

JUNE'S GARDEN

In June a group of ladies from Miyazaki, which is located on the Southern coast of Japan, were invited to visit our area and demonstrate their traditional art form of flower arranging called Ikebana, Sogetau. There are many different styles of Ikebana; Sogetau is the most contemporary. The demonstration was held in the Cannon Beach Chamber of Commerce building and sponsored by Seaside's So'Wester Garden Club. Beverly Terry from Cannon Beach, a member of the club, planned the program with her son, Michial Indigo, and his partner Vance Harper; both Americans living in Miyazaki. There they have a travel business that plans tours based on special interests. Harper traveled with the Japanese to act as their guide and interpreter. Some of the women could understand English but could not speak it.

The members of the So'Wester Garden Club, invited guests, and the Cannon Beach Garden Club were introduced to Mrs. Yokoyama and told that she is considered a master of all forms of Ikebana and creates flower arrangements for hotels and other businesses in Miyazaki and neighboring towns.

After Mrs. Yokoyama demonstrated the steps to follow in creating a Sogetau flower arrangement, everyone was invited to try their hands, working side by side with the guidance of the ten Japanese teachers.

The So'Wester Garden Club members had supplied the material for the demonstration. Gathered from their gardens, roadsides and beaches were a variety of flowers. To name a few -- poppies, iris, columbine, azaleas, foliage of different shrubs and plants, interesting branches of greyed driftwood, kelp that had formed circles when dried, moss from the forest, cat-tail leaves from the swamps and a variety of containers such as tall vases to flat dishes. It was explained that Sogetau is a composition that also can even be a collage with no plants.

The large chamber room was soon filled with activity and even though there was a language barrier, gestures and busy hands together successfully created a room full of floral compositions from all the material gathered. With nods of approval from the Japanese teachers and a branch or flower added or subtracted, at least twenty or more finished Sogetau arrangements were displayed. The common denominator was the appreciation of nature's gifts and the enthusiasm of learning a new floral art form which bonded the two cultures together.

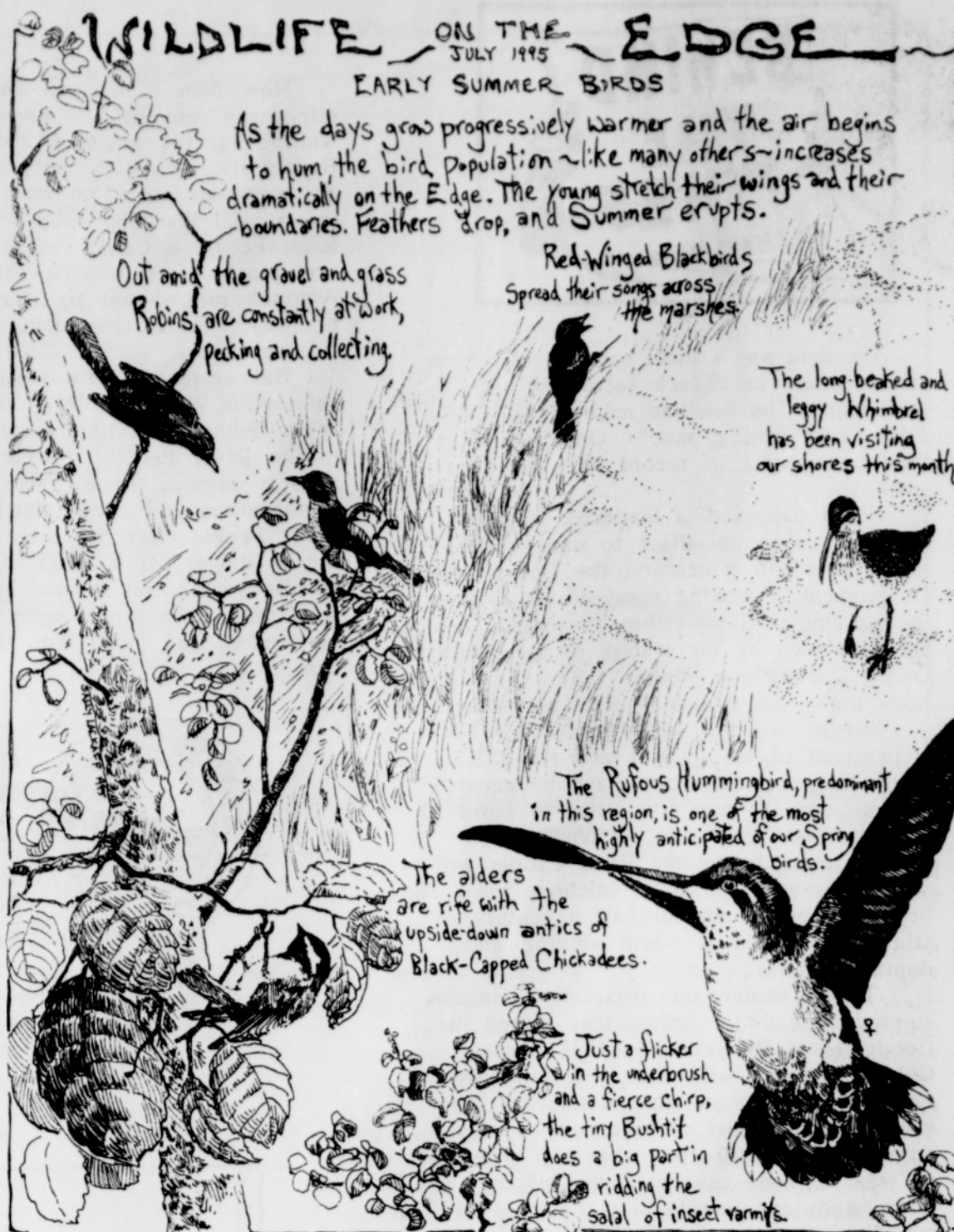
Later in the day Harper and the Japanese women visited my garden. Miyazaki's climate is sub-tropical but we were amazed at the number of plants growing in my garden which also grow in their area. They were familiar with Oriental poppies, Cosmos, Azaleas, Lanaria, mint and fennel.

In Japan Lanaria (common name Money Plant) is grown as a symbol of wished wealth. The round disks of the dried flower are similar to one of their coins. Since it reseeds so freely in my yard and if this were so, I said, "I should be a millionaire."

Harper explained my comment and they replied that in Japan the land

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used for private homes and gardens is very expensive and gardens such as mine would probably be used for growing vegetables. My whole garden is only about one third of a 50' by 100' lot but they made me appreciate the area I have for a flower garden.

I was left with the desire to study more about the styles of Ikebana and other crafts the Japanese so artfully create.

They had brought gifts they had made. One consisted of 12 inch squares of cotton that had been finely stitched to form patterns of flowers, birds, snowflake designs and fans. They dip these designs in colored dye and when the stitches are released the design appears white against the color. Each of the 50 or more they had made were different. I showed them a few American quilts I have collected and made, we all wished we had more time to share even more. They did have a chance to tour art galleries and a few more shops, and their day ended with a very American dessert of strawberry shortcake at Beverly Terry's home. Their next stop was Portland's Rose Parade; I'd like to have heard their comments on it. They were so friendly and polite and it was great fun to share our different cultures.

OVER OTHER BACKYARD FENCES

South of Arcadia Beach is a lovely garden built on a bank and designed to use different plants that bloom in shades of pink. Textures, height, and continuous color throughout the seasons were also planned. When I was there a dense mat of pink flowered Diascia cascaded down the bank making quite a statement of color with Claridge Druce cranesbill that was also in bloom. At the top of the bank wild Foxglove and Rosa Ragoza were planted to bloom in June. Following these are Daylilies. Their flowers are burgundy edged in golds and bright yellows. The pink-red Autumn Joy Sedum starts showing its color in July and continues to be brighter into fall before it eventually turns a deep brown. Tall grass of Penmustetum alopecuroides and short grass Caudatum both bloom pinkish-purple bottle brush-like flowers in late summer into fall.

Earlier in the spring Helleborus fettesus (Lenten Rose) blooms are pale green edged in rose color. Along the north side of the bank the designed landscape melts into the forest with drifts of native ferns and Alder trees. The whole bank is a contrast of texture and shades of pinks and greens so thoughtfully planned. I hope to go back in the fall to see the grasses bloom.

Over at Dan Elek's house, he and his family built a small garden for their son's Box Turtles' daytime supervised recreation. The garden is bordered by large rocks to encompass a boggy area. All the plants are native ferns, moss, marsh grass and Skunk cabbage. Watching the turtles investigate their garden one wonders if they feel a sense of freedom as they slowly weave through the swamp grass and other vegetation and find their way to the watery area where they slide into shallow water to settle down for the day.

Advice from my mistakes: I was faced with having to prune back a leggy Rhododendron that I had let grow to about 8' high. Rhododendrons should be pruned just after flowering. For best results one should only prune 1/3 of its branches a year. "To prune Rhododendrons you cut back to a side branch, leaf whorl, or ring of dormant leaf buds (marked by tiny nubbins on the bark where leaves once grew). Dormant buds grow within a month on smaller limbs, or within 10 weeks on tall main trunks. Then give the Rhododendron an application of fertilizer containing only nitrogen and phosphorus (such as 16-20-0) at the time of pruning. This stimulates new growth." -- Sunset Gardener's Answer Book.

It is best to prune Rhododendrons before July 10th, to give the plant a chance to grow new leaves before fall.

Please send your gardening experiences, comments or questions about coastal gardening to:

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