

# *The Garden Gate*



*March 2004*

## ***Events at a Glance:***

*March 13 - 14: Bonner County Home and Garden Show*

*April 5: BCMGA Board Meeting (all members welcome)  
Creekside Medical Center, 9:00 am*

*June 5: Spring Plant Sale (Are your starts started?)*

*June 17-19: Regional Conference (North Idaho College)*

*July 18: BCMG Garden Tour*

## ***Salutations***



**by J an Rumore**

**S**pring is in the air! It's snowing. This is that North Idaho spring thing, a few feet of the white stuff at Wrenco Loop and Samuels, but tulips and daffadillies peaking out from under a skiff of snow along Bottle Bay. Sunshine streams through

the falling rain, thunder, rainbows...the waning winter, waxing spring mixed bag of unpredictability. I love it!

Ah spring, the season when "a young man's fancy lightly turns to thoughts of love," and a Master Gardener's fancy cheerfully turns to thoughts of sharing the love of gardening with friends and neighbors. Otherwise put -- our M.G. activity schedule for 2004 is now fairly well defined, and it's chock-full of fun stuff.

This coming weekend March 13th and 14th, we'll be holding down a table at the Contractor's Home and Garden Show at the Bonner Mall. Stop by to visit and check out our special presentations. On Saturday (the 13th) the North Idaho Orchid Hobbyists will join us at 11:00 A.M. to talk orchids and answer questions. At 1:00 P.M. Rich Del Carlo will demonstrate pruning techniques for ornamental and fruit trees, and at 3:00 P.M. Jennifer Costich-Thompson will be starting seeds indoors. On Sunday (14th) at 1:00 P.M. Mary Reisenauer from the Flower Farm will show us how to arrange and plant moss and coco fiber hanging baskets. And present throughout will be Pat Van Volkenberg's worms and compost display - wiggly, fun and interesting for all.

In coordination with the Bonner Mall show we will be jump starting our first annual Garden Raffle. Michelle Reichelt, our perennial font of energy and ideas, has designed a fund raising, garden planting raffle which will be showcased at the mall and around the community. Watch for our posters and pick up a few tickets.

Happily for us, Rita Janisse has volunteered again this year to chair the Spring Plant Sale. I know she'd love some enthusiastic and energetic helpers...with flats of plants and new ideas to boot.

Bill Lamson and Don Childress continue to pursue the community garden possibilities, the county fair booth is in need of a chairperson, and Michelle R. is hard at work on a local Garden Tour project. Pat Moss, the Garden Gate guru, welcomes your feature articles and M.G. news items, Valle is canvassing members for new ideas for our Home Hort. series, Ann Warwick has scheduled us for Farmer's Market bake sale fundraisers. Bob Wilson and Don C. continue organizational work for the Regional Conference, the landscaping project at the Extension Office will resume soon, weather permitting. Bill L. is studying a possible assistance project for M.G.'s with Habitat for Humanity, I'm hoping to put a garden project together with J.R. White and the D.S.B.A., there is weeding to do in the native plant gardens, M.G.'s needed to help M.G.'s, Barb M. and Penny B. working on membership, Nicki D. looking for teachers for the L.P.H.S. classes, weeds and insects to collect, facilitating to be done, and *ohmygosh*, we'll soon be staffing the Plant Clinic! HELP!

We'd love to have you drop by our board meetings---next one Apr. 5, 9:00A.M. at the Creekside Bld. Or call me at 255-1827...Or call the Extension Office at 263-8511--- Or call any board member.



**W**e send our sincere sympathy and best thoughts to Helen Campbell with the passing of her husband Patrick. We hope the renewal of spring can bring some solace to you.



### *The Lucky Shamrock* by Pat Moss

**D**id you know that there is no such thing as a 'Shamrock Plant'? The word shamrock comes from the Irish word 'seamrog' meaning little clover. However, there are hundreds of varieties of clover. The question is . . . what is the 'original Irish Shamrock'? Most authorities agree that the white clover (*Trifolium repens* forma *minus*, family Leguminosae), a creeping white-flowered perennial, was the original shamrock of Ireland. These clovers occupied an important position in the cultural life of early peoples. White clover (*T. repens* L) in particular was held in high esteem by the early Celts of Wales as a charm against evil spirits. This pagan tradition was continued by early Christian leaders; it is said that Saint Patrick used the plant to illustrate the doctrine of the Holy Trinity. Considered by the Irish people as a good-luck symbol, the shamrock is celebrated around the world, with the '*wearin o' the green*' on March 17<sup>th</sup>, the Feast Day of Saint Patrick.

(Do you know the national symbol of Ireland? The shamrock?

Nope - the harp. Gotcha! Have a grand day.)

Editors note: I recently facilitated a MG class session and woe to us - the purple coffee bus broke down. No java! It looked to be a disaster beyond endurance but ... our intrepid Patti Speelmon speeled off to Yoke's and returned with steaming cups of energy for us to continue. Thank You Patti.

## THE INLAND EMPIRE GARDENERS

by Ann Warwicck

**A**vid gardeners who don't mind a trip to Spokane once a month can meet like minded folks, learn something new, and have some fun by joining The Inland Empire Gardeners, a dynamic group of green thumbs. The club meets at Decades Meeting Place at U-City in the Spokane Valley the first Thursday of each month, and offers fellowship, food, great door prizes, fun, and an informative presentation on some aspect of gardening. The March speaker was Eric Sorenson, a WSU extension agent from Franklin county (Pasco) speaking on growing vegetables. Stan Urmann from our own Riley Creek Blueberry Farm will be the presenter in April.



## Friends\*

by Nicki Donaldson

We are looking for the few, the proud, the volunteers who go into Lake Pend Orielle High School to help educate this generation of youth on the ins and outs of gardening!

Thank you, Tari Yoursak who will be teaching "Sanitation in the Greenhouse" on March 11th and 12th, and Lori Brown who is teaching "Propagation/Plant Starts."

Please help us fill the openings for: basic botany, insects, soils, hypertoufa, worm culture or any other subject you'd like to share. The school has many supplies and some funds for projects.

Interested parties contact me at 265-9337 or [hotpotatobomb@hotmail.com](mailto:hotpotatobomb@hotmail.com)

# *Tips Tried and True*



## APRIL SHOWERS BRING MAY . . . LETTUCE

by Helen Campbell, Master Gardener 2001

Traditionally, I plant my "cold weather" garden between April 15 and 19. I live in a windy, chilly microclimate south of Schweitzer and Baldy Mt. so crops are slow to start and develop. Getting impatient for that first home-grown salad, I discovered the perfect solution.

I start with a rectangular 25"x11"x10" (deep) planter box with drain holes. I fill the container *half way* with a half-and-half mixture of good quality planter mix and home "made" screened compost. Then I add 3-4 cups of alfalfa pellets (for nitrogen), and on top of that, *half* of the remaining soil mixture, mixing the two together. I finish filling the planter with soil, then sprinkle gourmet lettuce seeds over the surface. I usually top it off with a light dusting of sand to hold the seeds in place until they sprout. I use a watering can to gently water to a depth of several inches.

I then cover the planter with a double layer of Remay and weigh it down with two or three wooden stakes laid across the top. I move the planter to a sheltered sunny spot on my deck, close to the house for warmth. The seeds germinate in about a week and I have greens ready to snip off and serve by the second week of May.

I get extended production from this lettuce crop because when hot weather arrives I can move the planter to a cooler spot.

[Notes: You can buy a small bag of alfalfa pellets, marketed as rabbit food, but read the label first and make sure that the primary ingredient is alfalfa and not wheat.]



## *Shamrocks*

by Pat Moss (Source: Clover Specialty Company)

The shamrock plants that are sold around St. Patrick's Day are usually species of oxalis. Oxalis leaves are clover shaped and can be shades of green, red, or purple. The oxalis blossoms can be white, yellow, pink or red.

The Lucky Shamrock Plant (*Oxalis deppei*) has green leaves and pink blossoms. The leaflets fold up at night or during overcast days and open during daylight hours.

(Oxalis cont.) Tips for growing: Oxalis plants prefer direct sun for best growth and flowering. Oxalis plants usually bloom all winter if placed in a bright sunny window. These plants prefer soil that is kept barely moist and will do fine if the soil dries slightly between watering. Oxalis plants should be fertilized only when the plant is actively growing. Any all purpose fertilizer will do. After a period of active growth, oxalis should be allowed to rest or go dormant. The first sign that a plant is entering dormancy is leaf dieback. If this begins to occur, stop watering and fertilizing the plant. The leaves can be cut back or allowed to die back on their own and the plant should be moved to a cool, dark place for 1 to 3 months, after which new foliage will start emerging from the soil. When this occurs, move the plant to a sunny location and begin watering and fertilizing once again.



## Housekeeping with Herbs

by Michelle Reichelt (Source: Susan Witting Albert)

- ✘ Renew and polish your wood furniture with a soft cloth moistened with a mixture of 3 tablespoons linseed oil, 3 tablespoons malt vinegar, and ½ teaspoon lavender oil
- ✘ Chase moths away by hanging herbal sachets in your closet. Fill sachets (or muslin bags) with equal parts dried rosemary or southernwood leaves and ground pyrethrum flowers. A fragrant alternative: 1 cup lavender flowers, 1 cup artemisia, ½ cup rosemary, ½ cup pennyroyal, 1 ½ tablespoons powdered cloves.
- ✘ To freshen the house, place a few drops of bee balm orange oil in a pot of simmering water.
- ✘ Mice don't like mint, so stems of the herb (or drops of mint oil on a cotton ball) will send them packing. Bay leaves banish weevils from flour, cornmeal and stored grains.
- ✘ Full-strength white vinegar, mixed with a few drops of lemon essential oil, removes mildew from bathroom fixtures and shower curtains.
- ✘ I have tried the herbal polish, mice deterrent in our garbage cans and the mildew remover and have had great success.

\*\* If you haven't read Susan's books, you are missing a wonderful series of mysteries.

Peace Corps Area Office  
2001 Sixth Avenue  
Seattle, Washington 98212-2522  
(206) 553-5490 / FAX (206) 553-2343



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## Peace Corps Needs Your Master Gardening Skills!

*Life is calling. How far will you go?*

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Peace Corps is a 27-month commitment, during which time your living expenses are covered. You receive three months of training, transportation costs, medical and dental care, a \$6,075 readjustment allowance, and much more! For more information, please visit

[www.peacecorps.gov](http://www.peacecorps.gov), or call your recruiting office at (800) 424-8580,

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Peace Corps is currently accepting applications for programs departing throughout 2004. Married couples and adults of all ages are encouraged to apply. Applicants must be U.S. citizens, at least 18 years old, and in good health

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