

# BACK ACRE NEWS

Volume #56

Number 9

## The Men's and Women's Garden Club of Findlay

Organized 1954

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September 15, 2011

→ 7:00 PM Municipal Bldg Conference Room ←

Topic: Winter Gardens for Wildlife, Sarah Betts, OCVN

Refreshments: Grossmans & Jeannette Miller

### *Fall Exchange of Seeds Plants, and Produce*



Greetings,

This will be a very short message as John and I just returned from our Alaskan vacation. My mind is having a difficult time reorienting to the real world.

Weather seems to be the topic everywhere we went. It was either too hot, cold, wet, or dry. No one seemed to have what they considered a normal summer. It was truly a year of extremes. By the amount of water laying around our house it looks like we had plenty of rain while we were gone. I hope that it did not disrupt any of the fair activities. Thanks to everyone who participated in supporting the fair.

Our garden looks like a jungle. We are beginning to pull some things out to start the clean up process. We have had lots of bugs, especially mosquitoes!

I was amazed at the flowers in Alaska. We had beautiful weather with lots of sunshine. We saw flowers everywhere. We also saw the largest cabbage I have ever seen. The leaves were at least a yard or two wide. Apparently Ketchikan is the world capital for rhubarb. It was everywhere. Not huge plants but it seemed to come up volunteer in most yards. Fall is a short a season in Alaska. It occurred while we were there. It was a golden world with lots of reds and purples on the ground. Not at all what we thought we would see.

I hope to see everyone at our meeting on September 22. Take care. Cathy



**Gee, what did I miss?** A delightful (and tasty) presentation by Sharon Hammer-Baker on the use of Lavender to lend a subtle flavor to dips, icings, and other culinary creations. She noted that there is little difference in the use of flowers versus leaves in herbal cooking.

**In Case You Missed It:** "The Mennonite Memorial Home will sponsor its third annual flower show Sept. 24, during Bluffton's Fall Festival.", reports the Courier in its September 9<sup>th</sup> edition. Arrangements for all-floral and floral/vegetable will be shown. Categories for specimens and plants include roses, annuals, perennials and biennials, hostas, and container-grown plants. All entries will be judged.

**The Fair's the Thing!** If you missed the Hancock County Fair, you missed a bunch of kids doing great gardening work. The winners of the various contests were reported in the Courier, so we won't repeat them here.

New this year, after many years' absence, were posters naming the various displays and giving credit to our Club as sponsors. Thanks, *Jessica and Cindy Pierce*, for your efforts, and for donating the materials as well as your time.



The pumpkins and sunflowers had their usual great entries.



*Marilynn Beltz* checks the pumpkin display while *Larry Schock* and *Carlton Fruth* register another entrant.

The vegetables, flowers, and decorated veggies were also well represented.



(L-R) Cindy Pierce, Bill Jones, Randy Greeno and Jerry Bibler look over the specimen flower entries.



(L-R) Cindy Pierce, Ann Brickner, and Jessica Pierce arrange the vegetable display, while Randy Greeno fuels up.



The Tower of Big Ben was artistically – if aromatically – represented in vegetables, while the pumpkin balloon reminded us of the recent local festival.



The On-The-Spot Flower Arranging Contest was also its usual success, thanks to almost one hundred youths participating and the donors of the materials: Great Scot (flowers), Kroger (flowers), and Appleseed IGA (plastic containers). Thank You letters with pictures of the proceedings were delivered to these sponsors.



Three late arrivals were given an opportunity to wax creative at the 8U table.



The 14-18 group members thoughtfully select their raw materials.



The 9 – 13 year old finalists display their creations, eagerly (?) awaiting the judges' final rankings.



Our judges, Sheila Niswander and Jayme Inbody carefully scrutinize the senior group entries. Thank you again, ladies.

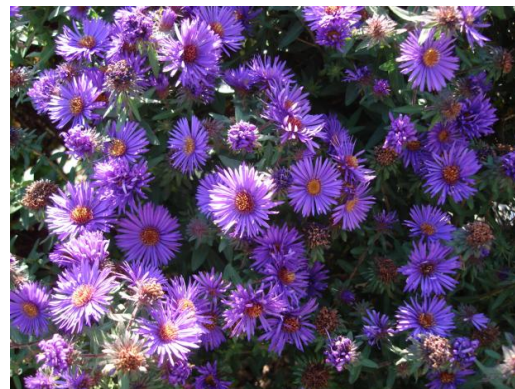
# September Flower of the Month – Aster

By Bill Jones, Photos by Ann Brickner



Aster is a collection of genera of flowering plants in the family Asteracea which is also known as Compositae. The name *Aster* comes from the Ancient Greek word ἀστὴρ (*astér*), meaning "star", referring to the shape of the flower head. Aster species are used as food plants by the larvae of a number of Lepidoptera (butterfly) species. Aster is the September birth flower.

While many of the plants we know as asters were once assigned to the Aster genus, today many of these various plants have been assigned new genus names. The new division of genera reflects the fact that many varieties will not cross with each other and have significantly different characteristics. Many asters are indigenous to North America and others are also found in Europe, South America and Asia.



Some common North American species of aster are as follows:

- *Aster cordifolius* (now *Symphyotrichum cordifolium*), Blue Wood Aster
- *Aster divaricatus* (now *Eurybia divaricata*), White Wood Aster
- *Aster ericoides* (now *Symphyotrichum ericoides*), Heath Aster
- *Aster laevis* (now *Symphyotrichum laeve*), Smooth Aster
- *Aster lateriflorus* (now *Symphyotrichum lateriflorum*), Calico Aster
- *Aster novae-angliae* (now *Symphyotrichum novae-angliae*), New England Aster
- *Aster novi-belgii* (now *Symphyotrichum novi-belgii*), New York Aster
- *Aster linariifolius* (now *Ionactis linariifolius*) Stiff Aster
- *Aster tongolensis*, Wartburg Star
- *Stokesia laevis*, Stokes Aster
- *Aster amellus*, European Michaelmas Daisy or Italian Aster
- *Callistephus chinensis*, China Aster, These are the annual asters and are propagated from seed and are found in most seed catalogs

Asters are an easy to grow perennial that grows well in average soils, but needs full sun. Asters come in blues, purples and a variety of pinks. All Asters are yellow in the center of the flower. Taller asters may be cut back one third in late June for a more bushy plant and with a slightly delayed bloom time. This may be used to extend the bloom period of a grouping of asters.



Asters are easily grown from division. Aster plants do best if divided every two to three years. Simply dig out half to two thirds of the plants, leaving the remainder in place. Then separate the portion you dug out into two sections and plant in another location or give them to a friend.

Asters have long been considered an enchanted flower. In ancient times, it was thought that the perfume from their burning leaves could drive away evil serpents. Today, they symbolize love and patience. They are also known as starworts, Michaelmas daisies or Frost flowers.

Some asters available from **The Perennial Plant Peddler** include:

*Aster novae-angliae* 'Purple Dome', New England Aster. Ann especially likes it because the flowers are larger.

*Stokesia larvia* or Stokes Aster. It is a great summer bloomer for those who can't wait for the asters to bloom in the fall.

*Symphyotrichum ericoides* Heath Aster 'Snow Flurry'. Ann says it makes a great white blanket in the fall

Other asters available from **Bluestone Perennials** include: *Aster dumosus* (*Symphyotrichum cordifolius*), Aster Wood's Blue, *Aster laevis*, Smooth Aster, *Aster Frikartii*, cross between Michaelmas Daisy and *Aster thomsonii*, *Aster novi-belgii*, New York Aster, and *Aster oblongifolius*, Aromatic Aster. Ann Brickner's experience with *Aster Frikartii* and *Aster dumosus* suggests that they are not reliably hardy in this area.



**Men's and Women's Garden Club of Findlay, Inc.**

**August Financial Report**

Bill Jones, Treasurer

Balance: January 1, 2011.....\$ 1,950.91  
Income YTD.....\$ 2,565.74  
Expenses YTD.....(\$ 1,058.49)  
Balance: August 31, 2011.....\$ 3,455.16

**Club Officers, 2011**

President	Cathy Grossman	Directors, 3 years	Sharon DeCooman
1 <sup>st</sup> Vice President	John Platt		Larry Schock
2 <sup>nd</sup> Vice President	Anita Lanning	Directors, 2 years	Marilynn Beltz
Secretary	Julie Kroske		John Grossman
Treasurer	Bill Jones	Directors, 1 year	Darlene Brown
			Lester Brown
Past President	Randy Greeno		
BAN Editor	John Platt	National Director	Anita Lanning



National Web Site: [www.tgoa-mgca.org](http://www.tgoa-mgca.org) Regional Web Site: [www.acom.net.cqjr](http://www.acom.net.cqjr)  
Check out the bargains offered to every TGOA/MGCA member:  
Go to the **Members Only** page of the national web site. Password is *lily*  
No internet access? Use your local public library!

