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Suburban Gardener Horticultural Congress Stresses Organic Gardening

By BETTY FRANKEL
Gardeners from all over the country gathered in Milwaukee, Wis. this past week for the 26th annual American Horticultural Congress. The lectures and informal conversations were liberally salted with words like compost, humus, soil pH, pest control and pollution.

Newest trends and latest restrictions in use of herbicides, insecticides, and fungicides were discussed and a workshop was conducted on the basic composition of soils and what can be done to improve them.

The compost pile merited a session devoted just to it. All disease-free leaves, grass clippings and other green waste should be put on a compost pile so it is converted into humus that can be used to enrich garden beds.

It is good "ecology" to recycle this way, and the experts stressed that there is nothing that improves soil conditions the soil as well as organic material does. A liberal amount of compost worked into the garden beds corrects the faults of light sandy soil or the problems of heavy clay soil.

THERE WERE lectures on new and off-beat perennials, on contemporary garden design, and on urban visual pollution.

Congress participants were taken on tours of some of the outstanding private gardens in the Milwaukee area and on a tour through a brewery. No visit to Milwaukee would be complete without this.

Most impressive of all was the Milwaukee County Parks system which includes a zoo, a conservatory, a botanical garden, neighborhood parks with senior citizen programs, hiking trails, bike trails, sports programs, a marina, and miles of beautiful beaches and picnic areas fronting on Lake Michigan.

IN MITCHELL Park, atop a small hill, is an impressive conservatory consisting of three fantastic beehive-shaped glass domes, each 140 feet in diameter and 87 feet high. They are filled with an attractive display of tropical and desert plants. At night the brightly illuminated domes glitter like giant jewels on the Milwaukee skyline.

In Whittall Park is the Boerner Botanical garden consisting of 450 acres of woodland and meadows and an educational center surrounded by vast, meticulously groomed formal gardens. There is a rock garden, a rose garden, a bog garden, and extensive perennial beds.

Despite the lateness of the season these were a colorful medley of phlox, delphinium, chrysanthemums, dianthus, and all kinds of hardy asters.

New to many gardeners were the tall stalks of moonhollow topped with a spike of deep blue hood-shaped flowers, and the Japanese anemones which had large pink or white blooms on bushy plants about three feet tall.

Near the entrance were the incredibly colorful beds of annuals where the "All-America Selections" were being tested. Nearby was an educational display of shrubs and hedges, each carefully labeled.

The Congress was keynoted by the thought that "gardens are the link between men and the world to which they live."

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Garden Reminders

There is still time to transplant evergreens. If less than two feet tall they can be moved with bare roots, but it is safer to move even these small ones with the roots in a ball of earth wrapped in burlap. Dig a generous hole. Don't skimp, and fill in with soil enriched with peat moss. Water thoroughly. Be sure to water all trees and shrubs planted last spring and last year thoroughly every week. When leaves begin to color on trees and shrubs it is safe to move them. This is the last call to seed lawns or to repair bare patches. Gather dried seed pods and weeds with an interesting form for lasting indoor arrangements.

WATCH WHAT'S GOING TO HAPPEN TO OUR SECOND FLOOR WINE CELLAR! (See Ad in the Observer next week)

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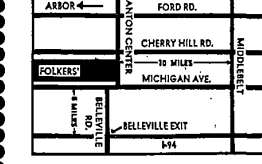
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