

## What's Up in the Gardens

by Joan Andersen

I have been a very frequent visitor at the Gardens this year because I take photos each week to use on our MCBS Facebook and Instagram pages. (Check our Facebook page at Munsinger Clemens Botanical Society and Instagram at Munsinger Clemens Botanical for new photos of the flowers.) I have enjoyed watching the constant changes to the Gardens as flowers bloom and finish and new flowers take their place.

This is most obvious in the Perennial Gardens, which have been fantastic this year. Early season bloomers such as peonies, lupines, Siberian iris, and delphinium are done. Right now the



Photo by Abigail Gans  
2016 photography winner

## Bringing Plants Back Indoors

by Beth Berlin,  
University of Minnesota Extension

As the fall temperatures begin to cool off, it is time to consider bringing indoors the houseplants you may have let "vacation" outside this summer. Many houseplants will thrive outdoors during Minnesota summers, but they do not perform well or may even die if they are exposed to chilly temperatures. Depending on the species, temperatures dipping below 45-50°F will cause damage.

Here are some tips to keep in mind as you prepare to bring your houseplants back indoors:

- 1) Inspect thoroughly—various insects may be infesting your houseplants

outdoors without your knowledge. Inspect the plant's leaves, stems, and even the potting soil. Also inspect the plant for signs of disease. If you notice either an insect or a disease, do not put with other plants. Treat the issue before bringing indoors and relocating near other plants.

- 2) Gradually reintroduce to the indoors. Just like hardening off your new seedlings, your houseplants may undergo shock if abruptly brought from outdoor conditions to indoors. This may result in yellow leaves, wilt, dieback, or even death. Take it slow, and let the plant get acclimated to the indoors again a little at a time.

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Garden is bursting with color as lilies, liatris, stachys, gallardia, coneflowers, and phlox are blooming. If you look closely you can see the plants in bud getting ready for their turn to bloom—sedum, asters, and chrysanthemums. You can see the changes every time you visit.

The Gardens staff raised about 75,000 annuals this year. It takes at least a month to get all those annuals in the ground. Nia Primus, Gardens Supervisor, has a plan to get this done. The first places planted with annuals are in high traffic areas such as the Rest Area Garden (near the gift shop) and the Formal Garden. Central areas are planted first since many visitors walk down the central pathways in Clemens Gardens. The Fountains and containers and urns are also planted as early as possible. In Munsinger Gardens, the same plan is followed so that the most visited areas are planted first. When that work is completed, Gardens staff plants the remaining areas.

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# Music

## in the Gardens and Butterfly Release on July 23



It was another gorgeous day in the Gardens with the annual Memorial Release of Butterflies followed by a concert with Dennis Warner and the D's. After a moving program by Quiet Oaks Hospice House, Monarch butterflies were released and began flying around. Some actually landed on people and some on nearby flowers. Others floated in the wind and it was a beautiful sight. Since Monarch butterflies are a native species, be assured that they will survive the experience of being released in Munsinger Gardens.

—Joan Andersen

### *Bringing Plants Back Indoors, continued from page 1*

- 3) Repot if necessary—many plants will get leggy while outdoors and should be repotted into a larger container. Prune the top and roots equally; use a clean sanitized pot and potting soil to replant.
- 4) Position plant in a sunny location—most likely your plant was exposed to a lot of sun outdoors, so although you may want to move it back to a specific spot, you may need to temporarily put it in a very sunny window and gradually reduce its sun exposure to its permanent location.

Other plants that often get brought indoors for the winter are geraniums, even coleus, begonias, and impatiens. All of these species can be propagated

by using cuttings to generate a new crop for next summer. Cuttings should be approximately four inches long and be taken from only vigorous, healthy plants. Remove the leaves from the bottom portions. One option is to make a forsythe pot; step-by-step instructions can be found by searching “forsythe pot” at [www.extension.umn.edu](http://www.extension.umn.edu). This propagation option allows for cuttings to form roots in a light growing medium like vermiculite and have a consistent moisture supplier with a porous corked clay pot in the center that you add water to.

There are other options to overwinter plants like geraniums such as to cut the plant back to one-third its size and

repot. The plant should then be placed in a sunny window, but again don't forget to inspect your plant for signs of insects or disease before bringing it indoors. You will likely need to prune this plant at various points in the winter to keep its shape.

Fall can be a beautiful time of year, but be sure not to wait till the temperatures dip too low to bring your houseplants back indoors or to take advantage of propagating some of your favorite annuals.



# Acorns and Oaks

by William M. Cook

(This article first appeared in the Fall 2012 issue of MCBS Newsletter)

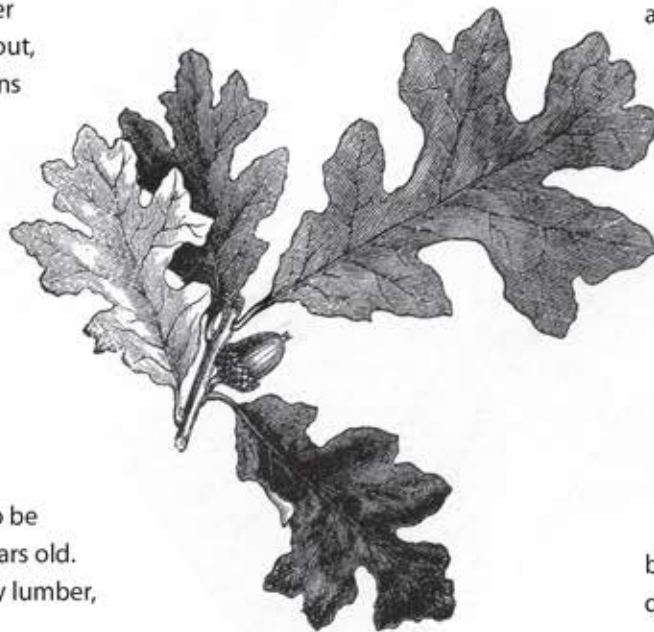
By the time you read this, it will be fall in Minnesota. One autumn phenomenon that most people notice, even if they are not generally attuned to things going on with plants and trees, is oak trees and the seasonal acorn drop. Some years, for instance last year, you can't walk down any street without hearing the crunch, crunch of acorns under your feet. Other years there are very few acorns, and most people don't think about them. Have you ever wondered what that was all about, and why there are so many acorns one year every once in a while?

Oak trees are, of course, staples of southern and central Minnesota's forests. There are around eight kinds of oak trees in Minnesota, though the ones I see most often are white, bur, and red oaks. Although this varies by species, it is not particularly unusual for oak trees to grow to be over 100 feet tall and be 400 years old. Oak trees make for good quality lumber, and are often planted in towns.

Everyone knows that acorns are the seeds or nuts produced by oaks, and they are carried around and buried by squirrels. Beyond mice, squirrels, and other rodents, large mammals eat acorns as well. They are an important food source for deer and bears. Some birds will feed on acorns as well, and there are moth and beetle acorn feeders. The popularity of acorns as a food source has both advantages and disadvantages for oak trees. The good news is that animals carry the acorns around, sometimes burying them, and

this helps to spread seed for the next generation of oak trees. Unfortunately, this means that a large number of acorns are eaten and thus can never grow. This brings us to the reason that oak crops are so variable.

Because so many animals eat significant numbers of acorns, and the relatively large nuts represent a large energy expenditure for the trees, the oaks need to be careful about how many acorns they produce. At first, you might think



that if not enough seedling oaks are germinating, the trees need only to produce a larger crop of acorns the next year, drop more acorns than the animals can eat, and thus solve the problem. However, this doesn't work ecologically. If oaks just put out larger and larger crops, the squirrel and other animal populations would reproduce in larger numbers because of the great food source, and thus still eat all the acorns. This is particularly true if the acorn crops are consistently large.

To avoid this problem, oak trees then vary their acorn production. Most years the crops are smallish, but about every six-to-eight years the trees produce a giant crop of acorns (this is called a mast year). Somehow most of the oak trees in a forest decide to do this all in the same year. 2011 was a mast year in the Saint Cloud area, and I remember one other mast year since I moved to the area in 2005 (possibly 2005 or 2006). In normal years, essentially all the acorns get eaten. However, by the oaks unpredictably producing a large crop once in a while, the animal populations are not able to ramp up in response, and in mast years more acorns get buried, are not eaten, and actually can grow.

Historically, acorns have been an important food source for humans as well as for other animals. Beyond meats, acorns were one of the best available protein sources for Native Americans in our area and much of what is now the United States. Because acorns are produced in large amounts, and can be dried and stored, they were depended upon by many cultures. It appears that Native Americans helped to manage acorn production by setting fires (oaks can tolerate light fires, while other trees may not), which also may have functioned to kill off insect larvae inside fallen acorns.

While acorns can be roasted and ground into flour, the main disadvantage of them as a food source is their acidity. Acorns have fairly high concentrations of bitter tannins, unlike nuts that we usually buy from the store. This means they need to be processed before

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## Sing a Song of Autumn

by Idella Moberg

Poems commemorate events. A war is won, a president is elected, a great person dies, we mark the occasion with a poem. Everyday birthday wishes come with a song. The arrival of Autumn is a great event. Here are just a few examples of poems that celebrate Autumn.

Autumn is part of the cycle of life. In "Sonnet 73" Shakespeare compares his time of life with Autumn, "That time of year... When yellow leaves, or none, or few, do hang/Upon those boughs which shake against the cold/Bare ruin'd choirs, where late the sweet birds sang./ In me thou see'st the twilight of such day..." Autumn reminds Shakespeare that life is short and that a person should "love that well which thou must leave ere long." Thomas Moore compares the last rose of summer to the sad fate of a person whose friends and loved ones have all died. Life is not worth living without loved ones. Moore wants to follow them soon: "Oh! who would inhabit/This bleak world alone?" ("Tis the Last Rose of Summer," 1805).

Autumn is a time of change. Elizabeth Barrett Browning compares life to the seasons in her poem "The Autumn" (1833). The Autumn wind is the same wind that blows in Spring. Don't begrudge life's changes, she admonishes. They are like the wind. While Autumn wind blasts, we can remember Summer's freshening breeze; when life is full of sorrow we can think about past joys.

Oh! like that wind, is all the mirth  
That flesh and dust impart:  
We cannot bear its visitings  
When change is on the heart.

Gay words and jests may make us smile,  
When Sorrow is asleep;  
But other things must make us smile,  
When Sorrow bids us weep!

No matter what life brings there is still a heaven above:  
Hear not the wind—view not the woods;  
Look out o'er vale and hill—  
In spring, the sky encircled them—  
The sky is round them still.  
Come autumn's scathe—come winter's cold—  
Come change—and human fate!  
Whatever prospect Heaven doth bound,  
Can ne'er be desolate.

Mary Oliver, in "Fall Song," describes changes that come in Autumn, the "rich spiced residues: vines, leaves,/the uneaten



Photo by Jenny Seil  
2016 photography winner

fruits crumbling damply/in the shadows, unmaterring  
back/from the particular island/of this summer, this NOW, that  
now is nowhere..." Life is transitory, and she tries to remember

when time's measure  
painfully chafes, for instance when autumn  
flares out at the last, boisterous and like us longing  
to stay—how everything lives, shifting  
from one bright vision to another, forever  
in these momentary pastures.

Autumn is sweater weather. Days grow short. Temperatures drop. We rummage through closets and pull out our sweaters. For Jennifer Marie Oliver, "Autumns Story" (2013), "The musty smell of drying leaves/Smoldering through my soul" leaves images of "Soft fuzzy hats/And warm wooly sweaters." For Paula Swanson along with the scent of fall, longer nights, slower pace, and golden display of color, a sign of Autumn is "Embroidered sweaters" that "hold back the gentle chill" ("September Remembered," 2011). Patrick Boyle envisions falling leaves that demand comforting "sweaters/shelter/hot tea/stories/available upon request" ("Falling Leaves," 2014).

Autumn is harvest time. Pumpkins and gourds and corn stalks "Piled in a row, headed for the market on/Old Pine Grove Rd" (Sharon Gulley, "Autumn Calls"). James Whitcomb Riley describes the work of finishing the harvest and all the food prepared for winter:

When the frost is on the punkin and the fodder's in the shock!  
Then your apples all is gethered, and the ones a feller keeps  
Is poured around the celler-floor in red and yellor heaps;  
And your cider-makin' 's over, and your wimmern-folks is  
through



With their mince and apple-butter, and they souse and  
sausage, too!

("When the Frost is on the Punkin")

Autumn has its own music. John Keats, in his poem,  
"To Autumn," says to Autumn,

...thou hast thy music too,—  
While barred clouds bloom the soft-dying day,  
And touch the stubble-plains with rosy hue;  
Then in a wailful choir the small gnats mourn  
Among the river shallows, borne aloft  
Or sinking as the light wind lives or dies;  
And full-grown lambs loud bleat from hilly bourn;  
Hedge-crickets sing; and now with treble soft  
The red-breast whistles from a garden-croft;  
And gathering swallows twitter in the skies.

Keats wrote "To Autumn" in September 1819. He had taken a walk beside a river and was inspired by the beauty of Autumn, its sights and sounds. Autumn's music signified to him not only summer's end but also the final moment in his career as a poet. Health and money problems, and family obligations too, demanded that he pursue more lucrative projects. Keats' "To Autumn" was his farewell to the poetry and the music that filled his life on that lovely Autumn day, ephemeral, passing away even as he gazed.

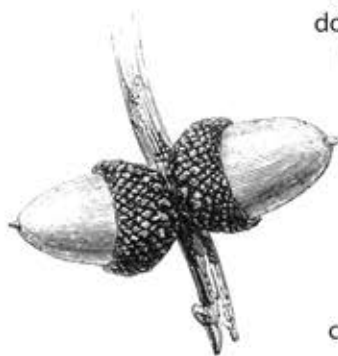
Autumn is a time for Sara Teasdale also to say farewell to Autumn's music. In "September Midnight" (1914) she speaks of

Lyric night of the lingering Indian Summer,  
Shadowy fields that are scentless but full of singing,  
Never a bird, but the passionless chant of insects,  
Ceaseless, insistent.

It is a sad song she hears: "Under a moon waning and worn, broken,/Tired with summer." She listens so that she may remember when winter comes to silence them. She gazes at the "fields that rest after harvest,/As those who part look long in the eyes they lean to,/Lest they forget them."

Here's a plan I have for Autumn. I'll go to the river, stand on the bank. I will gaze at the beauty all around me, red and brown leaves of Mississippi oak trees, flowers being put to bed for the winter. I will listen to the chorus of ducks and geese gathering to fly south. I will open wide my arms and embrace the wind that rips off shivering leaves, and sends them skittering off and away. To the tune of the Mississippi's deep and relentless rush to exit the continent, I will mark the arrival of Autumn with a poem.

*Acorns and Oaks, continued from page 3*



eating by humans (some other animals don't care about this, of course).

Leaching of tannins can be done either by soaking whole acorns in water for long periods of time, or by grinding them up and soaking the meal. Water, and particularly running water, soaks the bitter compounds out of the nuts.

I have experimented with processing and eating acorns, after reading a fair amount about acorns as a food source. After collecting and shelling several boxes of acorns, I tried leaching them in several different ways. I tried soaking whole acorn meats in a bucket in my basement over the winter, changing the water every once in a while. This removed a fair amount of tannins, but the acorns were still bitter after six months. I tried drying, then grinding, and then soaking the acorns (now meal) in several changes of water. I found this worked best when keeping the meal in a jar in the fridge (approximately 1/3 to 2/5 acorn meal, the rest water) and pouring off the brown water 1-2 times per day for 10 days to 2 weeks. My favorite way of leaching the acorns was to boil them, but I found they needed multiple hours on the stove in several changes of water, and this would be energy intensive unless you were already heating with woodstoves. In any case, acorns need to be carefully dried after any of the steps where they get wet (including the first collection, where they get damp outdoors) and carefully dried in trays. Once made into flour, acorn meal can be mixed with flour in pancakes, or made into a pizza crust.

Ultimately, I view this as a "proof of concept" activity, where I proved to myself that I could make acorns into food if I had to, and can now say that I've done it. The time and effort required per cup of acorn meal was substantial, and I doubt I'm going to be making acorn meal on a regular basis. Nevertheless, I am glad I have had the experience.

Overall, I hope you have found my summary of the ecological and food properties of oak trees and acorns somewhat interesting. In September and October we will know if it is a mast year (it will probably not be), and how much food our furry, feathered, and foraging friends will have to store for the winter.

## Art Fair in the Gardens 2017

by Joan Andersen

It was a fine summer day in central Minnesota on the day of the Art Fair! Even though weather is something we can't control, the Art Fair organizers put in plenty of worry time about how it would turn out. Lots of visitors attended and the atmosphere was festive with activity. I think this has to be the best setting for an outdoor activity anywhere—you can walk on the grass instead of pavement, find shade when you need it, sit down to rest at one of the many benches throughout the Gardens, and just enjoy the day at your own pace.

The Gardens staff did an outstanding job getting the Gardens ready for the big day. They weeded the beds and watered and deadheaded the flowers to make them look their best. MCBS appreciates all their hard work. Mother Nature did her part too by giving us warm summer weather and enough rain to encourage the plants to grow and flower.



Thanks also to all the wonderful artists who had booths at the Art Fair. I talked to many people who were trying to visit them all! There was such a variety of creations for sale—something for everyone.

And the day would not be complete without music and food. Carlos Quinche played his flutes near the gift shop in Clemens. Down by the Mississippi River, music was performed by Paul Imholte, John Hollingsworth, and OK Factor.

Because everyone gets hungry from shopping and strolling around the Gardens, food vendors Erbert's and Gerbert's, Good Earth Food Co-op, and Cutting Edge had great food choices. Shoppers could sit by the River and have a meal and enjoy the music.

It is a big event organized by MCBS, an all volunteer organization. Watch our website later this year for information on next year's Art Fair in the Gardens.

### Email Letter Sent to Scott Zlotnik, Park and Recreation Director, and Nia Primus, Garden Supervisor:

I would like to thank Scott, the City of Saint Cloud, Nia Primus, and the Gardens staff for all the hard work that was put into the flowers, lawn, landscaping, and maintenance to make the Gardens look their best for our Art Fair. All the assistance from the staff and extra prep work beforehand to get us ready for that event was much appreciated. The Art Fair was a success and MCBS would not have been able to get there without everyone involved. I and the other board members could not have done it without your support and assistance.

I heard so many wonderful comments about how beautiful the Gardens are. I heard comments from artists and vendors that they love being in the Gardens on a day like that. The Gardens really make for a bigger success with the event.

—Jill Florek and the MCBS Board Members



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*What's Up in the Gardens,  
continued from page 1*

This year we had enough rain so that the weeds were a problem. Staff had some weeding to do before the beds could be planted. Unfortunately, the same conditions that grow nice annual plants are also favorable for weeds.

The Rest Area Garden has a color theme in 2017 of blue, pink, and yellow. Blue flowers include salvia and verbenas bonariensis. Pink flowers include petunias, Magellan zinnias, vinca, and a really unusual light pink lantana. Yellow will be provided by a favorite annual—popcorn plant. Visitors like this because it is pretty and smells like popcorn.

The Formal Garden has an interesting combination of red, yellow, and black. The flowers around the fountain include several colors of sun coleus, black sweet potato vine, and a variety of bright yellow and red annual flowers. The beds nearby have the same colors using additional plants such as canna, ornamental grasses, and yellow snapdragons. Very dramatic!

Be sure to visit the monochromatic gardens of blue, pink, purple, and yellow up in Treillage. Annuals are really starting to bloom, and all of the color gardens are stunning as I write.

I also want to remind visitors to check out all the containers in the Gardens. Flowers and foliage are chosen to coordinate with the other plants in the garden where they are located. Clemens Gardens has many formal urns that look wonderful next to the fencing and fountains. Munsinger Gardens has many informal containers in addition to the formal urns. One planting is in an old wheelbarrow, and there are horse troughs in front of the cabin. A gardener can use almost anything for a container as long as it has good drainage.



*Photo by Suzanna Johnson  
2016 photography winner*

Virginia Clemens Rose Garden is in full bloom. All of the roses purchased for this garden for 2017 have been planted

and the entire garden is mulched in wild rice hulls. Almost every plant is in bloom and staff was very busy getting everything deadheaded for the recent Art Fair in the Gardens on July 20 and Music in the Gardens and Butterfly Release on July 23. Staff has also planted some lovely containers—look for roses in those containers.

Be sure to visit the Gardens on a regular basis. Things are always changing as perennial plants cycle in and out of bloom and annuals grow bigger and reach peak bloom. Roses will continue to bloom until October—they like cooler weather. Every day is a new look for the Gardens.



## Membership Application and Renewal

\$ \_\_\_\_\_ \$50-\$99 (Basic Membership)

\$ \_\_\_\_\_ \$100-\$249

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\_\_\_\_ Music in the Gardens \_\_\_\_ Art Fair in the Gardens

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**Membership Questions**

Articles and comments are welcomed.

will be in December.

four times a year. The next issue

MCBS newsletter is published

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There is still time for you to take pictures and enter them in the Photography in the Gardens Contest. Photos must be entered on November 3 or 4 at the Lake George Municipal Complex, 1101 7th Street S, Saint Cloud. If you are interested in entering, you can get the information you need (categories, rules, prizes, fees) at our website, munsingerclemens.com. The Award Ceremony will be at 3:00 pm November 18 in the Saint Cloud Public Library. Last year's winning photos can be seen on display at the Saint Cloud Hospital in September and at Quiet Oaks Hospice House in October.

December 1, 2016 — November 2nd, 2017

Munsinger Clemens Botanical Society  
invites you to participate in  
**Photography**  
*in the Gardens*

