



Lilies inspire art — indoors and out

By Corinne Abett
staff writer



Harris Olson, an inveterate gardener, wants the public to enjoy the gardens at First Congregational Church of Birmingham as much as he does. Here, he's counting the buds on a prize day lily and discovered, to his delight, there are 43.

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For those who love flowers, particularly day lilies, this coming weekend brings special pleasures.

The congregational church of Birmingham is holding its summer "Celebrate Life through Lilies of the Field" today through Sunday.

In the church gardens (open to the public), so beautifully planned and tended by Harris Olson of Birmingham, the 400 plus varieties of day lilies are almost at their prime. Olson, a volunteer, labor-of-love gardener, is also responsible for the church' outstanding iris and peony gardens.

Inside the church there will be an art show and sale, based on the lily theme, a display of the Sogitsu style of Ikebana or Japanese flower arranging and another display of table settings. This latter will have settings both formal and informal in approach using centerpieces with flowers of the lily family.

Then from noon to 5 p.m. on Saturday, a few miles northwest, at Summit Place (formerly Pontiac Mall) on Telegraph north of Elizabeth Lake Road, the Southern Michigan Iris and Hemerocallis Society will be having its Day Lily Show.

THE SHOW will feature award-winning blossoms as well as educational exhibits and a large selection of plants for sale. Club members will be at the show to answer questions on day lily culture and hybridizing techniques.

Olson said he started the day lily garden at the church in 1975 with, "well, a few plants."

He's a skillful hybridizer and the garden closest to the fence contains many of his new hybrids.

"We get every color but blue and white, and we are trying to get those," he said. He cupped his hand under a one large creamy white bloom saying that was the closest to white so far.

There are three categories of day lilies — miniatures, under three inches, smalls, three to five inches, and regulars, above five inches.

There are doubles which look like large camellias, spiders with narrow twisting petals and of course, the singles.

SOME HAVE ruffle edges, others have smooth. The petals may be plain with yellow and orange the most common color, striped, tipped, shaded or variegated.

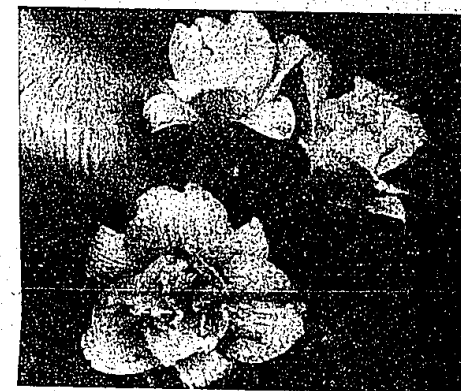
As he spoke of hybridizing Olson said, "We're trying to get wider petals and an almost round form."

Then after counting 45 buds on one stem to illustrate, he added many buds on a branch to his list.

"Day lilies bloom for only one day, but this will bloom 45 times," he said.



The large yellow day lily, above, with the beautiful ruffle edges was developed by Howard Hile of Lake Angelus. The smaller, double bloom below is a brilliant apricot. The light rain which started while these photos were being taken brought a smile of welcome to Harris Olson's face.



The flower arrangements in the church, done by Selko Akiko Sherman and her students, are all involved with the lilies of the field theme. Selko is her professional flower arranging name given after she completed studies in Japan for her teacher's license. She has taught in Japan as well as the United States.

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"Lilies of the Field" is open 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. today and Friday and noon to 4 p.m. Saturday and Sunday. The church is at 1000 Cranbrook at Woodward, Bloomfield Hills.

Staff photos by Mindy Saunders

Volunteers

Sharing museum's wealth with school children



MINDY SAUNDERS/staff photographer

Robert Russell of Bloomfield Hills, a relative newcomer to the volunteer ranks, and Florence Schreier of Beverly Hills find much to talk about when they discuss the Art-to-the-Schools program. The reproductions of

works from the museum's collection are some of the treasures which the school children are welcome to handle.

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When Flo Schreier of Beverly Hills, Johanna Hall of Farmington and Robert Russell of Bloomfield Hills get together to talk about the Art to the Schools program, there's non-stop conversation.

They are three of the 50 some volunteers for this Detroit Institute of Art outreach program. Last year alone, they gave programs for more than 35,000 fourth, fifth and sixth graders in 540 schools in 61 communities.

And they want to recruit more volunteers for the training program which starts in September.

The make-up of the volunteer group, said Schreier, a five-year Art to the Schools veteran, is almost as varied as the communities they cover — working women, mothers with young children, retirees, empty nesters, interior designers, computer programmers, housewives and executives.

By the time the volunteers complete the first-year training program, they are well-prepared. They have attended classes, had many tours of the museum, become well-acquainted with a special subject area and perfected their particular program with lots of expert help.

"Yes, it takes time," said Schreier, "but the opportunity to learn is fantastic."

SHE DOES programs on African and Native American art, a subject which, she said, at the time it was assigned to her, "I was the least interested in."

Now, she said, "I love it and I collect it. Modern was what I liked. This gives people an opportunity to learn about things they would never know about otherwise."

Last year she did 16 programs and more than 25 the year before. Volunteers generally average about 23 during the school year from October through April.

Well, whose specialty is American art, said, "I've been doing it for five years and this year I'm adding a second, 'Introduction to the Museum.'"

"I just love it," she added saying that she isn't an artist or avid collector, but someone who loves art.

"I've been in museums all over the world, including France, Russia."

Russell, retired from General Motors and in the program for just a year, chimed in, "So many of our volunteers have had amazing travel experiences. My year of training was wonderful. I'm interested in history, so it really fit with my interest. It entailed a complete survey of recorded art."

His program area is Ancient Art.

Schreier emphasized that being an Art to the Schools volunteer stretches far beyond the classroom. She loves the perks, such as tours of the new shows at the museum with the curator in charge, visits to outstanding private collections and the warm friendships which spring up among the volunteers.

"The nicest thing," Schreier said, "is when the kids draw pictures and send letters — saying the things that only kids can say when they write."

THE PROGRAMS given by the volunteers include slides and touchables, most of which are reproductions of paintings and sculpture in the museum.

The Art in the Schools program is free to public, private and parochial schools in metropolitan Detroit, the suburbs and surrounding communities.

For schools which no longer have funds available for bus trips to the museum, it is a way of becoming acquainted with this wonderful community resource.

The 50-minute programs on Ancient, African, Native American, Asian and Modern Art are presented as a dialogue between students and speaker.

The programs, Schreier pointed out, often have

Persons interested in the art training class are given in September months and before a final selection is made. Detroit Institute of Art, 625-1424, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. weekdays for an interview.

Schreier said with a touch of pride, "Yes, when our kids (DIA) all left home, they probably wondered what I would do without them. Now, they don't have to worry."