



Garden Club News

Rockport Garden Club, February 2024



Garden Diary Forcing Hyacinth Bulbs

By Patty Hock

Over a decade ago, I purchased two hyacinth glasses at Woodbine Antiques on Main Street owned by the Beachams (Janice was a member of the RGC). I acquired these 'forcing' vases for their color not because I had any knowledge on how to coax bulbs into bloom in the winter. Apparently, this was quite the rage during Victorian times. Little did I know that this simple purchase would bring me such pleasure during the winter months when getting out to play in the dirt is impossible.

If you create artificial conditions, it is possible to make a plant flower at a time other than its naturally occurring season. Just about any bulb can be forced in pots of soil. I prefer using water and a forcing jar because the sunshine pouring through the colored glass makes me happy on a gray winter day.



Hyacinths blooming in their glass vases.

Bulbs purchased in the fall need to be chilled for about 12 weeks to mimic winter conditions. Then, place them in a brown paper bag in the refrigerator away from fruit that gives off ethylene gas which can damage the bulb.

When the roots fill the glasses and there's an inch or two of top growth, bring the glass out into the light but still cool temperatures (60 degrees). Slowly increase the light but avoid direct sunlight. Turn the jars to keep the stem growing upright. If the bloom is stunted, it means it didn't get enough rooting time below 48 degrees. The cold is necessary for gibberellic acid to develop, which allows the stalk to lengthen. The acid is mother nature's way of keeping bulbs from sending up stalks during winter thaws.



Hyacinths just starting to sprout. Seen here in front of paperwhites.

Some garden catalogs offer pre chilled bulbs which allows you to avoid the chilling in the refrigerator.

Some of my favorite cultivars to force are *Hyacinthus orientalis* 'Delft Blue', 'Lady Darby' and 'Gypsy Queen'. Antique forcing jars can be found on eBay and in antique shops. New jars are available in garden centers.

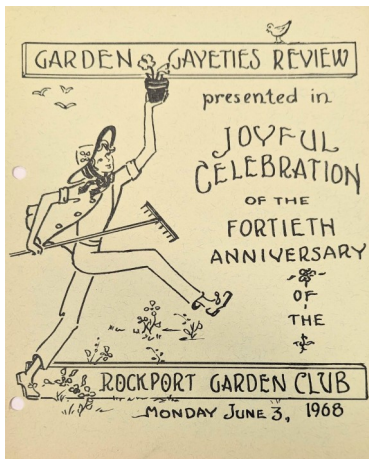




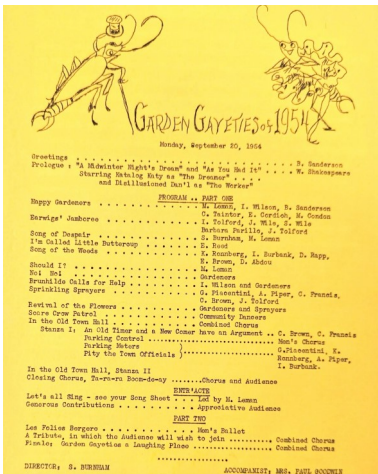
History Committee Update

By Caryl Johnson

The History Committee has been diligently working to prepare for the club's 100th anniversary in 2028. The committee recently uncovered information to share about the Garden Gayeties. On the back of a Garden Gayeties program from 1968 it states; "The "Garden Gayeties" was set up purely for frolic in the early fifties under the presidency of Barbara Sanderson, and from the first played to SRO audiences. We had the generous cooperation of the Johnny Jump-Ups, the men's Garden Club. Admission was free as were the punch and cookies, but we did pass the hat, and came up sometimes, with as much as \$75.00, mostly in silver..." The music for these reviews were well known tunes and the lyrics were written by Garden Club members.



The October 5, 1953 Annual Meeting minutes



states; "Mrs. Robert W. Sanderson, the President, called the meeting to order directly after the luncheon. In a brief and gracious speech she thanked Miss Lucy Piper for the lovely flower arrangements

at the speaker's table, and thanked the Chairmen of the Flower Show/The Garden Gaities/and the Garden Club market for the success of those programs. The Johnny-Jump-Ups had voted to give their share of the Garden Gaities proceeds towards kitchen improvements at the Community House and on a motion by Mrs. Walter Whilton, it was voted to give the Club's share of the proceeds to the same project."

Many more captivating stories from our history to come.



Rain Barrel Program

By Lisa Simms

The Rockport Department of Public Works, in conjunction with the Rockport Garden Club is offering discounted Rain Barrel again this year. Order your rain barrel through The Great American Rain Barrel Company and pick it up on Saturday, April 13th at the upper parking lot of the transfer Station.



To order go to <https://www.greatamericanrainbarrel.com/community/>

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