

For Vermont Standard
For May 19 --Sage Sassafras column on gardening

Gardeners Corner: A Plant Happening

London has Speakers Corner in Hyde Park. Woodstock has Gardeners Corner once a year on the lawn of the Norman Williams Public Library. The only time the chatter stops at Gardeners Corner is when the National Anthem is played as part of the Memorial Day Parade where uniforms highlight Yankee visages and remind that being mindful of making better worlds – and gardens – can be a way of life.

Gardeners Corner is a plant happening. Even ground hogs can't be as long-lived as the diggers who since 1994 have rummaged in Woodstock Garden Club gardens to pull out run-amuck perennials that need to be separated anyway. Before arriving at Gardeners Corner these plants are potted and labelled so that residents and visitors alike who happen to be meandering around the Woodstock Green between 8 a.m. and 1 p.m. on Saturday May 28 can help the club meet its goal of netting minimally \$10,000 to support projects such as civic beautification and funding horticulture scholarships.

Anyone who has ever tried to bring color to the garden by planting 50 or more pansies quickly understands the advantages of perennials that don't have to be replanted each year and that may need only a little dividing now and again. If this sounds too easy, ask those who belong to the I Hate Pansy Faces Anonymous and let them explain that paying a little bit more on May 28 for perennials pays off in spades – and no pansies – for years to come.

Look for such Zone 4 and 5 perennials as day lilies, iris, lupine, rudbeckia, delphinium, cimicifugia, hostas, lady's mantle and baptisia, a few of many that can add color and texture to gardens, even if you don't know what they are or how to pronounce them. (Actually, this year there will be visuals pinned on yet-to-bloom perennials so you can envisage what your investment will eventually look like.)

In the meantime, happy gardening. Check www.woodstockgardenclub.org for gardening ideas and remember that Mother Nature needs all the attention we can pay her.