



Dakota Gardeners AKA "Claybusters"



Officers for 2009

President-Pam Farrell
Vice-President-Sharon Moline
Secretary-Mary Fabry
Treasurer-Sande Speck
Members-at-Large-MaryBittner
 Joan Miller
 Roxanne Beseman



Happy New Year 2009!!
We begin again. Many interesting programs are coming your way in 2009. Join us each month as we learn more about gardening and have fun in this wonderful club. It's your club and if you have a special interest, just let the board know and we will find a speaker!

Planning and Design

Compared to designers in other fields, gardeners have a trickier time succeeding on a visual level, since our building blocks are alive, with schedules and needs that might not fit a particular decorating scheme. —*Adam Levine 1999*

That says it all! Don't you agree the challenge is in the planning? Now is the time to make your plans. What to change, what to create, and what to give up on. Winter is the time to use our brains and in the spring our brawn will prevail.

Winter

Now that the Holidays are over we can plan ahead for the next growing season. That means—evaluate. Yes, we need to think about what was successful and what didn't work well in our gardens last year. I think about the annuals that I ordered through the club and remember my favorites. I can recommend dreamland zinnias myself. They are brilliant in color, almost totally free of powdery mildew, and bloom from June through September. They were the "show-stoppers" in my garden. They need full sun and love the heat. I fertilized with a slow release granular fertilizer when I planted them and then gave them water soluble fertilizer every couple of weeks in the summer. They also need very little deadheading. Give them a try and I think you will find them one of your favorites also.

We Need You!!

The club needs a new star! We need a chair or co-chair for the Perennial Plant Sale this spring. All the groundwork is done. There will be lots of help in place, the site is all set, and sign-up sheets will be all ready. We just need a captain at the lead! Please let Pam Farrell know you will help—952-454-8385



"Nature has undoubtedly mastered the art of winter gardening and even the most experienced gardener can learn from the unrestrained beauty around them." - Vincent A. Simeone

"There are two seasonal diversions that can ease the bite of any winter. One is the January thaw. The other is the seed catalogues."

- Hal Borland



Dakota Gardeners Holiday Party

Another fun party with the club! We enjoyed an evening of great companionship, wonderful food, and delightful entertainment. We must thank Roxanne Beseman, Joan Miller, Pam Farrell, Bev Nordley, Anna Long, Mary Bittner, Sande Speck, Mary Fabry, Konnie Thompson & Donna McCarthy. As a club we also need to acknowledge those that donated door prizes. Let's give the businesses our patronage and let the members that donated items know that we really appreciate their generosity!

All Season Wild Bird Store
Cal's Market and Garden Center
Cardinal Corner
Gertens
Glassing's Floral
Kathy Stevens
Konnie Thompson
Lilydale Nursery
Bev Nordley
Pahl's Market
Pam Farrell
Tangletown Gardens
Valley Girl Espresso Bar,
Eatery, Boutique

*Just a few pictures to
remember some
Garden Club Fun!*



Our Happy Winner!

*We keep
growing
together...*

Abutilon Hybridum--Flowering Maple

Although the flowering maple (*Abutilon hybridum*) may be grown outdoors in warmer regions (Hardiness Zone 8), it is most often grown as a house plant. The flowering maple is not really a maple at all. That common name is derived from their maple-shaped leaves. The Abutilon is also commonly known as a Chinese bellflower or a Chinese lantern. The blooming season for most Abutilons is from April through June, but they will often flower periodically through the winter as well. The flowers differ with each variety, but generally resemble a cross between a Hibiscus and a Hollyhock, and are available in many colors ranging from white to reds, yellow, orange or shades of blue. The foliage is usually a pale green, but there are variegated forms with white or yellow mottling.

Abutilon as a house plant



Flowering Maples need a considerable amount of room in which to grow. If left unrestrained, they may grow to ten feet in height and spread, so it is important to not provide too large of a planter, nor to feed this plant too well. When the plant has reached a suitable size, the growth can be controlled somewhat by pinching, pruning and keeping it slightly root bound. Flowering maples should be pruned to the desired shape in early spring or late fall. They can be trained into a hanging plant growth pattern by pinching back *each* stem tip every time it grows out two or three inches. To create a more vertical tree like structure, allow only one main stem to remain, and remove all side shoots from it until it reaches the desired height. Then pinch the main tip to force lateral bushiness at the top of the plant. In addition to needing filtered sun, these plants grow best when kept at about 70 degrees F. during the day and 60-65 degrees F. at night. They require a well draining but evenly moist soil. The plant will benefit from being kept outdoors in filtered sun during the summer months, but must be returned indoors before frost. (*Be sure to check carefully for insects, when you bring it back in*) During the winter, if growth has slowed, the soil should be allowed to dry out between watering but never allowed to remain dry for too long. Humidity is not too great of a concern except during the winter months when it is helpful to give your plant an occasional misting. Feed your plant monthly when it is showing signs of growth, alternating between an all purpose (20-20-20) and a bloom type (15-30-15) liquid fertilizer applied at half the strength of the manufacturer's directions. Abutilons tend to drop their lower leaves if they are underfed, so you will need to 'live and learn' to find the right frequency of feeding. Flowering maples should be repotted in the spring if it becomes necessary, but only into a slightly larger pot unless you want to drastically increase the size of your plant. Abutilons can be grown from seeds which will germinate in 21 days when kept at 75 degrees. Seeds started indoors in early spring should be ready to produce their first flowers by the following winter. Additional plants can also be cloned by softwood cuttings taken at any time of the year. Cuttings will produce roots much sooner if bottom heat is available.

The Perennial Plant of the Year for 2009 has just been announced and it's **Hakonechloa macra 'Aureola'**

This wonderful grass is hardy in zone 4.



Full sun to part shade. The more sun you give this plant, the more "washed-out" the leaves will be. So for maximum gold color, grow it in the part shade. This one likes a rich, loamy soil with no waterlogging but no drought either. Propagation is by division and is easy in the spring. Just whack off a bit with a shovel. The plant habit is that of a soft draping effect and in a partly shady bed it can look like golden waves.

A very desirable plant so give it a try.

Dakota Gardeners

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A NOTE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Welcome gardeners to 2009

I look forward to serving as your president in 2009. Thanks to Roxanne Beseman, and the board: Sharon Moline, Sande Speck, Mary Bittner, Mary Fabry, Barb Horter, Roxanne Splittstozer, as well as all the members that donated their time on committees, tours, plant sales, membership and all the other jobs necessary to .keep this fine garden club active and growing. As we move ahead in a new year we have much to look forward to: engaging speakers, inspiring tours, our new on line site and a whole year of support and friendship as members of Dakota Garners.

As we receive our seed catalogs and start to dream of an even bigger and better garden for next year, I hope you're getting some kind of indoor gardening "fix" over the winter. Amaryllis or other forced bulbs keep us believing that spring blossoms really will arrive. And vegetable gardeners don't forget that by growing sprouts we can still harvest fresh greens for our table. Let's keep "growing" together.

Pam Farrell