Language of Flowers
By Sarah Denkler

There are as many as 6800 spoken languages on earth. One that may not be recognized on the list is the language of flowers.

Flowers have been symbols in many cultures throughout history. In the 1600’s the practice of using flowers as a language began in Constantinople. This moved to England and then France where it became popular in the 1700’s. This is one reason why so many flowers are present in Victorian art. The site and even smell of a particular flower sent a message to those who could speak the language.

This language has been used to convey feelings or send specific messages. Because this language is unknown to many, it may not be apparent to all who see the exchange what the message is.

If a flower that is offered is ‘reversed’ its direct meaning is likewise reversed so that the flower now means the opposite. Touching the flower received to the lips or passing it in the right hand signifies “Yes” while pinching off a petal and tossing it in the air or passing it with the left hand means “No”.

Dictionaries were developed to teach the subtleties of the language as well as the meaning of each flower. What follows is a list of some of the flowers with their specific meaning. The size of a flower, its color or how it is grouped in an arrangement can change the meaning.

Amaryllis - Pride, Pastoral Poetry
Bachelor Button - Single Blessedness
Begonia - Beware
Bluebell - Humility
Bouquet of Withered Flowers - Rejected Love
Calla Lily - Beauty
Carnation - (Pink) I’ll Never Forget You, (Red) My Heart Aches For You, (Purple) Capriciousness, (Solid Color) - Yes, (Striped) - No, Refusal, (White) Innocence, Pure Love, or (Yellow) - You Have Disappointed Me, Rejection
Chrysanthemum - (Red) I Love You, (White) Truth or (Yellow) Slighted Love
Coreopsis - Always Cheerful
Crocus - Cheerfulness
Cyclamen - Resignation and Goodbye

February 2012

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**Language of Flowers**

By Sarah Denkler

- **Daffodil** - Unequalled Love, You're the Only One
- **Daisy** - Innocence, Loyal Love, I'll Never Tell, Purity
- **Dandelion** - Faithfulness, Happiness
- **Forget-Me-Not** - True Love, Memories
- **Forsythia** - Anticipation
- **Gardenia** - You're Lovely, Secret Love
- **Garlic** - Courage, Strength
- **Geranium** - Stupidity, Folly
- **Gloxinia** - Love at First Sight
- **Holly** - Defense, Domestic Happiness
- **Ivy** - Wedded Love, Fidelity, Friendship, Affection
- **Lily** - (Orange) Hatred, (White) Purity or (Yellow) I'm Walking on Air
- **Tiger Lily** - Wealth, Pride
- **Magnolia** - Nobility
- **Marigold** - Cruelty, Grief, Jealousy
- **Myrtle** - Love, Hebrew Emblem of Marriage
- **Nasturtium** - Conquest, Victory in Battle
- **Palm Leaves** - Victory and Success
- **Peony** - Shame, Happy Life, Happy Marriage
- **Snapdragon** - Deception, Gracious Lady
- **Tulip** - (General) Perfect Lover, (Red) Believe Me, Declaration of Love, (Variegated) - Beautiful Eyes or (Yellow) -There's Sunshine in Your Smile
- **Zinnia** - (Magenta) Lasting Affection, (Mixed) In Memory (Scarlet) Constancy, (White) Goodness or (Yellow) - Daily Remembrance

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**Garden Trivia - The American Lawn**

By Donna Aufdenberg

- Close-cut lawns originated in Europe in the early 1800s as a sign of wealth. Rich European landowners kept hired staff to maintain them.
- The practice of having a lawn made its way across the Atlantic to the United States in the later 1800's.
- Most “common” Americans had yards comprised of dirt, weeds and flower beds up until the mid 1900s.
- Lawn became the rate for most Americans in the 1950s when the post World War II American dream was to own a house with a picket fence and green lawn in the suburbs.
- Today, Americans spend $30 billion in the lawn care industry which includes lawn care services, golf courses, sports fields, play areas as well as items to care for our own yards.
- The well kept lawn is what most Americans dream!
February Gardening Calendar
By Donna Aufdenberg

Outdoor flowering plants and Ornamentals
- Take geranium cuttings now. Keep the foliage dry to avoid leaf and stem diseases.
- Seeds of slow-growing annuals like ageratum, verbena, petunias, geraniums, coleus, impatiens and salvia may be started indoors now.
- Dormant sprays can be applied to ornamental trees and shrubs now. Do this on a mild day while temperatures are above freezing.

Indoor Plants
- To extend the life of Valentine flowers, recut the stems underwater with a sharp knife. Remove any stem foliage that would be underwater. Use a flower preservative.
- Repot any root-bound plants before spring arrives and vigorous growth starts. Move plant up no bigger than 1” larger than the present container.
- Late February is a good time to air-layer house plants such as dieffenbachia, rubber tree, and dracaena or corn plant.
- Check all five growing factors if your house plants are not growing well. Light, temperature, nutrients, moisture, and humidity must be favorable to provide good growth.

Vegetable Gardening
- Before working an area in the garden for early spring planting, check the soil. It should be dry enough to crumble in your hand before you work it.
- Season extending devices such as cold frames, hot beds, cloches and floating row covers will allow for an early start to the growing season.
- Check any vegetables you have in storage. Use or dispose of any that show signs of shriveling or rotting.

Fruits and Nuts
- Begin pruning fruit trees. Start with apples and pears first. Peaches and nectarines should be pruned just before they bloom.
- If you want to raise fruit in your garden, try grapes, raspberries or strawberries. It is much less difficult to succeed with them than with tree fruits, and you will get much faster results.
- Grapevine prunings can be made into attractive wreaths. Decorate them with cut-out hearts, dried flowers, or bird nests, or shape them into a heart over a wire frame for use as Valentine gifts.
- Fertilize fruit trees as soon as possible after the ground thaws, but before blossoming begins.

Spring Planting Dates
It’s almost time to plant...Let’s get Ready!

Late February
- Lettuce
- Spinach
- Mustard

Mid March
- Beets
- Broccoli
- Cabbage
- Carrots
- Cauliflower
- Chinese Cabbage
- Kohlrabi
- Kale
- Onion
- Parsnips
- Peas
- Potato
- Radish
- Swiss Chard
- Turnip
Native Plants - Fragrant Sumac  
By Sarah Denkler

Fragrant Sumac (*Rhus aromatic*) is often overlooked as a good plant for the yard. It is often grown as a tall ground cover due to its horizontally spreading habit that then turns up at the tip. With a height between two and six feet it could also be used as a loose, deciduous hedge or wind break. It has a light green leaf that becomes burgundy in fall. The flowers appear before the leaves and the fruit forms in red clusters on female plants in August and September. Both provide visual interest in the garden. This plant grows quickly in full sun and can be used on low maintenance slopes. It is resistant to drought, rocky and clay soils. The cultivar ‘Gro-Low’ has a compact height of two feet. This cultivar works well growing under a shade tree.

![Picture courtesy of www.missouriplants.com](image)

Pest of the Month: Crabgrass  
By Sarah Denkler

In June many will ask, “How do I get rid of Crabgrass?” If this sounds familiar then start thinking about control strategies now.

Chemically, pre-emergent is a control strategy that must be put on the ground in March in order to control annual spring and summer weeds. The calendar date changes each year based on weather so a good way to gauge it is to make sure the chemical is down before the forsythia blooms. The chemical must be watered into the soil if it is to work properly. This can be done by rain or by irrigating the application area. A second application can be applied by June to extend the length of time control is possible.

Most pre-emergent that is available will picture crabgrass on the front or go by the name crabgrass preventer or crabgrass control.

The best defense against any weed is a dense stand of turf. Manage turf properly by mowing no more than 1/3 of the height at one time. Maintain the tallest possible cut on the lawn. For bluegrass this could be 3 inches high but for zoysia it may only be 2 inches. Fertilize cool season turf in spring and fall and warm season turf each month from late spring though August. If low rainfall occurs choose either to irrigate at 1 inch per week or to allow dead spots to occur in the yard and repair them as soon as rain begins again. If turf is not dense, reseeding or new sod may be necessary in either spring, for warm season or fall for cool season turf.
A Garden Column by Sue Pfoertner.

Q: I have some leftover flower and vegetable seeds. Are the seeds still good?

A: Seeds do not remain viable (capable of germinating) indefinitely. Most flower and vegetable seeds remain viable for at least 1-3 years after ripening on a plant. Stored seeds will retain their ability to germinate for different lengths of time depending upon storage conditions and the type (species) of seed.

A seed’s survival is affected by storage conditions. Ideal storage conditions for seeds are dark, cool and dry. Laminated foil seed packets ensure dry storage. Paper seed packets should be stored in tightly sealed containers (screw-top jars or metal canisters) in the refrigerator. If your leftover seeds were stored outdoors in a metal shed or garage, exposure to direct sun or high heat and humidity would kill the seeds.

Natural seed longevity varies greatly between species. Some seeds (onions, parsley, parsnip and salvia) are naturally short lived. These seeds should be bought fresh each year to ensure a good crop. On the other hand, lettuce, spinach, radish, brassica and cucumber seeds can still germinate after 5 years with favorable storage conditions.

If the seed is more than one year past the “packed for” date stamped on the seed packet, you can do a germination test to check seed viability prior to sowing seed in your garden.

Here’s how to do a wet towel germination test—Put 10 seeds on a moist (thoroughly damp but not dripping) paper towel. Roll up the towel; then put it in a plastic sandwich bag. Be sure to label the bag with the date and identity of the seed. Seal the bag and keep at room temperature (70 to 75 F) out of direct sunlight and drafts. Keep the seeds moist; do not allow them to dry out. Remove and count the seeds as they germinate. Make a final count at the end of 2 or 3 weeks. 8-10 seeds: good to excellent germination, sow seed as usual. If 6 or 7 seeds germinate, this indicates poor germination. Seeds can be used, but sow thicker than usual. If 5 seeds or less germinate, throw out the remaining seed and buy new seeds.

Do you have a gardening question for a future column?? Please email your gardening questions to: asksemomg@gmail.com.

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Flowers For the Early Gardener

Here are some flowers that tolerate frost. These can be planted in the month of March or earlier if weather is mild. Seed can be sown as soon as the soil can be worked or transplants can be put out.

- Alyssum
- Poppy
- Calendula
- Candytuft
- Snap Dragon
- Phlox
- Pinks
- Viola
- Sweet Pea
- Pansy
Lichens
by Katie Kammler

Lichens can be found growing on trees, shrubs, stumps, fence posts, rocks, and soil. These flaky moss-like organisms get blamed for a lot of problems, including killing trees and shrubs but they actually do not cause any harm. Lichens do not have anything to do with poor top growth or death of shrubs or trees. Their appearance is often related to damage from environmental stress or poor management. Exposed limbs on damaged plants just give lichens a place with access to the sun that they need to grow with little competition.

Lichens are actually formed from a symbiotic relationship between a fungus and algae. This combination produces a long-lived organism that can survive in some of the harshest environments in the world. The alga uses photosynthesis to produce food and the fungus supplies the water and essential minerals and produces a structure that protects the alga from extreme environmental conditions. Lichens are a sign of good air quality as they will not grow in areas with air pollutions.

There are three types of lichens: crustose forms, which are flattened against the limb; foliose forms, which produce leaf-like folds above the limb; and fruticose forms, which produce highly branched structures with hair or ginger like projections. They also come in different colors from gray-green to yellow to orange to dark brown. Reproduction occurs when small pieces break off and are spread by wind or water to another area. Sometimes the fungal partner of the lichen will produce spores and a new lichen may appear if the spores land next to a compatible algae. Some spores capture algal cells as they are ejected from the fungal fruiting body so they can start new lichens.

Lichens are not considered a plant pathogen, they just happen to be noticed when a plant is in a decline because the decline has allowed for the conditions to be right for lichens to thrive. There are not any effective control measures available for lichens because they are in a category by themselves as they are neither plant or fungus.

Testing Your Soil
by Donna Aufdenberg

Your garden didn’t do so good last year? Maybe it’s time to take a soil test to find if it is a soil problem. To take the best soil sample from your garden, you don’t just stick a trowel in the ground, throw some dirt into a baggie and take it to be tested. Here are some tips that will help you get the most from your soil test.

1. Use a clean spade and a clean pail.
2. Push the spade deep into the ground and throw out a spade full of soil.
3. Cut a 1-inch slice of soil from the back of the hole with the spade. The slice should go about 7-12 inches deep and be fairly wide and thick. Put the slice into the pail.
4. Repeat the procedure five or six times in different parts of your lawn or garden.
5. Mix the slices thoroughly in the pail.

Take about one pint of soil to your local University of Missouri Extension office. For a small fee, usually around $14 (varies from county to county) they will analyze the soil and give fertilizer recommendations.
Recently I received a 2012 Missouri Tree Survey, from the Arbor Day Foundation. If you took the survey, and like me grew up in a time before computers, play stations, and iPhones, then you answered ‘YES’ to the first four questions about trees…

Have you ever built a tree house?
Have you ever climbed a tree?
Have you ever played on a tree swing?
Have you ever relaxed in the shade of a tree?

Sadly if I were to ask some of my younger cousins these questions, they’d look at me like I was from the ice age.

We all have childhood memories of a tree or two. Remember the tree your kitten climbed up and refused to come down? Ever heard your grandmother say ‘go and pick out your switch’ as part of your punishment? You never forget the tree where your first pet is buried. The time you climbed up that tree, fell down from that tree, and broke your arm? I’ll always remember my mom yelling at, and chasing off the electric guys for cutting the top out of that two-hundred plus year old maple tree in the front yard.

I think the most popular tree for me, when I was growing up was the Catalpa Tree—also know as the Indian Bean Tree, Cigar Tree, or the Catawba Worm Tree. A fast growing tree made up of bright green large heart shaped leaves, that makes it a great shade tree. The wood from the Catalpa tree is widely used as fence post, due to it’s rot resistance. In June you can find the Catalpa tree fully covered in showy fragrant white flowers, with orange and purple spots or strips. After the flowers have dropped, covering the ground like a summer snow fall, the fruit comes. Non-edible fruit, even though it looks like a very long green bean hanging from the limbs. As the bean matures it houses the seeds, which are nicely layered in between tissue looking material. By fall the beans turn brown, shrivel, and dry up. They hang on to the tree limbs most of the winter months and by spring they are cluttering up your flower beds. As rebellious kids we use to sneak off behind the house and smoke them (where the Cigar Tree name comes from), which left us sick and with a bad taste in our mouths.

The most valuable thing the Catalpa tree provided us, besides shade, was that it’s a host to the Sphinx Moth. Not much more than a plain brown moth, which lays its eggs on the leaves of the Catalpa tree. When the eggs hatch they produce a lime green larva which is called the Catawba worm. It can grow up to 2 inches long, has a black stripe down its back and several small black dots on its sides. It feeds only on the Catalpa leaves. The enemy of the Catawba worm is a small wasp, that lays its eggs on the host Catawba worm’s back, and once the wasp hatches it feeds on the Catawba worm.

Growing up in my family there have been several fueds over harvesting these worms. They are highly sought out by the fishermen of the family. They make one of the best natural fishing baits, and one worm’s tough skin can last several cast of the line. But collecting Catawba worms is not for the faint of heart. Someone has to climb the tree to shake the worms down, they have several suction cups that they use to cling to the leave, to your skin and to your clothing. Use caution picking up the Catawba worm, it has a self-defense mechanism, which is throwing up a orangish, brown liquid that is sure to stain and smell your hands up. It was not uncommon to open up the

"To exist as a nation, to prosper as a state, and to live as people, we must have trees."
—Theodore Roosevelt
refrigerator and see a mason jar filled with Catawba worms. The cold seems to slow down their metabolism and keep them fresh till it was time to go to the lake.

Another question ask on the Missouri Tree Survey was; Which ONE of the following would you say is the single most important function of trees?
- Provide Shade
- Provide oxygen
- Being a source of beauty
- Absorbing carbon dioxide
- Filtering water
- Saving energy by cooling our homes and neighborhoods
- Providing habitats for birds and animals

I had to flip the survey over, I was looking for a - ALL OF THE ABOVE answer. How could you pick just one?

I don’t think any of them would've been the wrong answer. With out trees we would not exist.

Let's face it, most of us take trees for granted. Trees are the largest (in total volume- Giant Sequoia- 55,508 cu ft) and longest lived (Great Basin Brisecore Pine-4,844 years old) structures on our planet.

The benefits, and products trees provide us are way too numerous to list. This year let's make a commitment not only to ourselves, but generations to come, and to our planet. So, let's go out there and plant at least one, or several of these perennial woody plants, we call trees.

Cole crop is a term used for cool season vegetables that are all cultivated varieties of the species Brassica oleracea. They prefer temperatures of 60 to 70°F for optimal growth and can withstand light frosts without injury. Broccoli, Brussels sprouts, cabbage, cauliflower, collards, kale, and kohlrabi are all including in the cole crop category.

Cole crops are planted in full sun and well-drained soil with a pH of 6 to 7. They can be grown as a spring or fall crop by setting out transplants. Most cole crops have a shallow root system and require one inch of water per week. A three inch layer of mulch will help conserve moisture and control weeds. Potential problems in cole crops are buttoning, which is where broccoli and cauliflower form heads prematurely due to stressful conditions, and cabbageworms that eat large, irregular holes in the foliage. Cauliflower heads may require blanching to have white heads. Blanching is the process of eliminating light from reaching the head, causing it to stay white. All cole crops are stored in the refrigerator after harvest and can last for several weeks.
# Group News - What’s Happening

## February 2012

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<td>Core Training: 4:30pm Poplar Bluff Ext Center</td>
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<td>Ste. Genevieve MG Meeting, 6:30pm, at the Ste. Genevieve Co. Ext. Center</td>
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### Upcoming Events

- **March**
  - 5 - Parkland MGs 1st Monday at 6:30pm, Farmington Courthouse Annex (3rd Floor)
  - 6 - Poplar Bluff MGs 1st Tuesday at 6:30pm, Butler County Ext. Center
  - 8 - Delta Area MGs 2nd Thursday at 7:00pm, Medical Arts Building, Sikeston, MO
  - 15 - Cape Girardeau County MGs 3rd Thursday at Cape County Ext. Center at 7pm.
  - 26 - Perry County MGs 4th Monday at the Perry County Ext. Center at 6:30pm.

### Missouri Organic Conference


### Contact Information

- If you have a horticultural related event for the calendar call 573-686-8064 to add it.

**The Garden Spade**
Editor's Corner

We welcome and encourage Master Gardener groups and individuals to submit items to the newsletter. We encourage the submission of any news such as upcoming volunteer opportunities, community events related to gardening, warm wishes or congratulations to fellow gardeners. We also encourage Master Gardeners sharing experiences and writing articles on timely topics.

All entries into the group news sections must be received by 4:30 on the 15th of each month for the following months news.

Email News to: kammlerk@missouri.edu, denklers@missouri.edu, or aufdenbergd@missouri.edu

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