

The Garden Gate



January 2004

Events at a Glance:

January 16: Winter Carnival Parade

February 2: BCMGA Board Meeting, 9:00 am

February 18: 2004 MG class begins (facilitators needed)

March (mid): Bonner County Home and Garden Show

June 17-19: Regional Conference - North Idaho College

Salutations!



by Jan Rumore

A very Happy New Year to all as we unfold 2004. And what a wild and willful year our recent weather portends. Well bring it on! We gardeners are a tough and gritty bunch.

Our 2004 M.G. Advisory Board has some new faces as we welcome Nikki Donaldson and Barb Moore to our ranks. These two ladies seem eager to jump right into projects and we appreciate their enthusiasm and commitment.

Mine is also a relatively new face on the board and there are many of you I've yet to meet. Hopefully our brimming plate of Master Gardener activities will afford many opportunities for meeting and socializing throughout the year. This is, I believe, one of the great strengths of the Master Gardener program, the opportunity to meet so many kindred spirits as we work together to serve our community. May we all give generously of our time and talents to help "grow" our Bonner County Master Gardener Program.

Our board objectives for this year include allotting some extra attention to two facets of our stated M. G. program goals: community beautification projects and introducing children to gardening. At our Jan. 5 meeting we agreed on some preliminary measures to better address these items and we welcome and encourage your suggestions, comments and, of course, your volunteer time. Let the fun begin!

Please join us at our monthly board meetings at the Creekside Building, 9:00 am the first Monday of each month. Or call any Board member or the Extension Office at 263-8511 to input, get information, or volunteer. **All Aboard!**

Carnival Parade—Jan 16



Bring your spirit and join the fun at the annual Winter Carnival Parade. Our float is outstanding and we will have Emeritus Valle and Fields decked in flower hats; Pat VanVolkenberg is the wildest, flame throwing scarecrow you will ever see. Meet at Merwyn's parking lot on Friday, January 16 at 6:00 and help us inaugurate spring (in winter) by giving wildflower seeds to parade goers. See you there.

Beauty and the Beast

by Nicki Donaldson



I look out the window and I see snow covered mountains, trees, yard. Smoke curls lazily from my neighbor's chimney. I think of how white is the combination of all the colors in the spectrum and my thoughts turn to my flower garden in the summer- oranges, blues, pinks, purples, reds, yellows...

My gaze focuses in on a coleus hanging on the inside of my window. My son grew it from a tiny seed and now the leaves are as big as my hand. All of a sudden I see a white, cottony blob on the stem. Mealy bugs! Frantically I dive for the q-tips and rubbing alcohol and wipe the horrid little creature off the plant. Further investigation shows two more clusters. I've been fighting them for two months. They are winning. Fortunately they don't do a lot of damage.

Not like the fungus gnats that killed my Christmas cactus last year. If I'd only known that all I had to do was scoop off and replace the top two inches of soil. Those gnats came in with a bag of potting soil. So now I am careful to check for them with each new purchase. I prevent fungus gnats by allowing the top two inches of soil to dry before each watering, for each plant.

Thinking of fungus, several of my houseplants began growing fungus on the soil not long ago. This was remedied by scooping the fungus out and replacing the soil. I realize I watered those plants too soon. I'm lucky I didn't get fungus gnats this time!

Although I don't appreciate these pests, my houseplants are valuable in keeping my green thumb warm in these cold winter months. And while it's wintry white outside, my own little green, indoor tropical jungle will keep me going until I can work in my flower garden again.



Tips Tried and True

Michelle Reichelt sends us a fool proof concoction for pest control, especially orchids. Perfect with Nicki's article.

1 c Murphy's soap

1 c Distilled water

1 c Rubbing alcohol

Mix together in a spray bottle and spray upper and lower leaves. This works great on fungus gnats and mealy bugs.



Buy Sell or Barter

We are instituting a new feature in the Garden Gate. Do you have garden implements that you want to update? Don't throw them away, your discard may be someone's treasure and we, as BCMGA members, can be of aid to each other. This feature can assist you in selling, buying, and/or bartering for your unique needs. Trade an old lawn mower for perennial starts? Done! An abundance of zucchini for clean grass clippings? Can do - well, maybe! Let's give it a try. E-mail Pat at geopat@bossiq.com or call 255-2667 and we will put your item in next time.

***** Facilitators Needed

The 2004 MG class begins on Feb. 18th, classes will be on Tuesday and Friday mornings this year. Please look over the calendar and find a class you would like to attend and assist with logistics. Call Patti at 263-8511 to schedule. Thank You, Bob Wilson

BCMGA Board of Directors Highlights - January 5, 2004

* Michelle expressed concern that the Christmas party was not well attended; only a dozen or so members. Donation of the poinsettia centerpiece/door prizes from Ann Murphy was appreciated. Michelle expressed her appreciation for the gifts she was given as out-going President.

* Regional Conference update: Bob reported that plans are coming together. The dates are June 17-19, place: North Idaho College, cost: \$40 registration for the entire conference. Bob and Don are working on the MG Volunteer and Leadership training to be given on Thursday pm. Sessions under discussion are: fundraising, power point presentations and a session on the BCMGA activities.

* BCMGA Dues: Bob will coordinate with Patti with regard to members who have paid dues and those who may need an additional reminder. Dues are \$10 for continuing members and the same for Associate members (those who wish to remain active but cannot fulfill the volunteer requirements).

* MG Training Course: Class will begin February 18 and be on Tuesday and Friday mornings. Bob reported there are currently 24 applications; Don and Valle will select 20 for the class. A BCMGA scholarship has been given to a teacher from Lake Pend O'reille High School

* LPHS Program: We hope to continue the classes given to students at LPHS. Jan will chair this with help from Barb.

* BCMGA Public Display: All agreed this is a worthwhile pursuit. Suggestions were: the new park area by the bank and somewhere on the Sandpoint side of the Long Bridge. Water will be a consideration; Jan and Barb will research an area and draw up a specific proposal. A showy display of perhaps ornamental grasses and day lilies was discussed.

* Raffle Fundraiser: It was decided to hold a raffle for a 10x10 garden plot (vegetable or perennial) with MG volunteers donating time and expertise and brawn. Details will be worked out and tickets will be sold at the Bonner Mall show and the Spring Plant Sale. The winner will be selected in early June and work will begin shortly thereafter.

* Rita developed an Event Information Sheet to be completed after each event and passed to future Chairs. This will be an invaluable aid and will eliminate much guessing and inventing the wheel each time.

The BCMGA Board of Directors include: President: Jan Rumore, VP: Beth Evans, Sec.: Pat Moss, Treasurer: Don Childress, Board members: Nicki Donaldson, Rita Janisse, Bill Lamson, Barb Moore, Michelle Reichelt and Advisory member: Valle Novak