

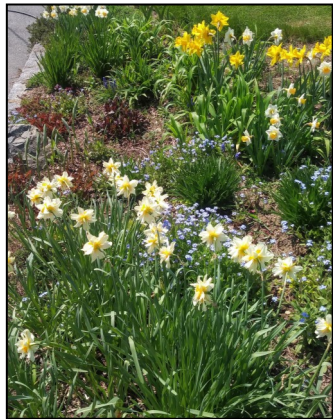
# Out in the Garden

Rockport Garden Club, April 2021



## The Garden Diary: Musings from a Lazy Gardener

There are definitely two types of gardeners — serious ones and lazy ones. When I am being honest I see myself near the bottom of the lazy group. As a lazy gardener my mission is to create a garden with my favorite flowers, herbs and vegetables with minimal effort. The formula that seems to be working for me is a combination of seeds, bulbs, tubers or other hardy perennials and ground cover.



To start a new flower bed I first select some perennials for structure then add in bulbs or tubers, and end with sprinkling some seeds, keeping in mind colors, height and flowering season. Since my goal is to do as little as possible I often let the bed take care of itself the first season. If the

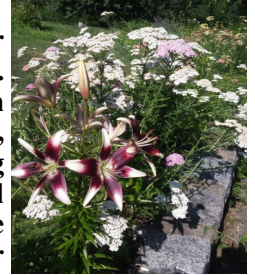
bulbs or perennials don't look happy or were taller or shorter than indicated I just move them around in the fall. If the seeds don't work, well, I just try a different variety. My favorite are hardy bulbs and perennials that come back stronger each year and self seeding annuals. For early spring I have a bed full of daffodils, camassia, grape hyacinths surrounded by self seeding periwinkle blue forget-me-nots. I have also learnt that one can 'layer' the seeds just like one can layer bulbs and tubers. So as the daffodils begin to fade, bright orange California poppies begin to bloom from seeds I sprinkled as the daffodil shoots were emerging. Both the California



poppy and forget-me-nots form a beautiful ground cover keeping the weeds at bay. A second round of California poppies can also be enjoyed by scattering seeds again to keep the perennial salvia and catmint

company. Once I figure out the combinations that will keep color spring to fall — I am done and all I do is water, pull a few weeds every now and then and replenish seeds as needed.

Another recommendation for the lazy gardener is Asiatic lilies. These are majestic, hardy with endless varieties of color and form, long flowering periods ranging from spring to fall. Combined with yarrow the effect is that the yarrow provides the ground cover in addition to leaves and blooms that are in sharp contrast of texture, height and size to Asiatic lilies. Both are low maintenance except for deadheading once in a while. I usually sprinkle zinnia seeds and bachelor buttons to come up when the lilies are done. The yarrow blooms well into fall.



My most recent discovery is thistle — my neighbor donated the echinops globe thistle a couple of years ago to my garden. These seem to be self seeding and attracting a great number of bumble bees. They begin to flower early summer right into fall, losing



some of the blue glow late in the season, but still elegant. I sprinkled some white nicotiana seeds among the thistle along with black eyed susans for a nice color and texture contrast... another flower bed requiring little to no care other than occasional watering and weeding.

A word about ground cover: other than flowering ground cover like alyssum or creeping geranium, variegated oregano or creeping thyme or chamomile are my favorites to plug the gaps among the flowers — just sprinkle some seed and wait....!!

—Submitted by Shubhra Ramchandani

Oh, give us pleasure in the flowers today;.....

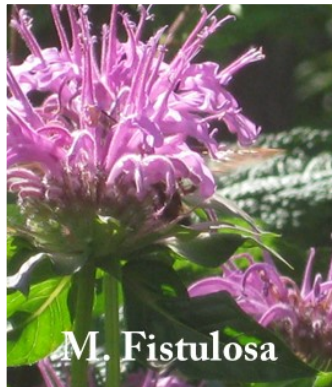
Oh, give us pleasure in the orchard white,  
Like nothing else by day, like ghosts by night;  
And make us happy in the happy bees,  
The swarm dilating round the perfect trees.  
And make us happy in the darting bird  
That suddenly above the bees is heard .....

~Robert Frost A Prayer in Spring



## The Garden Cart: Bee Balm

Bee Balm (*Monarda*) is one of the most reliable flowers in my native garden. Deemed an old-fashioned favorite, it's a showy flower that resembles a burst of fireworks. As a member of the robust and fragrant mint family, there are more than 50 different hybrid cultivar cousins that are available in almost every nursery. Blooms begin in July and colors range from bright red to lilac to shades of pink and white. *Monarda fistulosa* is our native bee balm along with *Monarda punctata*. You can see by the photos that the form of the two are very different.



Bee Balm attracts pollinators galore. My plants are covered with bees, butterflies and are visited frequently by hummingbirds. They're very easy to grow and the clumps multiply freely. It's great plant to quickly fill a large empty spot in your garden. Mildew can be a problem that's solved by watering at the base of the plant...when you water. Last year, my established clumps were watered only when the temperature soared above 90°.

*Monarda* offers very many wonderful properties including fragrance, ease of growing, willingness to reliably naturalize and attracting all manner of beneficial insects and pollinators.

### Attributes:

Height: 2-5 feet  
Spread: 3 feet  
Hardiness: 4a-9b  
Color: White, Pink, Purple, Red  
Exposure: Full Sun  
Soil Moisture: Average  
Maintenance: Low  
Ecoregion: Eastern US  
Bloom: Late Spring/Summer  
Tolerance: Drought  
Watch for: Mildew



—Lisa Simms

# Tips 'n Tricks

## How to Sow Tiny Seeds

This wacky trick will help you sow itty-bitty seeds in a flat or pot. Wrap a piece of cardboard around an electric toothbrush. A crease in the cardboard makes a nice channel. Secure with a rubber band. Fill the channel with seeds and turn it on.



The toothbrush vibrates just enough to allow you to direct your seeds to the right place and to stem the flow just enough to add a few at a time. You can be fairly precise with this method and your seedlings can be spaced perfectly for germination. This one works!

Share your expertise by sending your brilliant ideas to:  
[communications@rockportgardenclub.org](mailto:communications@rockportgardenclub.org)

## Garden Calendar:

### ZOOM Meeting

Monday, April 5<sup>th</sup>

12:30: Mingle

1:00: Speaker

C. L. Fornari

*“Hydrangea Happiness”*

[ZOOM Meeting Link](#)