to drowning his own tree and shares some other common tree planting mistakes including strangulation. The program ends with a pruning nightmare and luckily some advice on how to fix it.

For more information, visit www.wpt.org/garden

Butterflies in Wisconsin

Thursday, March 6, 9:00-11:30 am

Butterfly enthusiast and photographer Ann Thering will guide us through identification and natural history of many of the 150+ species of butterflies in Wisconsin. Tips on finding butterflies, what you can do to conserve butterflies, and some notes on rearing leps will also be covered. Ann, who has a master's degree in biology, spends as much time as possible seeking butterflies and other insects in the prairies, woods, and wetlands of Wisconsin. She is a founding member of the Southern Wisconsin Butterfly Association, and exhibits her photography around the state (see www.annthering.com).

University of WI Arboretum
1207 Seminole Hwy.
Madison, WI 53711
608/263-7888 or <http://uwarboretum.org/events/>

2011 Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) Open House

Sunday, March 13, 1:00 - 4:00 pm

Monona Terrace

1 John Nolen Dr., Madison, Wisconsin

--Celebrating 18 Years of making farm fresh, local foods accessible residents throughout southern Wisconsin

Bring your friends and neighbors to this community event, featuring a diverse array of CSA farms, workshops, kids' activities, music, a raffle, and tasty samples of farm-fresh foods to showcase the many benefits of CSA.

The event's expansion to the Monona Terrace represents the growing interest in and need for CSA shares. Previously this event had been held at Olbrich Botanical Gardens. The Annual CSA Open House brings most of the CSA growers serving the Madison area right to one location. You can meet, mingle with, learn from, and sign up for your CSA shares right here at the Monona Terrace.

Madison Area Community Supported Agriculture Coalition
303 s. Paterson St., Ste. 1B
Madison, WI 53703
608/226-0300
For more about them visit: www.macsac.org

Annual Spring Symposium: Your Garden: Maximized! Small Space Gardening

Saturday, March 26, 7:00 a.m.-4:15 p.m.
at Rotary Botanical Gardens

Registration deadline: March 14th

Price:

\$40 for RBG Friends or any WI or IL Certified Master Gardener

\$50 General Public

**Note - fee includes lunch **

Call 608-754-1779 or visit the website to register

Speakers include:

Jeff Epping--Director of Horticulture at Olbrich Botanical Gardens in Madison

Doreen Howard--acclaimed magazine editor, author and photographer

Ed Lyon--Director of the Allen Centennial Gardens on the UW campus in Madison

Mark Dwyer--Director of Horticulture at Rotary Botanical Gardens

Rotary Botanical Gardens
1455 Palmer Dr., Janesville, WI
608/752-3885 or www.rotarygardens.org

Designing Native Gardens

Saturday, March 26, 12:00-3:30 pm

Saturday, April 2, 12:00-3:30 pm

Held on two consecutive Saturdays, this class helps homeowners which native wildflowers to use in their home landscape. The first session discusses how to analyze your property to determine an appropriate native landscape including design

considerations. The second session focuses on site preparation, planting and maintenance and a discussion of individual projects. Registration required. (\$40 or \$36 for members of Friends of the Arboretum)

University of WI Arboretum
1207 Seminole Hwy.
Madison, WI 53711
608/263-7888 or <http://uwarboretum.org/events/>

Outdoor Living Extravaganza: a Retreat & Seminar with Proven Winners

Friday, April 8, 8:30 a.m.-4:00 p.m.
Peck Center at the Milwaukee Zoo
10001 W. Blue Mound Rd., Milwaukee

Cost: \$80/person

Registration includes the seminar, a catered lunch, snacks throughout the day, raffle prizes, and a gift bag filled with fun and useful gardening items.

You'll learn from our experts about creative new ways to use color, the easiest ways to grow plant varieties, how to put together exceptional containers, and much more.

Speakers include:

Kerry Meyer--PW Program Manager, "Only the Best for Your Garden"

Melinda Myers--Gardening Expert & TV Host, "Small Space Gardens"

Tim Wood of Spring Meadow Nursery, "The Hunt for New Plants"

P. Allen Smith--Gardening Expert & TV Host, "Creating Beauty: Stunning Solutions for Every Garden"

To register, visit www.provenwinners.com or call 877-865-5818

MARCH IN THE GARDEN--A checklist of things to do this month.

- ___ Pinch back over wintered geraniums one last time. Root cuttings if needed.
- ___ Check perennials for heaving during warm spells. Remulch as needed.
- ___ Check for early spring bloomers like crocus, winter aconite & hellebores.
- ___ Begin uncovering roses by month's end.
- ___ Continue bringing out your cooled forced bulbs for indoor enjoyment.
- ___ Inspect stored summer bulbs like dahlias, cannas and glads for rotting.
- ___ Check for and treat for pests on plants brought in from the garden.
- ___ Keep birdfeeders full. Clean periodically with soap and water.
- ___ Keep birdbaths full and clean for the return of the first robins & other arrivals.
- ___ Repair and clean out birdhouses. Early arrivals will be here soon!

- ___ Inventory last year's leftover seeds before ordering or buying new ones.
- ___ Seed starting is in full swing: petunias, tomatoes, peppers and cole crops.
- ___ Sterilize seed starting equipment and pots with a 1:16 bleach solution.
- ___ Shop for summer bulbs like gladiolas, lilies and dahlias.
- ___ Remove mulch & rodent protection (chicken wire) from tulip and crocus beds
- ___ Use the winter days to plan next summer's garden.
- ___ March is the month to prune most fruit trees and apply dormant oil.
- ___ Prune late summer and fall blooming shrubs.
- ___ Do not prune spring blooming shrubs like lilacs, forsythia or viburnum.
- ___ Begin bringing in branches for forcing: pussy willow, forsythia, quince, etc.
- ___ As the days lengthen and new growth occurs, increase fertilizing houseplants
- ___ Check your garden for any plant damage from weather or rodents.
- ___ Ready the lawn mower---just a few weeks to go.
- ___ Visit Klein's---the showrooms are filling up with spring annuals. Pansies, violas, calendula, cole crops & onion sets become available by month's end.

A SEED STARTING PRIMER--

Starting your own plants from seed can be both rewarding and frustrating for the beginning gardener. From experience, it's best to start out slow. This eliminates some of the frustration. Experience will gain you knowledge and confidence. Before starting your seeds, read the packet and get a little basic information. Some seeds are best sown directly in the garden come spring and not started indoors. It's best to do a little research by going on-line or purchasing a good gardening book. The packets themselves will usually tell you whether to direct sow in the garden or how many weeks before our last frost date to sow indoors. Our last frost date is about May 10. Using a calendar, count back from May 10 and this will be your sow date.

One can start seeds on any sunny windowsill and in almost any container. Warmth and moisture are critical in getting most seeds to germinate. But a few pieces of basic and inexpensive equipment purchased at your garden center and/or hardware store will help you get started and make your seed starting experience a great success. Here is a shopping list:

- *A heating mat--makes seeds germinate quickly and uniformly
- *A few 10x20" trays without holes
- *A few clear humidity domes
- *A sterile seed starting mix
- *A 4' shop lamp w/ 2 fluorescent bulbs (you don't need "gro-lights")
or a seed growing rack if you'd like to make an investment
- *A few 10x20" trays with holes
- *A few sheets of empty cell packs, e.g. 4-packs or 6-packs
- *A water mister
- *A timer
- *A soilless potting mix

All of the above items, except the timer, are available at Klein's.

Again, following package instructions, sow the seeds, as many as you want, in a very shallow, open container, filled with moistened seed starting mix. This container can be anything from very low or cut off dairy containers to disposable food storage containers. Per package instructions, cover or don't cover the seed. Some seeds require light for germination. Next place your seeded containers in a tray **without holes**, mist them till well watered and cover with a humidity dome. Place your covered tray on the plugged in heating mat under the shop light. Set your timer so the shop light is on for 13 hours (off for 11 hours).

In a few days, as your seeds begin to sprout, remove them from under the humidity dome and place in a well-lit, warm location. Keep your seeds and seedlings moist. Different seeds sprout at different rates so this can take from a few days to a few weeks. Once all your seeds have germinated, unplug your heating mat. You can now move all of your seedlings to under the shop light still set at 13 hours.

Once your seedlings have 2 sets of "real" leaves it's time to "**prick them out**" (transplant them). Do this by placing a sheet of empty cell packs in a tray **with holes**. The holes now become necessary for proper drainage. Fill the cells with soilless potting mix and moisten well with the mister. Using a pen or pencil "dibble" a hole into each of the cells. This is where you'll now place your seedling. Remove the seed starting mix and seedlings as a clump from their starting containers. Gently break apart this root ball, separating your seedlings. The pen or pencil will come in handy as an added tool to help separate the seedlings. Carefully place one seedling in each of the holes you put in the prepped cells. Gently firm in with your finger tips. Mist well to water thoroughly and place in a warm, well lit area. Using your shop light again makes this easy. The seedlings may seem weak and somewhat abused, but they're very resilient and will pop back quickly. When watering, fertilize your new plants with a very dilute solution, rather than at full rate. By May 10 your flowers and vegetables should be ready to put in your garden and you can say that you did it yourself--beginning to end.

In addition to the Livingston, Olds & Northrup King available at Klein's, check out the following seed sources:

All offer free print catalogs and easy on-line ordering. Seeds usually arrive within just a few days after an order is placed.

Some of our very favorite seed and plant sources include:

For seeds:

Baker Creek Heirloom Seeds @ www.RareSeeds.com or 417/924-8887

Burpee @ www.burpee.com or 800/888-1447

Harris Seeds @ www.harrisseed.com or 800/514-4441

Johnny's Select Seeds @ www.johnnyseeds.com or 207/861-3901

Jung's Seeds @ www.jungseed.com or 800/247-5864

Park's Seeds @ www.parkseed.com or 800/845-3369

Seeds of Change @ www.seedsofchange.com or 888/762-7333
Seed Savers @ www.seedsavers.org or 563/382-5990
Select Seeds @ www.selectseeds.com or 800/684-0395
Territorial Seeds @ www.territoralseed.com or 888/657-3131
Thompson & Morgan @ www.thompson-morgan.com or 800/274-7333

For bulbs:

Brent & Becky's Bulbs @ www.brentandbeckysbulbs.com or 877/661-2852
Colorblends @ www.colorblends.com or 888/847-8637
John Scheeper's @ www.johnscheepers.com or 860/567-0838
McClure & Zimmerman @ www.mzbulb.com or 800/883-6998

For plants:

Heronswood Nursery @ www.heronswood.com or 360/297-4172
High Country Gardens @ www.highcountrygardens.com or 800/925-9387
Logee's Greenhouses @ www.logees.com or 888/330-8038
Plant Delights Nursery @ www.plantdelights.com or 912/772-4794
Roots and Rhizomes @ www.rootsrhizomes.com or 800/374-5035
Wayside Gardens @ www.waysidegardens.com or 800/213-0379
White Flower Farm @ www.whiteflowerfarm.com or 800/503-9624

Note: To receive every possible seed, plant or garden supply catalog imaginable, check out **Cyndi's Catalog of Garden Catalogs** @ www.gardenlist.com. Most catalogs are free and make for great winter reading!

BEHIND THE SCENES AT KLEIN'S--This is a sneak peek of what is going on each month behind the scenes in our greenhouses. Many people are unaware that our facility operates year round or that we have 10 more greenhouses on the property in addition to the 6 open for retail. At any given moment we already have a jump on the upcoming season--be it poinsettias in July, geraniums in December or fall mums in May.

IN MARCH:

---Transplanting is in full swing on the transplanting line in our back greenhouses. Employees work 8-10 hour shifts planting thousands of plugs and tiny seedlings into the cell packs you purchase in the spring. Once planted, the flats move by conveyor and then monorail into the various greenhouses, all kept at different temperatures depending on the plant.

---The greenhouses and showrooms are filling fast with thousands of hanging and potted plants. We're constantly moving product around, trying to make the best use of our limited space.

---By the end of the month we're moving product outside into cold frames and

hoop houses. We move product that is very cold tolerant, such as pansies, dianthus, dusty miller, alyssum and even petunias. The cold keeps them compact and pest free and hardens them off for the transition outside. We also need the room in our ever-filling greenhouses.

---Perennial plugs arrive and are stepped up into 3 1/2" and quart sizes. Our perennials are also grown quite cold so they invest their energy into rooting out, rather than growing. Plants remain compact. Any remaining perennials from last season are placed into cold frames.

---Geraniums are pinched and shaped for the last time by the first week of the month. Any later pinching will delay blooming too much for spring sales.

---Retail items are arriving nonstop for unpacking and pricing, everything from garden ornaments and pottery to pesticides and fertilizers.

EMPLOYEE PROFILE--MARK ANDERSON

It was February, 2006 when Mark Anderson and his wife, Carmen, hesitantly approached the Klein's booth at the annual Garden Expo at the Alliant Energy Center. Their agenda was blatantly different than the majority of the visitors to our busy booth. Most came by merely to check out our lovely primrose and rosemary. Not the Andersons. After multi-visits, it was Carmen who made that bold first move...she asked for a job application for her plant obsessed husband. It's that obsession that makes for the perfect victim when hiring at a garden center...they'll do anything for that employee discount. We've got them FOREVER! (Wicked Laugh)

Over five years later, the obsession worsens and yes, Mark does talk about working at Klein's forever. In addition to working seasonally at Klein's, Mark has worked for more than 25 years at the Walgreen's Distribution Center in Windsor, where he accounts for and documents returned medications from the retail outlets.

Mark says that his love of gardening stems from his mother, who had a gorgeous rose garden as he was growing up here on Madison's east side. Even with his many green thumbs, he says he has not had the success with roses that his mother had. During his high school years at LaFollette, Mark did some volunteer work with the Department of Natural Resources. His interest in nature continued to blossom through his work in forests and area trout streams. In fact, Mark toyed with a career in forest management during a brief stint at Madison Area Technical College.

Mark says his love of nature evolved into a passion for gardening after being diagnosed with a hereditary back problem in the spring of 1998. He says he knew he had an interest in gardening immediately after he and Carmen bought their lovely DeForest home in the early 90's. Until his diagnosis, however, Mark's passion had been directed toward competing in marathons and triathlons. His new limitations redirected his energy.

We now flip the page to today and witness the redirection of that energy and the evolution of passion into obsession. After much labor, Mark and Carmen's garden is an ongoing masterpiece of design and color. Their garden incorporates elements of all facets of design, using height, texture, light and motion. Mark's gardens sprawl and fill most niches of their rather large lot, giving the feeling of walking from room to room, each room having a different theme. Themes include an Italian garden, an Asian garden, a tropical garden, a shade garden and various seating areas throughout the yard. Mark is especially proud of his water features, including a pond that has taken four years to achieve perfection.

Mark and Carmen are members of the Windsor Area Garden Club, whose main event is a garden tour held each July throughout the Windsor and DeForest area. This is the perfect opportunity for everyone to view their sanctuary. Mark also works at Klein's, of course, primarily in the springtime. After a full day at Walgreens, Mark still finds the energy to put in a few hours working at the greenhouse, primarily in our perennial area. Mark thrives on increasing his plant knowledge, seeing all that is new at the garden center and partaking in that dangerous employee discount, a means by which Mark's obsession is fed.

Recently, Mark has added floral delivery to his Klein's resume. If all goes as planned, Mark says he plans on working solely at Klein's once he retires from Walgreen's in the not-to-distant future. Mark is also a Certified Master Gardener and a member of the Hardy Plant Society.

PERMANENT FEATURES-- KLEIN'S MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

Have our monthly newsletter e-mailed to you automatically by signing up on the right side of our home page. We'll offer monthly tips, greenhouse news and tidbits, specials and recipes. . .everything you need to know from your favorite Madison greenhouse. And tell your friends. It's easy to do.

THE MAD GARDENER--"Madison's Firsthand Source for Expert Gardening Advice"

Ask us your gardening questions by e-mailing us at madgardener@kleinsfloral.com. Klein's in-house **Mad Gardener** will e-mail you with an answer as promptly as we can. The link is posted on our home page and in all newsletters.

We can only answer those questions pertaining to gardening in Southern Wisconsin and we reserve the right to leave correspondence unanswered at our discretion. Please allow 2-3 days for a response.

FACEBOOK

Klein's has joined the Facebook frenzy. Become a fan of Klein's by visiting us at www.facebook.com.. We continuously post company updates and new pictures

SENIOR CITIZEN DISCOUNT

We offer a 10% Off Senior Citizen Discount every Tuesday to those 62 and above. This discount is not in addition to other discounts or sales. Please mention that you are a senior before we ring up your purchases. Does not apply to wire out orders or services, i.e. delivery, potting, etc.

BUCKY BOOK COUPON

Klein's is again showing our proud support of community UW athletics and academics with advertising and coupons in the 2010 edition of the Bucky Book. We are also selling the 2010 edition in-store--the perfect gift. Visit www.buckybook.com for more information and to order your copy.

RECYCLING POTS & TRAYS

The City of Madison will recycle rinsed out hard plastic pots and trays when brought to their drop-off locations at 4602 Sycamore Ave. and 1501 West Badger Rd. They do not accept light plastic or multi-celled packs. White plastic #5's are also not accepted in city recycling bins or at the drop-off sites. For more information call 267-2626 or visit www.cityofmadison.com/streets/RigidPlasticRecyclingDropOff.cfm

KLEIN'S "BLOOMING PLANT OR FRESH FLOWER CLUB"

Send or receive 3 month's, 6 month's or a whole year's worth of seasonal blooming plants or fresh flower arrangements and SAVE!!

There's no easier way to give gorgeous blooming plants or fresh flower arrangements, month after month. Each month a seasonal blooming plant or fresh arrangement will arrive on yours or a loved one's doorstep. You choose the start date and we'll make your special delivery the very same day each month.

For just \$75, \$150 or \$300, respectively, we'll send 3 month's, 6 month's or a year's worth of seasonal blooming plants--perhaps a bulb garden or azalea in the spring, one of our famous large geraniums or a tropical hibiscus in the summer, a chrysanthemum or Thanksgiving cactus in the fall or one of our homegrown poinsettias or cyclamen for the holidays and winter months. Selection of the blooming plant will be based on availability.

And for just \$90, \$175 or \$350, respectively, receive one of Klein's lovely fresh floral arrangements. All arrangements will be seasonal and will contain only the freshest flowers. All arrangements are **Designer's Choice**, but are sure to satisfy the most discerning lover of fresh flowers.

Prices include delivery within our delivery area. Enclosure cards will accompany each delivery if desired. For delivery details visit the "**Permanent Features**" section of our newsletter below. If your chosen delivery date happens to fall on a Sunday or holiday, we will deliver it on the next available delivery day. All regular delivery conditions apply.

Join our **Blooming Plant or Fresh Flower Club** by calling Klein's at **608/244-5661** or **888/244-5661** or by stopping in. We request that payment be made in full before the first delivery and prices do not include sales tax.

DELIVERY INFO

Klein's Floral and Greenhouses delivers daily, except Sundays, throughout all of Madison and much of Dane County including: Cottage Grove, DeForest, Fitchburg, Maple Bluff, Marshall, McFarland, Middleton, Monona, Oregon, Shorewood Hills, Sun Prairie, Verona, Waunakee and Windsor. Current delivery rate on 1-4 items is \$6.95 for Madison, Maple Bluff, Monona and Shorewood Hills, slightly more to the surrounding communities and for more than 4 items. We not only deliver our fabulous fresh flowers, but also houseplants, bedding plants and sundries. A minimum order of \$25.00 is required for delivery. Delivery to the Madison hospitals is \$4.95. Deliveries to the four Madison hospitals are made during the early afternoon. There is no delivery charge to funeral homes in the city of Madison, although regular rates apply for morning funeral deliveries to Madison's west side. Regular rates also apply for funeral deliveries in the surrounding communities.

Morning delivery is guaranteed to the following Madison zip codes, but only if requested: 53703, 53704, 53714, 53716, 53718 and Cottage Grove, DeForest, Maple Bluff, Marshall, McFarland, Monona, Sun Prairie, Waunakee and Windsor. We begin our delivery day at 8:00 a.m. and end at approximately 4:00 p.m. Except during holidays, the following west-side zip codes and communities can be delivered only during the afternoon: 53705, 53706, 53711, 53713, 53717, 53719, 53726, Fitchburg, Middleton, Oregon, Shorewood Hills and Verona. During holidays (Christmas, Valentine's Day, Mother's Day, etc.) we are able to make morning deliveries to all of the above areas. We are not able to take closely timed deliveries on any holiday due to the sheer volume of such requests. It's best to give us a range of time and we'll try our absolute hardest. Orders for same day delivery must be placed by 12:30 p.m. or by 2:30 p.m. for Madison zip codes 53704 and 53714. We do not deliver to Cambridge, Columbus, Deerfield or Stoughton.

DEPARTMENT HEADS: Please refer all questions, concerns or feedback in the following departments to their appropriate supervisor.

Phone: 608/244-5661 or 888/244-5661

Floral Department Manager--Kathy Lehman kathy@kleinsfloral.com
Grower, General Manager --Jamie VandenWymelenberg jamie@kleinsfloral.com
Assistant Manager--Jennifer Simon jsimon@kleinsfloral.com
House Accounts & Billing--Barbara Foulk barb@kleinsfloral.com
Delivery Supervisor--Rick Halbach rick@kleinsfloral.com
Owner & Manager--Sue Klein sue@kleinsfloral.com

RELATED RESOURCES AND WEB SITES

University of Wisconsin Extension
1 Fen Oak Ct. #138
Madison, WI 53718
608/224-3700

<http://www.uwex.edu/ces/cty/>

<http://www.uwex.edu/ces/wihort/>

Plant Disease Diagnostics Clinic
Dept. of Plant Pathology
1630 Linden Dr.
Madison, WI 53706

<http://www.plantpath.wisc.edu/index.php>

Insect Diagnostic Lab
240 Russell Labs
1630 Linden Dr.
Madison, WI 53706

<http://www.entomology.wisc.edu/>

U.W. Soil and Plant Analysis Lab
8452 Mineral Point Rd.
Verona, WI 53593
608/262-4364

<http://uwlabs.soils.wisc.edu/>

American Horticultural Society

<http://www.ahs.org/>

Garden Catalogs (an extensive list with links)

<http://www.gardenlist.com/>

also <http://www.mailordergardening.com/>

Invasive Species

<http://www.invasive.org/>

Friends of Troy Gardens

Rm. 171, Bldg. 14

3601 Memorial Dr.

Madison, WI 53704

608/240-0409

<http://www.troygardens.org/>

Community Gardens Division (Madison area)

Community Action Coalition

1717 N. Stoughton Rd.

Madison, WI 53704
608/246-4730
<http://www.cacscw.org/gardens/>

Madison Area Master Gardeners (MAMGA)
<http://www.madison.com/communities/mamga/>

Wisconsin Master Gardeners Program
Department of Horticulture
1575 Linden Drive
University of Wisconsin - Madison
Madison, WI 53706
608/265-4504
<http://www.hort.wisc.edu/mastergardener/>

The Wisconsin Gardener
<http://www.wpt.org/garden/>

Allen Centennial Gardens
620 Babcock Dr.
Madison, WI 53706
608/262-8406
<http://www.horticulture.wisc.edu/allencentennialgardens/>

Olbrich Botanical Gardens
3330 Atwood Ave.
Madison, WI 53704
608/246-4550
<http://www.olbrich.org/>

Rotary Gardens
1455 Palmer Dr.
Janesville, WI 53545
608/752-3885
<http://www.rotarygardens.org/>

University of WI Arboretum
1207 Seminole Hwy.
Madison, WI 53711
608/263-7888
<http://uwarboretum.org/>

University of Wisconsin-West Madison
Agricultural Research Center
8502 Mineral Point Rd.
Verona, WI 53593

608/262-2257

<http://www.cals.wisc.edu/westmad/>

PLANTS POISONOUS TO CHILDREN:

Children may find the bright colors and different textures of plants irresistible, but some plants can be poisonous if touched or eaten. If you're in doubt about whether or not a plant is poisonous, don't keep it in your home. The risk is not worth it. The following list is not comprehensive, so be sure to seek out safety information on the plants in your home to be safe.

- Bird of paradise
- Bull nettle
- Castor bean
- Chinaberry tree
- Crocus
- Daffodil
- Deadly nightshade
- Dieffenbachia (dumb cane)
- Foxglove
- Glory lily
- Hemlock
- Holly berry
- Indian tobacco
- Iris
- Jimsonweed
- Lantana
- Larkspur
- Lily of the valley
- Marijuana
- Mescal bean
- Mexicanes
- Mistletoe
- Morning glory
- Mountain laurel
- Night-blooming jasmine
- Nutmeg
- Oleander
- Philodendron
- Poison ivy
- Poison sumac
- Pokeweed
- Poppy
- Potato
- Privet
- Rhododendron
- Rhubarb

- Water hemlock
- Wisteria

PLANTS POISONOUS TO PETS:

Below is a list of some of the common plants which may produce a toxic reaction in animals. This list is intended only as a guide to plants which are generally identified as having the capability for producing a toxic reaction. Source: The National Humane Society website @ <http://www.humanesociety.org/>

- Aconite
- Apple
- Arrowgrasses
- Autumn Crocus
- Azaleas
- Baneberry
- Bird-of-Paradise
- Black locust
- Bloodroot
- Box
- Buckeye
- Buttercup
- Caladium
- Carolina jessamine
- Castor bean
- Chinaberry tree
- Chockcherries
- Christmas berry
- Christmas Rose
- Common privet
- Corn cockle
- Cowbane
- Cow cockle
- Cowsliprb
- Daffodil
- Daphne
- Day lily
- Delphinium (Larkspur)
- Dumbcane
- Dutchman's breeches
- Easter lily
- Elderberry
- Elephant's ear
- English Ivy
- European Bittersweet
- Field peppergrass
- Foxglove
- Holly

- Horsechestnut
- Horse nettle
- Hyacinth
- Iris
- Jack-in-the-pulpit
- Jerusalem Cherry
- Jimsonweed
- Lantana
- Larkspur
- Laurels
- Lily of the valley
- Lupines
- Mayapple
- Milk vetch
- Mistletoe
- Monkshood
- Morning glory
- Mustards
- Narcissus
- Nicotiana
- Nightshade
- Oaks
- Oleander
- Philodendrons
- Pokeweed
- Poinsettia
- Poison hemlock
- Potato
- Rhododendron
- Rhubarb
- Rosary pea
- Sago palm
- Skunk cabbage
- Smartweeds
- Snow-on-the-mountain
- Sorghum
- Star of Bethlehem
- Wild black cherry
- Wild radish
- Wisteria
- Yellow jessamine
- Yew