

JUNE'S GARDEN

The mnemonic process can play tricks on you! Once you associate a person's name, a plant's name or anything you want to remember with a more familiar phrase or word, may be all you can ever remember.

A dear friend of mine who is an avid gardener whom I've written about before still calls *Geodetia Gotcha*, and *Lavatoria Lavatory*. The other day she came up with a new one, **Ham and Cheese**. "Pat," I asked, "what's **Ham and Cheese**?" "You know," she said, "Deli." "Deli? **Ham and Cheese**?" I questioned. "June, those tall blue flowers growing over there against the fence. See where all the **Scrambled Eggs** are blooming from the seeds you gave me last year."

Looking in the direction she had pointed, I saw several plants of delphinium. Under them in full bloom was a patch of *Lumnathus* that's usually called by its common name, **Poached Egg**. I decided to forget the most commonly used names or even the Latin names I should be memorizing; it's more fun to share gardening conversations with Pat.

I laughed and said "Pat, where's dinner?" We spent the rest of the day gathering hydrangea and *Lunaria* to dry for winter bouquets.

To pick hydrangeas for drying, wait until the blossoms are mature. The petals will have a leather-like feeling, but retain their color. Pick them on a day when the air is dry, as dampness will cause the petals to become discolored. Choose a bucket large enough to hold the cut flowers loosely, and fill to about one-third with water. Strip off any leaves that would be immersed in the water and leave the bouquet in the bucket until the water evaporates. Some of the flowers may wilt, but if picked at the proper time then the petals should hold their shape.

Lunaria (**Honesty** or **money plant**) branches are gathered for drying after the oval seed pods are formed. When completely mature the outer skins can be easily stripped, releasing the seeds, leaving a silvery-colored shell.

That day we also picked a few branches of *Lunaria* while the seed pods were still a greenish color, not fully mature, to use in a bouquet of chartreuse-colored *Alchemilla mollis* (**Lady's Mantle**) we had dried earlier in the summer.

I save seeds from many of the plants that grow in my garden. Wait until seed pods have completed their cycle on the plant before gathering. *Lunaria*, *Calendula* and many different types of poppies, to name only a few, can be sown in fall and spring. I sow these at both times so that I have plants that mature next year at staggered times.

I'll be visiting Pat again this week. She called and laughingly said, "I found dinner! My **beefsteaks** are ripe." I envisioned a plate of sliced, ripe, red tomatoes sprinkled with the fresh basil I'd seen growing in her yard. She interrupted my thoughts, saying, "My **beefsteaks** have never been so big and red. I always add nutmeg and cinnamon to them. Oh! Stop at the store and bring a quart of vanilla ice cream to go with the cobbler."

"Pat," I said, "are you talking about your tomatoes?"

"No, **January**." (She sometimes calls me.) "You know ... my apple tree!"

I'd enjoy hearing your comments, hints or questions on coastal gardening! Please write **June's Garden**, P.O. Box 74, Cannon Beach OR 97110



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