

Wild Nuts

by William M. Cook

In recent years, I have gotten interested not only in conventional gardening, but also in foraging for food among native plants. When you read this it will be autumn, which is prime season for one of our most abundant wild food categories, which is nuts. Nuts are time-consuming to prepare by hand, but can be free to collect and rewarding to add to your kitchen store.

There are three major groups of native nut trees and shrubs you can look for. I have experimented with all three of them and will give you a rundown of what you can use them for and how, if you decide to give it a shot.

Black walnuts (*Juglans nigra*). Most people know English walnuts from jars of mixed nuts. English walnuts are introduced into the United States but won't survive our severe winters in Minnesota. Here we have our native species of walnut, which occurs naturally in the eastern states and has been



introduced elsewhere. Walnuts grow into large, attractive trees that also produce valuable wood. Black walnuts produce prolifically and nuts are easy to collect, but unfortunately they are harder to process, crack, and extract than their English cousins.

Black walnuts, for some reason, tend to produce a lot of nuts every other year, and then not much in between. In my neighborhood even-numbered years tend to be the "on" years, but things might be different where you live. Walnuts look like green balls growing on trees in the summer and early fall and then mature in September to October. In general you wait for walnuts to drop before harvesting, since ones on the tree are usually immature.

Also, nuts that drop early tend not to be any good, but I have seen exceptions.

Walnuts are easy to collect by hand—I collected around 4,000 of them from a couple of trees in Saint Cloud last fall. I found once that 569 fit in a 5-gallon bucket, and filling the bucket took only a few minutes. The work really begins after that, though. When ripe the green balls turn yellow, and then brown. The ideal time to remove the fleshy rind is when it is yellowish, since when it turns brown it exudes an inky liquid that stains everything brown, including your hands. Peel these rinds off with your hands (use gloves, if you care about the staining) or simply stomp on them until the hard inner nut squirts out. After this, it is a good idea to wash the nuts in a bucket to get most of the inky liquid and stringy rind off. It is best not to dump the discarded rinds in your compost pile, because walnut residue contains a chemical that retards growth of other plants. I dump rinds back in the woods, or you can put them in the trash.

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What's Up in the Garden?

by Joan Andersen

Everything! On the day of the Art Fair, I took a tour of the Gardens to see the colors and design. I started in Munsinger Gardens, a shady place of tranquility by the Mississippi River. The river is very high due to the rains in northern Minnesota. Some places received over 10" of rain and the tributaries of the Mississippi are sending all that water our way. You should hear the roar of the water going over the dam by the greenhouse!

Munsinger is mostly shade, although there are spots of sunlight here and there. Everyone is familiar with hosta—the backbone of any shade garden. However, there are more wonderful shade perennials being added each year. Many of them love the environment, where they receive a little sun and are regularly watered. Some are chosen for their colorful foliage. I saw *ligularia* 'Brit Marie Crawford' which has

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It is a good idea to let husked and cleaned walnuts dry in layers on trays or cardboard boxes for a couple of months in a dry room or porch, though the meats will stay good for years inside. Walnuts have very thick shells, which require more force than a standard nutcracker will provide. Some people try to run car tires over nuts to crack them, but I would think that would pulverize them too much. It would be better to crack them carefully one at a time in a vice, or in a specialized spring-loaded nutcracker. Once they are cracked you will need a nut pick to extract the meats from the convoluted chambers inside. Fully dried meats will stay good in a jar indefinitely, can be salted and eaten like any nuts, and are great in baked goods. Black walnuts have a more intense flavor than English walnuts, so be ready for that.

Hazelnuts (*Corylus americana* and *C. cornuta*). Do you know filberts from those cans of mixed nuts? Those are basically just cultivated hazelnuts. There are two species of hazelnuts that grow wild in the upper Midwest, the American and beaked hazelnut. I have seen American hazel more commonly in our area, but nuts of both kinds are edible. Hazelnuts are shrubs up to 15 feet tall but usually shorter and can be extremely common in forest understories and at the edge of deciduous woods. For instance, there is a huge population of them at Sherburne National Wildlife Refuge in Zimmerman.

Hazelnuts (the nuts, that is) grow in green “envelopes” called involucre which are found hanging from the shrubs in the summer. These turn brown in September and then fall to the ground, but you want to catch them in late August when the nuts are mature and the involucre haven’t fallen off yet (and then been snarfed up by hungry wildlife). Some stands of hazelnuts seem not to produce any nuts in a given year—you might need to hunt around some. In a good stand I can fill a bucket or large tote bag with involucre in an hour or so.

Once you take everything home, you should let the involucre dry in trays before getting the nuts out. Once they are dry, you can put involucre in a barrel and stomp on them and nuts will come out. Prior to this, the nuts will stay stuck inside the involucre. Sadly, your bucket of involucre will be reduced to a collection of half a gallon to a gallon of nuts which will still need to be shelled. Hazelnuts have very hard shells, but are only half an inch or less across. These can be shelled by hand, or in my favorite hand-crank nutcracker. This has a hopper to feed nuts into, and I turn a metal arm and nuts and shells come out a chute at the bottom. Meats and shells then need to be sorted, but hazelnuts taste good raw.

Acorns (*Quercus* species). Probably the most abundant nuts in Saint Cloud and vicinity are acorns, which of course are the nuts from oak trees. Acorns were a major food source for many Native American tribes. Many people don’t know that acorns are edible, but with processing they can be an interesting ingredient and flavor to use in baked goods. Oaks are large deciduous trees, of course, and there are several species around. The most common in my neighborhood are bur and white oaks, but there may also be red or black oaks. Bur oak acorns fall in September, and other species do also in fall on a slightly different schedule.

Acorns are very easy to collect. In many falls, they litter driveways and sidewalks and can simply be swept right up with a broom. Some amount of sorting is then needed to get rid of leaves and sticks, but it is easy to gather lots of acorns quickly. Acorns can be cracked open right away, or dried in trays and cracked later during the winter.

Unlike the other nuts we have discussed here, acorns have thin shells and don’t require heavy machinery to crack. However, Minnesota acorns are fairly small (I see much bigger ones farther

south) and it can take time to crack a lot of them. My hand-crank nutcracker again comes in handy, though it can be time consuming to sort the meats out from shells.

One important thing to remember about acorns is that they are naturally bitter, and the bitterness needs to be extracted with water. Native Americans leached their shelled acorns by setting baskets of them in the river and letting the flowing water carry the bitterness away. This can be done in your kitchen by boiling the meats for up to two hours in several changes of water, or by grinding the raw meats into meal and soaking it in repeated changes of water. (This latter process requires more explanation than there is space for here.) Once the bitterness is gone, boiled meats can be pulverized into a paste that can be mixed into baked goods, or dried and then ground into flour. Acorn meal and flour can be somewhat perishable if not 100% dehydrated, but is also easily frozen. I like to use acorn flour in baking—it imparts a very rich, dark flavor. I use about 15-20% acorn flour by volume in muffin recipes (good with chopped apples, raisins, and rhubarb in different combinations) and up to half acorn flour by volume in quick breads, making a very rich, dense bread. I have found acorn flour goes well with pumpkin and molasses. A number of people have tried my acorn-pumpkin bread, and assumed that it had chocolate in it (it did not). Acorn starch is also used as a traditional ingredient in Korean cooking.

This all might seem far out to you, but if you are willing to expend some time you can find some interesting, free nuts for your kitchen just in your backyard or woods. You will discover why jars of nuts cost \$11.99 because of the time you will expend, but much free food is there for the taking. If this sounds like too much work for you, no problem—your local wildlife will be happy.

What's up in the Garden?, continued from page 1

deep green and maroon leaves. It is planted next to *aralia* 'Sun King' which has bright chartreuse leaves that brighten up a shady area and contrast well with darker foliage. Also look for many cultivars of *astilbe*, a plant with plumes of white, pink, purple, or red flowers and delicate foliage. There are also several plantings of *astrantia*, also known as masterwort. This underused perennial has tall sprays of pink or white flowers and it blooms most of the season if the spent flower stalks are removed. There are numerous cultivars of *heuchera* (coral bells) found around the gardens. They are grown for their colorful leaves with interesting shapes, as well as their flowers. Other shade-loving perennials found in Munsinger include *pulmonaria*, *brunnera*, ferns, and hellebore.

Perennial plants are important in Munsinger, but much of the color is provided by the many annuals. Look for large plantings of tuberous begonias, wax begonias, dragon wing begonias, *torenia*, *browallia*, and New Guinea impatiens. Annuals with colorful leaves include Rex begonias, coleus, caladium, and polka dot plant. As the summer progresses, these annual plants grow fast and will be at their peak in late summer and fall.

Clemens Gardens is almost always in full sun, so the plant choices are much wider. Each year there is a new color theme. Main colors in the Rest Area Garden (adjacent to the Gift Shop) are pink, purple, and burgundy. The key colors in the Formal Garden are lime green, purple, and orange. Nia Primus, Gardens Supervisor, says plants are chosen for their flower color, leaf color and texture, and ability to thrive in hot sun. In addition to using plants that have been grown successfully in prior seasons, she also likes to try cultivars that are new on the market. Each area of the Gardens has a separate design with



an eye to a cohesive whole. The designs include annuals mixed with perennials, lilies, and tropical plants.

Be sure to look at all the urns and containers. They are planted with annuals and tropical plants and are bursting with color and foliage. Many newer annual cultivars need a regular supply of fertilizer to bloom their best. Nia's secret is using a fertilizer called "Boost 'Em" that encourages plants to bloom.

Finally, no visit to the Gardens would be complete without a stroll through the Virginia Clemens Rose Gardens. Deb Keiser, Rose Specialist, observed that some of the more tender hybrid tea roses did not make it through the winter, especially on the northeast corner of the rose garden. All of the tender roses are covered in extra compost on the root zone and construction blankets for the winter, but the inadequate snow cover and the north winds during winter make it tough for the less hardy roses to survive. Next year, Deb will try a double layer of construction blankets on the northeast corner.

In the spring there may be damage from sawfly larvae. This insect overwinters as an egg on the stems and hatches into a little green worm that eats new rose leaves. The damage can be minimized if the larvae are picked off or washed off with a hose—they can't climb back up onto the plant.

It is inevitable that Japanese beetles will make it to our Gardens, but so far, so good. As I write this, four have been found and captured. The staff searched for more and no more were seen. We have had some bad storms with strong winds and it is possible that they blew in from somewhere else—it is one of the ways they move into a new area.

This year, there were 150 new miniature roses and 210 roses added to the Gardens. New cultivars are chosen to add to the rose collection. Many of the roses are identified with name tags so you can make a note of the name of a plant and buy it for your own garden.

I asked Deb for the name of a few of her favorites. It goes without saying that the criteria for a good rose include lots of flowers and disease-resistant foliage. She likes "Dee-lish*," a grafted hybrid tea rose. It is a tall, vigorous grower with lots of pink full old-fashioned fragrant blooms, and it re-blooms fast. It is also quite hardy for a hybrid tea rose but it will still need winter protection. Another favorite is "Violet's Pride" from the Downton Abbey series of roses. It is a fast-growing plant with nice English-style full lavender flowers with a spicy fragrance. It is a grafted floribunda rose and will need winter protection in our climate. Deb is also trialing two hardy shrub roses. They were planted around the Clemens Memorial Dome and they both wintered well. "Peachy Keen" has abundant pink flowers on a 3x3-4' plant. It was hybridized by Will Radler who is well known for his "Knockout" roses. "Icecap" has full white flowers on a 3x3-4' plant. It is the first rose released from a collaboration between Will Radler and the rose breeders at Meilland Roses in France.

If you visit the Gardens and want to know more about a rose or plant you like, feel free to ask one of the staff gardeners. They are happy to share their knowledge of the plants they care for.

The Well-Defined Apple

by Idella Moberg

The dictionary on my computer says an apple is: "1 the round fruit of a tree of the rose family, which typically has thin red or green skin and crisp flesh. Many varieties have been developed as dessert or cooking fruit or for making cider. • [with modifier] an unrelated fruit that resembles an apple in some way. See also custard apple, thorn apple. 2 (also apple tree) the tree which bears apples. [Genus *Malus*, family *Rosaceae*: numerous hybrids and cultivars.] 3 (the Apple) short for Big Apple."

This definition does not suffice. Pierce the thin skin of this dry definition and get into the flesh of it. The crisp, sweet juice running down your chin, flesh. Here's what some other people have said about what the apple is.

1 the round fruit of a tree... Margaret Atwood in *Alias Grace* deepens this by lavish praise: "I stand holding the apple in both hands. It feels precious, like a heavy treasure. I lift it up and smell it. It has such an odour of outdoors on it I want to cry." An apple is precious, a treasure. "You are the apple of my eye" is a saying that further defines the apple. Originally the central part of the eye, the pupil, was called an apple. The pupil is round like an apple and reflects the image of one who is cherished above all others.

...of the rose family... We don't usually think of an apple blossom as a rose, or an apple as a great big huge rose hip. But it belongs to the family *Rosaceae*, and who are we to second guess Shakespeare's "A rose by any other name would smell as sweet" (*Romeo and Juliet*). Juliet is arguing here that names don't matter, but certainly it adds to our understanding of the apple when we acknowledge its family tree. Unlike apples and oranges, apples and roses are family. They come to the house. A family having difficulty accepting such a different relative could benefit by keeping this in mind: an apple is a rose by another name.

Many varieties have been developed as dessert or cooking fruit... We Americans love apple pie. When we want to claim something as truly American, we say it is "as American as apple pie," along with hot dogs and baseball and ice cream.

Apples aren't native to America. In 328 BCE Alexander the Great brought apples to Greece from Macedonia for cultivation. For thousands of years before America was colonized, Asians and Europeans were eating and cooking apples. The English have been making apple pie since at least the 14th century. In the 16th century Dutch bakers developed the lattice-style crust that we use today. Apple pies were eaten through France, Italy, and Germany.

Nevertheless Americans claim apple pie as their own American treat. Sometime in the 17th century trees producing edible apples came to America. Pennsylvania Dutch women developed ways to preserve apples so they could make apple pie any time of the year. American settlers believed apple pie was an American dish and ate apple pie often. In 1928 "as American as apple pie" was used to describe the homemaking abilities of President Herbert Hoover's wife. In the 1940s the phrase "as American as apple pie" took off when soldiers going to fight in World War II stated that they were willing to fight "for mom and apple pie."

*2 (also apple tree) the tree which bears apples. [Genus *Malus*, family *Rosaceae*: numerous hybrids and cultivars.]...* Martin Luther tells us how he picked apples: "First I shake the whole apple tree, that the ripest might fall. Then I climb the tree and shake each limb, and then each branch and then each twig, and then I look under each leaf." Apples falling from the tree illustrates how children grow up to be similar to their parents: "The apple doesn't fall far from the tree." And the saying "One bad apple spoils the bunch" is a caution to choose friends carefully. Luther expresses his priority in a turbulent world: "Even if I knew that tomorrow the world would go to pieces, I would still plant my apple tree."

Popular Christian tradition maintains that in the Garden of Eden Eve shared an apple with Adam, forbidden fruit from the tree of the knowledge of "good and evil" (*bonum et malum*). Perhaps this identification accounts for the apple's genus *Malus*. Henry David Thoreau takes it in a different direction when he says, "How closely the history of the apple tree is connected with that of man."

Two famous men shaped their lives as a result of their experience with the apple tree. First is John Chapman, better known as Johnny Appleseed. He was a planter of apple trees in the 18th-19th centuries. American popular culture remembers

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Does the Heat Impact Your Plants?

The Well-Defined Apple continued

him as a simple man who dressed in sack cloth and wore a cooking pot for a hat. He traveled throughout Pennsylvania, Ohio, and Indiana, planting apple trees. His traveling song was the old Swedenborgian hymn: "The Lord is good to me and so I thank the Lord, for giving me the things I need, the sun and the rain and the appleseed..." In real life he was planting nurseries so that settlers coming to the American western frontier could buy his apple trees and plant them in their new home.

Second is Sir Isaac Newton. One day he sat under an apple tree, so the story goes, and an apple fell, maybe on his head, maybe not. Observing this fall led him to think about and to eventually formulate the Universal Law of Gravitation. The implications for Newton's observation of a falling apple are expressed in poetic form by Ellen Bass:

If you've managed to do one good thing,
the ocean doesn't care.
But when Newton's apple
fell toward the earth,
the earth, ever so slightly, fell
toward the apple as well.

3 (the Apple) short for Big Apple...

The Big Apple refers to New York City. Originally in the 1920s the term "apple" referred to the race courses in and around New York City and to the prizes that were awarded. New York City was the Big Apple because it was so important and prosperous, the goal of all horsemen.

The apple is best defined outside a dictionary. It has meaning in our life, in our thoughts, in our pantry. It's apple season. Go get some apples. Polish one on your sleeve. Take a big bite. Feel the crunch, taste its sweet tartness. Eat it down to the core. Sit back and say, "Now, that's an apple!" A well-defined apple.

by Beth Berlin, University of Minnesota Extension

The recent extreme weather can certainly cause a toll on humans, and obviously have an impact on our pets and animals, but how about our garden plants? Drought and heat can cause stress to plants that may be greater than you realize. Taking the time to give your plants extra care before and during environmental stress is important for their health.

Plants photosynthesize and create their own carbohydrates, but the rate of photosynthesis is affected by temperature. In general, the rate of photosynthesis increases as temperature increases, but once temperatures reach around 95°F the rate actually decreases. This is important to realize because plants need to have successful photosynthesis to grow each season. An annual needs to grow rapidly enough to mature its flowers or fruit before fall, and a perennial needs to photosynthesize enough to put carbohydrates into its roots and reserves so it can survive the winter. Therefore, an extended period of extreme heat can be detrimental.

Often with heat waves, night time temperatures stay elevated as well. This causes the plant to have higher levels of respiration—the process in which a plant breaks down the carbohydrates to provide itself energy. If the daytime temperatures are high enough to cause a decrease in photosynthesis and the night temperatures are high enough to cause an increase in respiration, the plant is unable to replenish. This results in the plant having to use its energy reserves, which should be going towards growth, flower or fruit maturity, or winter reserves.

Another issue for plants in heat waves is that it is common they do not have enough water to complete the process of transpiration. This is where water taken from the roots is exported throughout the plant with important nutrients attached. The water then will exit the plant through small holes called stomata. If there isn't enough water available for this process, the stomata close and the plant is not able to cool itself down as the water exits its leaves. This will result in sunscald, where growth of the plant tissue stops, leaves will drop, or the plant may even die.

Gardeners should be aware of this and provide adequate moisture to their plants. This may involve watering pots several times a day. Relocating sunny pots to a shaded area might also help the plants in the extreme weather. Mulching plants with a shredded or chipped wood will help keep moisture in the soil as well as keep soil temperatures cooler. Composted or shredded newspaper is also an option in vegetable gardens. It is important to do this prior to the heat wave for it to be more effective.

Finally, don't forget about the trees and shrubs. Extreme drought or heat can stress them as well, which may not be as obvious right away but instead breaks down their own defenses and makes them more susceptible to disease and insect infestations. An example would be borers, like the pine beetles, which often cause damage due to their infestation but will not be evident for another year or more.



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Book Review

by Idella Moberg



Wulf, Andrea. *The Invention of Nature: Alexander von Humboldt's New World*. Alfred A. Knopf: New York, 2015.

In *The Invention of Nature*, Andrea Wulf connects us with some great thinkers, artists, and scientists who influenced Alexander von Humboldt and some who were influenced by him. She intends to rediscover Humboldt and to "restore him to his rightful place in the pantheon of nature and science." It is her quest "to understand why we think as we do today about the natural world."

The book is divided into five parts, spanning Humboldt's life and career. In Part I Wulf describes the world into which Humboldt was born in 1769, the same year as Napoleon Bonaparte. Humboldt's family was wealthy and aristocratic Prussian, but he had no interest in following in his parents' footsteps. He wanted to travel and to study nature. He sought to discover how the world worked. He studied finance and economics and mining. As a young man he met botanists, explorers, artists, and thinkers. Alexander and his brother William joined a circle of friends that included the playwright Friedrich Schiller and Germany's greatest poet Wolfgang von Goethe. They discussed the question of how to better understand nature—by means of rational thought or through experience. Goethe believed that objective truth could only be attained by combining sensory perception with one's power of reasoning. This way of thinking changed Humboldt's approach. He began to bring together his exact scientific data with his emotional response to what he was seeing. Being with Goethe gave Humboldt "new organs" for seeing and understanding the natural world.

Part II relates Humboldt's five years of travel and exploration in South America with the French field botanist Aime Bonpland, beginning in 1799. There he saw nature with both his head and his heart. He collected astronomical data. He compared the evaporation of rivers and lakes across the world and studied the effects of cutting down forests for agriculture. He developed the idea of human-induced climate change. He believed that humankind's power to destroy the environment could have catastrophic consequences on the land and the climate. He also saw firsthand how devastating Spanish colonization had been, not only for the people but for the land itself. Humboldt observed that many things are connected with a single plan. He visited the Spanish botanist Jose Celestino Mutis and his large library. He climbed volcanoes to determine if they were linked together and to find out how the earth was created. He compared the mountains in Europe with those in South America and saw nature as a "web of life and a global force." Everything was interwoven as with "a thousand threads." Nature, he concluded, was a living whole.

Before returning to Europe he went to Washington DC and met Thomas Jefferson, who had recently acquired the Louisiana Purchase and had sent Meriwether Lewis and William Clark on their expedition across North America. Lewis and Clark were to collect plants, seeds, and animals; to report on soils and agricultural practices of Native Americans; and to survey land and rivers. Jefferson saw the United States as an agrarian nation of farmers with an emphasis on individual liberty and rights of individual states. Humboldt told the Americans what they wanted to know about Mexico. They gave him information about the United States.

Part III lays out Humboldt's life on his return to Europe. He lived in Paris, a great science center, and Berlin, where he became chamberlain to Prussian King Friedrich Wilhelm IV. In Paris and Rome he spent time with the Venezuelan Simon Bolivar, who would later lead revolutions in South America. The two men spoke of the South American land, of politics and revolutions. He wrote books about his travels and the relationships between plants, climate, and geography.

In Part IV, Wulf describes the spread of Humboldt's ideas and influence. He lectured at the university in Berlin about correlations that spanned the universe. He traveled through Russia with the idea of comparing geological information there with what he had collected in South America. In his published results of the expedition he listed three ways humans affected the climate: deforestation, ruthless irrigation, and "great masses of steam and gas" produced in industrial centers. Humboldt was the first person to look at nature and humankind in this way. When Charles Darwin read Humboldt's personal narrative of his Latin American expedition, he was inspired to take his own voyage on her Majesty's ship Beagle. In *Cosmos*, Humboldt took his readers from outer space to the earth's surface, into its inner core, throughout human history. He defined climate as a "system of complex correlations between the atmosphere, oceans and landmasses." The book was inspiring to all kinds of people, like Henry David Thoreau, Ralph Waldo Emerson, Samuel Taylor Coleridge to name just a few. Humboldt's work influenced them in their own work.

Part V deals with Humboldt's evolving ideas. He helped young scientists, artists, and explorers. He wrote and received thousands of letters. He had become the most famous scientist of his age. As an old man he lived modestly in his rented apartment in Berlin and had many visitors. After his death his influence continued to spread. George Perkins Marsh and his wife traveled through Europe and the Middle East and Egypt, and

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Art Fair in the Gardens

by Joan Andersen

The weather forecasters warned us for a week about the hot humid weather predicted for the Art Fair. We were ready for it, but it was not nearly as bad as it was supposed to be. We had mostly overcast skies and a light breeze that kept the heat below 90° for most of the day, and we were actually grateful! Unfortunately, the weather prediction probably kept some visitors away.

We have the most beautiful setting for an Art Fair. Booths are set up on the grass under the trees among the flowers. The Gardens were at their blooming best and everyone enjoyed the flowers, which grow very well in this hot weather (better for plants than people). It was comfortable for artists, food vendors, and customers—no hot asphalt roads for us! This year Carlos Quinche played his flutes in a place close to the Gift Shop and his music was perfect for the setting. Down by the river, Pushing Chain, Cristina Seaborn, and Cathie English played their music to appreciative listeners. Many people enjoyed food from Erbert's and Gerbert's, Good Earth Food Co-op, West Side Liquors, and Kettle Licious Kettle Korn.

The next Art Fair will be on Thursday July 20, 2017.

Moment in the Gardens

by William M. Cook

As I walk through Munsinger Gardens along the Mississippi, I often look up at the winding paths and hosta gardens and smile as I enjoy the scenery today, but also it brings back memories of prior years. One of my favorite memories involves a little bridge towards the north end of Munsinger Gardens, which crosses a little "river" that drains out of one of the water features there under the oaks. When our son was little, around three or four years old, he loved the story of the Three Billy Goats Gruff. Remember, this is the story of three goats who tried crossing a bridge to eat the tasty grass on the other side, but were blocked by the troll who lived under the bridge. This caught Danny's imagination in a great way, and he loved to play the crafty goat who outsmarted the troll and made it across the bridge. On summer afternoons we walked the few blocks down to the Gardens, walked around and looked at flowers, but inevitably we ended up at that little bridge, and I took on my recurring role as the Troll for 10, 20, or 50 repeats of the game. If you visit Munsinger and the bridge, you too can play the Troll Game.

Photo Contest

by Mary Margaret Bjorklun



Although the Gardens display a different scene of beauty throughout the year, summer and fall display the peak of vibrant colors. What a pleasure to stroll through the variety of formal and informal plantings where every day presents something new to delight our senses. It would be interesting to see photos submitted to Photography in the Gardens that would represent all four seasons.

A few comments about the contest rules might clarify some questions.

1. Why are close-ups of flowers not allowed? All photos entered in the contest must be taken in Munsinger Clemens Gardens during the current contest timeline. Close-ups of flowers may be spectacular but it would not be possible for the Gardens staff or contest judge to be certain that the flower pictured was found growing in the Gardens. Some other information must be present in the photo to prove that it was indeed taken in our beautiful Gardens.
2. Fees for submission of photos are \$5 per photo for youth and \$10 per photo for adults. Why is there a submission fee? The photo contest is sponsored by the Munsinger Clemens Botanical Society. There are three purposes of this society: (1) To plan activities which encourage visitors to enjoy their Gardens experience. The activities sponsored this year are the photo contest through November 5, Music in the Gardens on alternate Sunday afternoons during the summer months, and Art Fair in the Gardens. (2) To help cover the expenses of the photo contest. (3) To donate to the Gardens monies for supplies and equipment. Committee members hope the submission fee is modest enough to be affordable.
3. Where can I view the winning photos? The winning photos have been on tour around Saint Cloud at the Convention Center, the Saint Cloud Hospital, Centra Care Plaza, Quiet Oaks Hospice House, Whitney Senior Center, US Bank, and Paramount Theatre. In August and September they will be at Saint Cloud Medical Group, in October at the Waite Park Public Library, and in November at the Saint Cloud Public Library.

You photo enthusiasts can plan to frequent the Gardens until November and expand possible photo contest entry choices. Contest information is available at the display sites, Lake George Municipal Complex, and online at www.munsingerclemens.com. Winning photo awards will be presented at a public reception at the Saint Cloud Public Library on November 19 at 3:00 pm.

protection of the environment. Madison and Bolivar saw protection of trees as an economic necessity. Thoreau called for the preservation of forests for recreation. Ernst Haeckel studied and drew the beautiful single-celled marine organisms visible only under the microscope. He named Humboldt's discipline "ecology." John Muir read Humboldt, became a political nature activist, campaigned for the creation of a national park in Yosemite, and co-founded the Sierra Club, which has become America's largest grassroots environmental organization.

Andrea Wulf tells the story of Alexander von Humboldt similarly to the way he himself told the story of nature. His life and work were a network of brilliant scientists, artists, and explorers. He brought people together from disparate disciplines to talk with each other about nature and the universe. He made science accessible and popular to people in all walks of life. In his lifetime Humboldt was famous for his visionary worldview. Today we take his ideas for granted, without realizing how important and amazing they were in his time. Wulf wants us to understand and appreciate why we see nature as we do. She suggests that now may be the moment to reclaim him as our hero.

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Articles and comments are welcomed.

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