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## Fall for Chrysanthemums

— by Kevin O'Toole, Artist and Horticulturist

Chrysanthemums, originally from the Orient, are now prized the world over for their colorful blooms in fall. The mum has been woven into Asian culture for hundreds if not thousands of years and has long been the national flower of Japan. In the United States mums first became widely available in the early part of the twentieth century. They provide glorious color for the garden throughout autumn and are available in a wide range of colors, with many variations within each hue. The name chrysanthemum is derived from the Greek language and means “gold flower”. While many varieties are still in the yellow-gold range, red, orange, white, purple, and pink flowers are also common. And if the colors weren't enough to choose from, the flowers come in many different shapes and sizes. By planting a variety of mums with early-, mid- and late-season bloom times you can have an outstanding array of colors and textures from the end of August into November. In addition, mums are long-lasting cut flowers.

Commercially available mums can be divided into two distinct groups, namely “forced mums” and garden (hardy) mums. Forced mums are sold in full bloom no matter what time of year it is. They typically have single daisy-like blooms or cushion-shaped flowers. Forced mums come in exotic shapes such as spider, with delicate long arching petals, or quill with long hollow petals in a spiked shape, or spoon with blooms made up of many petals shaped like long spoons. Garden or hardy mums are available at nurseries in late summer and fall, and usually begin to bloom toward the end of August and finish up with the first heavy frost. They come in a wide range of colors but reds, oranges and yellows are most common. Hardy mums commonly have single daisy-like blooms, cushion style, pom-pom or small button style blooms, and are rarely available in the delicate long-petaled blooms more typical of the forced mums.

Mums are photoperiodic. This means they will only begin to set buds and come into flower naturally during the fall when the number of daylight hours decrease and periods of darkness increase. Forced mums can be bought in full bloom at anytime during the year because they are grown under controlled conditions and have been forced into bloom by the grower. Several months before they are ready to be brought to market the grower will begin to increase the number of hours per day that the plants are in total darkness. Through experience and a little luck, the grower is able to bring the entire mum crop into bloom at the precise time he needs to sell them. The mum varieties that are most often used in the floral industry require 1 to 2 more months of



*continued on page 2*



**The Behnke GardenNews****EDITOR-IN-CHIEF:**

Sonja Behnke Festerling

**MANAGING EDITOR:**

Judith Conway

**HORTICULTURAL ADVISOR:**

Larry Hurley

**LAYOUT/DESIGN/ILLUSTRATION:**

Lori Hicks

**CONTRIBUTING WRITERS:**

Randy Best

Judith Conway

James Dronenburg

Lori Hicks

Larry Hurley

Melodie Likel

Susan O'Hara

Kevin O'Toole

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long nights than the hardy mums that we typically plant in our gardens in the mid-Atlantic region. If left to their own devices in an outdoor environment, forced mums would not even have a chance to set buds before they would be killed back by the first heavy frost. Garden mums require only 1 to 2 months of long dark nights to set buds and bloom, so are perfectly able to put on an incredible floral display before the first killing frosts of winter arrive.

Several years ago Behnke Nurseries began offering Belgium mums, amazing garden mums resulting from years of hybridizing and research done by Dirk Peters. These are note-worthy plants for several reasons, not least of which is the fact that they are literally covered with hundreds or even thousands of blossoms at a time. Most garden mums have rather brittle stems, and it is not uncommon to break a stem or two during transport. Belgian mums have been bred for durability and have remarkably flexible stems, making them particularly easy to transport from the nursery. Look for many new varieties and colors that we are offering this fall.

Small mums or cuttings can be planted in early to late spring but will require a great deal of "pinching" and care to achieve the dense mounded form and high bud count that is typical of the mums found in early fall at Behnke's. The new growth tip of each stem has to be pinched or clipped back several times during the growing season or they will surely become tall and leggy with much fewer blooms.

Plant mums in late summer and throughout the fall when the selection is at its best. If you are interested in overwintering your mums you should plant earlier rather than later, at least six to eight weeks before the first killing frost in your area, so they have a chance to develop a strong root system. If your only goal is to have a spectacular fall floral display in your garden, grow your mums as annuals. Plant them when they are in full bloom, and remove them when they die back after the first heavy frost. Choose a sunny location with adequate drainage — mums will not tolerate "wet feet." Heavy clay soils will need to be amended with a generous amount of compost, well-rotted manure, or peat moss. Plant them carefully. Remove them from their pots and gently score (or rake) the rootballs to free the roots. Place them in the ground, taking care to plant them no deeper than they were in their pots. Mums have surface roots and will suffocate if planted too deeply. Water with a transplant fertilizer, such as Dragon Plant Starter Solution®, to stimulate root growth.

Most gardeners today suffer from a lack of space and dispose of garden mums once they have passed their peak bloom. However, if you have plenty of space, you might try to overwinter your mums. You can move them in the spring if they are taking up a prime color location. Garden mums will be content to pass the summer in a large vegetable garden or any sunny spot out of the way.

After they bloom, remove the faded blooms, but don't cut the stems back. Don't try to move them at that point, even if you don't want them to stay where they are through the next growing season.

Repeated freezing and thawing of the soil can heave plants out of the ground, exposing their roots to the elements. Newly-transplanted mums are especially vulnerable to heaving. Having well-established plants, or a layer of straw, pine boughs, or other springy material applied over the plants in late fall will help to minimize this problem. Lightweight mulching material will allow good air circulation, which is important.

When growth resumes in the spring, carefully clear away the mulch and remove any dead foliage. Now is the time to move them to a summer home, if necessary. Replant the clumps in good quality soil, which drains well — this is essential for healthy mums. We recommend a dose of transplant fertilizer to stimulate root growth.

Mums, being surface feeders, appreciate fertilizer applied as a top dressing. About the end of May, scratch a granular fertilizer for flowering plants (such as FlowerTone®) into the soil around each plant. Apply granular plant food every four or five weeks till August or supplement with water-soluble fertilizer throughout the late spring and early summer to encourage branching and bud formation.



## Notes from a Perennial Optimist

*Once Again, our Larry Hurley is Out Standing in the Field*

**F**all is here, and we encourage you to break the football habit, get out into the garden, and enjoy the weather. Soon, summer will just be an ugly, dry little blur through the rear view window of life. Autumn is a great time to become acquainted with some new perennials—some brand new, and some that you may have overlooked in the flurry of spring.

Ornamental grasses are mostly full-sun plants, but for the “grass look” in a shady spot, try one of the sedges (*Carex*). Two new ones for fall are *Carex* ‘Silver Sceptre’, variegated sedge, a short, clump-forming plant with ¼-inch narrow leaves with white margins. This really helps brighten up a dark corner. Another is *Carex* ‘Gold Strike’, growing to 10 inches, with golden-variegated leaves. In the spring of 2003 we will be offering a number of “new” native carex suitable for use as shady ground covers. For sun, look for cultivars of the native *Panicum virgatum*, or switch grass. Besides the popular ‘Heavy Metal’, there is ‘Shenandoah’, ‘Dallas Blues’, ‘Northwind’ and ‘Prairie Sky’. All are tall, late-summer to early-fall bloomers with airy plumes of bloom. Differences tend to be in intensity of leaf color (green to blue to purple) and fall color (yellow to red).

Perennial geraniums are staples of the garden, and a couple of new ones have great potential. *Geranium maculatum* ‘Espresso’ was recently released by Dale Hendricks of North Creek Nurseries in Pennsylvania. This cultivar has pale lavender-pink flowers over red-brown foliage. “A bold new look for our native cranesbill, useful for groundcover or shade garden feature plant”, according to Dale. Another geranium with some “buzz” is *Geranium* ‘Rozanne’. Growing 20 to 24 inches tall, it has deep blue flowers, and is said to have a much longer blooming period than most perennial geraniums.

Brunnera, or false forget-me-not, is a spring bloomer which performs well each year and then sits back and sort of calmly waits until next year. Appreciated by gardeners for its nice blue flowers, we are happy to note that there is also a white-blooming cultivar, ‘Marley’s White’. Horticulturists being what we are, we are also always looking for a little leaf-action in addition to breakthroughs in flowers. Until a few years ago, it was difficult and expensive to get variegated brunnera; now it’s only expensive. Last summer Walter’s Gardens released ‘Jack Frost’ (“This plant displays a frosty silver overlay with light green venations. Leaves resemble crackled porcelain and shimmer in the garden creating a shining



contrast against companion plants and its blue spring flowers.”) Pennsylvania perennial potentilla David Culp attests that ‘Jack Frost’ looked terrific in his garden all summer and enthusiastically endorses it.

*Spigelia marilandica* (“woodland pinkroot”; that’s catchy) isn’t “new” per se; in fact it is a native. But until recently it has been hard to propagate so it wasn’t seen frequently. The code has been cracked, and now you too can plant this summer bloomer with intense red and yellow tubular flowers that look almost tropical. Growing best in light shade, spigelia is a “hummingbird magnet” according to West Virginia plantsman Barry Glick. A slow grower, spigelia needs a couple of seasons to look really top notch.

For those of you with sunny gardens, you might like to try *Achillea* ‘Red Velvet’. Unlike many of the yarrows, it holds its color (that would be “red”) and does not fade out as the weather turns hot, a complaint lodged against many other yarrows. Fans of tall garden phlox will appreciate *Phlox paniculata* ‘Becky Towe’. (This was found in 1990, but because I am a shade gardener, it’s new to me.) This is a golden-variegated tall garden phlox with cherry red flowers. It’s a very striking plant, and is said to be powdery mildew resistant (which a real gardener knows is different than powdery mildew proof). *Nepeta x* ‘Joanna Reed’ is a new catmint, a three foot tall hybrid with darker violet flowers than other *Nepetas*. *Nepeta* is an easy care plant that bees and butterflies love, great for the new gardener and wildlife gardener.

Speaking of new, when we were in Chicago this summer for the annual meeting of the Perennial Plant Association, we saw the results of some exciting plant breeding work being conducted at the Chicago Botanic Garden. Crossing various species of cone-flower (*Echinacea*), they have come up with plants with lemon yellow flowers, others that are tangerine in color, and many shades in between. None have yet been released, but in a few years we expect to see some really amazing new plants released by the Chicago Botanic Garden.

Meanwhile, looking ahead to next year, we intend to have our usual assortment of new heuchera and other Terra Nova introductions in April (who can resist a golden spiral rush called ‘Blond Ambition’?), many additions to our Baysafe (native plants) selection, a good selection of tree peonies in multiple price ranges, and many more double-flowered primrose cultivars. More about these in future issues of the Behnke GardeNews.



# The Other Spring

*The so-called minor bulbs are a major source of color. As the winter risers will awaken your garden and announce the arrival of spring.*

Good things come in small packages, it's true, and when it comes to bulbs, good can be defined as reliable, affordable and beautiful. Bulbous plants are found all over the world, particularly in areas where the long, dry summers encouraged the evolution of this unique design. A bulb preserves the life of the plant during adverse growing conditions while maximizing a brief period of favorable weather to store energy in a bulbous compressed stem.

For the sake of simplicity here we speak of bulbs to include those plants which store energy in underground organs. In addition to true bulbs we include corms and rhizomes.

Generally speaking, bulbs are undemanding and easy to grow, especially for the first season. Future success depends on how closely the environment matches the ideal environment required by the particular plant. For example, daffodils are well-suited to our climate here in the

Washington area and will grow and multiply for many years.



Tulips on the other hand will usually deliver one magnificent display the first season. Subsequent displays diminish as the plants struggle to survive the adverse conditions of a strange land. Most gardeners, while well aware that some bulbs are a "one shot deal," consider them a bargain nevertheless. Like annuals, bulbs deliver big blooms for your buck.

The flowering season for bulbs extends from late winter straight on through the fall. Pots of bulbs can be easily "forced" into bloom indoors in winter, which means you can have blooming bulbs out of season.

Just about everyone is familiar with the well known major bulbs, such as daffodils and tulips. There are, however, dozens of minor bulbs that are wonderful additions to the garden, and a few of the spring flowering ones are introduced here. Keep in mind that just about all the minor bulbs mentioned below are well suited to our climate and will persist and even multiply for many years with a minimum of preparation and care.

Among the first blooms of the calendar year, the diminutive snowdrop is a true harbinger of spring — delicate nodding white bells defy the harsh weather of late winter. Another early-bloomer is winter aconite, with its cheerful yellow flowers held upward to greet the gray winter skies. Scilla (wood hyacinth), although sometimes



# g Flowering Bulbs

source of color and spring beauty. These early bloomers announce the arrival of a new growing season.

referred to as English bluebells, blooms in shades of pink and white as well as the traditional blue. Although at home in either full sun or light shade, they do prefer a well-drained soil. Once established scilla are more or less permanent, and a mature clump will produce up to a dozen flower spikes each spring.

*Iris reticulata* will multiply and persist for years, especially if the soil is improved. Plant them along a path you frequent to appreciate their delightful fragrance. All of these early bulbs are charming planted in naturalized drifts, a joy to behold for winter-weary passersby.

Waves of flowering bulbs bloom in March, April and May, bringing a mixed chorus of spring flowers. In addition to the common tulips, daffodils and hyacinths, consider planting chionodoxa (glory-of-the-snow), a favorite of bulb gardeners. Plant a quantity of them in a sunny location (under a deciduous tree works well, by the time the tree leafs out the bulbs are finishing up), and they will multiply and return each year.

Grape hyacinths, when planted in generous drifts, will make a splendid pool of color. The tiny, tubular blue bells, which are clustered along the length of the flowering shaft, are too small to be appreciated one at a time.

Crocuses are perhaps the most familiar spring-blooming minor bulb, as well as the most colorful.

They grow up to six inches tall and bloom in white and shades of blue, purple, lavender, orange, yellow and gold. Some flowers are bi-colored. Squirrels love crocus corms, as do voles. If you have a local population you should consider taking some precautions, such as planting in raised beds, nestling the bulbs into crushed stone in the planting hole or using repellants, such as Vole Block®.

Anemones (windflowers) deserve more attention. (In particular, we refer to *Anemone nemorosa*, a rhizomatous plant, not to be confused with Japanese anemone, another worthy plant to be sure but being fibrous-rooted do not belong in this discussion.) *A. nemorosa* are well-suited to a woodland setting where they will carpet the ground with ferny foliage and produce 6- to 9-inch stems bearing fresh, poppy-like blooms in white, lavender, blue and pink. The rhizomes can be confusing, have an expert show you which side goes up. Numerous other species and hybrids are available, many of which require slightly different regimens.

The fritillary family is a diverse genus featuring one of the most imposing of flowering bulbs, the 2- to 4-foot crown imperial (*Fritillaria imperialis*), with its large, nodding flowers that hang below a green crest of whorled leaves, and the checkered lily (*F. meleagris*)—a delightful curiosity which grows just 12 inches in damp woodland soil (although it does not appreciate heavy clay) and features nodding flowers with purple checks! Both are prized by bulb fanciers.

All of these bulbs, whether planted *en masse* for a bold impact, or artfully integrated into the landscape will fill the garden with a kaleidoscope of colorful blooms. And with a little extra care, they will stick around for many seasons of living delight.

— by Behnke Staff Horticulturists  
Randy Best and Lori Hicks



## Fall Lawn Care: Fertilization

— by Rick Hardie, Greenview Premium Lawn and Garden Products

A very dry, hot summer has our lawns brown and thin. They have been in summer semi-dormancy. However, with the arrival of cooler weather and autumn rains, these lawns will begin a new life cycle. And with a little help, our lawns will recover and prepare for winter and the following growing season.

The summer heat and dry weather has put considerable stress on the grass plants which make up our lawns. Their roots may have been damaged and some may even have died. Additionally, Japanese beetle grubs and other pests which feed on the root systems of these grass plants add to the problem. If your lawn has sustained such losses, you will need to reseed (or overseed) and fertilize to restore health and vitality to your lawn.

Overseeding thin areas in your lawn introduces new seed to replace dead grass plants. To prepare the soil for new seed, rake out damaged or dead plants. Another method to prepare a good "soil-to-grass-seed contact zone" is lawn aeration. Aeration is achieved with a tool that has tines which penetrate into the ground and remove a small plug of soil. This method loosens the soil and reduces soil compaction, which in turn increases the flow of air, moisture and nutrients to the roots. (Some garden tillers come with aeration attachments or they can be rented at most tool rental facilities)

For both established and new grass plants, food is essential. Furthermore, fall is acknowledged by university studies as the most important time to feed your lawn. University of Maryland and Virginia Tech, and the cooperative extension services of both states, recommend applying 1/2 to 2/3 of your lawn's yearly feeding in the fall. So, to help your lawn regenerate and green up in the fall,

the lawn-care specialists at Greenview have created a 2-step program that is both easy and effective. First, start with Greenview's Winter Green® lawn fertilizer. Its special formula (10-16-20) encourages grass plants to send out new growth and tillers (a shoot growing from the base of the stem) helping to thicken your lawn. In addition, the Winter

Green® formula also assures high germination of new seedlings with proper watering and feeding. About 30 days after applying your Winter Green®, it's time for the next application of food. The best option is a golf course fairway fertilizer with a unique slow release formula, Greenview's Super Green Power®. Although it started its life on golf courses, Super Green Power® has become a favorite of discriminating homeowners. It has I.B.D.U. as its slow-release source. This ex-

clusive nitrogen source is activated by soil moisture rather than soil temperatures, allowing Super Green Power® to feed your lawn later into the fall and almost all winter and early spring. This is important because after top growth stops around late November all food resources are directed into root development and food storage. Super Green Power® will continue to feed your lawn's root system during the cold winter months providing it with long lasting nutrients for critical root growth.

Only a healthy lawn will make it through the tough summer months. You need to start this fall with a good program of cleaning, seeding, and feeding. Lawns fed with a combination of Greenview's Winter Green® and Super Green Power® this fall will develop a deeper, denser root system than other lawns, allowing greener winter color, quick spring green up and more drought and heat tolerance for next summer.

### The Advantages of Fall Fertilization

(Cool Season Grasses)

- Increased Density
- Increased Root Growth
- Decreased Spring Mowing
- Improved Fall to Spring Color
- Decreased Weed Problems
- Improved Drought Tolerance
- Decreased Summer Disease

## Fall Activities 2002

### Fall Lawn Care Seminar

with Tom Jarvis. *Saturday, September 14 10AM in Beltsville, and 2PM in Largo*  
Tom's your guide to your best lawn ever. Now's the time to renovate ailing turf.

### Fall Gardening Festival

*Saturday, September 28, at Beltsville*  
Join us for a day celebrating the new gardening season. Discover ways in which you can maximize the autumn potential. Here's a line up of events:

• **The Right Plant for the Right Place** (9AM) John Peter Thompson, grandson of Mr. Albert Behnke, helps you avoid the pitfalls of buying the wrong plant — learn to get it right the first time.

Stephanie Cohen, noted perennial expert and contributing editor for *Country Living Gardener*, will present two talks:

• **New and Exciting Perennials for 2003** (10AM) You'll want to hear about these up-and-coming plants for next year's garden.

• **Fall Gardening—The Last Hurrah!** (2PM) Gardening doesn't have to end with summer—we should be actively gardening until early November.

• **A Few of My Favorite Things** (NOON) Join Helmut Jaehnigen as he talks about the special plants that he's learned to love during 30 years as a nurseryman.

### Holiday Open House

*Thurs., Nov. 21, 6 to 9PM, at Beltsville*  
An evening of fun and sparkle—music, refreshments and crafts will tickle your holiday fancy and fill you with spirit.

### Poinsettias On Parade in Largo

*Saturday, November 23, 10AM to 4PM*  
Tour our greenhouses (45,000 poinsettias!) and take advantage of a colorful photo-op during our annual event at our garden center in Largo, Maryland.  
For more information, call 301-249-2492.

## Looking Ahead to Fall Color

— by Kevin O'Toole, Artist and Horticulturist

With the heat and all too infrequent rain that we have been experiencing lately there is no better time than now to escape the heat and humidity and do some serious landscape planning for your garden later this fall. Finding plants with vibrant fall color for the home landscape is a high priority for many gardeners, but this can often be an elusive search. An often-used garden shrub with spectacular, almost fluorescent red, fall leaf colors is *Euonymus alatus* commonly known as burning bush. Burning bush's popularity is due largely to its spectacular fall color, but it also has an interesting form and texture and is also very easy to grow and extremely adaptable. Perhaps due to its extensive use in landscape, burning bush has become somewhat of a scourge in the wild areas and forests surrounding suburban areas in the Mid-Atlantic region. Burning bush has been particularly successful in colonizing large areas of forest and wildlands, quickly out competing less adaptable native species of plants and shrubs.

Over the last several years, Behnke Nurseries has made many efforts (e.g. Behnke's Bay Safe program in cooperation with the Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay) to encourage planting of non-invasive native and non-native species in the home landscape. By utilizing native and other non-invasive plants we can make our gardens visually richer and more exciting while at the same time creating outdoor living spaces that are sustainable and are not a source of problems to the larger ecosystem. Fall color should only be one consideration when choosing a plant for the landscape, since the reality is that most plants show their most spectacular colors for only a few weeks out of the entire year. If we can find plants that have beautiful fall color, but also provide interesting foliage effect during the summer, beautiful blooms in the spring, and persistent colorful fruit through late fall and winter, so much the better.

Many of the Japanese maples easily

rival the burning bush for spectacular fall color, and their ornamental value throughout the rest of the year is unsurpassed. The relative expense of these small trees will limit their use in the shrub border, but their beauty should warrant their inclusion in any garden.

Some of the newer cultivars of chokeberry (*Aronia*), have spectacular brilliant red fall color, especially effective when grown *en mass*. This fall display is complimented by masses of shiny berries that persist throughout the winter months, making for a bright note in an all too often dull and gray winter landscape. Small white flowers in the spring are also a welcome addition to the spring time garden.

Blueberries are often relegated to the vegetable garden or berry patch because of the common belief that their only value lies in the berries they produce. Blueberries provide a great deal of ornamental interest throughout the year, masses of small urn shaped white flowers in spring followed by delicious blueberries in summer, a spectacular red-orange foliage display in fall, ultimately ending in a display of red to green stems during the winter.

Amelanchier, or shadblow, is another small tree or shrub that makes a valuable addition to the home landscape. It not only has spectacular fall foliage in shades of orange, red and burgundy but is also covered with a cloud of small white flowers in spring followed by delicious fruits similar to blueberries.

Many cotoneaster species make excellent evergreen groundcovers or small shrubs providing excellent form, flower and bright red fruit that persist in the winter landscape, and many provide a spectacular



*Aronia*  
(Chokeberry)

fall color display with small glossy red to wine red leaves.

Winterberry is an excellent example of a plant whose berries offer a spectacular fall to winter display that can be achieved even without foliage. The thin gray stems of *Ilex verticillata* or Winterberry are literally covered with small bright red berries, that make a big impact for several months in the fall and winter landscape and even make wonderful material for holiday decorations.

Fothergilla is a relatively uncommon landscape plant, with fragrant, feathery white flowers in the spring followed by rich blue green foliage similar to that of witchhazels. Fall foliage is variable, but often spectacular, ranging from red, to orange, and yellow, while at times shifting to burgundies and browns depending on cultivar and growing location.

Itea or Virginia sweetspire is another under-appreciated shrub that provides excellent fall color along with great ornamental value during the rest of the year. Extremely adaptable and easy to grow, the gardener will be rewarded many times over with fragrant white flowers in early summer and rich green leaves that change to a deep reddish purple in the fall.

## Bathing Beauties

— by Kevin O'Toole, Artist and Horticulturist

With the exceedingly warm, dry weather that the Washington area has been experiencing, we are all concerned about keeping our gardens healthy and well-watered. However, many of the birds and animals that visit our gardens are also feeling the effects of the dry summer weather. While some bird species get all the water they require from the vegetation and insects that they eat, many other species need a reliable source of fresh water to drink from and to bathe in. Birds need water both to prevent dehydration and to aide in digestion. A birdbath not only provides a cool respite from the heat but also keeps their feathers clean and in tip-top shape.

Birds are more than happy to use a shallow stream or even a puddle for their baths, but puddles have been few and far between with the ongoing drought. During dry spells a birdbath can prove even more irresistible than a well-stocked feeder to our fine-feathered friends.

A birdbath can be as simple as a large plant saucer or even an upturned garbage can lid filled with water, but many more visually appealing birdbaths are available commercially. A high quality birdbath can make for a nice focal point in the garden, used much like a piece of sculpture. Look for a large shallow dish, no deeper than 2 to 3 inches at the center, with a rim around the

edge for birds to perch and preen upon. Avoid very smooth glazed surfaces—a rough surface on the inside of the bath will make the birds feel more comfortable and sure-footed.

Place the birdbath under or near a tree to provide a safe place for waiting birds to perch. Place it on a pedestal, so that it is reasonably safe from predators, and keep it away from shrubs and other objects that could serve as a hiding place for cats and other animals that might prey on the unwary bathers. Choose a site convenient to a hose so that you won't forget to keep it filled and clean. Every few days, or whenever you notice the water getting dirty, empty the bath and clean it with a strong blast from a hose nozzle. This, along with a thorough scrubbing with a coarse brush every few weeks, will keep the birds happy and the bath free of algae and mosquitoes. A kitchen steel wool pad is great for removing algae and the soap will reduce the bacteria and fungi that may harm the birds. Rinse the bath thoroughly. Birdfeeders, birdbaths, and especially hummingbird feeders must be cleaned on a regular basis to reduce the chance of spreading diseases among birds.

Consider using a small recirculating pump to provide a gentle stream of water into the bath. The sound of moving water is particularly attractive to birds and the recirculating water will help to keep the bath cool, fresh, and mosquito larvae-free.

*Editor's note: We would like to emphasize the importance of cleaning out a birdbath bath at least one or twice a week to keep it from becoming a breeding ground for mosquitoes. Mosquitoes are known to transmit several serious diseases, not the least of which is West Nile Virus. By emptying and cleaning the birdbath once or twice a week and eliminating other sources of standing and or stagnant water from your property, you will be doing your part to decrease the mosquito population in our area.*



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***Fall Gardening Festival!***

Saturday, September 28, at Beltsville  
See details, page 6.