

Spring 2018 Garden Kalendar

My Spring 2018 Garden Kalendar continues to mix condensed and edited excerpts from my 2017 garden journal (for the months of April, May, and June) with italicized passages from a book I was reading throughout the year: *The Meaning of Gardens*, an anthology of 30 essays edited by Mark Francis and Randolph T. Hester, Jr. (MIT Press). Since this Kalendar posting is 23 pages long, the complete text is posted as a PDF attachment. ~Bob

April 2017 Garden Journal

4 April (Tuesday): 2:45 pm; 53F, 66% humidity; cloudy; feels like it could rain but weather forecast indicated no rain before tomorrow morning. Earlier today I was at Menards. Purchased a few bedding plants, including flats of stock and hybrid violas, which I will plant in several containers. I've long been intrigued by the references to "stock" in English garden books, but I've never been sure what they are. The ones I purchased have lovely small blossoms and are supposed to be fragrant. I also purchased one perennial, a Candy Stripe Creeping Phlox (same phlox I planted last year in the "K" bed). I will put this new phlox in the rock garden to replace the sedum that is such a fierce spreader. This candy stripe has large, 5-petal white blossoms with tiny yellow/orange centers and light pink/magenta stripes in each petal. It also has tiny dots of darker, almost burgundy spots where the petal emerges. Very attractive and supposedly Zone 2. All the creeping phlox in the garden have survived, several already with blooms. Wonderful plants if one can keep weeds and grass out of them.

6 April: 4:30 pm; 54F; 33% humidity; sunny and windy. Was a crisp morning, temp into the 30's, but it has warmed up nicely — though breeze necessitates keeping on my fleece jacket. Hoed weeds/grass in gravel walkways. Ground is moist because of rain yesterday, so the grass clumps pull up easily. Also dug up several dandelions, one ready to bloom. At 3:00 met with Chad and Cara to discuss permanent bases for the two metal spheres, Ringo and Sisyphus. Reached agreement in about 3 minutes: round, concrete base with bolts driven through spheres into the cement. I also asked Chad to secure the NE bench so it won't blow over.

After they left, I focused on cleaning up the A1 bed; pulled up the straw covering the buddleia and crocosima. Several crocosima had just emerged. They were thin and leggy because of their effort to stretch through the straw. Should have pulled off the straw earlier. As for the buddleia, the primary stems appear green but no evidence of opening buds. I cut down stalks for coneflowers and boltonia in A1 and cut off seedheads on stonecrop in the "B" and "C" beds. Raked up leaves in "A" beds and cleaned up leaves stuck into honeysuckle next to fence in "M". The new honeysuckle looks healthy, many leaves budding out. The bleeding heart in "M" has also emerged. Many peonies are now six inches tall. I love those emerging red-wine stalks and leaves, a welcome addition to the relatively barren landscape. Also two of the creeping phlox in the rock garden are beginning to put on a dramatic flower display.

7 April (Friday). 4:25 pm; 62F; 22% humidity. It's been sunny all day, slight breeze; chilly this morning, but by 3:00 I had shed my jacket. Quite nice in the sun. Worked in garden all day. This morning focused on sanding, filling in cracks, and spray painting one of the benches. It does look better, but the spray paint did not provide satisfactory coverage. I'll use a real flat gloss paint for the next coat. I like the reddish-brown color, but I'll opt for a rosier shade. I sanded the top of the book end table (which I have had sitting next to the SW bench), applied a silicon sealant on the big crack in the middle, and spray painted the top with a bluish gray color that matches reasonably well with the existing gray. Still evidence of small cracks, so I will need to keep my eye on how this weathers.

I moved the white rock cress from the SE corner of the rock garden to an area with better drainage and less likely to be covered with leaves or overrun by the sedum. The Irish moss I planted there last year didn't survive. The rock cress produced wonderful white blooms last year, but this year the surviving plant is much smaller and does not look very vigorous. I hope the new location and improved drainage will improve its demeanor. Planted the Candy Stripe creeping phlox in the SW corner of the rock garden. Two older creeping phlox are already in full bloom, and with this new addition, that area looks very attractive. The thyme in that bed is mostly brown stems, but new leaves are emerging. I should have cut it back further than I did.

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We can see the progressive transformation from forest to forest glade, to meadow, to garden, to lawn as a metaphor of increasing control over, or sublimation of, the raw sexual content of nature. In this progression, the garden is middle ground, where sexuality is controlled but still potent and available.
~Robert B. Riley, "Flowers, Power, and Sex"

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12 April; 11:45 am; 68F; 45% humidity. Did a quick walkaround, counting flowers in bloom. There are 9 different varieties of daffodils in bloom—many now at their max, though we still have a lot of buds yet to open, or even to appear. The creeping phlox in the rock garden look spectacular: four varieties in bloom, plus one other in the "K" bed. Some tulips I planted last fall in "J" have just opened with red and yellow blooms; the tulips in "E" are a couple days behind, as is almost everything on the south side. A bunch of anemones are in bloom, plus several hellebores under the SE flowering crab. All the peonies are up. Several need to be transplanted—including a big one jammed together with the large tansy at the east end of "D" bed. Last task this morning: I dug up the newer chives in "A1", split it, and planted in the raised "E" bed, not far from the thyme. Another step in the transformation of the raised beds into an herb garden.

17 Apr; 11:00 am; 69F; 37% humidity. Sunny skies, slight breeze; perfect spring morning. It rained hard Saturday night; rain gauge recorded 2.8" rain (had 2.5" at home). Rain garden

looked good; only washed out area was gravel walkway close to east gate. I swept gravel back into garden area. The garden this morning was stunning. Took my breath away. I was not expecting to see all the tulips open: the reds in the "H" and "M2" beds, the red & yellows in "E" and "J", and the whites in "L". The garden is distinctly unbalanced: because of the additional sunshine in the mornings, much more color and vitality on the north side than on the south. Many of the anemones in "C" and "L" and the flowering espalier are in bloom. On the downside, hundreds of dandelions in the lawn, far more than I've ever seen before. Most of my work the past two hours has been pulling off dandelion flower heads and buds—plus digging up weeds and grass in the gravel walkways. One of the creeping "weeds" has a lovely small mauve bloom—looks like a tiny orchid, quite lovely. Many tulips are now past their prime, as are the hyacinths under the pergola. While all the daffs are still in bloom, I need to do some fertilizing, particularly on daffs that did not bloom. Some also need to be dug up and separated. The daffs I dug up two years ago and planted in the back of the "K" bed are in bloom and looking good. This morning I did dig up a dozen small nepeta plants in front of the patio and planted them along the fence near the NW gate, close to the honeysuckle—which is looking good, though I need to trim some old branches that are not leafing out. Speaking of leafing out, the two southern wisteria are leafing out—2-3 weeks earlier than last year. Finally, the sweet-smelling viburnum is now at its peak. I stop to smell the blooms every time I walk by.

18 Apr; 11:40 am; 68F; 53% humidity; overcast; more breeze than yesterday. Dark clouds in the northwest, suggesting rain is on the way. Spent most of the morning hoeing the gravel walkway on the south side. In the process, dug up several self-seeding coreopsis annuals and planted them in two planters. I also discovered I had just hoed up a pale corydalis. Only about two inches long, counting roots, but it was intact: the hoe had pulled the plant out of the walkway but had not severed the roots. And it had two small blooms—which is how I knew what it was a corydalis. I immediately retrieved a small pot from the greenhouse; mixed together some sand, compost, and soil; planted the youngster in the small pot; and gave it some water. I just checked and it is still turgid and upright. I'm fairly sure the corydalis in the WFS bed has passed on—after such a glorious year. Somehow a seed ended up on the gravel walkway and bloomed in time so I could recognize it. One wonders how many I hoed up without recognizing them.

The garden was again in glorious bloom this morning. And because of the overcast sky, it was a good day for shooting landscape photos. Alas, the photos never look as good as the reality. When looking at the real thing, I ignore the distractions and dead spots, but in the photograph all those gaps step forward, demanding my attention. Nevertheless, I hope judicious cropping can help me find a few worthy photos in the bunch. A couple days ago I produced some decent photos by using the flowering crab branches as framing devices. And with this new Canon, the zoom is much sharper, giving more flexibility in framing the shots.

One task today was gathering dandelion blossoms. It's intriguing to consider how much herbicide has been poured onto that ground in the last 20 years, and the dandelions are still

there, patiently asserting their fortitude. One other surprise was to see in the SW grass quadrant so many wild blue violets, quite beautiful on this April morning. We also have many blooming violets in our back yard. Quite lovely—though I wish they were not so aggressive in driving out other vegetation.

20 April; 11:35 am; 58F; 63% humidity; overcast, windy. The last hour I have focused on the “D” bed, removing volunteer rosebushes, dandelions, little trees/shrubs, etc. One rose bush I dug up had a huge old root. I also cleaned up around a tansy bush, trying to limit its expansion. It’s not super aggressive, but the expanding roots are almost a foot beyond where the plant was confined last year. . . . Overall, the garden looks good. I am disappointed the hyacinths under the pergola did not hold their blooms for very long—barely a week. Also notable that only one red tulip came up in “G” along the drainage canal—in contrast to the red tulips in “H” and “M2” that have returned in full force. The white flowering crab are within a day or two of full display. Really a lovely fragrance in the garden this morning. Very pleasant, even with the brisk wind.

24 April. 4:10 pm; 79F; 13% humidity; sunny; windy; showers on the way (by some time tomorrow). After lunch I went to Ace and bought some real paint for the two benches. Decided to go with a reddish brown (the red on the pink side of the scale). I painted for about 45 minutes and then MVM came and painted for over an hour. One bench is almost done. Should finish it tomorrow. This is a flat texture, not a brazen red, but definitely a stronger presence than the previous brown. Should add color without drawing too much attention to itself. While MVM was painting, I hoed and raked the “A” gravel walkway, which had thousands of emerging Sweet Annie. Also cleared out a bunch of volunteer strawberries that had escaped the Wilderness Field Station bed—which is now completely over run by the strawberries. They are in full bloom, look very healthy, and completely cover the bed—except for two buttercups and one columbine. Interesting that the plants that I focused on transplanting from northern Minnesota are no longer present: the harebell, pale corydalis, pearly everlasting, and blueberries. On the other hand, the two “accidents”—the buttercup, which is not a Minnesota native, and the little wild strawberries—are doing great. Nature’s willfulness can be frustrating, but the results are often unexpected delights. And I still have not given up on the harebells and corydalis. Perhaps both need their own, private rock garden.

One other special joy: saw the first signs of life in the two buddleia butterfly bushes in A1. All the new growth is coming from the base, so I cut back the old branches from last year. The flowering crab are now in their fullest display—but with this wind and expected rain, they will not last long. The daffodils are in decline—except for the frilly, all-yellow daffs, which have heavy heads that they can not always keep upright. The tulips in the “E” and “J” beds are losing their petals. I need to get the dahlias, cosmos, and zinnias started, but there will be a month or more when those two beds will be dominated by old tulip foliage.

27 April (Thursday). 4:50 pm; 56F; 55% humidity; breezy and overcast; feels like an early spring day; it rained last night (0.8") and rain is in forecast for next 3-4 days. Misty rain this morning for about 30 minutes—classic English weather. Sustainable Landscapes put in a rain garden at the low spot along the sidewalk/parking lot between McCabe and the Alumni House. They did everything in one day, including the planting. Amazing contrast: working with hand tools I needed six weeks to construct the rain garden in the "G" bed. While thinking about their speed, I was also thinking about the differences between landscaping and gardening. At the moment the latter feels more complex, but perhaps landscaping is just a subgenre under gardening—or perhaps it's the reverse and what I'm doing in the Alum Garden is public landscaping.

This morning I began cleaning up the "F" bed. Several plants are spreading and intermixing in rather unruly ways. For example, some asters and monardas are doing some serious spreading in the "F" bed east of the Karl Foerster grass. I dug up a few asters so they are no longer crowding the three variegated phlox--though this spring only about half of their leaves are variegated. I need to dig up a lot more monarda and replant in tighter clumps. They spread by shooting out roots that tend to run on the surface--in contrast to the asters, whose roots run 1-2" below the surface. The monarda have beautiful light-green leaves and I want to salvage as much as possible, but it's going to be slow work cleaning up that area. Similar problem with a perennial coreopsis, which has spread significantly this spring, moving into an area dominated by three sunflower clumps. Need to treat it like the Monarda. Sad news in "F": it appears Mel's Stokes Aster did not survive the winter. [I later discovered Mel's aster did survive but never showed any new growth until June and never did bloom.] On the other hand, first white blossom opened for the snow-in-summer planted in the raised "J" beds. Those patches in both beds look great.

28 April. 11:45 am; 43F; 67% humidity (and rising—it's been drizzling for the past 20 minutes). It's 52F in the shed; it was 47F, but 30 minutes ago I turned on the heater, and it's now more comfortable—though my hands are still cold from working in the dirt the past 2 hours. There were specks of sunshine when I arrived at 8:15, but the clouds soon moved in: looked like it would rain, felt like it would rain, and now it's raining. First task this morning was working on gravel walkways. I spot hoed over almost all the walkways and then raked the A, B, and M walkways. At the moment the walkways are about as clean and clear as they have ever been.

Most of my work this morning focused on the "D" bed, particularly separating plants. I pulled up asters I planted two years ago; they had really begun to spread. I separated them from an obedience plant that was being overrun. I also moved an obedience plant that was jammed up next to one of the daylilies near the front of the bed. The big job, however, was digging up and separating a mix of Stella d'oro daylilies, cranesbill, and coneflowers. After digging up the whole ball, I used my root knife and cut the ball into 9-10 separate chunks, enabling me to peel off the cranesbill and the coneflowers. I replanted five of the daylily chunks back in the hole from which they came and filled in the space around each near daylily with

fresh compost. I then planted bits of cranesbill along the front of the cranesbill patch, which was in front of the daylilies. Not sure how many of the cranesbill will survive: past experiences would suggest at least 50% of them will hang on. The impressive patch of cranesbill at the east end of M1 was created two years ago by planting pieces from other beds. As for the remaining daylilies, I dumped them back with the other daylilies near the compost bins. I also saved a few coneflowers.

As I was typing the previous paragraph, I recalled sitting in my Introduction to Humanities course, taught by Dale Jones, at Kansas State University, in the spring of 1965. Dale was a wonderful teacher, and the lone faculty member who demonstrated some faith in my academic potential. During one class he was talking about how books were reproduced and distributed prior to the invention of the printing press. As he explained the role of monks copying manuscripts, he noted that in one text the monk had written in the margins of the manuscript, “My fingers are freezing.” My fingers this morning are not freezing, but even after 15 minutes in this relatively warm room, my fingers are still cold and eager to spend more time near the space heater—a luxury a medieval monk would have perceived as a miraculous answer to his prayers.

MVM came by for a few minutes, and we moved the two freshly painted benches in front of the patio. Katie [my student garden assistant] commented that the “iron ore red” should work nicely as a contrast with the greens in the garden. Unfortunately, once the benches were in place, I immediately saw several areas needing more paint. Amazing how often one can look at a bench and not see what you are looking for, perhaps similar to overlooking editing errors in a manuscript. Once the benches were in place, I nailed them down and they are ready for duty. Once warm, dry weather returns, I will do a final round of touch-up painting.

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The garden is a product of the domestication of both plants and animals. It is a utilitarian place and a place of ritual—a place of the miracle of the transformation of seed to plant, food, fruit, flower, and fragrance. Above all it is a place of life, a model of a symbiotic relationship between humans and nature. The garden is a landscape idealized and transformed by design. The garden wall is a net, capturing elements of the wild landscape in preparation for their domestication and display. In the study of garden history we see places gradually evolving from their formative utilitarian agricultural function of food production into settings of expanded possibilities; place of leisure, pleasure, delight, and artistry. The garden should be understood and appreciated as the art of agriculture. Embellished and displayed it is the agriculturalist’s art—the materials and forms of utility transcending their basic nature. The “art” and the “agriculture” constitute another of the garden’s dialectics, symbolic of the contrast between our most basic needs and profound desires. The garden can be a source of spiritual as well as physical sustenance.
~Kenneth Helphand

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May 2017 Garden Journal

1 May. 12:02 pm, two minutes after the noon whistle in small Midwestern towns. Temp is 54F; 69% humidity; overcast, occasional mist—followed by sun breaking thru clouds for a few seconds. I've been digging up Husker Red in the "C" bed, separating them from asters and an artemisia that has come out of nowhere. My fingers caked with cold mud, probably not the best for the keyboard, but I wiped off most of my finger mud before I began typing.

Began the morning by deadheading daffs and tulips. The white tulips still look good; also a few daffs in "D" and "F" remain in bloom, but otherwise they are done for the year. Foliage, however, still looks attractive so they'll be all right through graduation this Sunday. While it was drizzling earlier this morning, I opened two boxes with medium-sized plant supports from Gardener's Supply. These I can set up by myself. I did put one in the garden, around some Solomon's Seal that has come up near the gazebo. The support is primarily for plant protection, to keep people from walking on them. The plants need to be moved back from the path, but I'll save that for another day.

This is the 5th day when we have had cold, rain-threatening weather. Not just threatening: this morning's rain gauge had 1.8" of rain. The small rain garden they built last week between the Alumni House and McCabe is completely flooded. Even the larger plants—such as the monarda—are completely under water. I'm guessing the design is not working as intended. I would like to know how it was intended for that water to drain out. Fortunately our rain garden looks good—and almost everything planted last year has come back—except for the rudbeckia. One benefit of the cold, rainy weather for the last few days is that it provided time for me to work on the April Garden Shed posting—the Spring Garden Kalendar. All my journal posts are from the computer file; I read thru my journal at home but never used any of it. My first edited draft was almost 30 pages long, so I did a lot of cutting and editing. The Pavord Slow Gardening essay that I integrated into my text added another 3 pages. The final version ended up being about 18 pages—still too long. So I posted the April posts and then provided a link to the complete piece—though I doubt anyone would ever read it. I concluded the Kalendar with a slideshow on gardens we visited in June last year. The largest number of photos were of sculpture pieces in the Sculpture Park in Surrey. Such a strange place—and so hard to find. Also included photos of Regents Park, Hyde Park, Green Park, Stourhead, Sizergh, a vegetable allotment in Kendall, a wisteria on a Mews near Paddington, Wilton House gardens, Holehird, and one photo of the flower bed in front of our Mead Hall "cottage" in Wiltshire. Posted the piece at 11:15 last night—with 45 minutes to spare. MVM this morning said it was like doing a paper in college, getting it done at the last minute. At least it was not an all-nighter.

2 May. 3:15 pm; 61F; 46% humidity, gentle breeze, partly cloudy but occasional sunshine. Spring has finally returned. This morning was still overcast and chilly, but it has steadily improved as the day has worn on. I arrived at 10:00, and spent most of the morning working in

the “K” bed, a bed that rarely receives much attention. Concentrated on a middle section where several small shrubs were popping up, a shrub (identity unknown) I have periodically cut back in the past. I was amazed how many of these shrubs I uncovered, many linked together by extensive root system. I dug up two mother plants with large, deep roots, like one would find for small trees. In the process I also dug up many balloon flowers and was amazed at the size of their large white roots, with a deep tap root. In most cases they had become mixed together with purple coneflowers and asters. I attempted to create a round clump of the asters and then replanted many of the Platycodon so they would create a swath cutting across the midsection of the border. I’m hoping they survive the transplant [*they did*]. Regardless of the final outcome, the border looks much more orderly and disciplined.

One other task in the “K” bed was providing a metal support for the asters I planted there two years ago. They have begun to spread underground (as asters will do) and so I gently pulled up several strays and moved them closer to the rest of the group. I then placed over the asters a round metal support I had brought from home. It has four loose feet and it proved impossible to get all the feet aimed downward in a co-ordinated fashion. MVM came by the garden (to deliver a cheesecake dessert), but even with the two of us, it was still not easy getting the feet coordinated and all aimed in the right direction. Eventually we got it anchored in the soil so it’s reasonably straight.

This afternoon, most of my attention was on the back side of M1, behind the baptisia. A lot of plants—including coneflowers and baptisia—had become mixed in with the bricks. It’s now fairly well cleared out. I did save a small bleeding heart that was emerging between the bricks. I planted it where we had some digitalis last year (no sign they intend to return). My current plans are to lay down a fabric along the patio wall and cover with a foot-wide swath of wood chips. I’ve still have a load of wood chips in the back of the pickup.

A few cranesbill in B2 have begun to bloom. The baptisia buds are emerging, and you can just see a blue edge appearing where the blooms will open. Also noticed we have flower buds on the lupine in the “J” bed. I’m very much looking forward to their opening. Unfortunately, the miscanthus in the west “J” bed does not yet show any signs of life. The two miscanthus in the east bed both have new green shoots. I’m also concerned about the fountain grass inside the four new grass supports that Cara made. One has a few random grass spears emerging but I’m not sure if these are connected to the grass we want. [*I eventually determined that the fountain grass did not survive the winter, and it was replaced with a little bluestem cultivar.*]

3 May. 3:15 pm; 64F; 38% humidity; sunny, but light diffused through high clouds; slight breeze; beautiful spring day. Arrived about 9:00. Visited Peterson Hall and checked out the plants to be moved. Some looked good (the sprawling scented geranium and several in the seminar room); others not so good (grasses, dracaena, Norfolk Pine). The two ficus and the apple croton looked okay. I moved outdoors the rosemary, which was very dry. Dug a hole in west “E” bed and planted it, with small lip of the pot showing above ground. Watered it; gave it

some compost/sand mix; and then spread a layer of rocks around the little bush. Cut off some of the lower branches. [*It survived and did very well throughout the summer and early fall. The dracaena also revived, once it was outside. As for the Norfolk Pine, it was terminated and composted.*]

MVM came by at 11:00. We laid out the weed fabric along M2 and anchored it with a few bricks. Now I just need to move some wood chips. We also spent ten minutes trying to set up a plant support for one of the pergola clematis, but could never get the support so it was straight. Very frustrating. I'll return to using bamboo poles. At the east end of "D" we have this incredible peony that has come out of nowhere and overrun the big tansy. I like the peony better than the tansy, so we pulled up the tansy's plant support and set it around the Joe Pye by the NW gate. As for the tansy, I will dig it up and throw it away.

This afternoon I dug up and potted several two-year old baptisia and some volunteer redbuds. Chad will use them somewhere on the Coe campus. The redbuds were mixed in with the bricks along the base of the patio, so I had to take out those bricks—and it was hard to get the redbud roots with any soil attached. The baptisia have very strong and deep taproots, even for these relatively young plants—and they wilt quickly once they are removed from the ground. The ones I transplanted from M1 to M2 last year all look good, so I think these should be okay if they receive regular watering for a few weeks. If they don't make it, we've got plenty more.

4 May. 3:20 pm; 69F; 30% humidity; sunshine, with some clouds; slight breeze; almost perfect Spring day. Main jobs accomplished today:

- Laid mulch over the rest of the weed carpet along the patio. Decided to do the same with the front. I finished B2, and it looks much better. There were about 10 baby lady's mantle growing through the bricks so I dug those up and placed them in front of a B2 lady's mantle. Last summer I moved several baby lady's mantle in front of the other clump, and those babies all survived and are beginning to fill in that gap.
- Dug up some of the yarrow, Harlene's donation, that has been planted along the fence in A2. Looks good early in the spring but does not get enough sun in that location so I moved two chunks into B1 and B2, each near the center of the bed. They wilted quickly, but with watering and mulching they'll do okay. My concern is that they spread by rhizomes under ground and may prove too aggressive next to the cranesbill, but that won't be a problem for this year.
- Worked on the middle of "F" bed. Removed a lot of asters. Dug up some of the sunflowers and regrouped them between the tansy and the baptisia. Separated a gray, woolly leafed stachys (I think it's a stachys) from the sunflowers and moved it to the front of the border, near the Karl Foerster fountain grass. Trying to create a lot of room around the baptisia. The last two years I have left plants too close to that "bully" — though it's a lovely buddy, the blue blossoms on display in a couple days. In digging out the asters, I encountered large, orange baptisia roots. I can see why they are not bothered by long spells of dry weather.

- Did some weeding in the “C” bed: removing dandelions and asters. A bunch of spurge in bloom, the stars of the garden at this time. Also Husker Red foliage looks good. Several allium with balls getting ready to open.

9 May. 11:50 am; 64F; 61% humidity; sunshine, light breeze; beautiful morning. Small thunderstorm last night, 0.4” in the rain gauge. A few quick notes:

- Went to Peterson Hall and brought back the apple croton, the dracaena, and the two potted grasses. I cut back the grasses and the dracaena. Gave them fresh compost/soil mix and watered them thoroughly. The dracaena has one flourishing mini-trunk, fortunately the short one. I placed it and the apple croton in the new “Asian” garden area. [*“Asian” only in my mind; perhaps in a few years this corner of the Alumni House west of the greenhouse can acquire some qualities westerners might associate with a Japanese-style garden.*]

- Planted four cerastium Yoyo (snow-in-summer) from Bluestone in the two raised “J” beds that already have the cerastium I planted last summer. Those cerastium look great—as do those two beds because of the lovely aquilegia blooms, now at their peak. Also the lupine blooms in the north bed are beginning to open, matching the blooming of its relative, the baptisia. Neither lupine nor cerastium bloomed last year, so this is a big advance.

- Did some hoeing of the gravel walkways. Interesting to come across a bunch of tiny tansies in the “D” walkway. Easy to kill at this stage—if I keep at it. Because of the rain last night I was able to pull up a lot of grass growing between bricks along the walkways. The Wilson wedding is this weekend so it would be nice to keep the walkways relatively clean.

- Most of my time this morning concentrated on the “I” bed—a bed I rarely work in. I spent a lot of time just looking at the bed, trying to figure out how to separate the perennials that are fighting with each other for space: asters (relentless spreaders), goldenrod, widely spread bee balm and hyssop, Solomon’s Seal, a few coneflowers, and several plants I can’t identify. I tore out a lot of asters and provided a space for the Solomon’s Seal. I dug up a few SS outliers and moved them in with the main colony. It would be better if the SS, because of its size, was a mid-border plant, but the colony is firmly centered in the back of the bed, and I will leave it there while trying to eliminate taller plants in front of them.

- The two compass plants I planted in “I” last summer have survived—at least there are two plants with long, lance-like leaves that don’t look like anyone else. I consulted my AHS encyclopedia, but I couldn’t be absolutely sure from the photo and description that these were my compass plants. I have two new daylilies intended for the back of that border—one reason why I need to do this cleaning out now so there is room for them.

11 May; 1:50 pm; 77F; 44% humidity; sunny; slight breeze. Beautiful day. Rained yesterday; worked in the morning in the rain. Chad and Lisa were walking around in garden so I joined them, discussing plants that they might want. Identified about 15 plants they had questions about. Plants I could share would include baptisia, redbuds, loosestrife, Joe Pye, asters,

coneflowers, daylilies, elderberry. Today at noon had lunch with Steve F., Kent H., Nukhet Y., and Wendy D. A lovely lunch with cheeses, salami, little breads, fresh fruit, several drinks, fudge brownies. An hour eating and chatting. Perfect day for a picnic.

This morning after working on walkways, spent the rest of my time cleaning up the “F” bed. Removed almost all the asters—though I’m sure I missed many roots, so they will be back. Moved a Sioux Blue grass away from the baptisia and closer to a second Sioux Blue. Also dug up a lot of bee balm and tried to gather them together in a clump in front of the Karl Foerster. Removed plants from around the three variegated phlox, though many of the leaves are no longer variegated. Perhaps they will gain variegations once they have more sun—or perhaps they lose their variegation as they grow older. I hope they don’t lost their variegation, it’s one of their most distinctive qualities. I opened the garden shed windows—the first time they have been opened since last fall. It almost feels like summer.

15 May (Monday); 5:35 pm; 90F; 42% humidity; slight breeze; sunny. Today felt like summer; no longer an “almost feels.” In fact, I have the fan turned on while I’m sitting here typing. Arrived at the garden at 7:00 and worked til noon. Mostly planting perennials that arrived in a shipment from Bluestone:

- Three Wendy Houses Garden Phlox (magenta) in M1 where last year we had some dwarf foxglove that have not returned.
- Four Diane’s Gold Brunnera in the two buried barrels east of the rain garden. This involved digging out the swamp milkweed and hyssop. The milkweed had a lot of big roots; don’t know if I got all of it out or not. Also removed milkweed surrounding both barrels, but it will come back.
- Three *Polygonatum O. Variegatum* (Solomon’s Seal) around the barrels with the new Brunnera. Also cleared vegetation circling the variegated SS planted last year on the “G” peninsula.
- Three Rudbeckia Sundance (4’ coneflowers) at back of “I” bed, where I had cleared out some asters and other “stuff” a few days ago.
- Three *Lobelia cardinalis* in the rain garden next to the cardinal flower planted last year. The new lobelia had become badly wilted before I released them from the Bluestone box two days ago, but they have perked up.
- Planted six *Salvia n. Caradonna* in three different locations: two groups in the “D” bed-- one group near an *S. caradonna* planted last year, and one pair in mid-border of the “K” bed, in front of a Joe Pye Weed.
- Three Carex Everest (Japanese Sedge) along west edge of “F” bed.

Other items planted not from Bluestone:

- Planted herbs in the herb garden, all started from seed: borage, bronze fennel, orion fennel, parsley, cilantro, and spearmint (which I put in a pot to keep it from spreading).
- Planted two hollyhocks—both started from seed—with the hollyhock in the A2 bed. Several mallow have self-seeded in that area, plus the old mallow is coming back.

My plans are to create a new page on the garden website, to be called "Monday Mornings." The idea is that each Monday I post to the website a list and brief descriptions of plants in bloom or of special note. Either Sunday evenings or Monday mornings, I will walk around and simply note what's looking good, what's coming into its own this week, and what's on the way out. Here's my first list:

Hot plants, at their peak:

- Iris (several varieties in several locations)
- Ox-eye daisies (all over garden but particularly noteworthy under the pergola).
- Clematis (at the front of the pergola)
- Giant alliums (in beds in front of the patio)
- Prairie Smoke (*Geum triflorum*; their blooms are past their prime but the seed heads are delightful, evoking the "prairie smoke" image)
- Meadow Sage (*Salvia nemotosa* are the first of the salvias to reach full display; their deep blue blooms should last for several weeks)
- Weigela (several shrubs, blooms first appearing at the end of last week)
- Snow-in-Summer (*Cerastium tomentosum* were planted last spring and did not bloom last year but this spring they are covered with white blossoms over their silver-gray foliage).
- Lupins (these are Russel Lupines, started from seed two years ago and now blooming for the first time)
- Cranesbill (several varieties, including Lancaster, Johnson's Blue, and Bloody)
- Columbine (the wild natives have self-seeded in several locations; also two wonderful batches of columbine in the raised beds on the north side of the garden)
- Pink Roses (in a bed near the patio; this morning they had dozens of open blooms and looked the best they have looked in years; they even had a faint but distinctive rose fragrance; it's not likely they will last very long).
- Little yellow buttercups (inadvertent hitch hikers from the Wilderness Field Station)
- Dianthus
- Dame's Rocket (white blooms on 4-5' stalks)
- Small blooms on small plants: Pink Mist Pincushion, Riding Hood Lavender Beardtongue, *Penstemon barbatus*, and one of the variegated coral bells.
- Catmint (poor man's lavender) in bloom in several locations
- Many plants with no flowers but noteworthy foliage: is particularly noteworthy: a dozen different hosta varieties, Husker Red Penstemon (throughout the garden), Valerie Finnis Cut Leaf White Sage (*Artemisia ludovisiana*), and the Helene Van Stein Lamb's Ear (*Stachys Byzantia*)

Plants just beginning to come into their peak display:

- Siberian iris (blooms just opening up; several marvelous clumps at the east end)
- Peonies (a few reds have already opened; should peak in a few days)

- Baptisia (false indigo; just beginning to open; they should peak at the end of the week)
- Several yarrow (including the Ballerina's tiny white flowers and the red 'Desert Eve' Achillea).
- Robinson's Red Painted Daisy (*Tanacetum coccineum*; just one plant but a distinctive blossom).
- We have our first blue Centaurea bloom; more will be forthcoming.
- Buds on a pergola wisteria are forming; should have blooms next week.

Plants with lingering blooms but on their way out:

- Dwarf lilacs (will be done by the end of the week)
- The tiny blue blooms of the brunnera are disappearing but still lovely foliage, which should continue to look good until the first hard freeze in the fall.
- The wild strawberry blooms are mostly gone, but a bunch of tiny, delicious strawberries will soon be ready for picking. [*Alas, no strawberries; my guess is the garden was missing the right pollinators.*]
- Spurge, moss phlox, and bleeding hearts all in decline.

[*A year later, I'm still posting Monday Morning Garden Reports, though they often deal with more issues than what is and is not blooming.*]

17 May. 3:30 pm; 81F; 50% humidity, windy; thunderstorm in the area though so far we have just had a sprinkle of rain; also a tiny bit of rain last night. Spent most of the day in the Garden. This morning I finished moving plants from 3rd floor Peterson. I pruned the Texas ficus and moved it into the Asian garden. Trimmed the scented geranium (a major haircut) and placed in the "J" bed complex. The cuttings I took home--it's now started to rain; humidity up to 52%--and potted 27 of them (will use for church rummage sale or give away). Speaking of give-aways, all the potted baptisia were gone this morning (about 40 plants in 14 containers). I sent out a new note shortly before noon indicating more would be available tomorrow afternoon—plus other plants in plentiful supply: spiderwort, Joe Pye Weed, some sedum, redbud, elderberry, yarrow, 4-5 more.

This afternoon was mostly planting bulbs. I replanted all the tuberose I dug up last fall. I initially thought I was planting the peacock orchids, and only after I finished planting did I look at the container and noted my error. But I'm certainly not digging them up and replanting. Only one tuberose bloomed last summer (though it produced wonderful, fragrant, long-lasting blooms), and I've read that they don't rebloom. I didn't come across that information, however, until after they were dug up, so I don't know which was the bloomer and which were the non-bloomers. Once the tuberose were planted, I started on the peacock orchids. Since I had dozens of baby bulbs (I type "bulb" but I doubt they are a "bulb"), I dug a series of shallow holes (mostly in M1 and F) and sprinkled a dozen or so mini-bulbs in each hole. I suspect they need more than a year of growth to become bloomers. Several had already begun growing shoots, so I'm sure they are alive. In fact, they all seemed in good condition, stored in the peat. I

planted some of the larger bulbs (most with babies hanging onto their bottoms) in “F”. As for the rest—which I hope to plant tomorrow along with the dahlias—I intend to place them at each end of the low beds in “E” and “J.” Temp now at 78F, 11 degrees cooler than when I came back to Coe this afternoon at 1:00.

18 May. 11:45 am; 68F; 66% humidity; overcast, slight breeze, quite comfortable. Thunderstorm went through early in the evening, leaving just over 1” rain. No notable wind or rain damage. Spent the morning potting plants for people who wanted freebies from the garden: I did bring two trays of plants from home (a dozen different kinds of tomatoes, peppers, dill, basil, borage). As for the plants from Coe, I divided an old clump of stella d’oro daylilies into six pots and one green-leaf hosta from behind the SE bench into seven potted hostas; also potted 20-30 baptisia in ten pots (nearly all small ones), several bunch of sedum, and pots with wild strawberries, yarrow, redbuds, elderberry, spiderwort, a purple coneflower, and sweet annie. I instructed people they could pick up stuff after 1:00 today. Interesting to see how much will be taken. My guess is the daylilies and hostas will still be here on the weekend—but that’s okay. I can donate them for the Buffalo UMC rummage sale.

One lovely surprise today: the iris on the berm east of the rain garden are in bloom: lovely, light purple blooms. And one outlier: a big yellow all by itself. The Dunn iris are almost completely gone, except for one outlier, a light purple. The Siberian iris are now in their glory: certainly no more beautiful flower in the garden. Such a powerful color and we have a lot of blooms this year, more than last year.

22 May. 10:05 am; 55F; overcast, light rain at the moment—the reason why I have come into the garden shed. It was bright sunshine when I woke up this morning, but the clouds rolled in, and forecast is for rain for today and tomorrow—and then consequential sunshine on Wednesday. Bit chilly in the shed so I turned on the heater. Was it last week I was using the fan to cool off? I began the morning with my Monday Morning walkabout. . . . Before it started to rain, I planted dahlias in the “J” bed: Kelvin Floodlight, Bishop Llandaff, and miscellaneous. Dahlias did fine overwintering in the peat—though many of the Bishops had dried more than I wanted. Probably 2/3 had emerging buds. At each end of the bed I planted peacock orchids. Now that it’s stopped raining, I will return to planting.

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“When gardens have meant something to a culture or a period of history, they have done so by referring to something shared, understood, and valuable to that culture.” ~Terry Harkness, “Garden from Region”

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23 May. 12:05 pm; 62F; 63% humidity; overcast all morning until just now, when the sun breaks through the clouds for a few seconds, sunlight streaming through the shed’s sunroof. A busy

morning. Arrived a few minutes after 7:00 and have been working (sunlight just left us) non-stop. A bunch of different jobs:

- Potted up seven more baptisia, most from bed "I", for two friends of the garden.
- Planted one package of Violet Giant-Almost-Dahlias Zinnias (J. Scheepers) along front border of bed "G". I also dug up a lot of horsetail.
- I dug up most of the little bluestem at the back of the raised "E" beds (left two clumps). Two clumps I transferred to the west raised "J" bed (where the Miscanthus had not survived the winter). The rest of the little bluestem I put into pots for later replanting.
- In place of the bluestem, I dug up the two lavender and the rue in A2 (planted the first year I worked in the garden—when I intended this area for our herb garden). Placed the two lavender in the west "E" bed; the rue in the middle of the back of the east "E" bed (the sun just returned!), positioned between the two little bluestem that I left in place.
- I dug up 1/3 of the Greek Oregano from A2 and replanted that at the front of the east "E" bed. Both of the raised herb beds are full. I emptied my bag of pea gravel around the new herbs.
- Where the rue and lavender had been, I planted four daylilies and three more daylilies in front of the perennial sunflowers. Need to dig up and replant the daffodil bulbs in that area. Some came up but no blooms. In process of planting the daylilies, I dug up three bulbs; all very small, undeveloped.
- Some blue fescue clumps look great, others are barely alive. Two of the latter are at the NE corner of the "D" bed. I dug up two of them and replanted in new soil—mix of sand, compost, and fresh soil. Also gave them some Milorganite fertilizer. We'll see if that helps. [It didn't]
- I had three Buestone Siberian Iris that I could not decide where to plant. Finally decided to plant in SE corner of bed "D", between peony/tansy clump and a Joe Pye Weed. I removed the golden rod that was in that spot. Then cut back most of the tansy—which is fighting with the peony over the same space. Later I'll take out the tansy, but it's going to be a big job—and I'll wait until the peony is done blooming. It has lovely white/pink blooms, nice fragrance, similar to peonies at east end of M1 bed.
- I finally planted the Roxanne Cranesbill that came in the Bluestone order. Planted it at the front of the "F" border.

Time for lunch!

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Wouldn't we all be truly crazy if we did not each have a special place where our most fantastic dreams, personal rituals, and symbolic associations could be expressed? Perhaps a garden is best considered as a precise point of connection between a human and the earth—a psychic umbilical to the earth's spirit. ~Robert L. Thayer, Jr. "Personal Dreams and Pagan Rituals"

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24 May. 12:00 noon; 57F; 76% humidity; overcast. Another English-gardening-weather day. Removed the old rose from under the flowering crab in A1. In the process discovered that the

ginger ground cover had small blooms—though they draw no attention to themselves. Tried to return the ginger to the area where they had been growing. Also dug up three swamp milkweed. And one big surprise: discovered that the thyme from the Wilderness Field Station had survived the winter. It looked dead last fall after I moved it. Despite the thyme being covered by the wild strawberries (which are throwing out hundreds of runners), the WFS thyme managed to peek its head through the leaves. Amazing. On the other side, emerging through the strawberry leaves is a good-looking clump of Pearly Everlasting—opposite the corner where one was located last year.

25 May; 12:10 pm; 69F; 54% humidity; slight breeze; started cloudy, but sun came out mid-morning and turning into a beautiful spring day. This was mostly a planting and re-planting day:

- Dug up and split two green hostas behind SE bench and left for Coe staff person to pick up. Also gave her a bag full of sedum from the rock garden (it was running over the thyme and moss phlox).
- Planted the homeless daylilies: two in “F” bed (west end, where I am still digging out asters), one in “H” bed near the shrub rose (this meant taking out two Russian sage that looked lost in that spot), and one daylily in a mid-border vacancy in the “I” bed.
- In the “I” bed, to make room for the Russian sage, I placed a Fall mum behind a light fixture. The new sage is now in a cozy relationship with three other Russian sages.
- In the “I” bed I also moved a *H. autumnale*: plant looked good, was growing, but was now under leaves of a daylily that had dramatically grown from last year.
- The other Russian sage I moved to the “G” bed with three other R. sages along the east drainage channel. Makes a tighter unit.
- I planted several Black Knight scabiosa in the two raised “J” beds, behind the columbine, assuming the columbine would die back once it was finished blooming (at the moment they still look wonderful and have more buds yet to open). Three other Black Knights I positioned in the middle of the “D” bed in a blank area. [*Neither of these efforts worked; in both cases the scabiosa was overwhelmed by its neighbors.*]
- Sowed a packet of Violet Giant-Almost-Dahlias Zinnias at the front of the “H” bed. In the process removed some bindweed and horsetail—more of that growing than I expected, though still much less pervasive than in the front of the “G” bed.
- Planted two Mexican Torch in the back of the “I” bed—where I have planted some the last two years. The two compass plants are still growing. Unusual leaf shape; I hope they are what I think they are. [*The Mexican Torches got lost; too many different plants competing with each other in a small arena.*]
- Brought from home 9 cuttings of Moses-in-the-cradle (a plant I always associate with Texas, where I first encountered it) : planted two in the “strawberry “ pot at the west end of the “F” bed; the other cuttings in the two large vases behind the NW and SW benches.

30 May. 11:50 am; 73F; 32% humidity; sunny but some big cumulous clouds; fairly windy, but still a lovely spring day. Tasks this morning:

- Planted several blue lobelia (started from seed) in the two raised “J” beds and two spots in rock/crevice garden (where it did so well two years ago).
- Planted two Bluestone brunella (from Bluestone) in the “G” bed, in front of the barrel (where verbena b’s have germinated). I dug pretty deep into the soil, trying to remove as much horsetail as I could reach.
- Three Bluestone Siberian Iris I planted in the east end of the “D” bed, between the surprise peony and a Joe Pye weed. Might get a little crowded there, but I thought it would be nice to have some color in that area of the garden in May, creating a connection with Siberian Iris planted elsewhere in garden. I need to dig up the peony and tansy, replant the peony, and dispense with the tansy.
- Spent a long time digging up horsetail and purple-fringe loosestrife out of the bed behind the SE bench; the loosestrife was invading the hostas. The new border space might last through the rest of this year.
- Removed many tiny flowering crab and miscellaneous weeds and unwanted asters from behind the NE bench. Cut back a clump of asters that had fallen over.
- Planted calendula and nasturtiums in two planters. They don’t look very happy, but they should come around. I also moved the four planters with the stock (from Menard’s) and placed them outside the shed. I cut off all the flower stalks (which were looking ragged) and seeds. We’ll see if they re-ignite. [*They did produce a few new blooms but nothing comparable to their initial display.*]

I spent some time trying to figure out the identity of a plant with foliage like a lamb’s ear and white blooms like a phlox. I believe the faux lamb’s ear is an *alba Lychnis coronaria*. My identification of this white-flowered rose campion, a member of the dusty miller family, is based on the erect, woolly, silver-gray, ovate-lance-shaped foliage. On the opposite side of the garden are the Jersulaem cross (i.e., London Pride), which are also a Lychnis.

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Art may be said to be an instrument by which members of a society share perceptions, styles of consciousness, modes of preunderstanding. Reality is constructed. The world is an Easter egg hunt, contrived by an unknown artist, shaped like Wordsworth’s flower in a crannied wall, not to show us how to do something nor even to reveal nature’s laws, but to give access. We can take the pieces home—seeds from a catalogue, an old tire to surround them, a birdhouse—and play a game of composition, miniaturizing the universe. Thus do we incorporate ourselves in it despite the disarray that it seems to be.
~Paul Shepard, “Objets Trouvés”

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June 2017 Garden Journal

1 June. 8:45 am; 67F; 48% humidity; sunny, slight breeze; perfect June morning. I had to leave the garden quickly yesterday and didn't write any notes, so I'll begin the day by noting a few items:

- Dug up the tansy and peony that were bonded together in the "D" bed. Incredibly dense, woody web of intertwined roots, almost impossible to separate them. I was able to salvage the peony roots that formed an outer circle on the north side; the rest went into the yardy.
- I had left the yardy outside the garden walls for several days, but no one came by to empty it so I dragged it over to the dumping area next to the students' vegetable garden. This worked out to my advantage because I saw several nice chunks of limestone. MVM and I came back yesterday evening and picked up three blocks (one probably weighing over 100 lbs) that are perfect for the garden. Also found a small slice of granite that is now on the shore of the south rain garden channel.
- I transplanted into the rain garden the turtlehead (*Chelone lyonii*) I had brought from home. Placed them where last summer I planted the rudbeckia, which did not survive. I trimmed off the tops of the turtlehead, and they are remained turgid, handling the transplant without any notable problem.
- Trimmed the espalier flowering crab. I wish I felt more comfortable knowing how to say the word "espalier" —not a word we ever used in Kansas. Also removed all the suckers growing up around the bottom. The sculptured tree looks much trimmer, a surprising touch of sophistication in this bourgeois garden.
- Trimmed the volunteer trees in the "H" bed. Most have sprouted from the roots of the flowering crab removed in 2014, but the one unidentified tree has some nasty thorns. After their haircuts, everyone looks more civilized.
- Major achievement: pruned the wisteria. The two vines on the south side are looking very robust and the SE wisteria has a lot of blooms. I pruned away all of the suckers and low-lying new branches. They both look cleaner. As for the north side fellows, the NE one is generating enough growth to start climbing onto the pole, but the NW plant still looks anemic.
- Started cutting back the ox-eye daisies. Focused on area under arbor where I planted an unnamed ornamental grass last summer. This cutting back should provide the grass with more sunshine and room to grow. [*Alas, the grass never took advantage of my special care. I'll give it one more year.*]
- The apple scab has hit the flowering crab. Many leaves have come down. [*By the end of the summer, all the flowering crab were stark, defoliated skeletons.*]

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The garden . . . is that middle ground between the given and the made, a dialogue undertaken in dialect both provincial and personal. We may script, make pictures and music, and write about nature, but, to my knowledge, the garden is the only art in which a detente is actually undertaken. When the plants came from horticultural or floricultural programs and are part of a design, the reciprocity becomes fainter. As

garden architects we may laugh at the virgin in her bathtub grotto or the plastic duck behind a chain-link fence, but we should be uneasy about that derision, for the constellation before us affirms that someone engages selectively with a real but inexplicable world rather than retreating into abstractions or rational plans. ~Paul Shepard, "Objets Trouvés"

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5 June. A Celebration of weeds. It can be tricky knowing how to define a weed. In the Alum Garden several plants are vigorous self-seeders and thus appear in many places where they are not welcome (thus earning themselves the "weed" moniker). But gardens are complicated. Some of these plants—such as Queen Anne's Lace or Sweet Annie—have attractive qualities that keep them from becoming candidates for total elimination. This week three weed/not-weed plants acquired some prominence in the garden:

- Spiderwort: the *Tradescantia virginiana* have spread themselves throughout the garden; hundreds of volunteers get pulled up each spring and summer, but many clumps are welcome, their purple-blue blooms providing dramatic points of color throughout the garden, in full sunshine and full shade.
- Fleabane: most of these annuals are pulled up and thrown in the compost pile, but we keep a few because the small daisy-like blooms can fill a void at the back of a border. The scientific genus is name *Erigeron* ironically combines "eri" (meaning spring) with "geron" (meaning old man, apparently because of this wild flower's resemblance to a lanky old man).
- Crown Vetch: although it has a lovely foliage and attractive pink blooms, which appeared over the weekend, it's an aggressive thug; I keep digging it up and throwing away whatever I can find, and it keeps coming back.

7 June. 10:35 am; 78F; 40% humidity; bright sunshine, no clouds, no breeze. Beautiful June day. This morning's routine follows yesterday morning's: trimming and pruning. The hedge trimmer is getting a daily workout, running until the lithium battery is done for the day. Yesterday I focused on the "I" yews; today on the "F" yews. Their fronts are 90% done, but the challenge is getting a ladder behind them. The Stokes ladder works great in the front, but it's too large and cumbersome to work well in the confined area between the yews and the fence—even though we've created a walkway behind the yews. If everything goes well, I should finish trimming the hedges tomorrow—then I need to find some who will sharpen the trimmer's blades.

9 June. I finished the pruning of the yews and the cutting of limbs from the apple trees. Everybody looks much better. The hedge trimmer is not cutting very well, so I'm hoping that a place listed in the yellow pages will provide a sharpening service as advertised. The Steven Marc Weiss memorial service reception is tomorrow afternoon at the Alumni House, so I'll spend the rest of my morning cleaning up beds and raking the gravel walkways. I also need to

do some watering because the next couple of days are going to put some stress on plants. Fortunately they started watering the grass with the irrigation system in the mornings and some of the flower beds have benefited from that extra moisture.

6:15 pm addendum. Returned to the garden this afternoon, arriving about 1:45. It was hot, but fortunately there was some cloud cover (in fact, a tiny sprinkle at one point) and some breeze so it felt much cooler. I concentrated on cleaning up bed "D": removed miscellaneous flowers/weeds, did some watering (peony, new iris, new salvia, astilbe), and mulched areas where you could see bare dirt. Some soil I worked with was quite hard; we need a thorough rain.

In bed "C" I dug up one of the big clumps of Stella d'oro daylilies at the front of the border and divided the clump into six good-sized clusters. I then cut back the Walker's Low catmint in that bed (in between two rows of daylilies) and moved the catmint to the front of the border—so it provides some symmetry with the catmint at the front of the "L" bed. I did some miscellaneous cleaning up (for example, dug up sever rosebud volunteers and cut back clumps of ox-eye daisies and spurge located in the middle of the daylilies). Dug up and removed several shoots of milkweed. Bed "C" looks much cleaner. Now we'll hope the daylilies come through and provide some blooms in the next month. [*They did come through.*]

13 June. 8:35 am; 82F, 70% humidity. Combination of heat and humidity already makes it feel oppressive so early in the morning. Since it will soon be over 90 in the garden shed, I thought I better type notes now because it will be too hot in a couple of hours. Yesterday I did the Morning Walk with garden hose in hand; took over two hours for watering—and still had to skip many areas. This morning I brought three sprinklers and set up one that is now watering the "I" bed. My current plan is to work my way around the garden, perhaps running the sprinkler for two hours per bed. Weather forecast does have possibility of showers in the next few days but nothing certain. Some of the beds are really dry, even with the mulch cover. While the sprinkler is going, I plan to do some weeding and deadheading, beginning with the herb garden (where little sprouts show up big).

19 June. 22 June. 11:30 am; 80F, cloudy, 68% humidity, slight breeze; feels like it could/should rain; dark clouds on several horizons this morning but no rain so far. Had a series of short showers yesterday; rain gauge indicated 0.35" (had 0.3" had home so two gauges confirm each other). Yesterday and today I hoed the gravel walkways; a lot of small stuff just emerging; the little sedum-like plants the most common; not much grass at this time of the year. I did some raking—will finish the raking tomorrow. I did move some walkway gravel from in front of the north-central bench to the L/B2 walkway, which had become rather bare.

Another task today was pruning the "G" shrub rose. It had a lot of dead blooms on it, plus I encountered a crew of Japanese beetles. Convinced several to drop into soapy water in an old yoghurt container—though several obstinate ones did not want to fall in the right direction. Also

found a few of our Asian friends on the rose bushes in “L.” Yesterday I found some at the Wickiup garden. Alas, they are going to occupy many hours of my time for the next few weeks—perhaps till mid July or even later. [*Prophecy confirmed: record number of Japanese Beetles in the Alumni House Garden, and they continued appearing into the first week in August; however, the 2017 infestation in the vegetable garden was relatively minor, in contrast to 2016 when I removed thousands from my pole beans.*]

Did some weeding in the herb garden beds. Mostly pulling up grass, spiderwort, and miscellaneous weeds. The basil all look wonderful, but several are beginning to bloom so they need trimming—which will be a difficult emotional challenge because they currently look so attractive. The herb garden in the raised beds has been a dramatic improvement over my previous efforts to create an herb garden in A2.

Had three classes of student artists, drawing flowers using pastels. I talk briefly with the instructor, mentioned the garden website, and encouraged her to submit some photos of student work if she was so inclined. I doubt she will follow up, but at least she didn’t immediately say, “No thanks.”

23 June; 11:50 am; 82F; 47% humidity; sunny, slight breeze. Without the breeze, it feels warmer than 82; started work at 9:00 am and within minutes was enjoying a good sweat. Today was more of the same: hoeing and raking the walkways. Eliminating those little sedum is particularly tough because they need virtually no soil to survive; in hoeing them I’m just replanting. I also trimmed the “H” bed shrub rose and in the process killed 20-30 Japanese beetles. I was distressed to find a couple beetles on the pink hollyhock, having drilled holes through the blossoms. I did check out the milkweed—which the beetles have relished in the past, but today only found one loner. A lot of the beetles were copulating so it was particularly satisfying to give them a baptism in soapy water while they were procreating.

Today we had a lot of visitors. It was the last day of College for Kids and the youngsters who came here to draw a flower brought their parents to show them the flowers they had drawn. In a few instances students were holding their drawing next to the flower that had served as the drawing subjects (drawings were done in chalk so the drawings did have color). While I was raking, one woman was looking at a lovely little blue flower in the raised bed, and she said something to her daughter which led me to believe she liked the bloom but didn’t know what it is. Unfortunately it’s something I planted last spring (started from seed) and I’ve never figured out what it is. I need to take the time to figure it out because it has a lovely bloom—and with the columbine and snow in summer now finished with their blooms, it’s the only thing blooming in either of those raised beds. [*I eventually figured out it was a miniature snapdragon.*]

27 June (Tuesday). 11:50 am; 81F; 33% humidity; sunny, very slight breeze. A lovely morning; ground is getting dry, but supposedly rain is on the way in the next 24-36 hours. This morning I

focused on cleaning up the “I” and “F” beds, at the front of each border. Cut back some salvia, removed a lot of small stuff, and pulled out some unwanted asters. I also worked on the wood chip walk in the “H” bed—removing horsetail, grass, bindweed. I did some transplanting—moving mallow from the raised “E” beds to the border under the pergola. I also did some cleaning up in that area: cut back a bunch of daisies, dug up a lot of queen anne’s lace, and cleaned out unwanted plants in the rain garden—which looks pretty good. Dug up a bunch of milkweed that has appeared in the past week along the rain garden border. The milkweed I’m allowing to grow on the east side of the wood chip walkway is blooming. Interesting to note that there has only been one Japanese beetle on it. Most of the beetles have been on the roses and hollyhocks—though I did kill a large congregation worshipping on a tall aster in the “D” bed.

There is a foreign language group meeting in the Alumni House this morning (faculty from Coe and Cornell) so had some visitors—including St. Clair and Chaimov. Also a high school girl with mother and professional photographer was in the garden for senior photos—in three costumes (dancer, clarinetist with long gown, and summer suit). I managed to stay out of any photos. As was true yesterday, a lot of butterflies in the garden: a couple of Monarchs but mostly Red Admirals.

30 June. 5:45 pm; 82 F; 53% humidity; partly cloudy but mostly sunshine; light breeze. Lovely early summer day—though warm and humid enough to work up a sweat. Worked in garden this morning for about three hours: pruned roses in M1 & M2; killed a lot of Japanese beetles. There is a weed in M1 that they are really love, many of the leaves bare skeletons. Killed as many beetles as I could find and then dug up the weeds. I had forgotten about the small rose bushes in M1 until yesterday—and discovered they were covered with beetles. Cut them back substantially; again many leaves were just skeletons. This evening I found several flower buds on rose bush in the “L” bed totally covered: able to brush about 20 beetles at one time into my yoghurt container with soapy fountain water.

This afternoon I went to the Hy-Vee Drug in Marion and purchased 15 large river-bed stones, some fairly heavy. In lifting one I wrenched a muscle in my lower back, so at the moment I’m moving (and sitting) a bit gingerly. My life is so dependent on being able to keep working physically. Need to be thinking all the time about not over-stressing the system—but hard to do. I got 11 of the stones moved into the garden and placed them in front of the two water drains from the patio to disperse the rain water as it flows into the flower beds. The stones replace red bricks I had placed there earlier this spring. The new arrangement is not perfect (aesthetically, the stones are too large for the site), but I’m going to live with it for the time being. As for the bricks, they will go under a drain that comes off the alumni house and shoots water into the “Asian” garden area: a lot of the wood chips have been washed away; I’m hoping this new arrangement will reduce the problem.

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“The man who has learned to take pride in his garden hurries home from his work, claimed steel company officials, “spending little time loitering and none in the saloon. Therefore, the garden tends to reduce alcoholism. The man’s standing in the community is raised; and what is even better, his own self-respect is promoted.” ~Arnold R. Alanen, quoting U.S. Steel Corporation 1914 publication in “Immigrant Gardens on a Mining Frontier”

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I love this effort by U.S. Steel to convince workers to become gardeners and thus reduce alcoholism while promoting self-respect.