

April 2009

WHAT'S GROWING ON IN THE GARDEN?



A Monthly Newsletter for Teachers, Staff & Students at Germantown Hills S.D. #69

The Hanging Gardens of Babylon

by Tabitha Cooper

The use of gardens has been a part of history for centuries. In ancient civilizations, gardens were a way of showing one's worth in society. Famous leader, King Nebuchadnezzar built a beautiful garden in hopes that his wife would love him. The Hanging Gardens of Babylon were a magnificent example of stunning plant life and sophisticated irrigation systems.

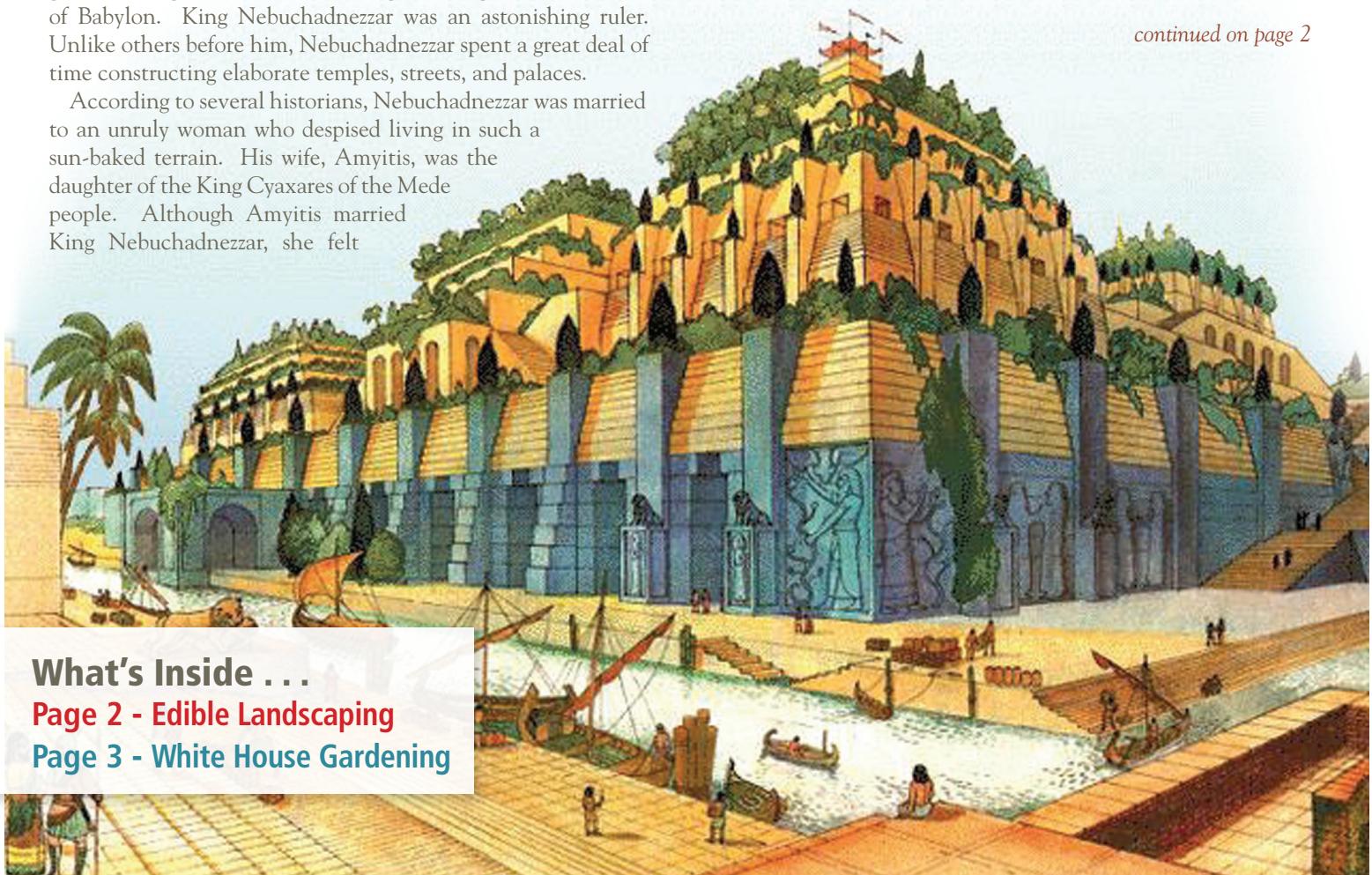
Many historians believe that civilization began on dry, desert land called Mesopotamia (modern-day Iraq) a few thousand years ago. Civilizations such as Sumer, Babylonia, Assyria, sprouted from the harsh grounds of this land. In 605 BC a gracious king, Nebuchadnezzar began ruling the civilization of Babylon. King Nebuchadnezzar was an astonishing ruler. Unlike others before him, Nebuchadnezzar spent a great deal of time constructing elaborate temples, streets, and palaces.

According to several historians, Nebuchadnezzar was married to an unruly woman who despised living in such a sun-baked terrain. His wife, Amyitis, was the daughter of the King Cyaxares of the Mede people. Although Amyitis married King Nebuchadnezzar, she felt

unwelcome in the new land that was so unlike her home. To gain the love of his wife, King Nebuchadnezzar resolved to recreate her homeland by building an artificial mountain with a grand rooftop garden. In a sense, King Nebuchadnezzar did what nature could not do on this harsh land: he created an Eden.

Although historians are unsure who built the Hanging Gardens of Babylon for King Nebuchadnezzar, it is assumed that slaves, prisoners of war, were forced to complete the magnificent dream. The entire structure measured around 400 feet by 400 feet. Although, conflicting sources report that they could not

continued on page 2



What's Inside . . .

Page 2 - Edible Landscaping

Page 3 - White House Gardening

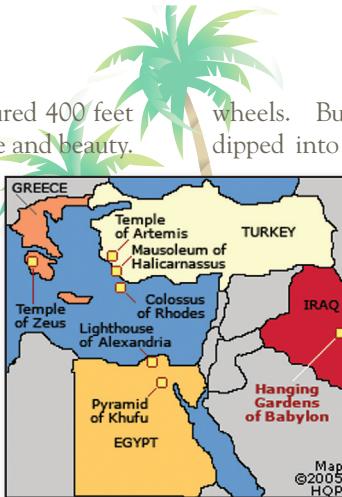
continued from cover

be over 320 feet tall. Whether the gardens measured 400 feet or 320 feet, they must have been magnificent in size and beauty.

According to ancient accounts, the gardens were built like sloped hillsides with several levels of flowerbeds. Inside the garden lay exotic flourishing plants that King Nebuchadnezzar imported from foreign lands for his wife to enjoy. Plants displayed in the Hanging Gardens of Babylon included plum, pear, fig, grapefruit, nightshade, willow, and pomegranate.

Although for years many believed the hanging gardens were in fact, hanging in mid-air. Contrary to popular belief, the Hanging Gardens were not exactly hanging. The name, Hanging Gardens of Babylon, actually came from the translation of the Greek word, *kremastos*, which meant "overhanging." Typically, the plants were hung over terraces supported by stone columns. Underneath the terraces lay cubed fountains inside large arched vaults. The fountains served many purposes including the ability to cool off the harsh soil.

Many questioned how the exotic plants could live in such harsh desert conditions. Since Babylon rarely received rain, the gardens had to be irrigated. To do this, streams of water flowed from the top of the gardens to the bottom, much like a fountain. Archeologists have found an elaborate tunnel and pulley system that brought ground water to the top of the gardens. The water was dispersed by the work of chain pump connected to two



wheels. Buckets hanging from the chain were continuously dipped into the reservoir at the base of the gardens probably from the Euphrates River. By turning handles slaves provided the power to turn the wheels.

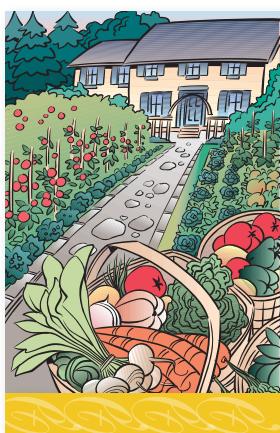
Although the Babylonian civilization did not last beyond 1200 years, the Hanging Gardens of Babylon flourished through the time of Alexander the Great. Nevertheless, some historians argue that the Hanging Gardens was simply a myth, a recent discovery might just have proved them wrong.

While excavating an area believed to be the sight of the Hanging Gardens, archeologists discovered a basement with fourteen large rooms made of stone. Historical records indicated that only two locations in the city had made use of stone, the north wall of the Northern Citadel, and the Hanging Gardens. Due to the fact that the north wall had already been found, historians are almost positive they have found the Hanging Gardens.

The Hanging Gardens of Babylon demonstrating the amazing understanding of plant life and irrigation during early civilizations. King Nebuchadnezzar was well ahead of his time when he created this beautiful scene for his wife. So ladies, next time your husband purchases flowers from the gas station, remind them of ol' King Nebuchadnezzar and the astonishing Hanging Gardens of Babylon.

Edible Landscaping

by Cathy Bandeko



We all know that landscaping adds exceptional value to any home. Today's landscapes tend to favor plants that are easy to care for or offer extended bloom time. However, historically-speaking, plants that provided food for the family dinner table were the primary plants used in landscaping. Edible landscapes successfully combine fruit and nut trees, berry bushes, vegetables, herbs, edible flowers and non-edible ornamental plants into pleasing designs.

There are many reasons to incorporate edible plants into the residential landscape.

These include:

- To enjoy the freshness and flavor of home-grown, fully ripened fruits and vegetables
- To control the quantity and kind of pesticides and herbicides used on the foods you consume
- To save on grocery bills
- To grow unusual varieties not available in stores
- To get outside, interact with the natural world, and have fun

Here are a few ideas to use edibles in your landscape:

- Put pots of herbs on the patio
- Include cherry tomatoes in a window box or hanging basket
- Build a grape arbor
- Grow nasturtium, violas, borage, or calendula and include flowers in salads
- Eat your daylilies
- Plant a fruit tree in the corner of your yard
- Grow Red-jewel Cabbage and Rainbow Chard right in your flower beds
- Plant colorful pepper varieties (e.g., Lipstick, Habanero) alongside flowers
- Tuck lettuce, radishes, or other short-lived greens into a flower bed
- Put basil together with coleus in a planter
- Grow chives around the mailbox
- Train raspberries up your fence
- Use lettuce as an edging plant
- Add rhubarb as a foundation plant

See if you can add a few of these ideas into your own home landscaping. Intermingle these edibles all around your home landscape, don't just keep them isolated in the vegetable garden!

Vegetable Gardening at The White House

by Linda Simpson



What does Germantown School have in common with the White House?

If you guessed "a vegetable and herb garden" you are absolutely correct! Though our third graders have planted a vegetable garden for the last 3 years and a certain first grade class did it for 7 years, this is the first year in a very long time that the White House is actually using prime real estate for a vegetable and herb garden.

A few weeks ago, a class of elementary students joined Mrs. Obama in digging up a section of the White House lawn. This was the first step, preparing the soil. In a few weeks, these students will return to actually plant some of the seeds and young plants when the danger of frost is gone. The third graders at Germantown will do likewise, usually the first or second week of May.

There are actually some fascinating details one can discover in checking out the tumultuous history of White House food gardening. Use the links in this article to view a short video entitled "This Lawn Is Your Lawn". It shares that presidents throughout history have tried to grow their own food, and there was even a White House greenhouse that was torn down to make room for the West Wing. President John Adams and his wife were the first to plant a garden there. Thomas Jefferson redesigned the garden, adding ornamental and fruit trees that were tended to by slaves. John Quincy Adams planted fruit trees, herbs and vegetables to actually feed his own household and Andrew Jackson built an "orangery" for growing tropical fruit. President Woodrow Wilson and his wife used sheep to mow and fertilize the lawn, but Eleanor Roosevelt was the first to plant a large Victory Garden on the White House lawn, inspiring many millions of Americans to follow her example and to help with the war effort. Continuing on in history, Jimmy Carter installed solar panels and tended to an herb garden. During the Clinton administration, a small container garden was planted on the roof that provided enough tomatoes, peppers, squash, cucumbers and herbs for the first family, but not their guests. The White House also now buys food from local farmers and co-ops and Laura Bush was adamant about organic foods.

Mrs. Obama has been receptive to the idea of using part of the lawn to grow organic food. Crops to be planted in the coming weeks on the 1,100 square foot, L-shaped patch near the fountain on the South Lawn include spinach, broccoli, five varieties of lettuce, assorted herbs, blueberries, blackberries and raspberries. Food harvested from this garden will be served in the White House and some crops will be donated to a local soup kitchen.

Germantown students will be planting many of the same vegetables and several of the herbs already exist in our herb garden. Can you discover which herbs we already have growing in our herb garden??? Which ones should we add? At the one entrance to our garden, you will find on the



Local Food, From the South Lawn

Blueberries, raspberries
and blackberries

Michelle Obama envisions the organic garden on the White House lawn as a means of educating children and communities about healthful eating, and as a source of fresh herbs and vegetables for the family and guests.



Source: The White House

THE NEW YORK TIMES/PHOTOGRAPH BY SANBORN, VIA GOOGLE EARTH

wall a pocket file, filled with laminated copies of our garden. There are separate copies of the herb garden. These are for students to carry out into the garden, check out what's growing, discover the names of the plants, then return to the file for others to use. Just do it!!! You can discover more about the White House garden, including a list of things to be planted and an actual map of the garden design at the following links:
thewhofarm.org/wp-content/uploads/2009/03/flotus_garden1_hi-res.jpg

This Lawn Is Your Lawn video link: vimeo.com/1812382

Short history of White House Garden link: vimeo.com/1767242

More detailed history of gardening at the White House:
davesgarden.com/guides/articles/view/2075/

CHICKEN Enchiladas

Ingredients

1 medium chopped onion
3 Tbs butter
8 oz cream cheese
2 Tbs water
1 tsps cumin (or more if you like) I use 2-3 tsps
Salt & white pepper to taste
4-5 cups chopped cooked Chicken –
NOT CANNED Chicken
1/3 cup chopped pecans (toasted, if you like)

Recipe provided by Lisa Sanderson

Snipped fresh cilantro & parsley –
one bunch each
12 – 6" Flour Tortillas
1 ½ cans Cream of Chicken soup
12 oz sour cream
¾ cup of milk
1 cup shredded Colby Jack cheese
Chopped tomato and green pepper

In support of
the United Nations
World Food Program

FREE
Rice



PLAY AND FEED
a hungry person!

FreeRice.com

Method:

1. In small skillet cook onion in butter until tender. Grease 13 X 9 Baking Dish.
2. In a bowl, mix cream cheese, water, cumin and salt until creamy. Stir in onion, chicken and pecans, cilantro and parsley (to your taste) Wrap tortillas in foil and heat in 350° 10-15 min. Take out of the oven and spoon chicken mixture into each tortilla and roll up - Place seam side down in baking dish.
3. Make Sauce by mixing soup, sour cream, milk and green peppers then pour over Enchiladas.
4. Bake covered @ 350, 40 – 60 minutes (uncover for the last 15-minutes)
5. Sprinkle with cheese. Garnish with chopped tomatoes, cilantro and parsley.

If you would like to see your recipe in an upcoming newsletter, send it to de@smileygraphix.com.



Earth Day is a Birthday!! Just like a birthday is a special day to celebrate a person, Earth Day is a special day that celebrates the Earth. Earth Day was born on April 22, 1970, in San Francisco, California. Every year, America and over 100 different countries join together in the celebration of Earth Day on April 22nd. Earth Day is the largest, most celebrated environmental event worldwide. On Earth Day, we remember to appreciate nature and learn ways to protect our environment. Find ways that you can help keep the planet clean and help protect our environment! Be sure to send us photos of your group participating in Earth Day activities. We will use them in a future newsletter.

Submit your photos to de@smileygraphix.com

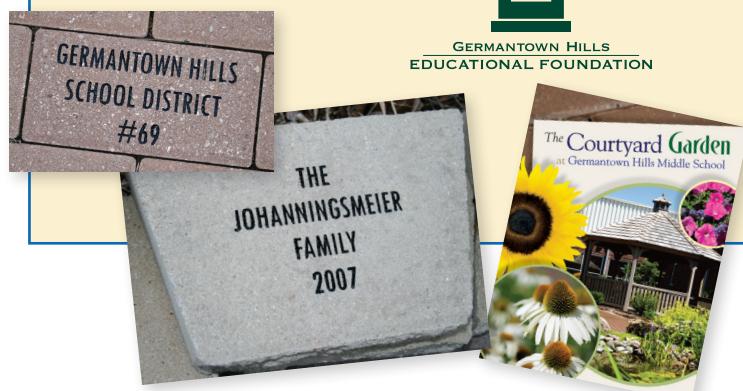
Earth Day is April 22, 2009

Learning Garden Contacts:

Cathy Bandeko, Master Gardener - 383-4802, cbandeko@multiad.com
Linda Simpson, Teacher - 699-0280, tsimpson@mchsi.com
De Ingles, G. Hills Edu. Foundation - 383-2662, de@smileygraphix.com

Order an Engraved Paver, Stepping Stone or Cap Stone

Purchasing a brick, stepping stone, or cap stone engraved with names of important individuals is a creative and affordable way to immortalize memories while contributing to the Germantown Hills Educational Foundation. Order forms and a brochure are available at the Elementary, Middle and Jr. High offices for your convenience. If you are a business and would like information about having your company logo engraved on a brick, stone or bench, contact De at 383.2662 or email to de@smileygraphix.com.



CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Arbor Day: April 24

Garden Spring Cleanup Day: May 1

Statue Dedication: May 15 at 1 p.m.

18th Annual Golf Outing: June 18

**Learning Garden Open House and
Dedication: September 18**

IF YOU'D LIKE TO RECEIVE AN ELECTRONIC VERSION OF THIS NEWSLETTER CONTACT US AT DE@SMILEYGRAPHIX.COM