

Sowers of St. Luke's

St Luke's United Methodist Church, Indianapolis, IN

June/July 2009

Visit us online at: www.sowersofstlukes.com

Summer's here!

From our leader

It is summer already! Hopefully all were aware that one of the founding members of Sowers, Marcia (Brandt Carter) Pearson's mother passed away last month. I can remember probably 12 years ago when Marcia organized a garden tour and her mother's garden was one of the stops, shady as I remember. Thanks to Sue McKee for getting the arrangement for the memorial service.

Another thank-you goes to Marcia who originally set up a website for our group several years ago. Fortunately for us, Diane has developed her web-related skills to the point that she has been able to get the newsletter posted. All issues from now on will be there if you need to look back at an old one. (And congratulations to her on her retirement at the end of last month!) Team leaders can also post their significant upcoming dates of activities as well.

Speaking of team leaders, I think I speak for all of them when I ask YOU to consider taking a more active role. NOW would be an ideal time to work with the team leader of your choice, to learn the ropes and feel confident about taking the lead at the first of next year!

Please note Carolyn's date for gardening on July 11th. Hope to see you then! Have a safe and happy 4th of July!
Gail

From our gardener

Four of us were busy snipping and digging in the garden on one recent Friday evening; Larry Bragg, now the expert, was trimming the espaliered pear trees. Between the Japanese Variegated Japanese Kerria and the Golden False Cypress some bright yellow poppy shaped blossoms had just opened. The yellow popped out

against the shades of green and as each of us viewed the scene everyone uttered a different name.

Is it evening primrose? Sundrops? Or Ozark

Mountain sundrops? This

plant has been in our garden since day one and it seems we should be getting together on its name. I went to my Taylor's Guide to perennials and found description and pictures. The genus is *Oenothera* (Ee-no-thee'ra or ee-noth'er-ra). The genus has 80 species in America. The flowers are apt to be yellow but are white or rose in some species. My book was underlined on these pages; I remember I have studied this before. The first species Taylor describes is *missourensis*, common name Missouri Primrose or Ozark Sundrops. Not ours, the branches trail and the yellow flowers are larger, four inches across. They open in the evening and remain open until the end of the next day. I asked about *Oenothera* being in the IMA gardens and was told that one species, *missourensis*, blooms in the Ravine Garden. Last week the four inch blooms were spilling over the walkway.

Then there is *Oenothera speciosa*, common name Showy Primrose. It is described as a day bloomer with stems 6-18 inches, erect or spreading and finely hairy. Flowers are nearly 2 inch wide, white or pink. They should be planted where spreading will not be troublesome. Benita Harshman years ago gave us a plant she called Evening Primrose with a spreading, pink poppy like blossom. I remember it in the spot where Russ's Chinese Maple is planted now. It was so invasive we eventually pulled it. I have some in my shady area where it is easier to control, and I like the pink blossom peaking up through other things.

Our flower in question is so common in I thought surely it would be mentioned in Taylor's



and it was. *Oenothera tetragona*, Common Sundrop is 18 inch high, leaves shiny green with lance-shaped, flowers one and one half inches wide, bright yellow, saucer shaped with four petals. It is also sold as *O. Fruticosa*. The picture looks exactly like ours with red buds and yellow stamens. To recap, what we have in the Sower's garden is of the genus *Oenothera*, species *tetragona*, common name, Common Sundrop. I remember Zan Hall originally bringing it to the garden and at her house it was around her screened back porch. After blooming she cuts it down to the basal rosette cluster of leaves and it is a ground cover for the remainder of the season.

If you have a flower name and want more information go to Google search and then also select Image; type in the flower you want to learn more about. I did that using 'common sundrops' and could pull up 10 pages of pictures and references. On the first page most references agreed with the species *fruticosa* or *tetragona* and common name of Common Sundrop. As you moved through the references similar looking flowers were titled small sundrop, evening primrose, Ozark sundrop.

You will soon notice an upgraded labeling system for our plants in the Sowers garden. They take a while to assemble and there were several more plants that required research. I thought you also might like these references on plant naming:

"Using common names for plant material is a nightmare. And, even Latin names have become more confusing due to botanists changing their classification."

"And a word on common names, I love to hear real gardeners talking, Latin names rolling off their tongue sonorous and beautiful. I feel abashed when I take a sleeve and say, 'come and see that pink thing over there'. Ah, *centaurea hypoluca*, very nice' they say. Never mind. It smiles the same for both of us." ...Pam Brown.

Come join several other Sowers on the garden dates listed in the calendar section of this newsletter. It is a good idea to let me know you are coming and to learn of any last minute changes.

Carolyn

Program possibilities

These are places we could visit as a group before the end of this season. Chris needs our input as to which ones of the list you would most like to see. It's quite likely that the announcement will need to be by email at this point. Please call or email her with your preferences if you would like to see one of these places prior to mid August:

Avon Perennial Gardens (Avon)
Soule's Hosta/Daylily Garden (south side Indy)
Farm House Tea Room and T.C. Steel home (Nashville, IN)
Carolee's Herb Farm/Flower Barn (Hartford City)
Stream Cliff Farm (south of Columbus, IN)
IMA grounds (Indy)

Member notes

Note to the Sowers from Marcia after her mother's passing:

"This group has been part of my life and my mother's life for years. As you know, Mariamelia passed her love of flowers and gardening to me.

I have so appreciated each member of the group and your cards that are so supportive.

I am now anticipating becoming more involved and look forward to re-igniting my enthusiasm for herbs.

Thank you... the basket of herbs and flowers were lovely.

Love from a gardener's heart," 'Marcia' Brandt

From Jan Seward: I have *Artemisia* for anyone who wants some to add to their garden.

From Joyce Wozniak – two program ideas for us:
Sat Aug 15 9:00am Fall or Christmas Wreath Workshop for a fee (for Individuals, not Holiday Bazaar)

Sun Dec 13 Leave 1:00 from St Luke's for Sower's Holiday Tea at LS Ayres Tea Room at the Indiana State Museum (each person pays)

From the editor

This (and subsequent issues) will all be posted on our website:

www.sowersofstlukes.com with the newest at the top of the list. So, you can always go there to see back issues. There will be an email to let you know when a new issue is posted.

Let me know if you desire to save paper and postage by NOT receiving the regular mail version.

Yes, as I mentioned in an email last week, I have retired from full time employment. I do plan to work part time for a while – exactly where is still being explored. Hopefully to start, I'll be asked back to my old job to finish properly training my replacement! Then I have a Plan B and C that could work out.

You'd think with no job responsibilities the entire month of June that I could have gotten this newsletter out a little sooner. But I've discovered that time gets away rather quickly and it seems to be true that the more you have to do, the more you get done!! Diane R

Dropping Acid

Want something *really* refreshing? Try drinking vinegar.

On the menu at Pok Pok, a Thai restaurant in Portland, Ore, my eye was drawn to a list of "drinking vinegars." While I was initially stumped by such a concept, the plum vinegar with soda that I ordered was a revelation: shockingly refreshing, tart and fruity, able to stand up to food and cleanse the palate like wine without being cloying. It seemed like the first truly adult nonalcoholic drink I'd ever had.

If chugging vinegar sounds curious to you as well, be apprised that this centuries-old practice has only recently been abandoned. The Romans diluted acetified wine with water to make an everyday thirst quencher called posca, and vinegar has been touted as a cure-all in Asia and Europe for centuries. The practice was brought to the Colonies from England, where it was commonly referred to as shrub, a term confusingly used both for a nonalcoholic drink and for one mixed with rum. In the United States, shrub seems to have thrived particularly in the South, gaining enormous

popularity with the temperance movement. Many Southerners still fondly remember a grandmother making up "raspberry vinegar" in the summer.

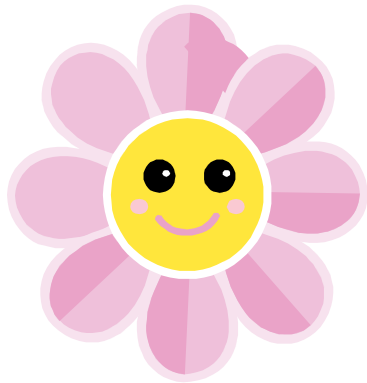
The vinegars that one drinks are not, happily, your toe-curling shelf variety. The gamut is varied and complex, with vinegars produced from every conceivable fruit and grain. (In Japan, where the trend exploded several years ago, some department stores have vinegar sommeliers.) They're most easily categorized as pure vinegars, compound vinegars and additive vinegars. A pure fruit vinegar is a labor of love and skill in which ripe fruit is crushed, fermented and acetified. The most concentrated, intense vinegars are made this way, the best of them requiring no sweetening in dilution. A compound vinegar is what most home recipes call for: fresh fruit is macerated in a bulk vinegar, typically wine or cider, then boiled to make shrub (or what the French call a *gastrique*), which can be added to water, soda or an alcoholic drink. Shrub can replace citrus in any number of commonplace cocktails with three-dimensional results. Additive vinegars, which dose mass-produced vinegar with extracts or artificial flavorings and a sweetener, are to be avoided. So read the label carefully.

The world of vinegars can be sampled at a click, from an Italian pure raspberry one called Etruria – so delicate it can be sipped neat – to the Japanese Yokoi Ma-Kurozu, a black malt vinegar made from glutinous brown rice and barley. (Coupled with soda water, Yokoi provides the satisfying heft and tang of a dark English bitter.) ChefShop.com in Seattle carries some of the best small producers worldwide. It is currently one of very few American suppliers for the European cult producer Acetoria, which makes small batches of superb vinegars from sources as disparate as tomato, fig, apple-balsamic and trockenbeerenauslese dessert wines. Tait Farm Foods in Pennsylvania markets its own shrubs at taitfarmfoods.com. Its ginger shrub, mixed with soda water, dark rum and lime, makes an unusually piquant Dark 'n' Stormy.

But to taste the best of these Model T-era coolers, you must make your own – particularly in the summer or autumn, when abundant local fruit is on hand. Modest mess aside, shrubs couldn't be simpler to make: find a good-quality apple-cider or wine vinegar, soak any fresh fruit in it for a week, then add sugar, boil for an hour, strain and bottle it

up. It can keep in the fridge for months. Unsurprisingly, the vinegar you begin with makes an enormous difference. The savior of the home shrubbest is Bragg, an excellent, widely available unfiltered and unpasteurized apple-cider vinegar. My first effort was a classic raspberry, which turned out to be so surprisingly delicious that I felt as if I'd broken some secret code. I then went a bit shrub mad, boiling up vats and fobbing off bottles on puzzled friends. Blueberries made a dense, showy shrub, thick with pectin. Black currant with white-wine vinegar produced a lithe, perfume-y cassis. As a sour-cherry version boiled away on the stove, my 4-year-old said she smelled cherry pie. The resultant elixir was so good that I couldn't bring myself to give any away. No matter; now that citrus season is swinging in, I'll redeem myself by wrapping up bottles of blood-orange or Meyer lemon and ginger shrubs for my newly enlightened circle.

*Written by Toby Cecchini, submitted by Chris Hammock
Reprinted from New York Times Magazine – late 2008*



Events Calendar

Sat 7/11 Garden with Carolyn, 9:30am

Fri 7/24 Garden with Carolyn, 6:30pm

Sun 7/26 Deadline for items in next newsletter

Team Leaders

Coordinators:	Gail Corn	843-1244
	gkcorn@sbcglobal.net	
	Sue McKee	253-9757
Treasurer	Judy Tults	873-5068
	jnjtults@comcast.net	
Programs	Chris Hammock	257-1421
	chammock@parktudor.org	
Gardener	Carolyn Curry	253-2033
	carolyn.curry@gmail.com	
Spring Plant Sale	Sue Meyer	816-0185
	s-meyer@att.net	
Fall Plant Sale	Carolyn Curry	253-2033
Bazaar	Committee	
News	Diane Rice	252-2612
	ladydi7560@yahoo.com	
Hospitality	Gloria Barron	844-2989