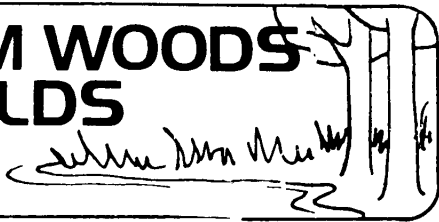


# FROM WOODS & FIELDS



by Connie Magoffin

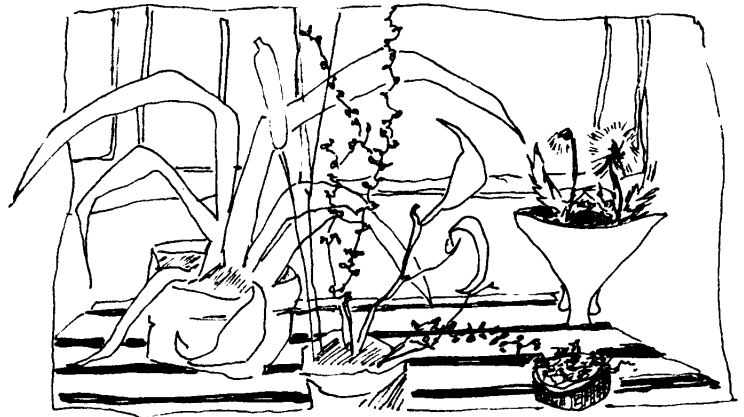
Our dye garden is now in the refrigerator. That is, some of the dye plants seeds that needed stratification (cold storage to break their dormancy) have now been planted and will be stored in the refrigerator for six weeks before being put into a warm area for germination. The evening of February 27th Theresa Mieseler from the University of Minnesota Landscape Arboretum gave 13 interested dye garden volunteers a very informative talk on starting seedlings. I had collected seeds for alkanet, dyer's greenwood, young fustic, golden marguerite, indigo, woad and weld. These seeds were distributed to those willing to start them and we discussed the following areas where help is needed in getting our Arboretum dye garden "in the ground."

1. **Starting seeds.**
  2. **Designing** our formal dye garden, which will contain dyes of historical significance.
  3. **Weeding**, once the plants are in the dye garden. It looks now as if each weeder may only have to work once. The seedlings will temporarily be placed in the nursery until the ground can be prepared, probably not until at least June.
  4. **Location and mapping** of dye plants which are not included in our formal garden, but which are found naturally in areas on the Arboretum grounds.
  5. **Funding**, particularly for labels similar to those used in the herb garden. We will also need some funds or donations for film and other miscellaneous materials.
  6. **Researching** the history and cultivation of the dye plants included in our garden.
  7. **Organizing a file of sources** for dye plant seeds and possibly fiber plants for some time in the future.
  8. **Record keeping.** A notebook will be kept at the Arboretum and the weeders will keep records of the growth of the dye plants there. However, we are also interested in those of you who might want to keep records of any dye plants you have in your yard, garden or nearby. I have had the dye plant record sheets (see insert, The Minnesota Weaver, Sept. 1977) printed and will supply them free of charge to anyone willing to help us. The records, when completed, should be sent to me (you may want to copy them for your own use too). Eventually we hope to publish something on dye plant cultivation and credit will be given to anyone who contributes.
  9. **Library.** We would also like to plan a slide library of dye plants and a file of dyed yarn samples and recipes. This may be kept at the Arboretum, the Weavers Guild or both.
- Those who attended the first meeting have already signed up for one or more of the above areas. I contacted 15 others by phone or mail who also wanted to work but couldn't attend the meeting. **If you are interested in the dye garden** and were not at the meeting (and we need you) please send to me:

1. Three self-addressed, stamped, legal-size envelopes.
2. A note indicating which areas you would like to work on and how many, if any, dye plant record sheets you would like me to send you.

To avoid excess meetings, in early May I will send out a newsletter with all workers' names, addresses, telephone numbers, areas of interest (so you know who to get together with), progress made thus far (especially concerning our precious seedlings) and, finally, details of our **May 20th picnic** at the Arboretum when the seedlings will be brought to the greenhouse. We will look over the dye garden area and make further plans. Dr. and Mrs. John McConnell have volunteered to coordinate and help cook for the picnic. Others are at work on funding, seedlings, research, etc. Let me hear from you soon!

My first dye plant record sheet has been returned. Mrs. Vergie McWilliams from Dyer (where else!), Indiana, sent a beautiful treasure box of dyed yarn samples from her mimosa tree and a record sheet of her loving cultivation of it. I will share her recipes and results, and those of several others who have recently sent dye experiments, in next month's column.



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