



## Oxford Botanical Gardens



by Anne Przybilla

One of the benefits of having children and grandchildren infected with the wanderlust is the incentive to visit them in their new and sometimes exotic living situations.

Shortly after my granddaughter was accepted for study at the University of Oxford in England, her mother (my

daughter, Chris) and I began discussing how much fun it would be to visit her before she returned to the States. The discussions escalated into actual planning, and before we knew it Jenna's school year was coming to an end and Chris and I were headed to the UK on a quest to visit the sites on our British Bucket List.

There were two gardens Jenna felt that her master

gardener grandmother should not miss. The Oxford Botanic Garden was one of those "must sees." It is the oldest botanic garden in Great Britain and the third oldest botanic garden in the world. As such, it has a long and interesting history. Though founded in 1621, it was not until 1633 that the Garden's completion was recorded.

It was originally known as the Oxford Physic Garden because when the original benefactor, Sir Henry Danvers, gave five thousand pounds (equivalent to five and a half million dollars today) for its construction his intent was to set up a physic garden to study medicinal plants. It was renamed the Oxford Botanic Garden in 1840.

Located in the heart of the city on the west bank of the River Cherwell, the first task in constructing it was to raise the site above the flood-plain of the Cherwell. Historic records state that "four thousand cart loads of muck and dung" (whatever that is) were hauled in to accomplish that task.

Designed by the renowned British architect Inigo Jones and built by his master stone mason, whose name, coincidentally, was Nicolas Stone, the grandiose main gate and the fourteen-foot-high walls have not been significantly changed or modified since

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## Orange Hues are Hot in 2015

by Carl Hoffman

2015 has been a year of validation for me! Having a penchant for the new and unusual, I have used orange annuals in my containers and beds for several years and I was very happy to learn that orange is being used as the designer color of the year for annual flowers. Because orange does not harmonize well with the pinks and reds that many of us have been using, it takes some planning when selecting plants. I attempt to plan my containers to harmonize and coordinate, but as far as beds and

borders, who cares? Plant coordination is definitely not one of my long suits, but I do like to combine blue shades with orange and have used blue and purple salvias, supertunias, calibrachos, blue bacopa, and anything else in the blue hues that strikes my eye when shopping in a greenhouse. I have also successfully used cordylone, phormium, burgundy sweet potato vine, selected sun coleus, grasses, and much more.

When a new designer color hits the market, it is always hard to determine

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**Moment in the Gardens?**  
Stepping into the north end of Munsinger Gardens one morning, I was thinking how at times this newsletter carries a short piece called "Moment in the Gardens." It would describe someone sitting on a bench, or walking among the flowers, or maybe standing above the shoreline rocks—and thinking.  
My moments usually happen on the path along the river, passing mallards, sometimes geese. A few weeks ago, out on the water six tiny mallards were riding on the back of an adult. On another day a little girl was running around in circles chasing mallards into the river. Some days I have watched a Great Blue Heron standing at river's edge, watching me as I approach then taking off across the water to settle at another spot. Stepping off the river path and into the Gardens, I admire once again the blooms and greens of another season.  
Our Gardens change day by day, week by week. Flowers bloom, plants grow, grass gets mowed. Young mallards learn to swim and learn to fly. Nature and the Gardens staff make a lovely place for observation and contemplation. A Moment in the Gardens. — Donna Gorrell, Editor

**Final concert of the season, Aug. 23, 3:00 pm—Monday Night Jazz.** Starting out as a bunch of guys getting together every week, this group began playing jazz music at a young age. They formed their group in 2004, performing at the former Tavern Bar in downtown Saint Cloud. When the Tavern closed down in 2005, they moved to Pioneer Place. The group is led by Jeff Engholm and Mugsy Lauer.



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## Oxford Botanical Gardens

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they were completed almost 380 years ago. A pond located in the middle of the walled garden reflects the classic architecture and unexcelled craftsmanship of the walls. Enclosing an almost square area of about five acres, the walls and arches were constructed on such a grand scale that by the time they were finished in 1633 most of the funds had been spent and there was little or no money left with which to purchase plants and pay for the running of the Garden.

Jacob Bobart, the first curator for the Garden, wasn't hired until 1642, and for his first seven years there the University failed to pay his salary, thus forcing him to make ends meet by selling fruit grown in the Garden. One of these original fruits, the medlar (*Mespilus germanica*), is still grown there today and is listed in the Garden's original catalog of plants, which was first published in 1648. That catalog, *Catalogus Plantarum Horti Botanici Oxoniensis*, contained approximately 1400 plant names and has been maintained in detail since those early days. I think Mr. Bobart would be astounded to learn that the catalog he began those many years ago will soon be available online for all the world to see.

Amazingly, an English Yew (*Taxus baccata*) planted by Bobart in 1645 is alive and well and has the distinction of being the oldest plant in the Garden. Though not originally planted for medicinal purposes, today yews are the source of Taxol and Taxotere, two mainstay drugs in our current cancer-fighting arsenal. I find it intriguing that the botanic family of the oldest plant in a former physic garden is providing the modern world with life-saving medicines.

The literary connections to the Garden are many. Oxford mathematics professor Lewis Carroll was a frequent visitor in the 1860s, and it is where he found his inspiration for *Alice's Adventures*

*in Wonderland*. J. R. R. Tolkien, another Oxford professor, spent many hours there relaxing under his favorite tree, a black spruce (*Pinus nigra*) whose distinctive twisting branches became his model for the Ents in *Lord of the Rings*. Sadly, this historic spruce lost a huge branch shortly before our visit and had to be taken down for safety reasons. There are plans to turn the remaining stump into a commemorative piece of art in honor of Tolkien.

The Garden is divided into two main sections, the Walled Garden which houses scientific collections and the Lower Garden which is home to ornamental collections. In both of them, care is taken to label every plant clearly and accurately.

Within the Walled Garden, plants are grouped in a number of different ways. The borders along the base of the walls contain plants that thrive in the micro-climate created by the walls themselves. There are ferns in the cool east border while the south border sports a collection of bamboo. Plants in the west and north borders are grouped by their geographic origin and include collections from Asia, North and South America, Europe, the Mediterranean, and South Africa.

The other beds in the walled garden are designed for scientific study. In the medicinal plant collection there are eight rectangular beds dedicated to plants used to treat diseases in each of the following medical specialties: infectious diseases, cardiology, dermatology, oncology, gastroenterology, hematology, neurology, and pulmonology. The plants in these beds contain many different "natural" elements with proven or potential medicinal purposes. By revealing the healing properties of these plants, the science behind this exhibition offers unique insight into how we are made and changed by the natural world.

The "family beds" feature plants that are arranged into botanical families in such

a way that visitors are able to stroll through different plant family "evolutions" beginning with plants that emerged first and ending with more recently formed "relative" groups.

Features of the Lower Garden include a rock garden, a bog garden, and the Merton Borders, as well as an orchard and a vegetable garden whose produce is all donated to local charities.

I found the Merton Borders to be one of the most interesting features of the Lower Garden. Developed to create an example of sustainable horticulture, the majority of the flowering plants used in the borders are from drought-tolerant native plant communities that prefer the growing conditions of a dry grassland. Direct sowing allows the plants to grow in high densities, and they require no artificial irrigation or fertilizers and need no intensive management methods such as replanting, staking, or soil amendments. Such a diverse plant community creates a stable ecosystem for pollenizing insects, which is bound to benefit the whole garden.

In addition to the two main gardens there are seven glasshouses connected by a long corridor. The very first glasshouse in the garden was built more than 300 years ago. It was used to protect tender plants over the winter. Today each glasshouse features a different climate and houses a collection of plants that thrive in that climate. There is a house for alpiners, a fernery, a palm house, a lily house, an arid house, a house for carnivorous plants, and a conservatory whose citrus trees were all bearing fruit during our visit.

I haven't mentioned the morning study groups or the evening lectures, the family-friendly events, or the special guided tours, but my space here is limited and so I'm going to stop now by telling you that Jenna was right. The Oxford Botanic Garden is a must see on your Botanic Bucket List.

## Geraniums

*Continued from page 6*

baseball cap. He used to have a gray ponytail, but has recently had his hair cut short. He comes across as pretty laid back, but you just know for a fact that he's really a little wild. This doesn't mean he's out of control or crazy. Rather, he hasn't been tamed. He's his own person, in charge of how he lives and where he lives and when he'll come over and fix your broken sump pump, which is when he's good and ready. And you're thrilled to see him whenever that may be. His unabashed love of geraniums seems incongruous, and sweet.

Geraniums are a prominent feature of the summer home on the lake landscape. Just as abundant as flags, geraniums adorn patios and decks, docks and mailboxes. They grow wherever you set them down in their pots. The deer seem to leave them alone. Their big blooms pop with every color you can imagine against the green forest background. It's no wonder our talented handyman loves them so much. And when he discovers that you love geraniums as much as he does, he'll offer to come over and water yours while you're away.

## MRT

Have you noticed the green and white signs that appeared recently on some of our streets? There are two near the entrance to Munsinger Gardens, and another two alongside Clemens Gardens. There's one on 6th Avenue N that points in the direction of one on 5th Avenue N and Hester Park, and there are several around Saint Cloud State University leading to and from Beaver Island Trail. There are many more.

The big letters MRT on these signs stand for Mississippi River Trail, and they mark a new adventure for bicyclists and hikers. They mark a trail that begins at Lake Itasca in Minnesota, traverses ten states, and ends in Louisiana where the Mississippi ends. The signs say "10 states, 1 river."

The mission of Mississippi River Trail Inc., as stated on its website, is "connecting people and communities with the river through development and promotion of multi-use pathways and bicycle friendly roads." Saint Cloud as a city along the river was judged to be a location able to offer food and overnight accommodations for traveling bicyclists.

So take a little trip on your bike and follow the signs to see how they wend through Saint Cloud, showcasing the river and our parks. For more information, check out the organization's website: [mississippirivertrail.org](http://mississippirivertrail.org).



— Donna Gorrell, Editor



## Photography in the Gardens

January 1— November 6, 2015

### > Prizes

**\$100 Best of Show**

**\$50** 1st place **Adult** winner in each category

**\$20** 2nd place **Adult** winner in each category

**\$10** 3rd place **Adult** winner in each category

**\$50** 1st place **Youth-18** winner in each category

**\$20** 2nd place **Youth-18** winner in each category

**\$10** 3rd place **Youth-18** winner in each category

*All winners will receive Award Certificates.*

### > Categories

**Landscapes** (garden scenery)

**Hardscapes** (decorative features in the Gardens)

*1st, 2nd, and 3rd place winners will be chosen from both age groups and each category.*

*Any visitor to the Gardens is eligible to enter.*

### > Submission Fee

**\$10** for adults per photo

**\$5** for youth-18 per photo

*Maximum of 3 entries per photographer.*

### > Rules

- Tripods may be used.
- Photos will be returned to photographer.
- Photographer retains copyright of photo.
- Use of the photo is granted to MCBS and credit will be given to photographer.
- Contest allows for only normal manipulation of an image.

### > Entries Due

**November 6, 2015** from 4:30 to 6:30 p.m.

**November 7, 2015** from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

at the **Lake George Municipal Complex**

1101 7th Street South, St. Cloud, MN

*Winners will be notified November 11-13, 2015.*

**Download the entry form from our website**  
[www.munsingerclemens.com](http://www.munsingerclemens.com)

## Photography Displays

Last year's photo contest winners will be on display at the Saint Cloud Medical Group, 1301 33rd Street South in August and September and at the Saint Cloud Public Library in October and November. Stop in to one of these locations and view the beauty of our Gardens as seen by these winning photographers.

## Virginia Clemens Rose Garden Update

by Joan Andersen

Northern rose gardens face special challenges. The Virginia Clemens is home to 1200 tender roses, and there are 200 more in the upper test gardens adjacent to the formal rose garden. As you probably know, these nonhardy roses are covered with construction blankets for winter. Unfortunately there are always rose casualties. Sometimes we get a winter without much snow as we did in 2014-15 and roses die. No rose plant lives forever and some just reach the end of their life. Sometimes roses survive when you don't expect them to and others that are well protected don't make it through winter. It is a waiting game to find out whether a rose plant survived. Some plants leaf out right away and bloom on schedule and others take longer to break dormancy. Roses are not removed until it is obvious they are dead. Of course, the majority of roses that overwintered successfully are growing and blooming, and the Rose Garden has been a blaze of color since the "first flush" of bloom in early July.

Deb Keiser, Rose Specialist, is always looking to find the best new roses to replace the ones that are lost. She looks for new hybrid tea varieties that are more disease resistant. These roses are grafted and always overwintered under construction blankets. She also buys new shrub roses that need to be very

## Geraniums

by Idella Moberg

He came to life up North from Illinois or some such place. He retired and came to live in the family cabin on Lost Lake and now lives in a hunting cabin somewhere between Lost Lake and Highway 53, which goes on into Canada about eighty miles or so.

If you ask him anything personal, like Where is your wife anyway, or What must you be going through to want to live by yourself in a rustic cabin in the middle of nowhere—you'll get a response by means of a look that states clearly and unambiguously "Mind your own gosh darn business." And of course you'd never even think to ask such questions, even though that's what you really want to know.

He makes his living working for summer residents, opening and closing their cabins, mowing lawns, painting and repairing rickety decks, and general carpentry. He'll build a shelf anywhere you like, and seal up your leaky windows. This keeps him quite busy all summer. In winter he checks their property for fallen trees and frozen pipes.

When people leave the lake at the end of summer, they often give him things they don't want to take home, like half-used bottles of salad dressing and bags of herbed toasted croutons, and potted geraniums. I imagine he just tosses the outdated

cold tolerant and "crown hardy" because most of them will be protected only by an extra layer of mulch. Even if they die back to the ground they should come back because they are growing on their own roots (not grafted). Currently there are about 500 hardy roses located in the lower test garden and tucked among the flower beds throughout Clemens Gardens.

Deb ordered 311 new roses in the fall of 2014—an unusually high number of plants for one season. Many of the newer cultivars have improved resistance to common rose diseases. Disease resistance is important so that the use of chemicals can be minimized. The plants were ordered "bare root" and were potted and grown in the greenhouse for a while. The pots were moved outside when the weather permitted. The potted roses are blooming and look like they have been there all season. By the time you read this, Deb and her assistant Helen will have them all planted.

All roses will be labeled—if there is a group of the same kind there will be one label for the group. With such a large selection of roses, visiting the Rose Garden is a good way to find roses that you might like for your garden. In case you are wondering, there are about 1900 roses in the Gardens. Feel free to ask Deb questions about the roses when you visit.

food items in the trash. He's somewhat finicky, preferring to eat his own food. If you invite him to stay for supper when he's been working all day fixing your leaky roof, he'll politely decline and launch off into a description of the lovely gourmet dinner he's going to prepare for himself when he gets home. Pizza from scratch, and your mouth waters just listening to him describe the savory herbs and the secret ingredients never to be disclosed that make his food so memorable.

The geraniums are another thing altogether. People leave them for his disposal. "Do what you want with them," they say to him, "just keep the pots for me when I come back in the spring."

"They come out of the pots in big clumps," he says. "I take cuttings off and root them in water. My kitchen fills up with geraniums. All winter long they take up space. Every kind of geranium you can imagine. Every color. You can hardly move, they're so many."

And he pauses at the pleasant thought of living inside a garden in the north woods in the middle of winter.

He looks just like every other seventy-year-old man living on Vermillion Range. He dresses like anyone else who lives there. Loose tee shirt that slopes over a growing paunch, baggy jeans that fasten just below it, flannel plaid shirt hanging open,

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## Orange Hues are Hot in 2015

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which came first, the color designated as the "designer color" or the plant breeders who want it to become a designer color. At any rate, plant breeders have put many new orange annuals on the market. The goal of the breeders is to produce a plant that is an intense orange hue and is nonfading. We have all probably been disappointed to find that petunias sold as orange are really salmon or fade to peach tones.

Let's take a look at some orange choices. Because of the popularity in both beds and containers, I will begin with some newer orange petunias. 'African Sunset' is a 2014 All American Selection that is probably the most readily available of all the orange varieties. It is touted as having an intense blood-orange hue, is nonfading, and requires no dead-heading. 'Sun Spun Orange' and 'Orange Flash' are two varieties that I found available in several local greenhouses as was a Proven Winners offering called 'Good and Plenty Orange.' A variety with a great name is 'Hells Bells' (Petunia Panache Hells Bells). I have not seen this variety, but I suspect that it is as orange as its name indicates. We used 'Perfection Orange Morn' (a relative of the very pretty 'Opera Spring Supreme Pink Morn'), which is dark orange with a lighter orange center in a concrete planter on the south side of our home. Combined with 'Black Mamba' petunias, they made an eye-catching combination, but they faded to a peachy orange shortly after opening. In an attempt to save the container, I added a couple of 'Royal Peachy Keen' verbenas from Proven Winners to add to the peachy orange color and have what I think is an attractive combination.

Geraniums rival petunias for use in containers. I have used 'Tangerine,' a zonal geranium from Allure, for several years and have never been disappointed. It has a bright glowing orange color and looks great in combination with blue and burgundy plants. I have used blue calibrachos and blue supertunias as spillers in containers and a variety of taller thrillers, but my favorite is a simple combination of 'Tangerine' geranium, a cordyline, and 'Ace of Spades' ornamental sweet potato vine which, incidentally, are found at the entrance to our home this year. Now that I have espoused my personal preference, I will introduce some additional orange geraniums that are just as eye catching. The first of these is 'Maverick Orange' with its fist-sized blooms of florescent orange. Proven Winners has introduced 'Timeless Orange,' another nonfading bright orange geranium, and there is 'Caliente Orange' for Caliente geranium lovers. I went online to see how many different orange geraniums there are and was very amazed at the large number available. Those I have included in this article are varieties that I have seen in area greenhouses and nurseries, and I am sure that there are varieties that I have missed. I was little surprised when the owner of the greenhouse from which

I purchase my 'Tangerine' geraniums told me that for the first time since she has offered orange geraniums, they sold out before the reds and pinks.

I think you are getting the idea that plant breeders are really into orange and we will see many more offerings next year. I have used only two common container plants and have compiled a sizeable list of new orange plants. Most of you are familiar with the beautiful bright orange gerbera daisies that, I am told, are finding their way into many wedding bouquets. I have a 70-foot row of 'Profusion Fire' zinnias that form a border on my flower bed and are really quite striking. I found a standard form hibiscus in a half-price sale that was in bud, but no color listed; it turned out to be orange!

Orange flowers do come with some caveats. First of all, although plant breeders have done an excellent job of introducing beautiful varieties, there are still a number of them that fade to salmon or peach hues. I am confident that geneticists will soon have this fault corrected. Secondly, it is quite easy to create eye-appealing combinations in containers but difficult when using orange in beds and borders. I am not completely satisfied with my flower garden this year because I have planted many perennials and their pink and red shades do not coordinate well with the fire-orange border, but it is certainly the source of a riot of color.

I am definitely going to use orange annuals again next year in my containers because I like the fluorescent, sizzling color that they provide. I am anticipating hotter, nonfading orange petunias, geraniums, and other container annuals from plant breeders. My goal in writing this article is to kindle your creativity so that you will join me in using orange in containers and gardens that will sizzle in 2016.

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## Hydrangeas

by William M. Cook



One of the most popular kinds of flowering shrubs in the U.S. is the good old hydrangea. Actually, we could say either “hydrangea” or “*Hydrangea*” because this is one of our garden plants whose common name is also the scientific name (the genus, to be specific). These shrubs can grow variously from shade to sun, and produce large flower heads which last for months (including all winter). Since you will be reading this in late summer or fall tree and shrub planting season, I’ll give you a primer here on the main groups of hydrangeas.

There are at least 70 species of *Hydrangea* in the world, mostly native to eastern Asia. The center of diversity for hydrangeas is in the north, in Japan and Korea, but some species stretch south down to the tropics. But a much smaller number of species appear in the garden trade in the U.S., though there are many, many varieties.

Most of the hydrangeas with white disc- or ball-shaped flower heads are in the species *Hydrangea arborescens*, which are variously known as smooth, snowball, or “Annabelle” hydrangeas (among other names). *H. arborescens* is a native species to the eastern United States, particularly in the Appalachian mountain region. The wild-type or “original” *arborescens* hydrangeas have disc-shaped flowers, which are also called “lacecaps” because they have a circular cluster of white flowers surrounded by a more diffuse ring of white flowers, reminiscent of a lace doily. I have a variety of hydrangea in my yard, growing happily in deep shade in front of my house and also in a sunny spot in the back yard, and they flower away happily in both locations. My variety of *arborescens* is descended from plants my great grandparents planted in their yard in the 1930s, and is more or less indestructible. By family tradition they are called “Hills of Snow” hydrangeas, and I suspect they are not

terribly different from their wild ancestors. They grow up to about five feet tall and slowly expand into colonies.

There are many varieties of *H. arborescens*, but the most common kinds you see are the kinds with white ball-shaped flower clusters. Many people know these as “Annabelle” hydrangeas. “Annabelle” is in fact a very successful variety of *arborescens* discovered decades ago in a town in Illinois, but there are many other varieties of white ball-shaped hydrangeas. Therefore, the term “Annabelle” is technically overused, as in calling all white facial tissues “Kleenex.” Nevertheless, these are an excellent kind of shrub for you to grow in central Minnesota.

The most popular hydrangeas in the United States are varieties of *Hydrangea macrophylla*, which is originally native to Asia. Some of the famous of these are the varieties which have ball-shaped blue or pink flowerheads. It is true that the same plant can grow different color flowers under different conditions; macrophyllas will often grow blue flowers when planted in acidic soils, and pink in basic or neutral soils. To turn future flowers blue, add elemental sulfur to the soil around the shrub to decrease the pH. To turn future flowers pink, you could add ash or lime. On the whole, soils in central Minnesota are neutral, so macrophylla flowers tend to be pink. There are pockets where the soil is more acidic, however. Macrophylla hydrangeas can be various colors, and they can be mophead or lacecap shaped.

There is a big problem with macrophylla hydrangeas in our area. The winters are too cold for most of them! It is easy to find Minnesota gardeners, including several who write for this newsletter, who got very excited several years ago about the new line of “Endless Summer” hydrangeas and ran out and bought some. Then, they turned into “endless bummer” hydrangeas (cue unhappy music), because they often died to the ground every winter. Macrophylla hydrangeas can survive pretty well by regrowing from roots every spring, but in this case they will never flower. I have read reports that some newer varieties are hardier, but I can’t confirm this from experience. On the whole, macrophyllas are wildly popular in less frigid climates, but tend to be a disappointment in Minnesota.

The third widely grown species of hydrangea is *H. paniculata*, usually called panicle or P.G. hydrangeas, which are also originally native to Asia. These are named for their white panicle (cone) shaped flowerheads. A stupendously common variety is *H. paniculata* ‘Grandifloris’ (i.e., P.G.) which has colloquially taken over the whole species, like “Annabelle” has become a name for all of *H. arborescens*. However, there are also many other varieties of this species of varying size and shape. These are very hardy shrubs, no problems here in

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## What’s Up in the Gardens?

by Joan Andersen

I visited with Nia Primus, Gardens Supervisor, to get her thoughts on how things are going in the Gardens in 2015. Over 100,000 annuals and perennials were planted this year and the staff finished on July 10. The cool wet weather early in the season delayed planting of tender annuals. Rain also made the weeds “grow like a weed,” so gardeners often had to weed a bed one day and plant flowers the next. For some reason many trees produced a bumper crop of seeds this year that are sprouting in the garden beds. Summer and heat finally arrived and the flowers have been growing fast and blooming beautifully.

Nia told me that the overall design for the flower beds was to use complementary colors. I had to review my color wheel definitions to remember that complementary colors (also called contrasting colors) are opposite to each other on the color wheel. When you visit the gardens, look for combinations of red/green, orange/blue, and yellow/violet. Watch for orange marigolds planted near purple liatris and red petunias, green and yellow rudbeckia planted with pink and purple zinnias. In some areas, grasses provide a little separation between the colors, which makes the combination even more pleasing. The effect is striking, and Nia reports that many visitors have commented on the bright and colorful appearance of the plantings.

Urns and other containers are located all over the Gardens. They are planted with flowers, grasses, and foliage plants and are kept in continuous bloom by frequent applications of a special fertilizer. Next to the gift shop you can also see an attractive trough of succulents plus an unusual “wall hanging” of succulent plants above the trough. Most of these succulent plants are not hardy in Minnesota so they are overwintered and propagated in the greenhouse. The wall hanging planter is laid flat and planted and when the plants are securely rooted it is then hung vertically on the wall.

The Trellage gardens on top of the hill in Clemens Gardens are traditionally composed of four gardens of single colors. Be sure to check out the corner plantings in each of these color gardens if you are looking to see what plants look good together. The yellow garden is a bright glow of yellow day lilies, ligularia, and cannas planted with marigolds and other annuals. The pink garden is a cheery mixture of pink day lilies, coneflowers, yarrow, and lilies planted with annuals—petunias, vinca, zinnias, and cleome. The red garden features red daylilies and several attractive red foliage plants and grasses. Red flowers include geraniums, celosia, pentas, red salvia, and New Guinea impatiens. Finally, the blue garden has a calming mixture of perennial balloon flowers and nepeta planted with annuals including petunias, salvia, ageratum, and pansies accented with variegated iris and grasses.

No visit to the Gardens would be complete without a stroll through the shade in Munsinger Gardens. The hostas are absolutely beautiful this year, and you can find many cultivars with different leaf shapes, textures, and colors. Many other shade perennials can be found nearby, and annuals such as begonias, coleus, torenia, and New Guinea impatiens bring color into the garden. It is a great place to find a bench to rest and look at the river.

Nia thinks it is important to change the look of the Gardens each year to make it interesting for visitors. Staff members love creating new designs. Once again, Nia and the staff gardeners have succeeded in a successful “makeover” of the Gardens while still keeping some of the familiar features that we love.

### Hydrangeas

*continued from page 4*

central Minnesota at all, and unlike the other species described here can be trained into small trees.

There are at least two other species of *Hydrangea* which are grown in the U.S., including one native species. However these are not at all hardy in Minnesota and we will pass over them here.

So, how do you take care of hydrangeas? Particularly if they are *arborescens* or *paniculata* types, it’s pretty easy. *Arborescens* or “Annabelle” hydrangeas are pretty flexible about sun or shade, unless it’s a really hot location. They are a great choice for deep shade, as they will still flower there. They grow into clonal clumps, which can be safely cut down to the ground in the spring if the stems are too old and unruly. *Paniculata* hydrangeas can be taller, and tend to like more sun in Minnesota than the other species. I haven’t tried cutting them to the ground, and I would imagine it wouldn’t be as good a plan as for the other species.

To make more of either *arborescens* or *paniculata* hydrangeas, they are easily propagated by cuttings. In early summer take 6’ cuttings from new (green-stemmed) shoots and plant them with at least one node below the soil level in damp potting soil. I tend to do this in large clear plastic containers filled maybe 3” deep, and keep the lid on most of the time to keep the humidity up. These need to stay in a very shaded spot during the early stages. Later in the summer some of the cuttings will have grown roots, and can be planted separately. These new plants are still quite delicate for some time, however. *Arborescens* hydrangeas can also be propagated by digging up part of a clump.

So, now that you know which is which, go out and shop and plant! Hydrangeas will fit nicely into most central Minnesota landscapes.