

## May in the Garden

May is a gentle month in the garden. Spring has arrived and summer is almost here. The early flowers have been and gone yet there is the anticipation of so much more to come.

As you enter the garden turnstile look up amongst the new yellow green leaves of the *Ginkgo biloba* for the male strobilus. The ginkgo is one of the oldest known seed plants and is assigned to its own phylum. Its male and female flowers are on different trees. Side by side along the edge of the pond the frothy white flowers of *Rodgersia podophylla* provide a foil for the dark red stem and buds of the ornamental rhubarb, *Rheum acuminatum*. If you follow the bottom path to the first bridge, you will find *Decaisnea fargesii*, the blue bean tree, with its racemes of delicate pale yellow green flowers. Further down the path, you will see *Rhododendron cinnabarinum* in flower and smell its wonderful cinnamon clove scent produced by glands on the underside of the leaves. If you follow the main path, just before the tunnel on your right, you can't miss the vigorous *Rosa filipes* scrambling up the native *Thuja plicata* (Western red cedar) and covered with very beautiful large corymbs of pure white fragrant flowers. Past the tunnel on the right is a very impressive *Clematis montana* tumbling down the side of the tree like a pink waterfall. At your feet the ferns are unfolding their fronds and our native *Tellima grandiflora* (fringe cup) and *Tiarella cordifolia* (foamflower) are in flower.

On the other side of the tunnel as you head up the incline to the right *Rosa* × *odorata* 'Mutabilis' is in flower. *Nectaroscordum siculum* subsp. *bulgaricum* and *Allium karataviense* are flowering on your left.

In the Food Garden the espalier apples and pears are in flower and the newly sown vegetables are showing green in their neat regimented rows.

May is a lovely month in the E.H. Lohbrunner Alpine Garden. The European area has become a tapestry of pink, mauve, bright green and yellows. *Erinus alpinus* is showing off its bright pink flowers. The new growth on the conifers seems to almost glow. *Picea abies* 'Little Gem' (spruce) forms

a mound of yellow-green that sets off the ground hugging plants. Occasionally you may be lucky enough to see the native Douglas squirrel foraging near the *Abies pinsapo* (Spanish fir). There are many columbines, including *Aquilegia buergeriana*, flowering during this month.

In the African section along the bottom road at the south end of the Alpine Garden look for the legume *Anthyllis erinacea* (Fabaceae) with its incredibly sharp spines and purple pea-like flowers. It seems to attract slugs and I have often wondered how they can navigate the spines without injury. You should also see the bright yellow to golden yellow flowers of *Homeria ochroleuca*, a member of the iris family, the Iridaceae.

Along the top path by the fence in the South American area the exotic *Embothrium coccineum*, the Chilean fire tree, is in flower. The beautiful flowers are scarlet with reflex petals and an extended style typical of its family, the Proteaceae.

In the North American area the blue flowers with bright yellow stamens of *Camassia quamash* (camas) grow beside the path as well as the white flowers of *Camassia leichtlinii* var. *leichtlinii*. Under the deciduous *Acer saccharum* subsp. *grandidentatum* (sugar maple) there is a wonderful selection of plants including *Trillium ovatum*, *T. sessile* (wake robin) and *Erythronium oregonum* inter-planted with *Dicentra formosa* (western bleeding heart).

You will see more *Dicentra formosa* as you enter the Native Garden. Turn right on the first path and look for the charming small *Trillium ovatum* var. *hibbersonii* with its three sepals shaded a rosy pink. By the back gate that leads out to 16<sup>th</sup> Ave there is a lovely woodland planting including *Erythronium oregonum*.

I hope you noticed and enjoyed our new interpretive signs. They are an ongoing project.