

## MUSINGS BY SANDRA ROSS

(reprinted from the Ohio Regional Lily Society newsletter)

It is a cool, damp wet May day, but I am not complaining. We need the rain! I heard on television that if we do not get significant rain this summer, Lake Erie would be the lowest it has been in 160 years. Many people who live on the Lakeshore cannot use their own docks since they are mud flats, so every shower is a welcome one for everyone. The lilies in our garden are two weeks ahead of schedule. L/A's (L. Longiflorum x Asiatic) have well defined buds such as Royal Respect and Easter Splendor and Kiss Me Kate has opened two flowers. The martagons are tipping over with swollen buds just prior to straightening up for spectacular bloom. The L. martagon species, a lovely dainty soft purple has opened and completely reflexed. Slate Select, a martagon, has increased the most and has opened in several areas of the garden. We have Madison, a red-orange Asiatic blooming in a pot on the patio. June Fragrance opened yesterday and is as fragrant as its name. Silk Road and Empress are over 5ft tall The overture has begun before the full symphony of bloom.

David and I are most excited about the two stems of L. nepalense that are growing in a pot on the patio. L. nepalense doesn't like our wet winters or any moisture, so we packed the two bulbs we got from Mr. Hrebik in dry peat moss and stored them in the basement. We potted them up in March and now have two small stems. The probably won't bloom this year but we can wait for the intriguing green and black purple blooms.

The garden looks like a sea of green now that the daffodils are finished but here and there a wonderful splash of colour erupts. Carol, a single layer peony, shows off her hot red colour against the fluffy stamens and waves in the breeze above a white Camassia with both carpeted by Sweet Woodruff. I have heard that a wine is made of the blooms, or is it the stems, of Sweet Woodruff? If it is the blooms the wine makers sure are patient pickers since the blooms are about 1/16 inch wide. Sweet Woodruff makes a wonderful border, but it can be invasive, but you can take a shovel and cut it out like sod. Tree peonies were glorious this year courtesy of the mild winter. We have several, but don't know the names - just white, pink cerise, etc. The white one is now 6ft wide and about 5ft tall. It was just covered with tissue paper looking flowers. The last few hot humid days made short work of the blooms, but we have a new digital camera to record our gardening triumphs and failures. Each day we tour the garden early in the morning, coffee cup in hand, as we see something new. The cats Cinders and Bears join the parade as we inspect the new shoots, new blooms and scapes. This is a wonderful season, a period of suspense and wonder as to what will bloom next.

Checking the scale bags we found that so many of Pete's (Harrison Peters) lilies have produced good bulblets, so we will have his legacy to bring to future sales. Others we planted in the garden, which were too small to scale look good except for the bunny nibbles. Ran out of Thiram but we are using pine that we shredded up as a mulch in other areas and the rabbits have left those stems alone. Pete's legacy of great lilies and his generosity of spirit live on.

*Sandra: I enjoyed reading your musings so much, that I wanted to include them in our newsletter. For our readers, Sandra and David are active members in the Ohio Lily Society, and are also members of the ORLS. You mention June Fragrance, this is a hybrid of our own Charles Robinson. I'm glad to hear that it is doing well for you.*