

JUNE'S GARDEN

"To bed, to bed," the garden said,
"The cheerful cricket sleeps."

Winter's wind blows from the North.
Shadows dance through the trees,
As shadows love to do.

Dark clouds bring frost and frozen ice
That chills your toes and reddens your nose.

Sleep, Sleep, cover your head,
It's time to rest a while.

Only your dreams will bring the sun.
Winter's put Summer to bed.

J. G. K.

There is not much more I can do to put my garden to bed for winter. The November winds and rains have soaked and whipped the last blossoms of the dahlias, chrysanthemums and roses. A few blooms of the tough nasturtiums, fall blooming Kafir-lilies (*Schizostylis coccinea*), and one last rose bloom graced our Thanksgiving table.

I've cut back all the perennials, spent days digging out the traveling deep roots of wild aster that had found their way into the lily bed, dressed the flower beds with last year's finished compost, mounding more around the base of the roses which I'll dig into the soil when the first bud's growth appears next spring. For me, the hardest job of all is to carry all the pots and fragile plants to my upstairs southwest window. I can't resist trying to save every geranium or fuschia plant, even though I have started new plants from cuttings I made a month or two ago.

The David Austin roses I planted three years ago had grown long, brambly stems. I cut them back to about waist-high so the wind wouldn't whip the plant causing the trunk of the plant to be pulled out and the roots to be exposed to the air. If you are concerned about any shrubs or trees that are newly planted and haven't had time to develop a strong root system, secure them with staking and tying. My yard, which is only 175 feet from the ocean, gets the full force of the winds and I can't keep pots or garden furniture on my deck in winter. I have a large cold frame where I keep the more sturdy plants.

When adding mulch to the garden to protect your plants from frost or occasional dipping of temperatures, use compost, pine needles, or any other organic material. Even newspapers held down with rocks or other heavy objects can be used. Before I learned the value of using compost for mulch, I nearly suffocated many rhododendron plants by using great quantities of bark dust. In time it formed a crust on the top of the soil and, because rhododendrons are surface feeders, the roots couldn't penetrate the crust to get moisture. Rhododendrons benefit from mulch and rich organic matter, but need more air in the root zone than any other plants; also, more constant moisture supply. Be sure any dressing you use is light in texture. I now use compost and pine needles which can be easily removed, or lightly scratch with a hand rake into the soil around the base of the plant. Never cultivate the soil around rhododendrons or you will disturb the surface roots.

I've ended this season with the reward of knowing I've done all I can to protect the garden, but I also have a few sore muscles and a slight hitch, as they say, "in my giddy-up." I may not be as young as I thought I was, but -- my enthusiasm and optimism for next year's garden never wavers. It's just that my body tells me to take each day a little more slowly and not try to dig up the whole yard in one day.

This reminds me of my favorite garden story, called, "Never Too Old: The Tale of an Ancient's Garden," written by an elderly woman. The story begins with her telling about buying an old whaling captain's house built in 1834 on Nantucket Island, which included one acre of wild, uncultivated moors behind the house.

While looking at the seed catalog she'd received from a friend and dreaming about how she used to garden, her thoughts were interrupted by a T.V. commercial advertising tombstones. The salesman was saying that the life span of an average American was age 71. This made her feel most unwanted, for she was approaching 80. To soothe her injured feelings, she decided to dig up the moors and raise a year's supply of vegetables for herself, thus showing the world or herself that nobody has to stop all activities after the age of 71.

On the first day of March, she took her spade in hand. The plot she'd planned shrank considerably after a few spadefuls. The first day she had got carried away, as she had

found many arrowheads; evidently the sod hadn't been dug since Indian days.

She finally decided on a 20 x 25 ft. plot, "either for a grave," she chuckled, "or a vegetable garden." She found she could dig eight spadefuls before her connective tissue seemed to be disconnected. However, by St. Patrick's Day she had dug and planted four rows of peas.

Next her intention was to prepare indoor flats of tomatoes, peppers, egg plant and broccoli, while still keeping up the calisthenics of eight spadefuls per day. In the middle of June, after she harvested her peas, she used the space to plant 50 tomato plants she had started in the flats.

As vegetables popped up, she added a walk to her daily schedule to collect seaweed and kelp to mulch in her garden. She had read it was a great soil builder.

She felt very proud of herself, even though each night she soothed her aching back and sore muscles with a heating pad and liniment. Each day her accomplishments and enthusiasm pushed her on. By the 20th of May she had planted 15 varieties of vegetables. She told of enjoying all the fresh vegetables and having a freezer full of a year's supply.

Her story ends with "how ambulatory" her 80-year-old knees kept bending, crouching, kneeling; but mostly of the therapeutic benefits of quiet days spent with Mother Nature. . . and if she kept up with these activities maybe next year she would try to dig nine spadefuls each day, but that even seven would be enough.

This story was printed long ago. I don't remember what year or what publication I clipped it from, but I have reread it many times and am always inspired by her endeavors and enthusiasm. If how many spadefuls determine one's fitness, I guess 20 or more a day puts me somewhere in the middle? Last week when I was digging in my garden, I unearthed a small perfume bottle. I think it was on my 21st spadeful. I'll add it to my collection of shards of blue and white china, an old milk glass Pond's jar, a pint glass cream bottle that is now turning purple from the sun's rays as it sits on the shelf in my garden room with an old blue glass Milk of Magnesia bottle, all that I've dug up in the last 15 years, which someone buried in this garden years ago. Maybe some day I'll find an arrowhead. This land too was once the home of an Indian tribe.

Soon I will decorate the fireplace mantle with berried branches of Skimmia, grey green foliage of False Cypress and Artimisia, pine boughs, small leafed Ivy, and holly. My Christmas cactus bloomed at Thanksgiving (poor timing). Now there is room for a Poinsettia, a white-flowered Amaryllis and a pot of "Paper White" Narcissus.

Have a safe and happy holiday and may your New Year be full of hope and peace and plans to spend a few quiet days with Mother Nature.

How many spadefuls can you dig in one day? Who knows, you too might unearth a treasure.

Write to: June's Garden, P.O. Box 74, Cannon Beach, OR 97110

EATS CAFE

OPEN MON-FRI.

BREAKFAST... 8:30 AM - 11:00 AM.
LUNCH... 11:00 AM - 4:00 PM.
FRIDAY AT 6 PM - GOURMET DINNERS
RESERVATION ONLY.

4792 S.E. Hwy 101 (541) 994-9404
Lincoln City, OR 97367

oceana

NATURAL FOODS COOPERATIVE
Member-Owned since 1977

A full-line grocery store specializing in
organically-grown produce, grains,
herbs, wines and coffees.

415 NW Coast St. - Newport, OR 97365 503-245-8285
Located in historic New Beach

We should weep for men at their birth, not at
their death.
Baron de Montesquieu (1689-1755)

MERRY CHRISTMAS

ANDERSON
HOUSE

EUROPEAN STYLE
BED & BREAKFAST

Box 217
CANNON BEACH
OR
97110

503-436-2855

Edible Food
Affordable Prices

**TRILLIUM
NATURAL FOODS**

Lincoln City

Arcadia
Landscaping

FOR
GARDENS DESIGNED
TO REDUCE OR
ELIMINATE
PESTICIDE USE.

ATTENTION BUSINESSES
WE CREATE & MAINTAIN
FLOWER BOXES, PLANTERS
&
HANGING BASKETS

436-0738 RES
LICENSED - BONDED
INSURED
REG 52

**Geppetto's
Toy
Shoppe**

436-2467
200 N. Hemlock
Cannon Beach, OR

"Where quality & tradition make kids happy"

Holiday Sale!

Brio, Playmobil,
Erector Sets
and
THOMAS THE TANK
&
FRIENDS ENGINE

ALL 20% OFF!

**COAST RANGE
ASSOCIATION**

P.O. BOX 148
NEWPORT, OR 97365

Wes Lawson

**Organic Gardening
& Maintenance**

436-0223

P.O. Box 800 Tolovana Park, OR 97145 Licensed & Bonded #89168

OREGON MEADOW
Natural Soap Company

What you put on your body is just as
important as what you put in it:
indulge in our rich lathering,
wonderfully fragrant herbal soap.

Made from quality vegetable oils,
natural colors and aromatherapy quality pure
essential oils which impart their natural
herbal properties - no animal fats or artificial
fragrances are ever used in our soaps.

See us at:
THE WEEKEND GARDEN MARKET
TRI-MET'S PARK & RIDE LOT
HWY. 26 & CORNELL RD.
PORTLAND, OR (503) 359-1705
SATURDAYS, MAY THRU OCT. 9AM-3PM

MOBY DICK HOTEL
& OYSTER FARM

"Home of the Wild Oyster"

on Willapa Bay
Nahcotta, Washington 98637

For Reservations or Information
(360) 665-4543 - Fax (360) 665-6887

T

**HOTEL
TABARD
INN**

1739 N St., N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20036
(202) 785-1277 Fax (202) 785-6173