Spring Plant & Bulb Sale
Sponsored by the Friends of the Domes
Saturday, June 2, 10 a.m. – 2 p.m.

www.milwaukeedomes.org
By Phil Rozga, Acting President

Most of us can agree that this has not been a normal Wisconsin Winter. But even without our usual snow cover, it has been rather bleak and gray. House plants, especially those with blooms, are a way to bridge the bleak days until spring. I believe every home should have some green plants all year round. Some plants are seasonally traditional, like Christmas Poinsettias and Easter Lilies. Others may have been brought inside from the summer garden, although survival rates are not always great. Some are purchased specifically as house plants. The Domes Gift Shop has a variety of house plants for sale, and books on how to grow them. I purchased a book titled The House Plant Expert by Dr. D.G. Hessay ($17.96 for members), which tells everything you need to know to grow almost any plant.

There are a number of reasons to include plants in your home. In addition to their beauty, they help remove some undesirable gasses from the atmosphere and add humidity. It is fun to start plants from kitchen waste, call it garbage gardening. I’ve started plants from grapefruit and avocado. The tops of pineapples and carrots can be placed in water to grow roots. This is a great project for children or grandchildren.

Another book I found in the Gift Shop is 100 Flowers and How They Got Their Names by Diana Wells ($15.96 for members). Did you know that forsythia and zinnia are the names of actual people? William Forsyth was a Scottish gardener and Johann Gottfried Zinn was a German Medical Professor at Gottingen University. You don’t want to know what orchids were named after, but if you must find out, read the book.

This is a good time of year to read seed catalogs and plan your garden. It’s also a great time to come to the Domes and get a preview of summer.

By Paula Zamiatowski, Interpretive Educator

Our culture is a vital part of our lives. It influences our values, humor, hopes, and fears. Mitchell Park Domes welcomes visitors from around the world, so it helps to have some perspective and understanding of different cultures and how much we have in common.

Research shows that when a student’s culture is understood and appreciated by teachers, the student does better in school, feels more accepted as part of the school community, works harder to achieve and is more successful in school. When children enter the Education Center for classes and see my “Culture Kids” smiling back, it opens a lively discussion about the significance of plants and our environment.

In order to build communities that are powerful enough to attain a significant shift in sustainable practices, we need people working together. If cultural groups join forces, rather than work in isolation, they will be more effective in reaching common goals.

Saving the environment will not work unless we act together as a global community. Understanding each other is a good start. Everyone needs to breathe and eat. So where do we get our clean oxygen and produce?

Plants! What better way to get to know each other than through the foods we eat. A majority of the basic ingredients of a healthy diet originate from plants. And don’t forget about all the plant resources we use every day. Future camps are being developed to encompass ethnic traditions, customs and foods. I can’t wait.

By coming together to recognize our many cultural backgrounds, and honoring the heritage of each one, hopefully we will have a renewed urgency to preserve our natural world so we can preserve our history. Please come meet my culture kids during our Green Living Festival on Saturday, April 7!
By Sandy Folaron

The plants may be confused about their growing schedules due to the mild winter season, however most people are not! Many are planning their gardens and contemplating how soon they can get outside and turn over that first shovelful of garden soil!

We are also contemplating our first shovelful of construction soil when we begin to build our new County Greenhouses right here in Mitchell Park behind the Domes. The project is due to start this summer and with a little luck and much anticipation, we believe that we will be up and running by late fall. This extension of the Domes will serve the public and our own horticultural staff as well. It will also offer cross training opportunities along with community programs and tours to show our visitors the full range of how plants are grown for the Conservatory’s yearly seasonal shows and collections. Many of you who have been involved with the Friends organization know that this has been an important topic for years and to see it all finally come together is cause for celebration!

Look for other new additions and improvements to Mitchell Park in the near future including the installation of a “Green Bay Packer” donated football practice field and a potential skateboard friendly walkway over existing pathways!

And check out our new plaza planting beds designed by our Show Dome horticulturist, Mary Braunreiter, under the guidance of Roy Dublick (one of the landscape architects of Chicago’s Millennium Garden). This green initiative, with permeable pavers and water fountains using recycled “captured” water, all add an eco-friendly and esthetically beautiful entrance to our facility.

Enjoy the season and happy planting!

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From the Director's Chair

Continued from page 1

breach the third year barrier.

The Art Festival is the most flexible, dynamic Friends of the Domes event. This year we will feature incredible visual art, wonderful performance art, delicious food by some of Milwaukee's best restaurants, entertaining and educational features, adult and family friendly fun at a world class venue, our Gold Medal Winning Milwaukee County Park's Mitchell Park Domes.

The 2012 MDAF website features the beautiful award winning art “Justin’s Tent” from last year’s plein air competition, created by the incredibly talented Tom Kubala. As soon as the participating artists for 2012 are determined, the artists and their art will dominate the site. For updates on artists, music, food, sponsors and more, check www.milwaukeedomesartfestival.com often. When I see you there, we will all be having a great time!
Fantasy Garden Train Show

Everywhere they looked, something amazing to see!

COMING ON MARCH 31
Tulip Mania
Spring Show

Photos by Bridget O’Donnell

Green Living Festival

MITCHELL PARK DOMES
524 S. Layton Blvd. | Milwaukee | 414-257-5611

APRIL 7, 2012 | 10am - 5pm

Find ways to save your green while helping people and our planet!

REGULAR ADMISSION RATES APPLY
COUNTYPARKS.COM
Marketing the Conservatory, A Problem Solved

By Steven Libbey, FOD Board Member

For years thousands of people have driven past the Domes every day. To many, our Domes are similar to beautiful art hanging in a hallway. Rarely do people pause to appreciate it, in spite of the joy it brings. For the conservatory this was a painful problem – until January.

Your FOD has contributed a major marketing tool in the form of bidirectional digital billboard in front of the conservatory. Try to drive by now without seeing what is happening or coming soon to the Domes. This sign of brilliant things happening at the Domes is worth celebrating!

This largest capital investment to date required the executive leadership of acting FOD president Phil Rozga and former FOD president Roger Krawiecki. Milwaukee County Parks Director Sue Black is a supernatural force of positive change for the Domes. Sandy Folaron is Mitchell Park’s fulcrum maestro of positive impact. Of course, nothing is possible without the incredible growing support of every FOD members. Thank you.

The sign is an attention grabbing marketing tool, promoting the Domes 24/7. The FOD now has a new revenue stream dedicated exclusively to the support of the horticultural conservatory. As the FOD takes a more progressive approach in fundraising and delivering real value via events, horticultural collection enhancements and facility promotion, upkeep and improvement, we will be replicating this success over and over.

If you would like to promote your business in front of the conservatory contact the FOD right now for opportunities at www.milwaukeedomes.org.

Save the Date

Orchid Show & Sale
September 15-16

Gifts Under Glass
What’s New in the Gift Shop?

By Sarah Philipp

Joan Calder grew up learning about gardening on a dairy farm in Cato, Wisconsin. After receiving a B.A. in Social Work from the University of Wisconsin, she held a variety of jobs, from recreation director for the U.S. Department of the Army in Vietnam, to travel agent, to marketing assistant in a high tech industry. In 1997, she returned to school to follow her passion. She earned an A.S. degree in Ornamental Horticulture from Foothill College in Los Altos Hills, California.

Joan manages the campus greenhouse for Ecology, Evolution and Marine Biology at the University of California in Santa Barbara, and teaches garden design classes for the Santa Barbara City College Continuing Education Program.

Airplanes in the Garden - Monarch Butterflies Take Flight is her first children’s book. To create this adventure in nature, Calder combined butterfly facts in a fun to read story. Illustrator Cathy Quiel added vibrant watercolors not usually seen in a children’s book.

Photo by Bridget O’Donnell
Did You Know?

Turtles Live at the Domes!

• Turtles are cold-blooded reptiles.
• A group of turtles is called a bale.
• Turtles live on every continent except Antarctica.
• North America contains a large variety of turtle species.
• There are only two species of turtle in Europe.
• A hard shell called a “carapace” protects the turtle’s body.
• Several species of turtles can live to be over 100 years old.
• Turtles range in size from 4 inches to 1,500 pounds.
• Turtles have existed for nearly 215 million years.
• Many species of turtles are endangered.

The turtle pictured here is a Red-eared Slider living in the Tropical Dome. A three-toed box turtle named Terra (short for Terrapene carolina triunguisand) lives in the Education Center at the Domes. Three-toed box turtles like Terra are omnivorous, meaning they eat items like snails, insects, berries, fungi, slugs, worms, and roots.

Turtle facts, courtesy of sciencekids.com and kidskonnect.com.

What Is It?

If you visited the Show Dome for the Fantasy Garden Train Show, you would have seen this wonderful plant, commonly known as Flowering Kale.

The Latin name is Brassica oleracea “Chidori Red.” It was grown from seed that germinated at our greenhouse center last July! It has ruffled and fringed leaves with uniform dwarf heads. This Kale variety has a deep red center with purple outer leaves when fully grown. It is sometimes seen in shades of pink and white. You can often find it in fall gardens along with chrysanthemums, asters, and pansies. Although Kale is an edible, nutritious vegetable, Flowering Kale is generally not eaten due to its toughness and strong flavor. Watch for this plant in our upcoming fall and Christmas shows!

This answer comes from Amy Thurner, a new Horticulturist at the Domes. Watch for more on Amy in the next issue of this newsletter – and learn about the cool things she gets to do in her job at the Domes. Maybe you will want to become a horticulturist when you grow up!
By Gail Schumann

The crown of thorns or Christ plant (Euphorbia melii or E. splendans) takes its name from history. It is said that the spiny, pliable stems were woven into a “crown of thorns” and placed on the head of Jesus before he was crucified. The plant originated in Madagascar, but it was already widely planted in the Middle East at the time of this event.

Euphorbia species belong to a big family. Many species share features with Western Hemisphere cacti because they have adapted to similar climates in the Eastern Hemisphere. These plants have latex tubes that produce a milky sap to discourage feeding by herbivores (plant eaters). For example, the rubber plant (Hevea brasiliensis) from South America has a very high level of latex in the sap. The family is commonly known as “spurge” because the plants are toxic. It reflects the need to purge the plant materials if eaten. The sap can also irritate the skin.

Crown of thorns has grayish brown bark and many slender sharp spines, some more than an inch long. It is a succulent with thick fleshy leaves arranged in a spiral, mostly on the newest growth. This climbing shrub can reach six feet or more.

Like poinsettias, the “flower” is actually a false flower. The two red (or various other colored) leaves, called bracts, surround a cluster of very small flowers. Colored bracts help attract pollinators. Between the bracts is one reduced female flower and three male flowers, which each have only a single stamen. The entire structure is called a cyanthium, and they are produced in colorful clusters throughout the year. And, as with poinsettia, the bracts last much longer than flower petals which makes crown of thorns popular as a house plant or a landscape plant where the winters are not too cold (not Wisconsin!).

Easter is a popular time to visit the Show Dome. Crown of thorns is an attractive plant in the Arid Dome with an interesting story for the season.

Photo by Peter S. Goltra for the National Tropical Botanical Garden. Used with Permission.
2012–2013 Calendar of Events

March 31 – May 28 ................................................................. Tulip Mania Spring Show
April 7 ......................................................................................... Green Living Festival
June 2 ............................................................................................. Spring Plant & Bulb Sale*
June 9 – September 9 .............................................................. Summer Winds Summer Show
August 17-19 ............................................................................. Milwaukee Domes Art Festival*
September 8 .............................................................................. Annual FOD Membership Meeting
September 15-16 ....................................................................... Orchid Show & Sale
September 22 – November 4 .................................................... Don Quixote Fall Mum Show
October 12 .................................................................................... Rainforest Night
October 25 – 26 ............................................................................ Ghosts Under Glass*
November 1 – December 27 ..................................................... Music Under Glass Concert Series**
November 10 – 11 ....................................................................... Jewelry at the Domes
November 17 – January 6, 2013 .............................................. Let it Snow! Holiday Show
December 2 ................................................................................... Gifts Under Glass Art Fair
December 31 ................................................................................ New Year’s Eve Family Celebration*
* Sponsored by the “Friends of the Domes.” Special admission rates apply.
** Thursdays from 6:30 – 9:00 p.m.

DATES SUBJECT TO CHANGE  Visit our website
www.milwaukedomes.org for more information and
events scheduled after publication of this newsletter.