



FRIENDS OF COOLEY GARDENS **newsletter**

Dr. Buck's Shrub Roses: Hardy Stars of the Summer Rose Garden

NANCY LINDLEY, GREAT LAKES ROSES www.GreatLakesRoses.com

In the past couple of years, Eric Stinson has added several of my favorite roses to the line-up of roses at Cooley Gardens.

While Dr. Buck's roses are the best-sellers at our nursery, Great Lakes Roses, Eric initially seemed reluctant to plant them. I got the impression he thought they were too nouveau, too modern in appearance and not famous enough to join the tasteful collection arrayed at the garden. Yet, he had to admit that the preponderance of once-a-year blooming roses meant that the summer garden was lacking rose-interest, so he tried a few of the Buck roses and is now a convert to their crowd-pleasing blooms and solid constitutions.

Dr. Griffith Buck was a professor of horticulture at Iowa State University from the late 1940's until 1985. Roses were really a special interest, almost a hobby for him. His rose breeding efforts were never well-funded and he always lacked time to care for his roses "properly". Fungicide sprays, winter-protection and irrigation were not a part of his test garden regime. This meant that his creations were subject to a Darwinian program of survival of the fittest in the harsh climate of Iowa. The hot, humid summers tested their disease-resis-

tance and the harsh winters culled out the tender varieties.

Dr. Buck introduced genes from hardy rose varieties into hybrid tea and floribunda roses to create shrubs that produce florific, high-centered blooms on hardy, disease-resistant shrubs. The casual gardener can be forgiven for thinking a Buck shrub rose is just a very healthy, happy hybrid tea. They can easily "pass" for the queens of the garden.

The appeal of the Buck roses in cold climates is obvious – they return in the spring while tender hybrid tea roses often don't. Their popularity in the South baffled the Buck family until they learned that Southerners appreciate the disease-resistance of his roses. This disease-resistance is also valuable during our humid Michigan summers.

Eric has planted several Buck roses in Cooley Gardens, with plans to add more. "Hawkeye Belle", one of my favorites, has joined his "favorites" list, too. While officially classified as a "white" rose, "Hawkeye Belle" is really a pale, blush pink. The large blooms have a high petal count and the form of a David Austin English rose. Admittedly, "Hawkeye Belle" doesn't have the fragrance of an Austin rose, but it is much more winter-hardy and disease-resistant than the average Austin rose. Dr. Buck named

the rose in honor of Iowa, known as the "Hawkeye State."

"Dorcas" is another of Eric's favorites at the garden. Like many of the Buck roses, the color varies within the bloom. The center petals have a distinct yellow-tan cast, while the outer petals are light pink, with dark pink "freckles". Other two-toned Buck roses include "Honeysweet", "Freckles", "Spanish Rhapsody", "Tobelle" and "Prairie Harvest".

This year, Eric ordered some Buck roses for the May Cooley Garden plant sale. They sold well. I would expect their numbers to increase next year, both in the garden and at the plant sale.

in this ISSUE

2
ERIC'S GARDEN JOURNAL

4
GARDEN SPOTS

BOOK REVIEW

5
WEED CONTROL

MESSAGE FROM THE BOARD

6
CALENDAR OF EVENTS

ERIC'SgardenJOURNAL

BY ERIC STINSON

Eric P. Stinson

The Nature of Gardens

Kiss of the sun for pardon,

Song of the birds mirth.

One is nearer God's heart in a garden,

Than anywhere else on Earth.

The above was written on a small plaque that hung above the phone in my grandmother Glayton's house, perhaps to remind her to be gentle with others of her kind, including herself, and then reminding her also of the healing qualities of nature and of gardens.

Notice that I separate nature and gardens. Nature arranges itself while man and woman rearrange parts of nature into living pictures, fabric, tapestries, forms, textures, walls, crop production, and so on. This yearning to rearrange nature is of fundamental importance to city and country. Our lives depend on an at least limited mastery of the environment, making the world safer and more certain. Now that line of thinking surely must include a benefit/loss statement, the point being that you don't hear of too much in the loss column nowadays.

Invasives – plants that cannot co-exist with natives – are the hot new topic in horticulture these days. Careful!! The lid just blew off of Pandora's Box. Do you mean that I cannot do exactly what I'd like with this or that plant treasure? Yes, folks, that is precisely what it

**“Wow!
Agastache
Tutti Frutti
is the hands
down winner for
both the amount
and duration of
bloom.”**



*Feathery bronze fennel growing through
dusky purple Colcasia 'Illustrus'.*

photo ©2004, Kim Kauffman

means. I won't go on to explain the science, concerns, and imperatives. I will simply refer you to page 32 of the most recent *Horticulture Magazine*, specifically the Online Invasive Plant Atlas of New England. These are complicated issues, requiring much (puzzled) thinking on everyone's part.

On to subject two: **incredible plants that merit attention**. Elephant Ears (*Colocasia*) have my attention. They are bridging the gap between hot and cold in the big annual beds in the upper panel, or “upstairs” as it is known to those who frequent it every working day. They play the blues; *Cynoglossum*, *Ageratum*, and *Salvia*. They set off the hot colors, too. Add foliage, *Canna*, and *Dahlia* and there is a trio (or more) meant to bridge hot and cold. It works. The stars must have been just right. Peak for the annual beds should be the next few weeks.

Wow! *Heliopsis* 'Summer Nights' has single flowers with a rose to ox-blood halo in the center, and the typical “old gold” of *Heliopsis* on the rest of the petal. Stems are a clear rose red/ox-blood with leaves a darker green than average. I have it with Cotnius (purple smoke bush) and both color contrast and echo are wonderful. This plant comes out of Prairie Nursery in Wisconsin. They sell plants and Seeds of Nature perennials and a cheer went up when 'Summer

Nights' was born. This plant began blooming around June 15 and it is now August 16. That is a respectable amount of time and we're not talking your average garden perennial. I think that this plant is one of the 10 (20?) best plants I have ever run across in this garden. It is interesting to note how many eastern U.S. natives are on the Perennial Plant Association's "Perennial of the Year" Award list: *Echinacea*, *Rudbeckia*, *Phlox*, and so on. Is there something going on here? Mostly I think that these easy landscape plants bloom a long time and don't have a problem with heat and drought. This *Heliopsis* is definitely in that group.

Wow! *Agastache* 'Tutti Frutti' is the hands down winner for both the amount and duration of bloom. Color is zippy yet refined with 2' spikes (of many small flowers) in a blued pink with red overtones. Several, four perhaps, were planted in the north east quarter of the rose garden in June 2003 and they bloomed late July to frost. This year they are three times broader and will again bloom to frost. Some people seem to have doubts about its perenniality in zone 5. I wonder if it blooms itself to death? This could be another of those "nature knows not" kind of plants with a life cycle all of its own. Anyway, two years of spectacular service at about \$1.50 per year. 'Tutti frutti' can be easily had locally – ask if they don't have it. Try the



Heliopsis 'Summer Nights' backed by *Cotinus* (purple smoke bush); in the foreground is *Agastache* 'Tutti Frutti'. photo ©2004, Kim Kauffman

web site of the Denver Botanic Garden, Blue Bird Nurseries and/or Singing Springs Nursery. You should inquire about other *Agastache* cultivars, as I'm aware of at least six that resemble 'Tutti Frutti.'

More Elephant Ear asides: a catalog seen this past winter features eight cultivars of this plant. Several more hybrids (between *Colocasia* and closely related Genera) are available. All can be stored between seasons, as you would bulbs (Rhizomes) of *Canna*. Ladies and gentlemen (and others, if you don't fit in these two categories), this is a foliage plant of the first rank.

Other asides and "oh by the ways:" The bed at MSU's Delapa Perennial Garden that is most infested with Bindweed has been deconstructed and then treated with a soil sterilant, after only modest success using every strength solution of Round-Up on it last summer (2003). A soil sterilant could also be termed, according to Ann Hancock, as a biocide. The technician who performed this biocidal act told Anne that you must spray a lot of Bindweed growth above ground (Round-Up

in this case) for the plant to effectively translocate it to the root system and die. Remember: the concentration of chemical in the Round-Up sold to home gardeners should not be diluted very much to work well on Bindweed. Perhaps 5 to 1? I use 1 oz. per gallon of 40% solution. Compute accordingly. I'm sure that's not the last word on what to do about Bindweed — but certainly treating as much as

possible above ground with a moderate concentration of Round-Up makes sense to me.

I really like the idea of using corn gluten meal as a pre-emergent. (see our feature article on page 5) The bare ground in the rose garden is very hard to keep weeded. Mulch would be constantly stirred up, thereby losing some of its weed suppressing ability. We'll try 50 lbs on each quarter and keep doing it for awhile to see how it goes.

Well, we're headed towards fall in a hurry and I'm starting to think about planting during this optimal window of time — mid-August to mid-September. You can stretch it in either direction with risks at either end of the continuum. But for goodness sake, plant something! Either that or donate the money you'd be using to buy that plant to the Garden and I'll plant it in your honor. No kidding! Then you'll have a vicarious but richly embroidered horticultural act to mull after Christmas, in January and February when you really need it. Bye for now!

gardenspots

Kim Kauffman Botanical Photography

October 3 - November 29

Mackerel Sky
217 Ann Street Plaza
East Lansing, MI 48823

Equipoise: creating a balance is the title of Kim Kauffman's latest exhibition of botanical photography. The show is comprised of three related bodies of work: colorful new images in the Florilegium series of cameraless images; organic images framed in hand painted, multi-paned windows; small views that are abstractions of the commonplace. The opening reception will be held Sunday, October 3 from noon until 4:00 p.m. 517.351.2211 • www.mackerelsky.com



KimKauffman©2004

Calendar Dog



KimKauffman©2004

Lazarus, Westside dog, will be a featured canine in a soon to be available calendar of Dogs of the Westside. The 15-month full color calendar is a fundraiser for Advent House Ministries and showcases dogs whose homes or gardens have been featured on the annual Westside Home Tour or Westside Garden Festival. Lazarus is owned by long time Cooley Gardens supporter and Westside gardener Mary James.

The calendars will be available late September and sell for \$15 each. To order, contact Advent House at 517.485.4722 or via e-mail to info@group230.com

Fall Fun & Savings at Great Lakes Roses

Climbing Roses slide lecture & garden training/pruning demo

Sunday, Sept 19, 1 pm
Monday, Sept 20, 11 am

Winter Preparation for Roses

*a lecture and garden
demonstration*
by Roger & Nancy Lindley

Sunday, Sept 26, 1pm
Mondays, Sept 27, 11am
Sundays, Oct 3 & 10, 1pm
Mondays, Oct 4 & 11, 11am

All roses 30-50% off

Thru October 11th

GreatLakes Roses
49875 Willow Road, Belleville
734.461.1230

www.GreatLakesRoses.com

Book Review

A charming book that I would recommend for a cozy read is *Mrs. Whaley and her Charleston Garden* by Emily Whaley in conversation with William Baldwin, Algonquin Books, 1997.

Mrs. Whaley is an eighty-five year old South Carolinian, opinionated, sociable and determined, whose small walled garden in Charleston is said to be the most visited private garden in America. This book is a catch-all of her thoughts on gardening and life in general. Great quotes and advice abound. She advises, "Early to bed and early to rise, work like Hell and fertilize!" She is careful not to overdo in planting design, saying, "Remember! There's such a thing as too many dancing girls!" And she says, "A warning: life is full of decisions and you better not waiver and quaver over each one or you will stress yourself. You will die young and miss your seventies and eighties, which are two decades that can be a delight." It's a wonderful book and always helps me to get up and do what "needs to be done," in the garden and otherwise!

-Peggy Casey

Confessions of a Plant-aholic

Help, I have a problem, a big green plant problem. All I think about are plants. All I do is gardening.

My kitchen sink leaks, my house needs painting, my deck staining, but my planting beds are glorious. I have plant food in the refrigerator when I have no milk. I have taken a blood oath against Japanese beetles. I have run out of places to put plants. Wait, I know, what about putting them in the roof gutters? Help! I need more plants.

-Carlton Evans

vinegar, dish soap, salt & corn gluten Non-poisonous methods of weed control

-CAROL SIEMON

Most of us are growing uncomfortable with using traditional synthetic herbicides for weed control because of the damage they can cause to the environment.

I have been experimenting with natural methods of weed control and encourage you to try the following methods:

1. A mixture of 1 gallon distilled white vinegar, 1 cup salt (I use canning salt because it dissolves easily), and a couple of drops of dishwashing liquid.

Mix these together and apply in a hand sprayer. Like Roundup, it will kill (or at least damage) anything it touches, so it is best used for edging, cracks in pavement, large mulched areas, etc. You can use it to kill off foliage in an area you wish to plant, but wait until it's rained or you've watered to dissipate the vinegar/salt from the soil well (but don't water for a day or two after you've sprayed, if possible). I've even used it on poison ivy with good results.

2. Corn gluten, a by-product of corn-starch production, has been shown to be effective for pre-emergent weed control.

The gluten acts on the roots of the just-germinated seed and kills the plant shortly after germination. It does work on all plants, not just weeds, so don't use it on recently seeded lawns until the grass is tall enough to mow, or in beds until any desirable seeds have formed a set of true leaves. Corn gluten meal (looks just like corn meal) is available by special order from the Mason Elevator (676-1016) for \$18.55/50 lbs. It is also available both as gluten meal and in a pelletized form from

Gardens Alive catalog (www.gardens-alive.com/search.asp). Gardens Alive also has directions on its site and in its catalog on how to apply the gluten. It is typically applied on lawns in the spring (when daffodils bloom) and in the fall (from September until a hard frost), but can be used in flowerbeds all season. It remains effective for 4-6 weeks. It will only kill plants germinating during that time period and has no effect on existing weeds. Research indicates that repeated applications over time become increasingly effective as weed control, with up to 95% effectiveness after 3 years. An excellent website for further information is: www.gluten.iastate.edu/.

ideas to plant

Do you have any words of gardening wisdom or wonder that you'd like to share with other FOCG members? Send information to: fran@group230.com *Deadline for the Winter issue is December 1.*

boardREPORT

We'd like to thank everyone for their support of the plant sale again this year. Membership participation on Friday night and on Saturday continues to be a major part of the sale, with sales to members accounting for approximately 55% of total sales. While this demonstrates a loyal membership, it also shows that we need to find new ways to attract "the public" to the sale on Saturday. Total sales were down from last year, and we had to reduce the number of hours for our summer intern.

Any ideas you have are always welcome. FOCG Board meetings are held on the third Tuesday of every month at 7:15 p.m., usually at the Biery-Stinson household in Okemos. (please call Eric or Lynette at 347-4757 to be sure the location hasn't changed) We would enjoy having you visit.

If you haven't had a chance to visit the gardens in the last few weeks, please do! Eric's annual display is magnificent. New pictures of the garden can also be viewed on our website: Cooleygardens.org.

As always, thanks for your support.

FRIENDS OF COOLEY GARDENS Membership/Renewal Application

name _____ phone _____

address _____

membership level: Individual \$15.00 Student \$10.00
 Household \$20.00 Senior Citizen \$10.00
 Benefactor \$75.00

I do not wish to become a member at this time, but would like to donate \$_____.

I am interested in: Garden Work Plant Sale Fundraising
 Newsletter Public Relations/Membership

Make checks payable to **Friends of Cooley Gardens** and send to:
 Friends of Cooley Gardens • P.O. Box 14164 • Lansing, MI 48901

Benefits of Membership: Annual members-only guided tour, Newsletter, Plant Sale Discount

FRIENDS OF COOLEY GARDENS
board of directors

President
Rich Schaberg

Vice President
Sam Pardee

Secretary
Peggy Casey

Treasurer
Rich Schaberg

Members at Large
David Dickhaut

Mary James

Jo Pardee

Sally Potter

Dianne Robinson

Lynette Biery-Stinson

Eric Stinson

This newsletter is published quarterly as a benefit to members by Friends of Cooley Gardens, P.O. Box 14164, Lansing, Michigan and is sponsored in part by Group 230 Design, Old Town Lansing.

For more information on Cooley Gardens visit our website at www.cooleygardens.org

calendar OF EVENTS

september

- 21** FOCG Board Meeting, Scott House, Capitol Avenue at Main Street. 7:15 pm.
- 22** Lunchtime Garden Tour and Talk with Head Gardener Eric Stinson. 12:10-12:50 pm.

october

- 13** Lunchtime Garden Tour and Talk with Head Gardener Eric Stinson. Last of the season. 12:10-12:50 pm.
- 19** FOCG Board Meeting, Biery-Stinson household. 7:15 pm. call 347-4757 for directions.
- 23** Cooley Gardens Fall Garden Cleanup. 9 am - 1pm. No tools required — just show up and lend Eric a hand. *In the event of bad weather, call 483-4332 for rescheduling information.*

november

- 16** FOCG Board Meeting, Biery-Stinson household. 7:15 pm, call 347-4757 for directions.
-



capitol avenue at main street, lansing

P.O. BOX 14164

LANSING, MICHIGAN 48901

www.cooleygardens.org