



Swinburne said it best. And frosts are slain and flowers begotten, And in green underwood and cover, Blossom by blossom the spring begins. Our spring has begun and has progressed quickly and madly into summer this year. Many of the flowering bushes are at least two weeks earlier than normal and the heat of summer has shortened their bloom time for us all. I think, I missed the Oriental poppies blooming in the stock beds in the nursery. I did not go down there for a week and they had bloomed and finished in that time. Survival in the gardens was good this year, we have talked to a lot of folks this spring and it seems that no single class of plant was badly hit by the winter. We lost a 6 year old cherry tree. Apparently healthy last summer, it simply did not leaf out this spring, a Russian apple tree we had been growing for 8 years also passed away this spring but that was half expected (but no less mourned). Perennials survived well in the main gardens, a few of the rock garden plants succumbed to being too heavily mulched and a few of the biennials did not make it but on the whole, it was a very good spring for the gardens. Grass is growing madly with all the rain and heat and in fact I do not recall ever seeing such a great start for the hay field we call a lawn. Summer is a good time for cut flowers and every house should make a few extra efforts to have a bouquet on the table at all time. Cutting the flowers in the morning before the heat of the day reduces the sugar content of the plant and the water content is the best approach to make sure your cut flower lasts a long time. Re-cutting the stems under water so that the cut end does not dry out for even a microsecond is also a great idea. Ensuring that the stem end cells do not dry out makes sure that they continue to draw water up the stem to keep the plant alive. While many folks talk about putting aspirin etc in the water to help keep the flower going longer, research has shown that this does not accomplish anything.

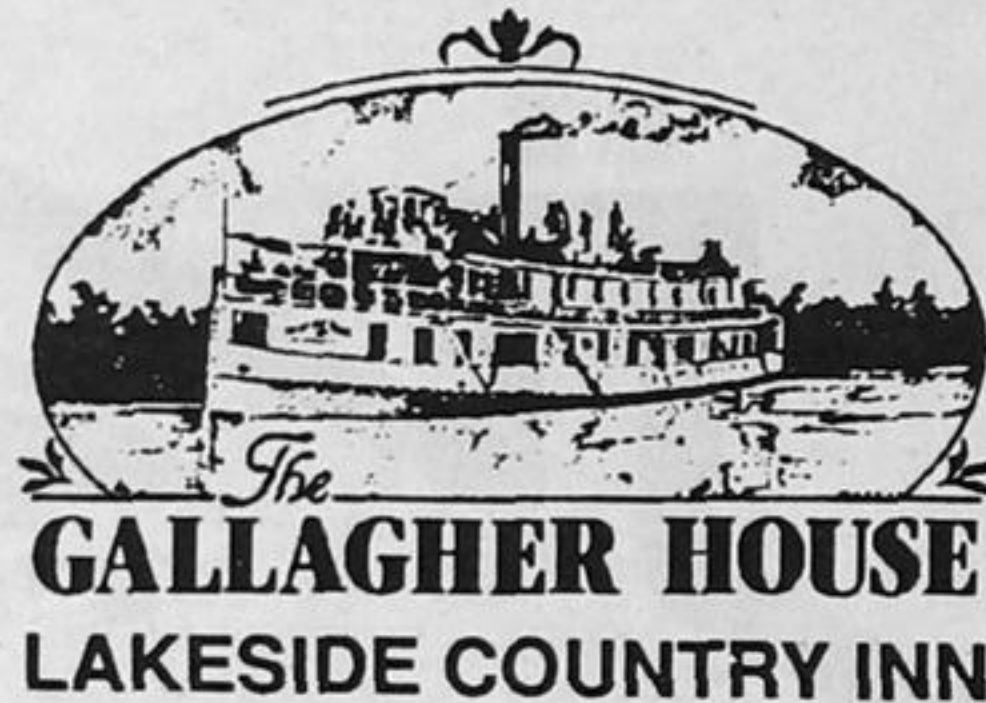
A flower can use a touch of sugar. (Sprite works well). Commercial preservatives contain sugar and algae suppressor. If you change the water regularly and add a pinch of sugar to the water your flowers will do well. Speaking of cut flowers, our tender roses survived the winter without any care. We buried them very deeply when we planted them, the bud union was approximately 6-8 inches deep instead of the 2" recommended by the normal gardening book. We even ran the bulldozer over them and this spring they popped back up and as of this writing (June 11) we have had cut roses on the table. We have planted a bunch more and I think if this really works we will branch out into rose gardens. I learned about this planting deeply trick from a rose grower in Gananoque who passed along an article written by a prairie gardener. It is funny in this gardening world of ours, information gets passed along in the most interesting manner, and it is often the casual remark that leads us to informative discussion.

An idea you can hold on to and try next spring is to use old plasticized feed bags over your tomato cages to protect them in the early spring. The bag lets in enough light to keep the plant growing and stops the wind from whipping the plant to death. An excellent idea and old feed bags are easy enough to come by in this area. (hint: try one of the local feed dealers, you can probably get them quite reasonably without the feed). Remember to use tanglefoot in your trees this summer to prevent the "crawlies" from getting back into the tree once they have hit the ground. I wrapped the trunks of trees I am protecting with masking tape, applying the tanglefoot to the tape then prevents any insect from crawling back up the tree. You might also try painting a ball red, covering it with tanglefoot and hanging it in your apple trees. This will attract the adult moths and they will be stuck to the lure instead of laying eggs in your apples (eggs turn into worms). Tanglefoot is great stuff, environmentally friendly and effective.

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