

Quail's

Tales

February 2006 Newsletter

Presidential Preface

Are we ready for spring?

January weather sure made it feel like spring is here. The golf course we passed on our way back from the craft store had dozens of golfers on the course. January was very kind after the extra-cold December.

The visit to the craft store was an adventure. It was my first time there and it was a fantastic array of decorations for every season of the year. I'm sure that I slowed down Nancy and Marge's progress through the store but we managed to complete our selections before the store closed. Be sure to check out the Ways and Means table this month.

A warm welcome to our two new members, **Dave and Jan Henry**. Dave and Jan were a great help at our two sessions of working on the pine cone swags. In fact, Dave designed a method of wrapping the wire with floral tape that saved us a huge amount of time.

I'm looking for one or two members to volunteer to design our display for the Cultural Arts Festival at the end of April. I know it's three months away, but signing up now will give plenty of time to plan. Maybe at our meeting in March we can brainstorm some ideas.

Hope to see you February 9.

--Angela

Hill And Dale Garden Club's February 9 meeting

Not everyone is into spring.

Jean Moran knows it's still winter, and fresh flower material is often raggedy and darned expensive. So she'll devise attractive designs with a minimum of fresh material and loads of style. This is a super opportunity to learn from the master and judge. And, if there's time, maybe she'll verbally tour us around India. She's recently returned after visiting her daughter who's working there.

Hostesses for the February meeting

Lynn Dulmage

Mar Sclawy

with a fair amount of help from **Peggy Dapkus**, hospitality chair for the year

Green sale accounting

Carol Smith reports that the green sale and soup jars netted the club \$795.48.

Spring sale on deck (almost)

The club is thinking spring already!! Our Perennial and Flower Sale is scheduled for Saturday, May 20, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Please tell your family and friends about the sale. Start thinking about your perennials you would like to divide and donate. Order forms for the annuals will be included in the April and May newsletters and also available on line. Deadline for orders is Friday, May 12.

Sign up sheet for helpers will be circulating at the April and May meetings. There will be two shifts: 8-11:30 and 11:30 to 2:30. Happy Spring.

--Stacy Buatti
248.426.9037

\$29.50. Reservations are required.
Call 248.332.6430

Coming Up

Feb. 2: Crocuses—a bit premature.

Trowel and Error: Mar Sclawy suggests a trip to Matthaei Botanical Gardens Conservatory & Gift Shop for February 11, 12 or 19. Admission is \$5 and we'll carpool if there's enough interest. Check your calendars and plan on signing up at the Feb. 9 meeting.

Feb. 16: Elizabeth Sullivan, Sr. V.P. of the Kresge Foundation, will share the Foundation's experience in constructing a "green" building at their Troy headquarters on Big Beaver in Troy. "Building a Sustainable Future" is part of Kingsbury School's Environmental Institute Lecture Series. Presentation begins at 7 p.m. at 5000 Hosner Road, Oxford. Program is free. RSVP is appreciated. For more info, please contact Kingsbury School: 248.628.2571.

Feb. 26: Find out "What's New in Houseplants for 2006" at Goldner Walsh Nursery. Julia Janiak, just back from the nation's largest tropical show in Florida, will show you plants you can't resist. Talk starts at 1 p.m. Admission is \$10. Reservations are required. Call 248.332.6430.

March 2: Bid "Goodbye to the English Garden" while spending an evening with Noel Kingsbury. He'll expand on the English Garden concept to introduce other sources of inspiration for a stunning garden. A prolific writer, Mr. Kingsbury will have books available for purchase and signing after his presentation, which begins at 7 p.m. Admission is

March 10 – 12: "Come Fly with Me!" to District 1's standard flower show at Ford Field. **Lisa Steinkopf** urges club members to bring their prize horticultural specimens, properly labeled and spiffed up, on March 8. Show opens March 10. Hours are noon to 9 p.m. on March 10; 10 a.m. to 9 p.m. on March 11; 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. on March 12. Tickets are \$8.

The District I Flower Show needs volunteers for the following shifts:

<u>Friday, March 10</u>	<u>Sat, March 11</u>
2:30 to 5 p.m.	10 a.m. to 12:30
5 to 7:30 p.m.	12:30 to 3 p.m.
7:30 to 9 p.m.	3 to 5:30 p.m.
	5:30 to 8 p.m.
	8 to 10 p.m.

Sunday, March 12

10 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

12:30 to 3 p.m.

3 to 6 p.m.

Angela will be passing a sign up sheet at the February meeting.

Volunteers receive **free** entrance to the show. Parking will be available, starting at \$3. The show is an excellent chance to visit Ford Field. Once inside you can visit the Home and Garden Show at no additional charge.

March? April? Trowel and Error is thinking about a trip to the zoo, specifically the butterfly house. If that sounds good to you, look up **Peggy Dapkus** at the February meeting. If it doesn't, where would you like to go?

June 4: Spring Native Plant Sale, sponsored by Oakland Land Conservancy, runs from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. at the Betty Stogdill Pancake Shelter, Pike and Mill Streets, Pontiac

Garden Therapy

- February project was **Valentine Nosegay**
Chair: **Katie Wemyss**
Committee: **Marcia Stewart, Sandy Cusack, Lynn Dulmage**
Classroom visit: week of Feb 6-10
- March project: **From the Sea**
Chair: **Peggy Dapkus**
Committee: **Nancy Adams, Marge Gordon, Ruth Trombley**
Bagging week: February 27-
March 3
Classroom visit: week of
March 6-10

This 'n' That

- Attention new and old members: Now available at the Ways and Means table until sold out are the exclusive Hill & Dale Garden Club embroidered t-shirts and sweatshirts. Tees are \$5; sweatshirts are \$10.
- Look for our display board at the Downtown Farmington library during February. It's promoting the club's meetings, events and fund-raising sales.



Horticulture

FLOWER SHOW FEVER

March is rapidly approaching and the Ford Field Flower Show, "Come Fly With Me", will be here before we know it. On Wednesday, March 8, from 2-7 pm, I

would love all of you to come to Ford Field and bring your prize-winning house plants. Sally and I will be waiting expectantly for you.

Now is the time to look at your houseplants and decide which ones you would like to bring to the show. Good grooming is of the utmost importance to the judges. Dust, dirt, dead-leaves are not going to impress them or anyone. Clean pots are also a must. If you don't want to transplant your plant, slip the whole pot into a nice, new, clean pot. This is called double-potting and is perfectly acceptable. Make sure that the plant is still in proportion to the pot as that is an important point in the judging process. Clean plants are the #1 consideration when bringing your plants. Give your plants a nice shower in your sink or in the shower. They enjoy it as much as we do. **NEVER**, use plant shine! This is a BIG no-no. All dead leaves and tips should be removed. Cut the brown tips off leaves, making sure you follow the shape of the leaf. Check for insects and use Ivory dish soap to wash away any unwanted residents. When entering your plant, you should know the botanical name of the plant, but by all means bring it even if you don't, because we can help you with the correct name.

When you bring your plant, please also bring an evergreen branch from your yard or a forced branch. Shrubs and trees suitable for forcing include forsythia, witch hazel, redbud, spirea, pussy willow, cherry, and fruit trees. Cut a few branches and bring one or two in every couple of days, so that you are sure to have optimal bloom on the correct day. We provide the glass container, so you need only bring your branches cut between 18" and 30" long.

If you have any questions, please call Sally or myself. We would be happy to help you and we really want the Ford Field Show to be spectacular. This show is going to be light, bright, and a whole new experience for District I. And remember this is the Districts only fundraiser. Please come!

Lisa

Critter spotting

Despite Steve's providing me with a study sheet of likely animal tracks, I really haven't been observing many critters in the yard—other than those hanging around the bird feeders.

That means squirrels—all sizes of squirrels. None of them seem particularly athletic this year. In past years there has always been one (or several, I don't find squirrels easily differentiated) squirrel that would shinny up the shepherd's crook pole that the feeders are hung from and stretch herself out to the edge of the feeder and devour as many sunflower seeds as she could before she lost her grip. In the process she managed to send further sustenance to the ground where she continued her feasting, along with the doves and other ground feeders.

This year, however, the sparrow population has so entirely overtaken the seed feeder that the squirrels just stand around on the ground and let the sparrows send the seeds flying as they regularly take fright and flee to the nearby bushes. Coming and going, they (well, *elbow* can't be the right word) nudge each other for a place at the feeder tray, further cascading those seeds to the ground.

There are so many of them this year that they actually pack down the snow under the feeder—an activity that I welcome when surrounding snow easily exceeds the height of my shoe boots.

A few unattached cardinals come by, easily spotted whenever they make the slightest move in the bushes. The chickadees warble their cheerful greeting whenever I'm filling up the feeder. They don't fly far and they're always grateful for a new round of feeder fill. They'll grab a single sunflower oiler, fly to the cherry tree and smack the seed against a branch to get to its tender center. For a while I suspected them of pecking at the dormant cherry buds, but no, the branch is merely the chickadee equivalent of a seagull's rock used for smashing oysters.

The suet feeder attracts a totally different clientele, except for an occasional curious finch or sparrow that gives the suet cake a poke, generally without reward. The little downy woodpeckers attend rather regularly (one at a time, timid or polite or both). And a much larger red bellied woodpecker (with a bright red head and virtually no red tummy feathers) drops by from time to time and really makes the suet fly.

So far, I'm estimating that the birds—with squirrel assistance—have eaten about 60 pounds of not very fancy bird seed. At least they've gone through that much seed. Spring will probably suggest that they've planted a fair number of obnoxious weeds around that feeder.

And, of course, an occasional impertinent sunflower—a surprise treat for the groundhogs, no doubt.

—Mar Sclawy

Last October Jeannine, Nancy, Marge and Angela had a goodtime here!

