

# Quail's Tales

## *April newsletter*

### Presidential Preface

The Flower Show at Ford Field was great. It's an excellent facility—so much brighter and roomier than the Silverdome. Hill & Dale was well-represented in the various categories. We went early and attended some of the garden workshops. Nancy Szerlag gave the latest on Hot Plants and Cool Tools for the garden. Janet Macunovich and Steven Nikkila, photographer of 8 Months of Color in the Garden, teamed up for their presentation.

The District I Spring Meeting on April 18 has two interesting topics: Water Gardens and Carving Fruits and Vegetables the Chinese Way. I want to thank Katie Wemyss for volunteering to design a centerpiece for the meeting.

The state convention will soon be here—May 31 to June 2 at Boyne Highlands Hotel in Harbor Springs. The theme is “Connecting Body, Mind and Spirit.” Check out the schedule on page 4 of the current *Garden Gate*.

Be sure to sign up to work at the flat and plant sale on May 19 or 20. Stacy will have a sign-up sheet at the April 20 meeting.

I am really grateful for everyone's cooperation in getting the various jobs done. Thanks for being faithful to your commitment.

—Angela Paul

Dues are due. \$25 for regular members; \$40 for associate members.



*Welcome Jan and David  
Our newest members*

### April 20 meeting

Spring is here. Time to consider turning that irksome puddle into an ecological and esthetic plus. Unpack the wellies and come prepared to hear **Lillian Dean**, indefatigable promoter of rain gardens and other clean water initiatives in southeastern Michigan, present the latest concepts for *Rain Gardens*. Snacks at 7 and the program begins promptly at 7:30. You'll also have a chance to discuss with Lillian another naturescaping project: Franklin Village Historical Museum Woodland. The ecological gardening education portion of this project is through a Rouge River National Wet Weather Demonstration grant.

### Hill and Dale rocks—the local horticulture world.

Hill and Dale members dominated the horticulture and a few of the design awards at the spring show at Ford Field

in March. Members and their awards are:

**Gretchen Pugsley:** 2 firsts and 2 thirds, with a second in table design.

**Sally Ouellette:** 3 firsts, 1 second, 1 third and 3 honorable mentions and also in a petite design.

**Amy Langdon:** 2 firsts, an honorable mention and the Arboreal Award.

**Chelsea Steinkopf:** (not actually a member, but closely related): 2 firsts and the Junior Award in Horticulture.

**Lisa Steinkopf:** 4 firsts, 4 seconds, a third, 2 honorable mentions, the Horticulture Excellence Award and the Horticulture Award of Merit.

**Marcia Stewart:** 1 first, 1 second, 2 thirds and a third for a niche design.

According to Lisa Steinkopf, Hill and Dale was well represented and took all the top awards in horticulture.

### Coming up

**April 18**—District meeting.

**April 22**—Earth Day

- Heritage Park. Watch local papers for scheduled events.
- 10 a.m. to 8 p.m. in the Shotwell-Gustafson Pavilion at Oakland University. This expo will feature demonstrations of healthy, natural, and ecologically friendly products and services. More than 100 exhibitors and 20 presenters are scheduled. Tickets: Adults-\$10 Students \$7. More information and complete schedules are posted on <http://www.nasemichigan.com/ExpoPages/ExpoAttendeeWebpage.htm>

- Greening of Detroit Tree Sale at Detroit's Eastern Market, Shed #6 from 9 a.m. till noon. Call 313.237.8733 to pre-order until April 14. Trees will also be available on day of sale. Among the native trees and shrubs for sale are American Masterpiece crabapple, ironwood, quaking aspen, Canada red choke cherry, white oak, Redmond linden, witchhazel, fragrant sumac. Trees are \$22; shrubs are \$10 for nonmembers.

**April 29** and thereafter—Booth Park stewardship workdays. Located in the flood plain of the Rouge River in Birmingham, Booth Park has a dedicated cadre of caretakers, who always have room for a few more. Tentative dates are May 4, 11, 13, 20, 25, all from 10 till noon. Please confirm the dates with Anne and Peter Bray at [annebray@ameritech.net](mailto:annebray@ameritech.net).

**April 29**—Telly's presents an 11 a.m. lecture on container gardening, followed by a workshop at 1 p.m. It's a Trowel and Error event as well so we'll cap off the day with George's annual tour of what's new in the nursery at 2 and a late lunch after.

**May 6**—Invasive Species Removal. Take out all your aggressions and help remove garlic mustard, buckthorn and other invasives from 10 till noon at Fairway Park in Birmingham.

**May 8**—Oakland Land Conservancy's Annual Meeting. Focusing on equestrian land conservancy, the meeting begins at 7p.m. with refreshments and horse-drawn carriage rides in Metamora horse country. Check the website for details: [www.oaklandlandconservancy.org](http://www.oaklandlandconservancy.org).

**May 20**—Hill and Dale annual spring flat and perennial sale. Pot up those overgrown perennials and sign up to work the sale.

**June 3**—Rouge Rescue. The premier Rouge cleanup day takes place at many locations. Visit [www.therouge.org](http://www.therouge.org) for a complete list of sites or call 313.792.9900.

**June 4**—Oakland Land Conservancy's Seventh Annual Spring Native Plant Sale at the Pontiac pancake shelter at Pike and Mill streets.

**June 19**—Trowel and Error planning at Jeannine Gundle's home.



Having Fun!!!!

**July**—Butterfly counting at Golden Preserve. Email [susaannegreenlee@wideopenwest.com](mailto:susaannegreenlee@wideopenwest.com) for information about the spring training session.

### Hostess assignments

- April 20 general meeting—Flo Holzknicht, Stacy Buatti, Eleanor Case. Bring your own coffee cup to the meeting.
- May 1 board meeting—Chris Sechler

### Garden Therapy

“I’m a Special Me” is the project. Baggers are: Flo Holzknicht (chair), Lu Eaton, Stacy Buatti, Eleanore Guirlinger. Bagging will take place the week of May 1-5 with classroom time the week of May 8-12.

### Horticulture

*We will be trying something new at meetings, a show and tell time for horticulture. We will explain at the next meeting.*

### Longacre Gardens

It's time to think about the gardens again. Isn't spring a wonderful time of year? I'll have a map of the gardens at the April meeting. You can pick a section and take care of it whenever it fits your schedule. Please let me know where you will help. Thank you—Katie

### Critter spotting

Critter populations are booming. The blackbirds have returned and set up in the marsh. Bruno the enforcer swan has returned, escorting yet another mate around the canal, looking for just the right place to nest. The past few years have not been kind to his series of mates and their disappearing offspring. We don't know if we should attribute Bruno's consistency to dogged determination to make a life in a hostile world or plain stupidity. We're inclined to the latter.

The migrating diving ducks spent a few days in the lake, but didn't swim close enough for us to identify just what ducks they might be.

As soon as open water showed up, so did the Canada geese, honking their brains out at nothing more noticeable than the open water.

The winter denizens of the bird feeders are learning to share with the

fair weather fans. Robins don't touch the seed, but still hop through the garden looking for worms. The downies and the red bellied woodpecker are holding their own at the suet stand against the starlings and the grackles, and an occasional cow bird.

The petulant groundhog, trimmed down a bit after a winter of hibernation, strolled through the garden this week, checking out the flora. This early in the year there isn't much to tempt his palette, but he doesn't seem to be leaving town in search of fairer offerings either.

A solitary rabbit (how long can THAT status last?) hopped out of the side garden last week. They don't eat as much as the groundhogs—at least not individually. Still, enough of them make us ambivalent about the fox sightings in Ray's yard. We KNOW we're not pleased that Ray had three deer in his yard. It's right next to ours.

"Spotting" might not be the most apt word for a recent critter encounter. I woke up wondering what was smoldering in the house. It was a naggingly familiar smell, but we could find no smoke. Still, as a precaution, I unplugged the humidifier before heading off to work. And then I recognized it. Skunk!

Quite dead in the middle of Middlebelt, right outside our driveway. Not 10 feet away, a dead possum. The scene was ripe for speculation. Neighbor Ray was sure that they'd fought and in the heat of battle missed the approaching vehicle that settled the war—a draw.

As is the way with roadkill, the possum was soon flattened and kicked into the ditch on the other side of the street. So how come the skunk was NOT flattened and still wound up at the entrance to our drive. We straddled that critter for more than a week, hoping that another vehicle would send it farther down the road and nature would take its course. Or maybe some carrion eater

would stop by to complete nature's cycle. Not this time. Ray inquired about our plans for that skunk. That forced us to consider making some. On regular trash day, bagged in a white garbage bag shroud, the skunk left the area. It was still pretty sniffy.

--Mar Sclawy

### *This 'n' that*

Oakland Land Conservancy's Native Garden Photo Contest will accept entries until May 3. Entries must show native plant species found in Michigan that are part of a native landscape or garden in southeast Michigan. For all the rules, visit the website: [www.oaklandlandconservancy.org](http://www.oaklandlandconservancy.org).

SOCORA announces a compost price reduction for 2006. Screened Compost Humus made from grass, leaves and woodchips is available for large scale users at the Southeastern Oakland County Resource Recovery Authority (SOCORA) facilities: Northwest corner of Dequindre & School Road, Rochester Hills-between Hamlin and Avon Road. Prices are \$9/cubic yard-first 1,000 yds, \$8/cubic yard-second 1,000 yds, 7/cubic yard-quantities over 2,000 yds; \$15 minimum charge). For hours and more information call SOCORA: 248.288.5150 (main office), 248.651.7840 (compost site).



From Gretchen !