

# "Columbia Underground"

Member: National Garden Club, Federated Garden Clubs of Missouri, and Central District

Editor; Marie Pasley

## Upcoming Events

### January 11- Zoom mtg. at 1 pm Program:

**"Sustainability in Action" Maggie McCoy**  
w/Earthway Gardens in St. Louis will present a virtual tour of the Missouri Botanical Garden showing sustainable practices.

**Feb. 8- Zoom mtg. at 1pm Program: "Pruning Trees presented by Hank Steltzer, MU Extension Specialist**

**March 9 Zoom mtg. at 1pm Program: " New & Easy Proven Winner Container Plants" presented by Jesse Keith, Horticulture & Communication Specialist with Proven Winners.**



## "Celandine Poppy"

Color- Yellow

Light Preference: Shade

Height/Spread: 16" tall, 18" spread

Bloom Period: March to May

\* This area info for 2021 is taken from "Tried and True Missouri Native Plants for Your Yard "

### CGC January 11<sup>th</sup> Zoom Meeting at 1pm.

**"Sustainability in Action" Maggie McCoy**  
w/Earthway Gardens in St. Louis will present a virtual tour of the Missouri Botanical Garden showing sustainable practices. Betty said this is an excellent video. I hope everyone will join us on Zoom for the January meeting.

### 2021 CGC Yearbooks

Yearbooks are ready to be picked up from Betty Connelly.

## Plant Care for Outside Gardens

Similar to the way motorists are urged to "winterize" their cars at this time of the year, gardeners should do the same for their more tender garden plants. Many of our perennial garden flowers have been selected for characteristics such as flower size, color and form, rather than for their ability to endure severe winter conditions. Additionally, in an attempt to have something unusual in their landscape, gardeners often attempt to coax perennial plants further north than their zone of natural hardiness. While nature promotes the survival of the fittest, many gardeners are upset when nature has not chosen their plants for survival. Therefore, winter protection becomes important to ensure that certain plants will survive our midwestern winters.

One way to protect our plants is through proper site selection. Plants that have been placed in sites poorly suited to their needs are more susceptible to winter damage. Too much shade for some, too little shade for others, poor soil drainage, or other environmental problems can lead to winter damage.

A goodly number of our garden plants would disappear, if grown in the wild without any help. In other cases, nature provides a protective cover of leaves for tender plants growing near trees, thus allowing them to survive. In the garden, clean appearance is most often desired. Thus, leaves usually are removed. Additionally, leaves allowed to remain as mulch often will not stay where we want them and will blow throughout the yard.

Mulches provide the best winter protection for most flowering perennial plants. As soon as growth has ceased in late fall and temperatures are cold enough for slight soil freezing, mulches should be applied. Not all plants need covering; durable perennials such as peony, daylily and iris will survive without it. Nevertheless, mulches still are beneficial for moisture retention and weed control.



Photo credit: R. Trexler & New Hampshire Extension

The main purpose of a winter covering on flowering perennial plants or marginal woody plants is not to conserve soil heat. Instead, coverings prevent abrupt, wide temperature fluctuations at the base of the plant and in the upper root zone. For younger plants that might not yet be well established, an important function of mulch comes in late winter and early spring. During that time, unprotected grounds alternately freezes and thaws.

As soil freezes it expands; when soil thaws it contracts. When this happens, young plants or perennials with fleshy root systems may be heaved out of the ground so roots become exposed and dry out. These plants with exposed roots are killed or weakened greatly. This problem is very common with shallow-rooted species such as chrysanthemum, Shasta daisy or certain small bulbs such as crocus. The problem of frost heaving is most common in heavy clay soils which have not been improved with organic matter. It normally is not a problem in loose, sandy soils.

Pine needles, wood chips, sawdust, leaf mold and compost are all useful materials for mulching for winter protection. Most of these items are too dense to put directly over the crowns of herbaceous perennials that maintain green growth during the winter such as oriental poppy and tritoma. Straw or evergreen branches placed directly over the latter type of plants provide some protection, yet allow light and air to penetrate. Avoid the use of hay, which often is laden with weed seeds.

Other, heavier materials might be placed on the soil around tender perennials. If they can be kept in place, stiff leaves such as those from oak trees make a good mulch because of their slow rate of decomposition. Soft leaves, such as maple or ash, often become too soggy during the course of winter and can suffocate small shoots.

Coverings of loose materials for winter protection should be at least two inches deep. Check the mulch and condition of the plants it covers on mild winter days. Even after the holidays, it is not too late to add an additional covering of leftover holiday greens to tender plants that need them.

Finally, in the spring when perennials break dormancy, mulches need to be pulled back. The objective is to expose the plant's crown (growing point) to sunlight to promote new growth. Surrounding the base of the plant with the mulch that was protecting its crown, is a good way to deter weed growth and conserve water during the coming growing season.

## **CGC Dec. 14, 2020 Minutes**

The Columbia Garden Club met by Zoom on December 14, 2020. President Betty Connelly called the meeting to order at 1:12 p.m. Mary Nesladek gave the inspiration: "Nature gives to every time and season some beauties of its own" by Charles Dickens. Minutes of the previous meeting were approved as presented. Evette Nissen, treasurer, reported that we received dues for two more members for \$40 and paid out \$24 in dues. The balance is \$8,794.73.

**Committee reports:** Melissa Kouba talked about the Russell School garden. To go and look at this, it is best to go to College Park Drive at the Kiwanis Park and park near the bathrooms. Karen Blackmore is working on the yearbook for 2021 since Rita Gerke's computer crashed. This book may be a little late in getting printed; it will also be available in digital format. The yearbook is dedicated to Ken and Jane Sadler as they donated tomato plants for many years for our plant sale. Ken has passed away recently. (Since this meeting Jane has also passed away).

**Garden Schools:** Here are some Zoom garden schools coming up in 2021:

Environmental School II January 21-22 from Garden Club of Coral Springs, FL. Chairperson Jeri Deker 954-913-1616.

Environmental School II March 15-16 St. Louis, MO . Registration Gloria Whyte 314-993-6534

Garden School IV January 26-27 Garden Club of Deland, FL. Registration Barbara Hadsell 561-635-8809

Landscape Design School IV January 29-30 Arizona Federation of Garden Clubs, Contact Judy Tolbert 602-421-5290

**Program:** Members showed or shared Christmas items and/or memories. Diana Cooksey started collecting the Peanuts Woodstock ornaments (yellow bird) when she was a child; she now has a tree full of Woodstocks. Melissa Kouba shared a story of her parents being in Saudi Arabia and seeing their vehicles adorned in Christmas lights. Donna Russell showed a wooden

nativity set she made, a Father Christmas made from her Dad's clothes and her Mom's baskets. Linda Antal showed a Santa collection. Mary Nesladek showed felt mice she buys from her annual Church Bazaar. Kay Kern showed a box of Frango mints that she buys at Macy's; she also showed puppets she made many years ago. Barb Rothenberg showed the flower arrangement she made for her dining room table; she also has many ornaments from various countries that she has visited. Carolyn Oates showed her new pencil tree decorated with butterflies, birds, and red bows; she also showed her paperwhites and amaryllis flowers. Carolyn Doyle showed her nativity set she started in 1956 with her husband making the stable; she purchased Italian nativity pieces at a dime store for about \$.17 each. Evette Nissen showed a large Italian nativity set she started in 1992. Lynn Birkby showed a German stollen pastry she buys from Sehnert's Bakery in McCook, Nebraska; it is a family tradition to have that for Christmas morning. The bakery has recently won the James Beard award. Marie Pasley showed many Santa Claus and beautiful gourds. Marla Mueller showed an unusual Advent set that was a potting shed. Karen Blackmore showed beautiful decorations in a cabinet along with a plant shop and greenhouse. Betty Connelly showed paper paperwhites and nativity sets. Everyone enjoyed this Zoom Christmas presentation.

Meeting adjourned at 2:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted

Mary Nesladek