

Kingsley Garden Walkabout June 16

The Kingsley Friends of the Library will hold their 4th Annual Spring Garden Walkabout, Thursday, June 16 from 2 to 8 p.m.

Four area gardens will be featured this year, and homemade cookies and lemonade will be offered at the refreshment garden.

Tickets are \$6 in advance and \$8 the day of the Walkabout and are available at the Kingsley Public Library as well as the Traverse Area District Library, Interlochen Public Library and the Fife Lake Public Library.

Kingsley Friends of the Library members also have tickets, as does Pine Hill Nursery at Village Gardens, Keystone Perennials and the Kingsley Branch of Northwestern Bank.

Also on June 16, the KFOL will hold their 2nd Annual Plant Sale, featuring healthy, flourishing plants from area gardens at reasonable prices. It will be held once again at the site of the old H&M Party Store on the



corner of Elm and M-113. The Plant Sale will begin between 9-10 a.m. and will run until all plants are sold. For those who have plants to donate, call Carrie Armstrong, chairman of the Plant Sale, at 263-5478. All proceeds from the Spring Garden Walkabout and Plant Sale are dedicated to the building fund for a new and improved Kingsley Public Library.

June is a 'perennial' favorite

It seems like there is a month for everything — June alone has quite a few designations. Did you know it's American Rivers Month, International People Skills Month, National Frozen Yogurt Month and Turkey Lovers Month, to name just a few?

And just so we gardeners don't feel left out, the Perennial Plant Association has designated June as Perennial Gardening Month.

Since 1990, they have been selecting a Perennial Plant of the Year. Past plants have included Moonbeam Coreopsis, May Night Salvia, David Phlox and Japanese Painted Fern.

The 2005 Perennial Plant of the Year is Helleborus x hybridus, or Lenten Rose. It is a wonderful shade plant that tolerates dry conditions. It is evergreen and one of the first perennials to bloom in early spring.

It's hardy to zone 4 and possibly colder with snow cover. Mature plants are 18-24 inches tall and 24-30 inches wide. Flower colors range from pure white to a plum color bordering on black. Other

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colors are pink, yellow and red, some with spots on the inside of the flower. Flowers can be semi-double to double, and are followed by unusual seed pods. The highly ornamental foliage is coarse, leathery and divided into 7-9 segments, and it lends an interesting texture to the shade garden.

They are ideal for naturalizing in woodland areas and provide a perfect backdrop for bulbs and other shade perennials. Lenten Roses are easy to grow. They prefer part-shade to shade and a rich, well-drained soil. Sometimes the leaves can look a little tattered in the spring here in Northern Michigan, but that is easily remedied by simply cutting them off as the new foliage

emerges.

One more notable attribute of this wonderful plant is that deer do not like it! I have grown this plant in my yard for eight years and it has become one of my favorites.

Since June is Perennial Gardening Month, let's talk a little more about perennials in general. Perennials are non-woody plants that die to the ground in the fall and re-emerge in the spring. They are defined as plants that live three years or more. Traditionally perennials were planted in long beds with evergreens, shrubs or a fence serving as the background. This style was developed by the English and is still popular today.

But true to our typical American Spirit, perennials gardens have broken the mold and are being used in very non-traditional ways. They can be mixed with flowering shrubs and evergreens to create mixed borders. They can be used in foundation plantings, as hedges or borders and as groundcovers.

Many perennials also adapt well to container planting and can be combined with annuals or planted alone to create season long interest. There are perennials available for every garden situation and their use is limited only by your imagination.

When you're ready to join in all the fun and get started with perennials, the first step is to choose a site. If you know where you want your garden to be, it will be easier to choose plants that will adapt to those conditions.

The amounts of sunlight and soil conditions are the two most important factors to consider when choosing plants. If you get six or more hours of direct sun, look for plants that prefer full sun. If that sun is filtered for part of the day then choose plants for full sun/part-shade. If you



BY JEANINE RUBERT
Local columnist

get less than three hours of sun, then choose shade plants.

I know this can be confusing, but remember that it is only a guideline and sometimes you need to experiment a little. One of my favorite things about gardening is that there are no mistakes, only learning experiences. Most perennials grow best in moist, well-drained soils, and the extra time and effort spent preparing your soil prior to planting will pay big rewards later with better plant growth and general health.

As a general rule, perennials don't bloom as long as annuals, so when choosing plants, consider foliage color and texture as well as flowers. That way you can create a garden that has interest no matter what the season.

While perennials are for the most part low maintenance, they are not no maintenance. They still require regular watering, fertilizing, weeding and deadheading to keep them looking their best. Whether you are just a beginner or a confirmed perennial addict, perennials offer a world of gardening pleasure.

Remember that the garden is never truly finished; it is a work in progress, just like we are.

If you have questions or comments, e-mail Pine Hill Nursery owner Jeanine Rubert at:
jrubert@pinehill-nursery.com

Pond restoration workshop June 28

SEEDS will host a 4-hour workshop Tuesday, June 28 from noon-4 p.m., transforming a seasonal pond with low oxygen levels into part of a healthy ecosystem for the fish and wildlife on the property.

The workshop will go through the process of designing, building and installing a wind-powered pond restorer complete with aeration system and a floating wetland garden.

"I'm looking forward to this project — and to a healthy pond," said homeowner Julie Chai of Leelanau County. Aeration will help restore a healthy limnetic condition to the

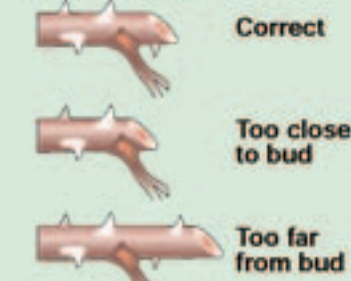
pond and shift the aquatic structure and dynamics to support an active beneficial microbial community. This should decrease the density of phytoplankton and increase light penetration resulting in a more desirable pond. The restorer system's treatment capabilities are strengthened by a small floating wetland cell above the aeration system. Plant roots and the wetland cell media provide a healthy home for microorganisms that help clean the water.

The \$40 workshop fee includes lunch, materials and instruction by SEEDS Ecological Engineers, Pete Muñoz and Barton Kirk. To pre-register and get directions, contact pete@ecoSEEDS.org or call 231-929-3663.

Rose pruning tips

It's vital to prune your rose bushes. Pruning renews the plant by encouraging new growth from the base and allowing air to circulate, resulting in less disease. It also trains the bush to grow the way you want it to. Here are some tips:

- Cuts should be properly angled — slanted at almost a 45 degree angle. Upper point is 1/8-1/4 inch above growth eye with lower point slightly above level of eye on opposite side of stem.
- Rose bushes should be pruned to a vase shape with the middle left open.
- Strip all leaves from the bush.
- Remove all dead and diseased wood by cutting at least one inch below the damaged area.
- Remove all weak shoots and those growing toward the center.
- If two branches rub or are close enough that they will do so soon, remove one.



SOURCE: www.napagarden.com

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