



"There's fennel for you, and columbines; there's rue for you; and here's some for me; we may call it herb of grace o' Sundays. O! you must wear your rue with a difference. There's a daisy; I would give you some violets, but they withered all when my father died. They say he made a good end, --

Hamlet's father may have made a good end, at least according to Shakespeare, but the end of the Lantern certainly marks a withering of a different sort. The phone calls from the editor will no longer grace my days ("Do you remember Doug that the Layout Day is this Tuesday?") and my nights will no longer be spent trying to decide if I had written about that before ("So what if I did; -- if I've forgotten, so have the readers"). I certainly hope that somewhere in the paper, somebody has thought to graciously thank current staff (especially editors and family) as well as put a good

word in for those countless hours spent by almost nameless, and certainly thankless volunteers who put together the Lantern ("Oh great, here's the gardening column at it's usual last minute rush -- now where do we put this thing"). (Hey guys, I just got back from Florida and am writing this at 6am to meet today's deadline)

My last gardening words for the Lantern are a summary of what I believe will make your gardens a better place, both for plants and for gardeners.

Feed your soil and not your plants.

Make the soil a wonderful place to be by composting, fertilizing, double digging and mulching. Keeping the soil happy will make your plants grow better, reduce insect and disease populations and keep your workload happier.

Grow different plants.

Most nurseries make the majority of their money by selling approximately 15 plant varieties. Get out of the groove and experiment. Set the pace, garden experience should come from many years of experimentation, not one year of gardening repeated many years in a row.

Design, design, design.

Get rid of stiff, narrow flower beds that narrowly circle the house and property as a snake circles its next mouse. Expand those beds, eliminate the stiff lines, and drink in the joy of unconventional gardening design.

Get rid of the plastic and plywood.

Plastic has no place in a good garden. Plastic is tacky and so are bent over plywood figures showing off their bloomers.

Plant some trees.

Plant some different trees, render the ubiquitous Crimson King Maple into the proverbial compost pile.

Plant some native shrubs and plants in your garden.

Give our birds and insects a chance to live and thrive in your neighbourhood.

Put your pesticides in the garbage, use only Soap, Rotenone and B.T. on the home scale garden. We do not need anything else in our large nursery and garden, why do you need something on your gardening scale?

Above all, enjoy your garden.

Put a seat in your garden, if you do not sit out there, you'll only go there to work and not enjoy. Spend some time over coffee or tea, just sitting and watching.

Ignore opinionated garden writers.

Say "Goodbye" Doug.



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