

Fall Garden Kalendar 2019

THIS FALL GARDEN KALENDAR is composed of edited excerpts from my garden journal entries composed in October-December of 2018, representing about 25% of the total journal. The chosen entries primarily focus on the Coe Alumni House Garden, with occasional commentary on my vegetable garden (near Wickiup Hill Outdoor Learning Center), my gardens at home (including large hosta beds that have replaced my front yard's lawn), and my garden and landscaping projects at Buffalo United Methodist Church. The italicized quotations sprinkled through the Kalendar are from Eleanor Perényi's *Green Thoughts: A Writer in the Garden* (Vintage Books, 1981), a collection of essays that provided me many hours of pleasurable reading throughout the year. Because of the excessive length of this fall Kalendar, the complete text can be read as a pdf document by clicking on this link to [Fall Garden Kalendar 2019](#).

~Bob

- *A border is among other things a calendar of the seasons, and I don't look for columbines in August or chrysanthemums in July.* ~Eleanor Perényi

4 October 2018 (Thursday). It feels appropriate that I begin the month of October with a new garden journal, one with front and back covers of a Monet painting featuring the Japanese bridge in his garden at Giverny. Most of my garden journal observations are recorded in cast-off notebooks. This journal feels too elegant for mundane recordings on my soil affairs. But so be it.

This morning at Coe, after miscellaneous non-garden tasks, I unloaded the mulch in the pickup and dedicated my energies to serious weeding at the east end of the "D" bed and spreading "fresh" mulch that had been covering a lawn section. In the afternoon I pulled back a large swath of weed control fabric over a lawn section and collected earthworms, transporting them to one of the compost bins. Also killed 30+ grubs. Dug up a lot of determined violets, unfazed after spending three months covered by the weed-control fabric and mulch. I then fertilized the lawn section with Milorganite, spread the sunshine grass seed mix, and covered the exposed seed with a roll of compressed straw matting. I didn't water because the soil is already wet, and it's supposed to rain tonight. Forecast is for rain to continue off and on for the next week. [Full text available in [Fall Garden Kalendar 2019 pdf](#).]

10 Oct. Just returned from a four-day trip to western Iowa. The rain gauge at Coe recorded 3 ½" of rain while we were gone; I'm guessing it rained every day. There is standing water in the rain garden and many puddles on the gravel walkways. The newly planted grass had sprouted. The NW lawn section is quite green--exciting to see--but the ground is very wet, in places like a wetland, and we need a few days of dry weather. This morning we did have a brief shower, but rest of the day was dry and there's no rain in tomorrow's forecast. It's going to be colder, however; temperature dipping into the mid 30s.

Today I concentrated on the "C" bed. Dug up and put in compost bin a lot of spurge that had become intermingled with the daylilies. Several daylilies I had to dig up and separate from the spurge, using my root knife. I was surprised by the thickness and depth of the spurge root systems--like small shrubs. A few spurge I replanted since they do produce those lovely, yellowish-green flower-like bracts in the spring. I just read on-line a gardener's list of 12 flowers one should never plant, and spurge was on the list--as was wisteria, though I think the problem is with the Asian wisteria in southern states and not the North

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American native planted under the pergola. I also dug up a lot of Husker Red penstemon, transplanting them so they might expand the size of three established Husker Red groups. While the "D" bed still looks disheveled, its basic structure is much cleaner and will look better once I cover the disturbed areas with fresh mulch—a task on tomorrow's schedule after I return from hanging out with my buddy T [a grandson] in Iowa City.

11 Oct. At 4:30 pm MVM and I drove out to Wickiup. Possibility of frost and a real freeze tonight so we wanted to harvest most of the above ground crops. Filled a bag with eggplants and two bags of peppers—leaving dozens still unpicked. Brought home four watermelon, four acorn squash, six butternut squash, and a final harvest of pole beans, three varieties: Seychelles green, runner beans, and Chinese long noodle beans. That row of pole beans has been fantastically productive this summer, in contrast to the two rows of bush beans devastated by rabbits. We did have a few duds this summer: no parsnips (zero germination) and almost no carrots or beets (good germination but they were planted late and seedlings unable to survive the long stretch of hot/dry weather in late May and early June). On the other hand a banner year for potatoes (Yukon Gold and Kennebec), onions, green beans, watermelon, sweet peppers, eggplants, radishes. The tomatoes, zucchini, and cukes were productive but not comparable to the 2017 crops.

12 Oct. The word for today: MULCH. Started this morning by cleaning up beds in front of the house, focusing on areas between our place and the K's. Removed ground ivy, pin oak seedlings, silver maple seedlings, violets, a few dandelions, and some grass (spreading rhizome variety). Also cleaned up the big hosta beds under the pin oak—though for that project, I really need to lift up the stepping stones, lay out the mulch, and re-position the stones. Regrettably, several stones are cracked, and I currently lack the ambition to do that project justice.

After lunch I unloaded the mulch-filled pickup, and by 3:00 pm I had all of the east-side front beds thoroughly mulched and ready for winter. The larger beds to the north and west could still use some attention, and I need to plant those two dwarf mugo pines that I bought over a year ago. They are still in their Home Depot pots, patiently waiting.

At Coe, mulch remained my obsession, a process that began by lifting off the mulch from the SW lawn section. All the mulch and weed-control fabric from that section are now removed, and the conclusion of the re-seeding for this section is in sight. The grass seed sown last week continues to germinate. The NW section has a good spread of green with just a few bare spots. Although it's getting late, if the weather cooperates I'll try to sow some grass seed tomorrow. Temps are supposed to be abnormally low for next 3-4 days, but perhaps we will still have a week of dry Indian summer. I've got plenty of seed, and it will look better if the soil is covered with the straw matting.

16 Oct. It was a beautiful day for working in the garden. Most of my time was spent on the lawn, including some repairs on gravel walkway under the pergola (a lot of gravel had washed out onto the sidewalk). Some major advances today.

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#1: Finished sowing grass seed in the SW lawn section, and most of it is now covered with the straw matting.

#2: Sent to faculty, staff, and students an email on the garden's fall hours and an invitation to submit to the *Garden Quarto*. I immediately received a GQ submission from GH, a pleasant surprise.

#3: With MVM's assistance, we got all of the used weed-suppressant fabric rolled up and ready for storage.

17 Oct. Another lovely fall day: sumptuous sunshine, temperature into the 50s, ideal for mid-fall gardening. All my daylight hours were at Coe, emblematic of how little attention Wickiup has received the last two weeks. I had committed myself to being in the garden today from 8:30 til 3:00 pm, providing free herbs for anyone who came by. I welcomed three visitors, all office staff personnel, and distributed samples of oregano, thyme, tarragon, basil, lemon balm, a few bell peppers, and garlic bulbs (the last two items from the Wickiup garden). As for garden work, the first thing I did was unpack the bulb shipments I'd received from Van Engelen and Colorblends. Bulbs are now laid out in the greenhouse, such an impressive collection I took their photo.

Much of the afternoon was absorbed with cleaning up two areas in the "I" bed, on each side of the Baptisia. Both areas are a mess. The challenge is figuring out what to keep—and of those keepers, which ones need repositioning. One complication derives from the success of the 4' tall Russian Sage that has been blooming since mid summer. It is distinctive looking and quite attractive, but it's planted at the front of the border (a placement influenced by observing how these *Perovskia* are used as border plants in the Chicago Botanical Garden), hangs out over the walkway, and is too tall for its neighbors—such as the stonecrop planted in front of the Baptisia. Although I could move the Russian Sage toward the back, I hesitate this relocation because it has really thrived in its current home—an enthusiasm not evident in the other Russian Sages I've planted the last three years.

Today I did remove a lot of New England asters. I like having the asters in this bed, but I need shorter versions that fit better in the middle of the border without requiring a mid-summer trimming. As for other plants in the area, it appears the two century plants finally succumbed after being eaten by a groundhog in the spring. [I was in error: both century plants reappeared in the spring of 2019; one remained intact through the summer, the other eaten to the ground by some unwanted visitor in July.] I also dug up many giant hyssop with roots stretching under the yews. In that same area are three 'Autumn Minaret' daylilies (late summer bloomers) that I want to keep, but they need more space. I also will try again to plant *Tithonia* around the Baptisia. Though they have been a total failure this year, they worked beautifully in 2015, and I keep thinking we can duplicate that success. [The *Tithonia* failed again in 2019; although several germinated on time, they were slow to develop, never grew very tall, and only began to bloom in late September, shortly before they froze once temperatures hit the low 30s.]

19 Oct. Worked at Coe morning and afternoon. Overcast all day but temp into low 60s, quite comfortable. Some drizzle in the morning, but no measurable accumulation. Most of my attention concentrated on the east end of the "D" bed. A lot of pre-winter transplanting, more than I've ever done at this time of the year. I periodically paced up and down the gravel walkway, ruminating on the space,

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trying to decide what plants to throw out and what deserved a better location. I finally removed most of the New England asters. Split the Pennisetum Fountain Grass into three groups: it had been slow to emerge this spring and had a tell-tale dead area in the center. Behind that newly formed grass triangle, I arranged several coneflowers while relegating to the compost bin a volunteer Joe Pye, several asters, and their goldenrod buddies. Moving west, I dug up four clumps of Maltese Cross at the back of the bed and moved them in front of the taller Joe Pye weed, which can remain in the spot it chose a couple of years ago. I also replanted several clumps of Purple Coneflowers. One plant I left undisturbed was a lupin, the lone survivor from a dozen or so lupins planted two years ago. It has not bloomed, but I'm thinking it may do better once some taller competitors have been removed. [It did re-emerge in 2019, producing a much healthier plant, but I don't think it ever bloomed. The lupin family on the other side of the garden, in the "J" raised bed, has been performing much better—with some attractive flower displays—but they were devastated by the hot July weather, and only one had any green leaves when we reached August. In June I saw some incredible lupins in Scotland, and I'm determined to keep trying to find the right soil and location for these wondrous flowers.]

20 Oct. When I arrived at the Coe garden this morning, I immediately had to repair the straw matting intended to cover recently sown grass seed. The wind was gusty—perhaps 30-35 mph—and corners of the matting had been pulled up and were tearing. I secured the corners with bricks, boards, and several flower pots: looks a bit unprofessional but at least the matting is no longer flopping in the wind. I also watered the matting—which helps glue the material to the underlying soil. As for seed germination, the last area to be sown in the SW lawn section now has some new grass. While I don't know how much will survive the winter, I'm hoping this new grass can generate a root system before the soil freezes hard. As for the NW section, it has had a good germination rate and is beginning to look like a real lawn. Still a few brown areas, but they should fill in okay.

After working with the lawn, I did some cleaning up of the "F" bed, digging up asters and goldenrod that had emerged this summer in front of the Baptisia and the Stoke's Asters. I discovered one of the Stoke's Asters had blossomed, though its blooms had been hidden behind the asters and goldenrod. I should move the Stoke's gang forward so they are no longer in the shadows of the muscular Baptisia. The Rozanne Cranesbill in that bed is still blooming, confirming my intention to purchase several more and create a sequence of these cranesbill along the front of the "D," "F", and "H" borders. [In the spring of 2019, I did purchase four more Rozanne Cranesbill, and in the middle of October they all were alive and producing their attractive blue flowers.]

While visiting Home Depot this afternoon, I discovered they had a lot of small bulbs on sale—half price—so I bought eight boxers, most of which I will plant at home. Might also try a few in the upper portion of the A1 bed. Now that we've had some freezing weather, it's time to do some serious bulb planting—though this year, I hope to do a better job of creating a reasonably accurate map of what I plant where—and to make sure I don't misplace the document (which happened after I did an extensive bulb planting two years ago around the Buffalo church). [I intended to create a comprehensive map of all plants in the Coe garden, but that project never made much progress. Perhaps this coming January I will be more successful.]

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21 Oct. We had frost on the grass this morning, and some plants—such as the hydrangeas—looked quite ill, but most of the hostas are still erect. It's much easier to remove their foliage if the leaves are harvested before they suffer a hard freeze. But my problem at the moment is that I don't have an empty compost bin. I need to empty a compost bin so I have space for the new "compostibles."

22 Oct. Perfect Indian Summer day: temp into the 60s, sunny, no wind, ideal working conditions. At Coe garden both morning and afternoon. First task was repairing the straw matting on the last lawn areas to be sown, securing the matting with more staples. Next task was removing the broken garden hose reel, donating it and the inner hose to a Coe garbage container. I then installed a new steel, stand-up hose holder (no moving parts) and a new nozzle sprayer. Tested the new system by watering down the straw matting. Worked great.

Rest of my day was consumed with composting. Ran the electric shredder for over two hours. It's a slow process, but it's gratifying to see how condensed the leaves and stems are after having gone through the shredder. I used the hibiscus stalks to serve as plungers for encouraging other stuff to move through the cutting blade. Had to stop and clean out the shredder a couple of times, an annoying delay but this electric shredder is much easier to clean out than the old gas machine I've been using the last two years.

As a break from the composting operation, I cleaned up the front of the "H" bed border. This was relatively easy because I knew I wanted to remove all the goldenrod and big asters. I was initially slowed down because I thought several plants in the area were phlox, but I eventually decided to remove everything. The area now looks much cleaner.

Eleanor Perényi on the subject of tools: *All my basic gardening tools (trowel, spade, shovel, rakes, claw for cultivating, secateurs, hoe) were bought more than thirty years ago from the kind of store that used to be a short of hardware heaven. Vast, ill-lighted, manned by laconic staff who wouldn't have dreamed of boasting that they, in fact, could provide just about anything you had in mind—if not on the main floor, somewhere in the cavernous attic, where a friend of mine once ran across an ancient hay wain—this dream-palace stocked hand-cranked ice-cream freezers, pronged ice-shavers, stone crocks, coal scuttles, as well as every imaginable old-fashioned and solidly made garden tool, right up to the black day in the late 1960s when they went out of business and were replaced by a store call Unisex, whose specialty was blue jeans.* Last year I started a Garden Shed essay on my tools; I need to find that draft and try to finish it. I love how gardeners still use tools easily recognizable by gardeners from 400 years ago.

24 Oct. It was cooler than yesterday but still a lovely day, temp into upper 50s, sunshine, perfect for gardening. As has been true most days the past three weeks, both morning and afternoon at Coe. Started planting Tommies in the NE lawn section after peeling back some of the weed fabric. Discovered that 200 crocus bulbs did not cover as much territory as I had hoped, so later in the morning I went back to the Colorblends website and ordered 1,000 more bulbs—which should bring the total to 2,000 Tommies in the two eastern lawn sections. My dream is that these little guys will eventually naturalize the area. As for sowing the grass seed in those two sections, I will wait until December and resort to dormant sowing, trusting the seeds will relish the cold treatment and germinate like crazy in the spring. [And, indeed, that

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is what happened: we had excellent seed germination in the spring, and the turf in the two eastern lawn sections is now thicker than the lawn sections sown in early October.]

25 Oct. At the Coe garden I cleaned up a small corner of the “L” bed, next to the grape hyacinths, and planted ten large *Allium Schubertii* (tumbleweed onion)—a late blooming variety with blooms resembling a Grandfather’s Whiskers. [They did produce marvelous blooms, but a special bonus is their distinctive seed heads that work beautifully in dried flower/seed bouquets.] I got on this planting project because I wanted to vacuum up leaves in the “M” beds, but to do that I needed to empty the big trash can full of mulch destined for the “L” bed—but I didn’t want to spread that mulch before cleaning the “L” bed and planting these bulbs. I still don’t have the mulch re-distributed, but at least the bulbs are planted.

In the afternoon I went to Wickiup, my first trip in a week. Nearly everything above ground was frozen. But we still have a few veggies to harvest: potatoes, sweet potatoes (the survivors not eaten by the voles), a few onions, a couple kohlrabi, two small cabbages, a handful of carrots. But most of my three hours were spent hoeing weeds, pulling up dead tomato vines, removing pole bean vines from bamboo supports, composting dead eggplants. Deer had been in the garden and eaten a bunch of strawberry leaves and some romaine lettuce. I’m not sure where they jumped over the fence. In the spring I plan to install livestock panels several feet inside the outer perimeter fence: the panels will be used for climbing vegetables (e.g., peas, cukes) and supports for larger plants (e.g., tomatoes), but they will also serve as a further challenge for any deer tempted to hurdle the outer 5’ high fence. [In the spring, I did install a dozen 5’ x 8’ livestock panels, and they seemed to work; I had no deer in the garden until October, when they broke through the fence in an area where I had not yet installed any panels.]

27 Oct. Another beautiful October day—the weather I was desperately yearning for back in the hot, humid days of summer. Unfortunately, I didn’t do any real gardening before 3:00. I began the morning by working on the October Garden Shed blog posting based on my Fall 2017 Garden Journal entries. After two hours of typing and editing, I took off for Menards, seeking materials for constructing new compost bins at Buffalo for the fall harvest of oak and maple leaves. Since I didn’t want to spend a lot of money—and I wanted something easy to assemble—I spent a long time in a fog of indecision before settling on 8’ treated lumber posts for the corners and 4’ long cedar boards for the sides. The finished product will be shorter than the bin I constructed at Coe but a similar design. Fortunately at Buffalo we have plenty of space in the NW corner of the property, next to a new fence.

After unloading the materials at Buffalo, I drove to Wickiup and worked there from 3:00 til almost 7—after the sun was down and it was rather dark. Spent a lot of time pulling up tomato vines, finished taking down the pole beans’ bamboo supports, cleaned up the area where I store tomato cages and other equipment. I loaded the pickup with the tomato and squash vines that I did not want in the Wickiup compost piles. Finally, I dug up 3 hills of Kennebec potatoes and filled a plastic bag, 8-12 large potatoes per hill. Also dug up remaining sweet potatoes, although the voles had only left me a few small potatoes. I also dug up the onions that I had planted around the sweet potatoes, hoping they would deter the voles’ appetite. That companion planting experiment was certainly a failure. I’m now thinking my best option is to plant the sweet potatoes in a raised bed, protected by underground wire netting. Make the voles work

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harder to reach their favorite veggie. [In 2019 I planted the sweet potato slips in a steel raised bed, 12" tall. No evidence of any voles, and I had a bumper crop of sweet potatoes.]

29 Oct. All day at Coe. C., my sculptor friend, came by at 9:00 to pick up the wooden sundial—which was coming unglued in several places and beginning to split apart. While we both really like the sundial's basic design, we were undecided on how to construct a more durable version. As we walked around the garden, we discussed several other possible projects. Most of our conversation focused on designing new plant supports to constrain larger plants in the "D" and "K" beds (e.g., Joy Pye, New England asters, ornamental grasses). We settled on a plan for steel supports, about 3' high, that could be arranged in different configurations in front or around the intended plants. These sculptural supports would incorporate the curving lines in the four rectangular supports C. created two years ago.

31 Oct. My folks' wedding anniversary, 76 years ago. Didn't get to Coe until this afternoon. First task was final editing and posting of the October blog post. I then planted another 100 crocus bulbs in the NE lawn section. I decided I had been planting them a bit too deep—just over 4" and I wanted to aim for 3 ½". By some miracle, I found the metal ring for the bulb planter to help secure the right depth for particular bulbs. Still have a lot of bulbs to plant.

1 Nov. Today was my day to hang out with T., which meant no gardening until 3:30. After I arrived at Coe, I sliced and diced food scraps for the red wigglers and noticed that the Red Crown Imperial Fritillary bulbs had begun to sprout, leading me to think they needed planting asap. Based on research at the American Meadows website, I had the impression they can be tricky to grow. One issue is that the bulbs—if facing up—can collect water and rot. Also several sources had noted the bloom rate in the first year can be low. Different websites also revealed a disagreement on the bulbs' winter hardiness (ranging from Zone 3 to Zone 5) and preferred planting depth (6" to 8"). I decided to try them in the NE corner of the "I" bed in a rare space with no other flowers. I dug out a trench 2' long, 1' wide, and about 8" deep--which meant I had to cut through some thick roots from the flowering crab (and perhaps some wandering yew roots). Since the soil in that area is compacted and not organically rich, I mixed in some compost, peat, and vermiculate to improve drainage. I planted the large white bulbs on their sides, covered them with my new soil mix, and inserted three yellow markers in the ground to identify their location. Supposedly they are a good back-of-border flower, reaching 4' tall, but they disappear in the summer, which is okay because that area is surrounded by other flowers. Of course this assumes they actually appear next spring. [They all survived, all produced large orange blossoms, and for several weeks they were one of the garden's star attractions, garnering frequent attention from visitors asking "What are those orange flowers?"] I finished up at Coe by drilling over 100 holes for crocus and planted about 50 before I ran out of daylight.

2 Nov. Lovely October day in November. Spent the morning removing the weed control fabric and all the wood chips from the NE lawn section. Removal of chips also meant raking and picking up by hand the

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chips that had washed out onto the gravel—a tedious task. Gravel walkways around that section still have a lot of chips, but they're no longer as noticeable.

Another job was digging up the dandelions that survived the fabric/mulch suppression. Many had already started greening up with new leaves. Fortunately, since all the grass had been killed, I had free rein in digging out their deep taproots. Several dandelions were like small shrubs, ample evidence of how Culver's repeated applications of Round-Up were killing the dandelion tops but not seriously harming the root system.

My next task was establishing a permanent position for Ringo and Sisyphus, the garden's two large see-through iron spheres. I spread a thick weed suppressant fabric over the ground (about 5' square) and placed tan Belgian pavers around the perimeter. After positioning sphere each inside a square, I covered the surface with wood chips--of which I have an ample supply. I had no trouble positioning Ringo (the south-side sphere), but Sisyphus proved uncooperative. No matter how I turned it, it always look unbalanced. One complication is that I wanted maximum stability so the sphere would not roll over if some youngster tried to climb on it. Eventually I called MVM, my long-time consultant, to come and help decide the best rotation. Within minutes of her arrival, we were done.

3 Nov. Another Coe day but with an unusual twist. When I arrived at the garden about 9, I discovered a black bag lying next to the "E" bed park bench. All the compartments were unzipped, and inside one compartment I could see a cell phone and charger. I took the bag to the Security Office in upper Gage, but the office was locked so I left the bag with a student worker at the information desk, explaining my suspicions this was a stolen bag that had been dumped in the garden.

Later in the morning, as I was planting trout lily bulbs, I saw a man crossing the freshly sown lawn area, walking away from where the bag had been. The guy was wearing disheveled clothes and a hoodie, with the hood pulled over his face (at least the sides of his face could not be seen), and carrying a liter Mountain Dew bottle. When he reached the NW gate, which was locked since this is a Saturday, he climbed over the fence, spent a few seconds looking around a big redbud outside the garden, and then walked away.

Meanwhile it had started to sprinkle and continued as a light drizzle for several hours. During my five hours in the garden, I focused on planting bulbs.

- 25 Trout Lilies. Planted them in groups of five along both sides of the gravel walkway under the pergola. The bulbs are an odd shape, sort of cylinders with roots on one end. I planted them so they were lying at about a 60 degree angle, 3-4 inches from each other, covered with 3-4 inches of soil and mulch. [The Trout Lilies were a disappointment: half did not survive the winter and those that did produced modest, short-lived blooms.]
- 10 Iris Reticulata Eye Catcher. These are small iris from Van Engelen. According to the catalog, they only become 5-7" tall, with white/deep blue/yellow blossoms in early April. I rearranged an area in the middle of the crevice garden, removing clumps of the sedum I brought from home. The sedum loves the crevice garden, but it spreads too insistently and would take over the entire bed if it had its way. Online information emphasized this iris needs good drainage and to be at least 3" deep. In several instances, I ran into slanting rock slices while planting these bulbs, but I'm hopeful they will do okay. [Wow, did they

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perform. They were some of the garden's first bloomers in March, producing stunning blooms impossible not to love. Now we'll see if they come back in 2020.]

- 5 Gladiator Alliums. They are supposed to produce large lilac-pink blooms in late spring. The bulbs are quite large. I planted them in a space I had just cleared of golden rod next to the grape hyacinths in the SE corner of the "C bed. I planted them about 5" from each other and tried to get their roots at least 7" underground. [They all came up, right on schedule, and produced blooms as advertised.]
- 100 Wolf's Bane. Planted at the front of the B1 and B2 beds. Very hard to distinguish the top from the bottom of these small, nutlike corms. Planted in 3" holes, often putting them sideways, occasionally two to a hole. [Perhaps 20% success rate; they produced a lovely little yellow flower, but the garden did not have enough in mass to produce any notable impact.]

5 Nov. Just returned from an overnight trip to St. Paul. At the Coe garden I began by digging more holes for the crocus bulbs in the SE lawn section. The ground, however, was so water-logged that I couldn't get the soil out of my large steel bulb planter. So I got down on my hands and knees and used a trowel to dig one hole at a time, managing to create about 125 holes. By the time I finished, most of the holes had small pools of water in them so I postponed planting the bulbs until after the water had drained away.

I then focused on planting my 100 Turkestanica tulips from Van Engelen. These are a species tulip that I hope will naturalize. I planted most of them along the front of the "D" border—and then one clump surrounding the light post at the west end of the "K" bed. I got all 100 planted. Now we'll see if they look half as good in reality as they did in their on-line photos. [In the spring, we had close to 100% germination, and they served as a lovely, early spring, front-of-border flower. The blooms only lasted about one week, but they were a welcome addition to the garden, and the plants had totally disappeared by late spring. Now we'll wait and see how many return next spring.]

One major disappointment this fall was that many of the dahlias did not start blooming until late September. I recently read that one solution is to plant the dahlias in large pots in a greenhouse in early spring and then bury the pots in the ground once there's no danger of a late spring freeze--the same procedure I use with rosemary. Another option is to plant a couple of weeks before the last frost date but plant them deep, at least 12" below the soil surface.

This fall I've been creating a list of Midwest gardens I should try to visit this summer:

- Cantigny Gardens (near the Morton Arboretum in Wheaton, Illinois)
- Rotary Botanical Garden (near Janesville, Wisconsin; 20 acres, 26 garden styles)
- Fernwood Botanical Garden (Niles, Michigan)
- Garfield Park Conservatory (Chicago, 10 acres of outdoor gardens)
- Green Bay Botanical Garden (Green Bay, Wisconsin; 47 acres)
- Hornbaker Gardens (Princeton, Illinois)
- Lincoln Park Conservatory (Chicago)
- Allen Centennial Garden (Madison, Wisconsin)

Came across this sentence on one of my note cards. It's probably a quote but I have no indication of the source: "A gardener is part scientist, part experimenter, part conservator, part historian, part lover,

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part fool." The closest match I could find was this quote from John R. Whiting: "The home gardener is part scientist, part artist, part philosopher, part plowman. He modifies the climate around his home."

7 Nov. Planted tulips in the "J" bed this afternoon:

- Flair: 100 tulips with red and yellow flowers; early to mid-spring bloomers; 14-16" tall; 5" deep, in sets of 3, somewhat random.
- Tubergen's Gem Species tulips: yellow with red accompaniment; mid-season; 8-10" tall; 4" deep; planted about 75 in front of the Flair; inserted two triangles of Tubergen's into the Flairs to create some variety, breaking up the straight lines.

Tulips planted in the "E" bed:

- Tubergen's Gem: 25 in the front of the bed.
- Blushing Lady: 70 of these tulips, yellow with rose accent; mid to late season; 26-30" tall; planted 6" deep. [The Tubergen's Gem and Blushing Lady proved to be outstanding performers; I particularly admired the Blushing Lady because they were so beautiful either closed or open; they held up well against rainy and windy weather and looked good for over two weeks.]

8 Nov. Another day at Coe. Wickiup has become a distant memory, my life absorbed the last two months with either preparing the lawn sections for grass seeding or the planting of spring bulbs. Today was chilly and overcast, temp hovering just above freezing. Not ideal working conditions but we made some progress:

- Finished planting the Tommies crocus (with my student assistant's help) in the two eastern lawn sections. We'll sow the grass seed after Thanksgiving Break.
- Planted 60 red tulips under the espalier crab tree in the "M2" bed; we have had red tulips there for the last two springs, but discovered earlier this fall that very few bulbs survived from last spring.
- Planted 100 Colorblend daffodil mixes on the "G" bed berm. In front of them I planted 25-30 species tulips before it became too dark to see—plus my hands were freezing.

9 Nov. Feels like the first day of winter. Light snow last night, temp about 32F when I checked the thermometer at 8 am. Since then a steady drop in the temp, despite sunshine. It's now 3:45, temp at 23F, and we'll be going down another 10 degrees before tomorrow. Plus it's windy, the wind chimes providing an incessant reminder of winter's arrival. Despite the wind and cold, I just finished planting five more *Schubertii Allium* in the back of the "I" bed, mixed in with the Solomon's Seal. I had intended to move the SS to the east end of the bed, but I finally decided to keep them in their current location while introducing a few companions—such as the allium.

11 Nov. Sunday, Armistice Day, the 100th anniversary of the termination of fighting in WWI. As for gardening, it was all home gardening today. The maple leaves are all down so I need to start collecting them for the compost bins—which means I need to empty the bins with their current compost—which means I must clean up the raspberry, gooseberry, and current beds so I have a place for the compost. The bin closest to the garden shed is already full, so my focus today was on emptying the north twin—which

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involved about six wheelbarrow loads. Most of the compost went on the big raspberry bed, but I also spread compost on the new raspberry bed and dumped compost into the three large flower ports I didn't use this summer. As for the new leaves, the mower chopped up and collected all the leaves on the driveway and patio. Fortunately the weather today was excellent, with temp into the low 40s, quite comfortable. Could use a couple more days like today.

12 Nov. The big accomplishment today was that I successfully dug up, cleaned, and stored all the dahlia and peacock orchid tubers, putting them in containers filled with Canadian peat. This year I added no moisture to the peat since last year a few dahlia tubers rotted. Overall, the tubers look in good shape, though I don't think the Bishop of Llandaff are as large as last year's crop.

13 Nov. An unusual morning. At 9:00 I had a 75-minute phone interview with a researcher interested in the retirement experiences of faculty and administrators who had been in the field of composition and rhetoric. A pleasant, thought-provoking conversation. It was fun returning to a previous life, hearing myself talk about issues and using a language I never use any more. At noon I had lunch with R.M., one of my old students at Coe—to whom I once sold a 1967 Dodge Dart in exchange for two homemade cheesecakes. R. is an amazing character, full beard, long hair, big western hat, just finished making a \$3,000 saddle while attending a saddle-making school in Montana.

In the afternoon I was at Coe. The ground is frozen so no bulb planting—and I still have 600+ bulbs that need planting at Coe, Buffalo, Wickiup, or home. I also have some potatoes and carrots that need to be harvested at Wickiup. I could use a couple of days with temps in the 50s, but I'm not sure that's in the cards.

Because of the cold weather, I concentrated on work in the greenhouse. Got the place reasonably clean and semi-organized. Now storing three rosemary bushes, one kniphofia, one tarragon (which is sending out new shoots, thinking it's spring), five Christmas cactus, and two large pots with flowers and herbs.

Big day yesterday. Received an email from a South African poet, giving permission for the publication of one of her poems in the next *Garden Quarto* issue. Also received a touching piece from K., a Coe alum, describing a garden plot where her dog is buried. With the latter piece I spent an hour or so doing some editing, trying to make the piece tighter, more sharply focused, a bit less sugary. Managed to trim 75 words from a 350-word essay. Also altered the sequence of a couple sentences so the flow is smoother and more logical.. Both pieces will make strong additions to the fall publication.

16 Nov. Chilly, overcast, temp in low 30s, but I managed to plant a few more bulbs. In the "A2" bed, planted 15 *Nigrum Alliums*. According to the catalog, they will produce white, late-spring flowers; 28-32" tall; I planted them 5" deep in front of the two cathedral plant supports and behind a row of daylilies. The remaining 10 bulbs were planted in the SE area of the "L" bed, where there had been a rose bush, next to a small group of Siberian Iris.

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22 Nov. Thanksgiving Day, the day I have been waiting for: warm enough that I could plant more bulbs. To date, I estimate I've planted over 3,000 bulbs at Coe. Here are the results of five hours planting bulbs today:

- Swept off the snow of the old Field Station "A1" bed. While the garden had not received much snow, the "A" beds don't receive much direct sunshine at this time of the year, and there was still snow covering the "A1" bed and walkway. I dug up most of the volunteer strawberries, but I left the WFS thyme and a couple of buttercups. I forgot about the Pearly Everlasting and unintentionally dug up some of it. Discovered it has underground rhizomes and had created several new baby plants lurking below the surface. In that "A1" bed, I planted the remaining Blushing Lady tulips (about 30 bulbs) and in the front of the bed 35 smaller Bakeri Lilac Wonder tulips. I'm hoping the latter may prove to be naturalizers in this bed.
- Planted 25 Bakeri Lilac Wonder bulbs in the back corners of the rock garden. This required pulling up a lot of sedum and cutting back on the creeping phlox. I must become more aggressive in trimming the phlox after it finishes blooming in the spring. Removed a lot of dried up stems and old foliage.
- Planted 100 Unifolium Allium bulbs along the eastern borders of the "C" and "L" beds. These alliums are supposed to produce lavender-pink blooms, late in the spring. [I'm not sure what happened, but few of the allium survived the winter—unlike the Bakeri Lilac Wonder tulips, which did very well in the spring of 2019.]
- Planted 25 Purple Sensation Allium bulbs in the middle and back areas of the "I" bed, space occupied by a hodge-podge of New England asters, black-eyed Susan vines, coneflowers, and Solomon's Seal. This is also the area where I have "planted" 5 of C.'s glass flowers.
- Finally, 35 Sphaerocephalon Alliums (drumstick allium) planted behind the NE park bench. They are supposed to produce wine-red blooms later in the season. They won't get much sun in that area: not sure how well they'll like it. I had hoped the *Verbena bonariensis* (purpletop vervain) would self-seed in that space, but only a couple popped up this summer.

25 Nov. Today was our annual trip to Hoffmann Tree Farm, where we chopped down two white pine trees, a six footer for ourselves and a four footer for K, P, & T. It was very cold at Hoffmann's—the temp might have been above freezing but vigorous north wind, producing serious wind chill. Despite the cold, we felt lucky: we were supposed to have snow, but the storm went south of us and all our roads remained clear. This made it possible to drive the Chevy S-10 to Hoffmann's and then to Wickiup—where I worked from 1:30 until after 5:00, when it had become completely dark. My first task was planting 80 daffodil bulbs (Colorblend 3D mix) along east fence closest to the road—same location where I planted bulbs three years ago. The ground was not frozen, but it was cold, wet, and gooey, making it impossible to use my big bulb planter. So I dug a 30' long trench, about 6" wide, then used a trowel to dig the bulb holes. Slow going but I got it done.

Other jobs at the garden:

- Covered strawberries, bed of onions, and new garlic bed with fresh hay.
- Collected tomato cages and stacked them over a row of four iron posts.
- Collected tools and put them in pickup for winter storage in garden shed at home.

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- Loaded hay in pickup to cover crocosima and agapanthus in Coe garden.
- Did some general cleaning up, trying to make things look a bit neater. This could be the last time I visit the Wickiup garden until February.

One significant development on the drive home in the dark: a deer ran across the road, directly in front of me. Hit the deer hard, breaking the grill and busting the headlight on the passenger side. After hitting the deer, I kept driving so I don't know what happened to the deer, but I know it was a solid thump. I've had several close calls in the past (most notably just missing a mule deer in Arizona while driving a load of students to see the sunrise at the Grand Canyon), but this is the first time I've ever made contact. The damage is going to cost me some money, but I feel lucky that I had no problem retraining control of the pickup, particularly because there was a vehicle coming at me from the opposite direction.

27 Nov. Another cold November morning, about 12F when I arrived at Coe, but it was sunny, not much wind, and by the afternoon it was reasonably comfortable working outside. G. and I were able to plant most of the remaining bulbs. In the upper "A1" bed, we planted about 15 *Allium moly* 'Jeannine'. The remaining 35 bulbs were planted in a semi-circle around a clump of purple love grass at the east end of the "K" bed. We also planted 70 or so Wolfbane along the gravel walkway that "C" shares with "B1." [This wolfbane planting was a total failure; only a couple came up in the spring. The corms are small and I was unsure how deep to plant them and how to position them in their holes. For whatever reason, they did not thrive in this location.] Finally, behind the NW bench we planted the remaining 40 Sphaerocaphalon Alliums. The ground was covered with leaves and was relatively easy to work because it was not frozen. A few spots in the "A1" bed were frozen on top, but I could usually get the dibble (or dibber or dibbler: not sure which is the more accurate name) to break through the crust and reach unfrozen soil. All the planting this morning was with my dibble, and it was the perfect tool when working with small bulbs and such cold, hardened soil. While drilling holes behind the NW bench, I noticed that many *Leucojum* were already poking through the soil, small green blades 1/2-1" tall. On the other hand, I saw little evidence of daffodil action. Last year many daffodils were up by mid November but not this year.

One new task this afternoon: I had purchased two strands of small outdoor lights for one of the pruned trees in the "H" bed. This afternoon I hooked up the two strands and draped them around the branches of the "tree with thorns" (a tree I've never managed to identify more precisely). In the evening when the lights came on, I was surprised to discover my lights had such a brown, incandescent tone: I was expecting a whiter light, but I soon decided it would be okay. The miniature lights create an attractive, spherical glow that should look reasonably attractive when viewed from the Alumni House. I think I will purchase 4-5 more strands and cover the dwarf lilac and the hydrangea, creating a trio of lighted shrubs in that area—but that also means I will need a new power cord and an insulated connection. As usual, one step leads to so many other steps.

The kiss of the wind for lumbago,

The stab of the thorn for mirth.

One is nearer to death in a garden

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Than anywhere else on earth. (Quoted by Perényi)

28 Nov. Spent a couple of hours editing the fall issue of *The Garden Quarto*. All my efforts were focused on the layout, particularly with the margins. The last copy I ran looked good on screen but when it printed, one corner of the masthead box is missing. Frustrating to spend so much time on a petty detail. One other task this morning was that I composed two more Gerard poems for the Garden Shed blog. Both went quickly (apparently I'm more skilled as a 16th-century poet than a 21st-century editor). One of the poems is on Nigella—though Gerard doesn't include "love-in-a-mist" in his list of common names. The other poem is on cranesbill, which Gerard treats as a serious medicinal herb for major wounds.

30 Nov. A few minutes before midnight. Just heard on the TV that Pres. George H. W. Bush had died, age 94. Remarkable contrast of a genteel, principled, moderate, public-servant Republican with the current White House occupant. Hard to believe they both represent the same party.

As for gardening, it was a beautiful day, ideal for the last day in November. Temp reached just over 40F. This morning I focused on computer tasks and finally produced an edited copy of the Fall '18 *Garden Quarto* ready for delivery to the Copy Center. Last night I did some final editing and trimming of my two Gerard poems. Looked up several of Gerard's terms and discovered that "mastic" is a resin from a tree, once used in gum, and "obliganum" is the same as Frankincense, also derived from a tree. Since both words appear in my poem, I thought I should have some idea what they mean.

In the afternoon I strung up three more strands of Xmas lights on the dwarf lilac and hydrangea bush in the "H" bed. Upgraded the extension arrangement and it all worked: I think the lights add a touch of winter vitality to the garden in a reasonably tasteful manner.

Another job was cutting down more old vegetation. Removed old peony foliage from the "M1" bed (because of their mildew, all the peony stems and leaves went into the green yardy, not the compost pile) and the asters (plus a few goldenrod and Joe Pye and Baptisia). At the other end of the garden, I did some serious pruning of the big rose bush in the "H" bed: cut out a lot of dead wood and reduced the shrub's tallest limbs to under 4'. It now looks more compact and disciplined. I also cut back the tall New England asters behind the rose bush, making it easier to see the new Xmas lights.

One unexpected adventure today was visiting an estate sale on the SE side, not far from the Country Club. Yesterday MVM purchased a set of metal herb labels. Today we went back and got a large copper plant support, a bag of potting soil, two rolls of wire mesh (which I may use for keeping voles out of raised beds at Wickiup), an old bucket that might be used as a pot for plants, and eight heavy, ornamental metal spikes that can be used to guide a water hose or hold down an object that needs to be held down.

Most of my herbaceous peonies have been in place for the better part of forty years, quite long enough for me to have forgotten what they are—or what is more reprehensible, to try to find out. Trying to identify them would be rather like suddenly asking your oldest friend his mother's maiden name. To me, they are just peonies. ~Perényi

4 Dec. A busy day. With G's assistance, we sowed grass seed on the SE lawn section. Temp was in the upper 20s, light snowfall throughout the morning, but we were able to work four hours and get almost

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everything finished. We raked most of the old thatch and wood chips off the quad section and onto the walkway gravel—an ill-conceived decision that will create problems when we try to scoop up the soil/thatch mix and put it on the compost pile. But I'll worry about that problem later. The goal today was to fertilize the area with Milorganite, cover the soil with bluegrass and rye grass seed, and then protect the seeds with the straw matting. I was worried that the rolls of straw matting (which we had stored along the fence, behind the "F" bed yews) had gotten wet and then frozen—making it impossible to unroll the matts without tearing them—but the two rolls unfolded without any significant problems and we have all the seeded area covered—though the matting is not yet secured with a sufficient number of staples. I wish I could work tomorrow, but in the morning I must attend a computer workshop—learning how to resurrect the Coe History website—and in the afternoon I've got to prepare for a church supper home-made chili and a vegetable soup (which will consist of vegetables from my garden: potatoes, onions, frozen peas, frozen tomatoes, frozen tomato juice, frozen peppers, rosemary, and garlic).

This morning, my right thumb was not functioning very well. Couldn't apply any pressure—felt like a pinched nerve, lasting 15-20 minutes, long enough to remind me of the fragility of my gardening life. Most of the year my body has been working well enough so I can keep at it without notable pain or discomfort or ineffectiveness—but it could all go so quickly. One malfunctioning thumb and I could no longer be an independent gardener. I somehow need to keep all the body parts working.

7 Dec. A's birthday. He's now 42 years old. Sounds like an entrance point to middle age. Mentally, I feel like I'm still middle-aged, but that surely can't be true. When I was 42, it was 1987, the second year of my full-time teacher/administrator position at Coe. Interesting to reflect on the fact that I was over 40 years old when I really began my primary academic career. Until then, it was a meandering sequence of part-time or temporary jobs: a house-husband, two years as a publishing firm consultant, two years in the Army, many years as a student, long stretch writing a dissertation. But I was lucky that in my first full-time teaching job, I already had so many diverse experiences, including over ten years of college teaching. It was much easier for me to hit the ground running, with confidence that I could be successful. And now in my 70s, starting over in a different world, trying to learn how to be a gardener.

10 Dec. Took a bunch of photos this morning. There was moisture in the air, temp below 20F, so there was a lot of frost on leaves, etc. Most of my photos were on the south side of the garden, in areas still in the shade. By 9:00, the north side of the garden had received enough sunshine that most of the frost was gone. At this time of year, the south side does not receive much sunlight, even in the afternoon. By 4:00 the shadows of the Alumni House stretch across the lawn to the "G" and "H" beds. There's an intriguing difference between the mini-ecological zones of the north and south sides of the garden.

Spent most of the afternoon raking the NE lawn section. The ground was frozen in most locations, but it had received enough sun that the thatch was partially thawed and I could remove a high percentage—and even smooth out some of the underlying soil. Most of the thatch/soil mix I removed was added to a compost bin, but I did spread several loads on the hosta bed behind the SE garden bench. The lawn section should now to be ready for sowing grass seed, which I'll do tomorrow morning.

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19 Dec. Another beautiful December day. This morning I drove out to Wickiup and dropped off eight more posts to hold up plants supports for my new raised beds I'll construct this spring. I then did some cleaning up, dumping dead vegetation in the compost pile behind the three full compost bins. I'm concerned that the pile can become a harbor for varmints, but I'll worry about that in the spring. I cut back all the asparagus and added that material to the compost. I finished the morning by cleaning up one raised bed, fertilized it, and sowed with year-old Yukon and Palco spinach seed. I then covered the bed with some leftover straw matting from Coe. I'm hoping the straw will protect the seeds from any birds that might drop by, looking for an easy lunch. [The Palco spinach did not germinate, but the Yukon did produce a lot of spinach plants in the spring—though they bolted early in the spring before they had grown to full size.]

In the afternoon, worked at Coe, mostly cleaning up gravel walkways around the SE quad section. We have a real mess because the thatch and soil raked off of the lawn area is now mixed in with the gravel and difficult to separate. Made some progress but it's a real mess. It may be easier to remove the dirt and thatch when it has frozen.

20 Dec. Temp was into the low 40s, could do some gardening, but it was a sad day: drove the Chevy S-10 to its winter storage home. Probably the last day I will drive it until late February or early March. A dear companion I will miss.

23 Dec. At Coe this afternoon for three hours. Primary focus was on compost. This was the first day I've used the new Patriot chipper/shredder. It worked great for over an hour—much faster and more powerful than my old electric chipper/shredder, but then it got clogged and tripped a fuse or breaker switch somewhere. I thought it would be the GFCI button on the pergola's outlet, but that didn't reset the electricity. The electricity was on for the west end of the garden but not the east end. Because it was getting dark, I put the Patriot away for the night—which required repositioning the two lawn mowers and the leaf vacuum in the portable garden shed. Tomorrow I'll take the Patriot up to the patio and see if it will work there. Hate to lose this ideal composting weather with the relatively dry fodder.

24 Dec. Christmas Eve. Actually it's a few minutes past midnight so I suppose Christmas has already arrived. My 73rd Christmas. As a kid, I found the imminent arrival of Christmas so exhilarating. I loved the decorations on the cedar tree, always placed in front of the living room's east window, a safe distance from the wood stove that heated the farm house. I loved the thrill of Christmas morning when we were opening presents, being surprised by new toys or games or books. And on Christmas day for many years, my Dad and I would assemble the same jigsaw puzzle, a picture of a father and son fishing together. I still love Christmas, but it's certainly a more low-key event while gaining a richer religious/spiritual sonority. This afternoon at the Buffalo Christmas Eve service, I read the second chapter of Luke, the passage describing the baby "wrapped in swaddling clothes," the shepherds "sore afraid." This is the Elizabethan language I would have heard growing up in Kansas, the phrases a direct link to my parents, the church, the community, the source of my most fundamental values. While I know the story is a transcendent fiction, it is such a powerful, revelatory, resonant vision of a new beginning. I have no idea how the

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author "Luke" managed to create this story, but I find it impossible to imagine my life without this story and its complex layers of meanings.

As for gardening, it was a bit chilly, but the sun was shining, no snow on the ground, and temp in low 30s, a pretty nice day for winter in Iowa. At Coe this morning I eventually got the Patriot chipper/shredder cleaned out, its earlier malfunction caused by a clump of compressed foliage making it impossible for the motor to drive the shredding wheel. After removing the feeder chute, I got it cleaned out and functioning again. But after filling one bag with shredded leaves, I had to turn my attention to Christmas shopping (bought Michelle Obama's autobiography for MVM and an Ace gift card to P) and then cooking--a kale/squash soup and a kale/carrot dish for tomorrow's Christmas dinner.

28 Dec. Yesterday turned out to be an unexpectedly good day for working in the garden. In the morning it was raining. The Coe rain gauge is stored away for the winter, but I suspect it rained at least an inch. By the afternoon, however, the sun was out and the temp shot up to near 50F. I could work outside just wearing a fleece jacket. Focused on cleaning up the "I" bed and trimming back the Siberian iris lying prostrate in the "H" bed. In the morning, before the rain arrived, I dragged the Patriot to the west end and ran several bags of leaves through the shredder. Worked beautifully, producing finely chopped leaves.

Today was totally different weather. Temp 20 degrees colder, windy, bright snow on a layer of ice. Definitely felt like winter. After finishing the church's January newsletter, I focused on December's Garden Shed "Almanac" posting, which needs to be submitted by Monday. I typed notes from my reading of the RHS book on 40 great gardeners and began typing notes from the *Hortus* book. I also pulled up a bunch of JPEG files of old drawings of antique garden tools, images for sprinkling through the text.

One other task: in a flower I sowed two varieties of kale seeds--Prizm and a Scarlet cultivar. Also filled 25 peat pots with a plant starter soil mix, set them in a tray on a heating pad, watered them, and will sow basil and parsley seed tomorrow, once the soil has warmed up. I located a couple of charts indicating my old basil and parsley seeds should still be viable. Came across a chart that Beth Chatto created, listing the number of years one should be able to use old flower and herb seeds. Her years are more optimistic than the guidelines on the two internet sites.

The encounter with the Chatto chart reminded me of a passage from Perényi's *Green Thoughts*: "Not until the twentieth century did any woman play a recognizable part in garden design. . . . The great gardens of the world have been reflections of men's intellectual and spiritual experience: visions of Arcadia, hymns to rationalism or the divine right of kings, Zen parables." Striking to consider this passage when we reflect on the pre-eminent gardeners/garden writers of the past century: Beth Chatto, Gertrude Jekyll, Katherine Swift, Vita Sackville-West, Ellen Willmott, Margery Fish, Penelope Hobhouse, Anna Pavord, and, of course, Eleanor Perényi.

31 Dec. The last entry of the year. My major accomplishment for the day: finished the December blog, my first end-of-year Almanac, a collection of gardening ideas from this year's reading and experiences. I ended up with 16 pages, posted as a pdf. Not a great work, unlikely it will be read by anyone, but it was

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fun working on it, and provided me with a welcome opportunity to reflect on what I have learned and thought about during the year.

I was only at the Coe garden for a few minutes this afternoon. My main concern was making sure the heaters are functioning. I did some weeding in the planter with the nepitella. I also planted 12 small fritillarias in the kniphofia pot. We'll see if they sprout or not. [The fritillarias did not emerge. The kniphofia did survive the winter and was planted in the "D" bed, but it never bloomed and was then, alas, forgotten by the gardener until he typed this journal entry on the last day of November and wondered to himself: "What did happen to that kniphofia?"]

I'll end this sequence of journal entries by giving the last word to Eleanor Perényi:

A little studied negligence is becoming to a garden: it blurs the edges—always supposing there are edges to blur. Painters love gardens on the fringe of neglect. We owe the landscapes of Watteau, and after him Boucher, Oudry, Fragonard, Hubert Robert and many others to the bankruptcy of the French government in the years immediately before and after the death of the Sun King. Thanks to his extravagance, the royal gardens could no longer be maintained as they had been. Balustrades and staircases sank into moss, trees grew up and were overcome by vines, statues were masked in ivy, until—in time—these neglected gardens became the ideal, paving the way for Rousseau's romantic visions of untrammelled nature. From the sixteenth century onward, the voluptuous untidiness of Italian gardens has been part of their charm to painters—and everybody else. We gardeners needn't kill ourselves in the name of order.