

# GARDENING

## Walk at Henry Ford Estate

Walk through history from 7 p.m. to sunset Thursday, June 21, and Thursday, July 19, down Jensen's Meadow at the Henry Ford Estate in Dearborn.

The walk, described as Henry Ford's favorite, will include stops at the corner-stone laid by Thomas Edison, an ancient oak tree, the old farm well and root cellar, stones from the old Ten Eyck tavern which burned in the 1890s, the rock garden, meadow and lake and the various watercourses spread over 72 acres of award-winning designs and grounds.

Tickets for the tour with a box dinner are \$16 for adults and seniors, \$14 for children. For the tour only, tickets are \$5 for adults and seniors, \$2 for children. Registration through the Estate's scheduling office at (313) 593-5590 is required.

## Stand tall in sunflower contest

### GARDEN SPOT



MARTY FIGLEY

Get ready, plant, grow! Yes, it's time to announce our annual High Hopes Sunflower contest!

There is always much enthusiasm and keen competition, so we want you all to participate.

Mrs. William Starr Dana, author of *How to Know the Wild Flowers*, describes the tall sunflower, *Helianthus giganteus*, this way: The stem is rough or hairy, from 3 to 10 feet high; branches above. The leaves are lance-shaped, pointed; rough to the touch, set close to the stem. Flower heads are yellow, composed of both ray and disk-flowers.

We already knew that, didn't we?

"We have over 20 different species of sunflower," she writes. She describes two: *H. divaricatus* — of a lower growth, with opposite, widely spreading leaves and larger flower heads — and *H. annuus* — the garden species familiar to all; this is said to be a native of Peru.

A 19th century American horticulturist, George Ellwanger, writes: "In the mythology of the ancient Peruvians it occupied an important place, and was employed as a mystic decoration in ancient Mexican sculpture.

"Like the lotus of the East, it is equally a sacred and an artistic emblem, figuring in the symbolism of Mexico and Peru, where the Spaniards found it rearing its aspiring stalk in the fields, and serving in the temple as a sign and a decoration, the sun-god's officiating handmaidens wearing upon their breasts representations of the sacred flower in beaten gold."

John Gerard, the English botanist who lived from 1546 to 1612, described it as follows: "The Indian Sun, or the golden flower of Peru, is a plant of such stature and tallness that in one Summer, being sown of a seede in April, it hath risen up to the height of 14 foot in my garden, where one floure was a weight 3 pound and 2 ounces, and crosse over-thwart the floure by measure 16 inches broad."

So whether you grow the sunflower to be entered in the contest for the tallest one, or enter for growing the largest seed-head, you will probably surpass these old gents.

Well-drained soil, rich in nutrients with a neutral pH, lots of sun and extra water, especially when there is no rain, will suit these undemanding flowers.

The seeds should be planted about 1/2-inch deep, about 8 inches apart. When it's time to thin them, make sure there are 18 inches of space between so they have plenty of room to grow.

You might want to mound the soil up around the stems or put stakes in the ground to support them so they won't fall over. Cages will deter birds and squirrels from eating the young plants. Follow information on the bag when you fertilize.

If you are growing your sunflower for the largest seedhead, prune out some of the smaller ones so the energy will go into just a few.

To watch a sunflower grow from seed, visit the National Garden Bureau Inc. Web site at



High-ho, high-ho: Sunflowers, sunflowers — the contest is on!

www.ngb.org

Contest rules and prizes will be given in an upcoming At Home.

Here's something I read about in the August 2000 issue of *Garden Gate* magazine:

In the fall, pull the tall sunflower stems from the ground and cut off the roots and heads. Keep the stalks dry by hanging them in a shed or garage and save them for next spring's garden. Tie some of the very tall pieces together as a teepee for pole beans or other vines. The rough, dry stems help the vines to twine and not slide.

The stalks could also be used to make a trellis for annual vines. Attach it to a metal fence post or side of a building. It will look like a tall tie-tac-toe trellis. Bind the stalks together with jute twine.

The stems will last only one season, then should be added to the compost pile. But if you grow more sunflowers you will always have a ready supply.

Marty Figley is an advanced master gardener based in Birmingham. You can leave her a message by dialing (734) 953-2047 on a touch-tone phone. Her fax number is (248) 644-1314.

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## Grubs wreak havoc, but sometimes it's best to do nothing

By LEE REICH  
AP WEEKLY FEATURES

If parts of your lawn lift off like a toupee, grubs have been at work chewing grass roots.

Grubs are larvae of Japanese (and related) beetles. The beetles lay eggs in turf from mid- to late summer, and the eggs hatch into grubs that feed on grass roots. Cold weather drives the grubs deep into the soil, but they surface again in spring before emerging as beetles.

These caterpillar-like grubs — fat and creamy white — are usually curled up when you find them. Incidentally, they're considered tasty morsels in certain parts of the world.

Rather than killing grubs by eating them, you could do them in by drenching your lawn with chemical pesticides. But if you don't want to think twice before sitting or walking barefoot on your lawn, there are several natural ways to keep grubs under

control.

In Japan, the native home of Japanese beetles, natural enemies are so effective that the beetles are not even considered pests there. Two biological controls are milky spore disease and predatory nematodes. They are available from Gardens Alive! at (812) 537-8650.

If you can establish either milky spore or nematodes in your soil, control is long-lasting. Unfortunately, milky spore will

not survive where winters are frigid.

A final approach to the grub problem is the do-nothing approach. Populations of Japanese beetles and their grubs fluctuate from year to year, and even in a given locale, there may be pockets of heavy or light infestation.

So do nothing and you still might not have problems with grubs this year, or maybe ever again.

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## Crafters sought

The "Home for the Holidays" Arts and Craft Show, sponsored by Farmington High School (32000 Shiawassee), is seeking crafters for its 12th annual show on Saturday, Nov. 3, from 9:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

For more information, call Susan Nichols at (248) 476-9674.

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