

Volume XIX | No 1

Spring 2018

Another Season Begins in the Gardens

by Joan Andersen

As I write this, we are all trying to adjust to daylight savings time. It is dark in the morning—but so nice to have more light in the evening! The cardinals are singing, woodpeckers are drumming in the woods around my home, and flocks of swans are honking as they fly over my yard. Another spring is beginning at the Munsinger Clemens Gardens greenhouse. Some of the perennial plant plugs have already arrived and the main shipments of annual plants will be delivered the week of March 26. The core group of garden workers will be back for the season on March 26 to begin transplanting baby annuals into their pots to grow in the greenhouse. Hiring of additional workers for the upcoming season begins at the end of March.

Gardens Supervisor Nia Primus creates the master plan of flowers for Munsinger Clemens Gardens. The design incorporates many shapes and sizes of flowers and foliage plants in the chosen colors. She works with a plant broker that assists her in finding the plants she wants from many different growers. It is necessary to use a number of different sources if you are looking for a specific plant or if you want a large supply of a plant in a certain single color instead of a mix. Each year, Nia selects plants that have grown well in the Gardens in past seasons, but she also wants to try new introductions to keep the Gardens fresh and interesting for visitors and staff gardeners. The initial plant order for 2018 was placed in August 2017. Nia is kept busy updating the design if flowers need to be substituted due to crop failures or if they become unavailable for some reason.

In 2018, Nia's design for the Rest Area Garden—a large area between the Rose Garden and gift shop—will feature flowers in vibrant shades of orange and pink with burgundy and a little purple to provide contrast. Flowers and foliage plants will be combined to get this hot look. Colors will be repeated around the Rest Area fountain and the many urns and containers in the area. Bright color will be found in a reliable cultivar of zinnia called the 'Profusion' series in shades of scarlet-orange, orange and double hot cherry. Another favorite zinnia is the 'Magellan' series, a shorter plant with big flowers that has been a great performer in past years. Cherry red will be used in the Rest Area Garden. Also look for a newer short zinnia with big flowers called the 'Sweet Tooth' series—'Orange Slice' (don't

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April Showers

by Idella Moberg

It is between two major blizzards that I have set down some springtime thoughts. Our parking lots have become mountains of snow. Deadly ice and soaky slush is everywhere. Walking outdoors is a perilous endeavor. Nightmarish traffic bunches up in our efforts to keep from sliding into a ditch or to go anywhere in our filthy cars. We are stymied at every turn. It is March. Months of Minnesota snow has been dumped indiscriminately upon us. The blahs have set in. We need some cheer. It's time to trade snow showers for rain

showers. We need April showers to bring May flowers.

What's it going to take for that to happen? Meteorologists explain the process. During the month of March the days gradually lengthen. Stronger

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you love the names!) will be planted in the Rest Area. Celosia 'Dragon's Breath' has fiery red plumes on a 24" plant. Lantana 'Bandana Orange' has bright orange flowers on long stalks. Salvia 'Wendy's Wish' has vivid magenta-pink tubular flowers on tall spikes. There are way too many plants to mention but you get the picture—this is a high energy color scheme!

Plants grown for their leaves also give color to the garden, especially early in the season before all the flowers are in bloom. Coleus 'Solar Eclipse' is grown for its deep red leaves with a green-yellow border. Coleus 'Mariposa' is a large plant with deep burgundy-purple leaves with a red border. Coleus 'Hipsters Luca' is a smaller red with spiky leaves that can be used as an edger.

The Formal Garden colors were chosen by Deb Keiser, who also cares for the Rose Garden. The main shades will be the colors of the Minnesota Vikings purple and gold. The center walkways in this garden will feature a foliage plant called Alternanthera—its common name is 'Joseph's Coat.'There are newer cultivars that are smaller and come in different colors. 'Little Ruby' is compact and has burgundy-purple leaves. Panicum 'Ruby Ribbons' is a medium height switch grass with interesting green leaves that become deep wine red later in the summer. Coleus 'Fishnet Stockings'has striking green and burgundy variegated leaves. Flower color will come from Craspedia 'Sun Ball' that sends up bright yellow balls of flowers on long stems. There will also be petunias from the 'Sanguna' series in yellow and a deep purple-blue. Gerbera daisy 'Garvinea Sweet Smile' is a bright gold. Angelonia 'Angelface Super Blue'

has tall blue-purple spikes with a slight grape scent.

Flowers surrounding

the fountain in the
Formal Garden will
follow the same
color scheme, using
different plants. Look for Colocasia
Royal Hawaiian 'Black Coral' which is a
smaller 3' tall 'elephant ear' with almost
black leaves. Unlike most dark-leaved
elephant ears, it will take full sun.
Coleus 'Pineapple' has gold leaves with
deep red edges. Angelonia 'Alonia Big
Blue' has deep blue-purple flower
spikes. Delosperma 'Button Up Gold'
is a trailing plant with bright gold daisy
flowers that will be planted at the edge

The Gardens are intended to be a home for pollinators and birds, so pesticides

of the fountain.

are not used unless absolutely necessary. It is also difficult to apply

pesticides when visitors are always

present. While some annuals are bred for color and may not be that interesting to bees and butterflies, many annuals such as zinnias, penstemon, salvia, and lantana attract their attention. More perennials are being added to the Gardens each year and many of them are extremely attractive to humming birds and beneficial insects. Look for pollinators on asclepias (butterfly weed), asters, echinacea (con eflower), liatris, salvia, sedum, and many other perennials. Hummingbirds prefer annuals and perennials with tubular flowers, Look for them this summer as they are checking out the 'Hot Lips' salvia, Angelonia, foxglove, and columbine. Summer can't

get here soon enough!

Membership Application and Renewal

\$	\$50-\$99 (Basic Memb	bership)		
\$	\$100-\$249			
\$	\$250-\$500			
\$	Other			
Gifts over th	e Basic Membership may be o	designated to:		
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2017 Annual Flower Trials

by Beth Berlin, University of Minnesota Extension

The University of Minnesota has several research locations throughout the state. A familiar one to gardeners is located in Morris and is referred to as the WCROC, West Central Research and Outreach Center. At WCROC, research-based projects are done annually including those done in the display gardens related to annual and perennial flowers. Research evaluates different varieties for plant height, width, uniformity, flower size, disease resistance, and plant quality characteristics. Each year the Top Ten Performing Annuals are selected from the hundreds of varieties trialed.

Plants were evaluated by a certified trial judge three times during the 2017 growing season: July 5, July 20, and August 7. Although the flowers are under evaluation, their placement is well thought out in an aesthetically beautiful design in the display gardens. All flowers are labeled so visitors can see what varieties are displayed in the gardens.

2017 Top Ten results include the following annual flowers:

- Argyranthemum Pure White Butterfly™ which has large white daisy flowers with bright yellow eye. This plant performs best in full sun to part shade and doesn't seem to require deadheading. The plant will grow to a height of 18-24" and has an even and uniform growing habit. It makes a great addition to a garden or a container.
- 2) Begonia Megawatt[™] Rose Bronze Leaf boasts nonstop flowers throughout the summer and doesn't require deadheading. The flower stems are very sturdy and hold the flowers above the attractive dark bronze foliage. Known to bloom sooner than the green leaf varieties, they have excellent rose hue color and look stunning in big containers or hanging baskets.
- Calibrachoa MiniFamous® Neo Orange+Red Eye has an eye-catching single orange flower with dark red center. It is a semi-trailing Calibrachoa but will have a uniform, even growth; perfect for a hanging basket.
- 4) Coleus Main Street Michigan Avenue has a stunning highimpact variegated foliage throughout the summer. It is an easy-to-grow, uniform variety that performs well in sun or shade. It can stand alone or is a perfect complement to other plants in the landscape.
- New Guinea Impatiens Sun Standing Purple has headturning bright purple flowers with a glossy green and bronze foliage. The plant performed extremely well in the

- trial gardens and containers. It has a natural compact and uniform growth habit and can be grown in sun or shade.
- 6) Petunia Surprise Blue Sky is a plant covered with brilliant royal blue flowers the entire growing season from spring to fall. It has a uniform height and spread of around 18" with a foliage that stays green the entire season.
- 7) Salvia Mystic Spires Improved is a new and improved salvia that has a better summer garden performance because it holds the brighter blue flowers longer. In addition the plant is sturdy and has dark green leaves that add a bit more drama against the blue flowers. This is an attractive flower to bees and butterflies yet is deer resistant.
- 8) Vinca Cora® Cascade Violet is a compact spreading ground cover with an attractive violet flower and gorgeous glossy green foliage. It performs well in dry soil and should not be overwatered. It is a nice addition to a sun-loving garden or hanging basket.
- 9) Zinnia Magellan™ Orange is a simple-to-grow zinnia that is only 12-18" tall with a large fully double orange bloom that lasts all summer. It is a vigorous variety showing good disease tolerance and is well suited for challenging weather conditions. It does require occasional deadheading to get new blooms, but it is worth the effort to add this colorful power-punch to any garden.
- 10) Zinnia Profusion Coral Pink is an attractive compact, bushy plant at 12' high and 15" wide. It is loaded with nonstop 2-inch daisy-formed blooms all season. The petals boast a colorful bright coral pink with hints of orange and salmon. It is recommended to be planted in mass plantings for the biggest impact in a garden. It will perform best in a well-drained soil.

Source of all information above, plus more information about the annual flower trial research, can be found at https://wcroc.dans.umn.edu/researchprograms/horticulture.



Photo Contest

Last year's winning photos will be on display at the following places: April, CentraCare Plaza; May and June, Whitney Senior Center; July and August, River's Edge Convention Center; September, Waite Park Public Library; October, Quiet Oaks Hospice House. This year's contest runs until November 2-3, when entries will be due, and a contest reception will be held on November 17. If you want to submit photos this year, check out the rules and entry details on our website: www.munsingerclemens.com.

When to Plant Your Vegetables

by William M. Cook

Clemens and Munsinger Gardens are ornamental gardens. But gardeners who are interested in flowers are often also interested in vegetables, too. If that's you, here are a few tips on when, in our area, to plant those so as to be effective.

Gardeners are most aware of the changes in air temperature, particularly afternoon high temperatures. But it's actually the soil temperature that is most important to know about, especially when trying to plant vegetables from seed. This is best done with a soil thermometer. Additionally, many seed packets recommend "Plant as soon in the spring as the ground can be worked," but that's not necessarily good advice. Just because a seed won't die when planted at a low temperature, that doesn't mean it is a good time to plant it. If the seeds are guaranteed to just sit for several weeks before germinating, all sorts of bad things can happen to them and you might as well wait.

Roughly speaking, you can categorize vegetables into cool weather plants and hot weather plants. Cool weather plants can and should be planted in the early season, which basically means sometime between late April and about June 1, depending on the plant. Hot weather plants basically should wait until June to be planted, and sometimes even mid June depending on the year.

Cool season crops include peas, lettuce, spinach, most root vegetables like beets and carrots, Swiss chard, and the broccoli and cabbage group. Hot weather crops include the squash and melon group, cucumbers, beans, and the tomato/pepper /eggplant family. I'll indicate whether we're talking about planting seeds or seedlings.

About the first vegetable you can plant in the spring is onions. Around here, if you are going to plant regular biennial onions you probably should start from sets (grape-sized, second-year onion bulbs). These you literally can plant as soon as the ground is thawed, and evidence for this is that all my perennial onion species seem like they are six inches tall by the time the last snow traces are gone. I don't think you can be too early with onions. You could plant them as early as late March, in an early spring.

The next group are lettuce, spinach, and peas. Seeds apparently are OK and some might germinate when soil temperatures are in the 30s, but then again birds might eat them or other disasters might befall. It is more sensible to wait until soil temperature is in the 40-45 range, where germination



rates are higher and growth will happen much faster. This could be in late April, but more likely early May, at least in my yard.

The following group are the root crops such as carrots, beets, radishes, and turnips. Preferable soil temperatures for planting these species are in the 45-50 degree range. Again these could possibly be OK earlier, but there isn't much advantage since they might germinate but won't grow much. I generally figure on planting these around early May.

The next batch of vegetables is Swiss chard plus the big group of broccoli, kale, cauliflower, Brussels sprouts, and cabbage. The latter bunch, despite looking quite different, are all closely related and behave similarly. Most of these really shouldn't be planted from seed until the soil temperature is in the 50-55 degree range. Unfortunately, that often means late May in Minnesota, and as a result there isn't enough time for these slower growing plants to mature before it gets hot in late June or July. Generally it works better to plant broccoli and their relatives as seedlings in Minnesota. This means you buy the seedlings, or plant them indoors substantially earlier.

Eventually we get to the hot weather vegetables. Squashes and pumpkins can be transplanted as seedlings, but in the right weather they grow just about as fast when planted as seeds. I have planted squash seeds in May before, but if they do germinate they stay very small and don't take off until the ground gets dose to 70 degrees in early June.

The same is said for beans, though
I seem to do OK planting them in late
May as well. Certainly beans don't
grow very fast until the hot weather

Just plant the seeds in early June, or even mid June.

comes, and they don't transplant well.

Lastly, we get to everyone's favorite, tomatoes, and their botanical friends eggplants and peppers. Seeds of these plants may start to germinate when the soil is cooler, but not in a reasonable number of days until the soil temperature reaches the upper 60s. Since these are relatively slow maturing plants as compared to squashes and beans, you won't have enough time to get the crop you

want if you plant tomatoes by seed in June.

Plant these as seedlings, also at around the same time. If it is a warm spring the later part of May is also fine, but tomatoes and peppers really dislike cool weather and can be damaged by the last few chilly days of the season if planted too early.

Finally, I want to give a caveat. I live in Saint Cloud close to the Gardens, and my house is on the northwest corner of a block and has big trees around. This means that my yard is one of the later places around for snow to melt, since early in the spring the sunlight is blocked by buildings and trees. As a result the ground takes longer to warm, even after the snow is gone, especially in April and early May. Therefore my guidelines might be conservative; you could plant slightly earlier if you live outside of town or have true all day sun locations. By June my yard seems to have caught up, but this caveat is likely to be relevant to the cooler weather crops.

As I write this, it is early March and we are in the middle of an ice and snow storm. However, even though I personally enjoy winter weather, it is pleasant to look out my window and imagine things in May and June. The early flowers will be blooming, and the vegetables sprouting, and summer will be approaching. Hopefully this year I will be organized and plant vegetables when I should, and hopefully you will too.



Tree Roses for 2018

by Joan Andersen

Tree roses are a great design element for vertical interest in the Rose Garden. They are a challenge to grow in northern gardens. They are almost always grafted—and the graft is up in the air at the top of the stem, so winter protection is absolutely necessary. All tree roses in the Gardens are potted and the pots are sunken into the ground for the summer and then pulled out in the fall and overwintered in the greenhouse. This year, Rose Specialist Deb Keiser will be using a new method of planting the tree roses by sinking two pots into the ground so that one pot can be removed in the fall—no more digging!

This year there are 20 new tree roses. Ten will go into Virginia Clemens Rose Garden and ten will be planted in the upper test rose garden, next to the Virginia Clemens Rose Garden. The roses used are floribundas that produce many dusters of flowers. Deb chose these tree roses because she has had good success with the same cultivars when growing them in the ground in shrub form—lots of flowers and good disease resistance. The ones Deb has chosen are all fragrant—and you won't have to bend over to enjoy the scent.

One interesting selection is called a 'Two-fer' Tree Rose from Weeks Roses. It has two great roses grafted together on one stem. 'Ebbtide' is a floribunda with fragrant deep purple 3-4" very double flowers and it will be growing with 'Julia Child,' a floribunda with fragrant golden yellow 3-1/2" very double flowers.

Other tree roses to look for are 'Sparkle and Shine,' a yellow semi-double floribunda with 3-4" flowers and a moderate fragrance, and 'Easy to Please,' a floribunda that has 2-1/2" to 3" double flowers of fuchsia pink with lighter reverse and a moderate fragrance.

The new tree roses have already arrived and they are being potted right now and will be growing in the greenhouse until it is warm enough to put them outside to harden off before they are put in their summer home. Be sure to check out the new additions to the tree rose collection this spring.

Clematis Collection at Munsinger Clemens Gardens

by Joan Andersen

What's not to love about the flowering clematis vine? It gives us a profusion of flowers and is easy to care for, as long as you follow a few basic tips on planting and pruning. A happy clematis growing in a place it loves will live for many years in your garden.

There are some lovely clematis growing on the front fence and gate at the entrance to Virginia Clemens Rose Garden, facing Kilian Boulevard. They start blooming in late spring and often cover the fence, and they are an excellent companion plant to the roses blooming nearby. Some additional clematis can be found in the Rest Area Gardens and in the color gardens in Treillage.

Clematis is a genus of about 300 species in the Ranunculaceae or buttercup family. Most are climbing vines although there are some types that do not climb because they lack the tendrils needed to attach themselves to a support. They are almost all native to the northern hemisphere—China, Japan, Europe, and North America.

Clematis prefer cool roots and sunny tops. Choose a place where the roots will be sheltered from hot afternoon sun and keep the root zone cool and damp. The clematis in the Gardens are planted by a fence that protects the root zone from sun. Nearby roses also give the root zone some shade. Clematis climb by twisting their leaf petioles around a support. They don't climb well on a support that is too thick. If your trellis or arbor has posts over 1/2" thick, attach some bird netting to it to help the clematis plant cling. The plant will soon cover the netting and make it invisible.

New clematis plants should be planted deep in a large hole. If you are planting a dematis grown in a pot at least a gallon in size (recommended), dig a hole at least 24 x 24" and mix the soil with compost or peat moss. Remove a few of the lower leaves and plant the crown 4-6" below the soil surface. Fill with amended soil, and water it in. Apply some organic mulch and keep moist during the season. It takes a few years for the plant to reach a mature size.

The biggest challenge for dematis is pruning. Failure to prune can leave you with a tangled plant that may bear flowers only on top of the plant. Clematis that are good for northern gardens are generally in pruning group 2 or 3. (Pruning group 1 produces all flowers on old wood that may not survive our winters.) Pruning is necessary to get the most flowers, keep the foliage nice and lush and to control size and height. It is important to prune early—often by late March or early April.

Pruning group 2 produces early flowers on side shoots of old wood—the previous years' growth. Many of our favorite large flowered cultivars are in this group.

buds in early spring. Work from the top of the plant and prune off the dead vines above the highest pair of strong buds. Cut back at various lengths so that flowers will be distributed all over the plant. Remove any weak or broken stems. The flowers on old wood will appear early in the season but Group 2 clematis will also have flowers later in the season on new growth. Group 2 clematis can also be lightly deadheaded after the first bloom to encourage more flowers.

To prune them, watch the stems for swelling leaf

Pruning group 3 clematis produces all their flowers on new vines each year. These are the easiest clematis to maintain. Watch for new shoots

from the ground in early spring. It is tempting to leave last year's vines, especially if they are starting to leaf out, but these plants grow very fast and you will have a neater plant if you start with fresh vines. Remove old vines to the ground. You can pinch the new vines above a pair of strong buds to a height of 12-14". This will reduce the height of the plant and make it bushier. Group 3 clematis plants bloom later—in summer to fall.

Clematis have only one serious potential problem. Clematis wilt is a stem rot and leaf spot disease caused by a fungus Ascochyta clematidina. It can only enter the plant through damaged stems and roots and will cause the plant to suddenly wilt and turn black. It often shows up about the time that the flowers are opening. If you see this, remove and dispose of the infected stems. Prevent clematis wilt by planting in a sunny site with good air circulation and avoid stem damage during the summer—this is why pruning must be done early. You can mix a balanced fertilizer into the soil around the plant in spring but be careful not to damage the roots. One organic protective fungicide, myclobutanil, is labeled for use on clematis wilt. It will not cure the plant and should only be used as a preventive measure if you have had problems in the past. Continued on page 7



Clematis Collection at Munsinger Clemens Gardens continued from page 6

Here is a list of some of the wonderful clematis growing in the Rose Garden:

- Bees Jubilee'has 7-8' light pink petals with a red bar and yellow anthers. It grows 10-14' and blooms May-June and August. Pruning group 2. It will take part shade.
- The President' has 7-8" deep purple flowers with large anthers. It grows 8-12' and blooms July-September. Pruning group 2.
- 'Multi Blue' has 4-5" blue flowers with large, thistle-like anthers. It grows 6-8' and blooms June and August.
 Pruning group 2.
- "Ramona' has 6-8" pale lavender blue petals with red anthers. It grows 8-12' and blooms in spring and late summer or early fall. Can be lightly pruned as group 2 or treated as group 3.
- 'Vino' has 6" cherry red petals with a darker red bar and light yellow anthers. It grows 6-10' and blooms in May-June and August. Pruning group 2.
- Princess Diana' is from the Texensis group of clematis, a wildflower vine native to Texas. It has 2" tulip-shaped flowers that are pink with a red bar. It is a vigorous grower up to 10-20' that blooms July-October. Pruning group 3.
- 'Henri'has 6-8' white flowers with chocolate brown anthers. Height is 9-15' and it blooms in June and September. Pruning group 2.
- 'Rhapsody' has 4-5" sapphire blue petals and creamy yellow anthers. It grows 8-10' and blooms from July to September. Pruning group 3.

Be sure to visit the Gardens early in the season. Some of the dematis will start blooming in May even before the roses, but both will be gorgeous in June! April Showers, continued from page 1

rises. Into the cold atmosphere it rises, where it condenses and forms clouds. Warm air meeting cold air will activate the weather. Chilly air blows across the warmer ground. It will be warmed by the strengthening sun and rise higher. Bigger taller clouds, cumulus congestus, will be formed. And when the clouds can hold no more moisture, rain showers will fall. April showers.

Geoffrey Chaucer (1343-1400), in his prologue to The Canterbury Tales, poetically describes what occurs when April showers bring May flowers:

When in April the sweet showers fall And pierce the drought of March to the root, and The veins are bathed in liquor of such power As brings about the engendering of the flower...

Zephyrus, Greek god of the west wind, "with his sweet breath/Exhales an air in every grove and heath/Upon the tender shoots." Flowers are blooming everywhere. The "young sun" warms the air. Young birds sing all the time. People, too, says Chaucer, become more active in April. They travel to other countries or go to Canterbury.

Modern day people also become more active as winter gives way to spring. Winter-weary people flee to palm-lined beaches in early spring. Students gather in sunny locations for spring break. Gyms fill up with people getting ready for a more active summer lifestyle. Gardeners explore seed catalogs and plan their gardens. A little song and dance is also a welcome accompaniment to the arrival of spring and the change from snow showers to rain showers.

In 1921, Louis Silvers and B. G. DeSylva wrote a popular song, "April Showers." The song was introduced in the Broadway musical Bombo, sung by Al Jolson. The song is cheerful. It reminds us that beauty can emerge out of a dark time.

Life is not a highway strewn with Still it holds a goodly share of bliss, When the sun gives way to April showers. Here's a thought that we should never miss: Though April showers May come your way, They bring the flowers That bloom in May: And if it's raining. Have no regrets: Because it isn't raining rain, you know. It's raining violets. And when you see clouds Upon the hill, You soon will see crowds Of daffodils: So keep on looking for the bluebird, And listening for his song, Whenever April showers come along.

Many artists besides Al Jolson have recorded "April Showers." If you'd like to hear them you can find them on YouTube: singers like Judy Garland, Frank Sinatra, Mel Torme, Carol Burnett, and guitarists like Ludenhoff and Rossinskiy and the Frank Vignola Trio. Walt Disney's movie Bambi also has a lovely song, "Little April Shower," that you may like to see and listen to. Many rain songs have been recorded that will also cheer you up on a rainy day:

Beatles, "Rain"
Prince, "Purple Rain"
Gene Kelly, "Singin' In The Rain"
Led Zepplin, "The Rain Song" live 1973
"Rain, Rain, Go Away"
B. J. Thomas, "Rain Keeps Falling on
My Head"



Arranged for our summer pleasure again this year will be Music in the Gardens. Be ginning in June on alternate Sundays, you can bring your chair or a blanket, sit down in Munsinger, and list en to these fine groups

> June 10, Gypsy Mania Hot Club June 24, Monday Night Jazz July 8, Cristina Seaborn July 22, Harper's Chord August 5, Dennis Warner and the D's August 19, Ring of Kerry (Su bject to change)

Art Fair July 19

Plan to stroll through Munsing er and Clemens Gardens on Thursday July 19 and see art on displayby various artists and list ent othe following musicians: Carlos Quinche | Nathan Neuman | Cathie English

RAP

Taking some trips in warmer weather? Maybe you're going to one of 320 gardens through North America where your MCBS membership card entitles you to special admission or discount. Check it out at www.ahsga.rdening.org/ra.p.



www.munsingerdemens.com

Co-Chairs Joan Andersen Jill Florek

Mary Margaret Bjorklun

Sam Calvert

Elaine Carter

Will iam Cook

ChrisFelsch

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Articles and comments are welcomed.

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