

Hill and Dale Newsletter
August 2006

Presidential preface

The summer certainly is NOT over. The garden, however, can wait a bit. It's time to start the new club year, a good time to reflect on club goals and activities to make sure that Hill and Dale is providing maximum benefit and enjoyment to its members and the community. You'll find a copy of proposed by-laws revisions in this issue. Angela Paul, Gretchen Pugsley, Katie Wemyss and I worked on the revisions. We focused on providing by-laws that reflect the way the club has been running and hope that you find them acceptable to govern the club going forward. Whether you like or dislike the changes, please come to the meeting and voice your position—and see Lisa's stellar gardens.

--Mar Sclawy

*August 10 meeting—please
note the venue change
Garden Tour and General
Meeting*

Lisa Steinkopf is hosting the meeting at her place with a tour of the garden. A map to her place is enclosed. This is a potluck affair. Please bring your own dishes and table service and a dish to share. We will have a tour of Lisa's as well as her neighbors who is a member of Livonia Garden Club starting the year off with lovely gardens and a purposeful meeting

Visions of Beauty

You can place your order for Vision of Beauty, the national club's annual calendar, at the meeting. Carol Smith will be collecting order money on that day only. Standard size format (5 1/2" by 8 1/2") is \$4.95; small format (4" by 6") is \$2.50. Price includes shipping and handling. Any price break from submitting larger orders will be credited to the club treasury.

There are proposed revisions to the club by-laws enclosed with this new letter. Please review them before the meeting. We will discuss and vote on them at the meeting.

Minutes of June 15 meeting

Our annual potluck June meeting and installation was well attended. The installation was done by Kathleen Postema. A beautiful plant was given to each of the board members. She did a great job and the evening was enjoyed by all.

Angela thanked the membership and board members for their assistance during her year as president. She then presented each of her board with a beautiful plant.

Hospitality. A clip board is being passed. Please sign up for the month you would like to serve in the upcoming year.

Flat sale: There were 29 flats left but Stacy was able to sell all but 2 1/2 of them, giving us an additional \$84 to add to our flat sale profits for a total of \$453.58. Stacy and her committee are looking at changes for next year in order to gain greater profits.

It was announced that Dan Abbott informed us that there will be a memorial service for Ilene at July 22 from 2 to 4 p.m. at the Costick Center.

Mar presented Angela with the past president's pin along with a gift from the membership. Respectfully submitted,
--Chris Sechler,
secretary

Coming up

August 26 - from 10 am to noon for those who embrace (or at least can stand): GRASSHOPPER, CRICKET and KATYDID SURVEY at Golden Preserve. Contact Susanne Greenlee at 248.601.2816 or susannegreenlee@wideopenwest.com to participate.

September 16 – Plant exchange at Farmington Hills city hall parking lot from 8:30 to 11. Trade your overstocks for someone else's and widen your garden horizons.

Garden therapy

Jeannine Gundle is looking for the following materials: foam egg cartons, tuna fish cans (or other cans of that size), fabric scraps at least 9" round (preferably in small prints), pressed flowers.

Trowel & Error calendar

Club members have volunteered to organize the following adventures throughout the year:

- August—Peach time in Romeo. Jeannine Gundle is checking on dates.
- September 23—The Rock Shop, Angela Paul
- November 11—Packer Creek Pottery, Genoa, OH, Chris Sechler
- February 10—Pictures at the Zoo, Carol Smith
- March 17—Eastern Market (and maybe Corktown for St. Pat's Day celebrations), Mar Sclawy
- April 21—Belle Isle conservatory, Nancy Adams
- May 12—Wildtype Nursery, Mason, MI, Mar Sclawy
- June 16—Bogie Lake Nursery, Sally Ouellette
- July 14—Hidden Lakes Gardens, Jan and David Henry

Plans for October fell through. Anyone with suggestions should contact Peggy Dapkus.

This 'n' that

Nancy Goulette, long-time Hill and Dale member and chair of the finance committee of Michigan Garden Clubs, has sold her Davisburg home. She's moving to Buford, Georgia, to live near her daughter, but will be in the area until November. Linda Talacki and Mar Sclaw y have her contact information while she's still in Michigan.



Horticulture

Green is my favorite color, but my favorite plants have variegated leaves. Why have plain foliage when you can have green and white, or green and yellow, or green and pink, or all of the above?

Why are plants variegated? There are a couple of reasons. One, they originate as random seedlings, or sports-unusual variegated shoots coming off of a plain green plant. Two, they are virus-induced to be variegated.

With red or purple-variegation, chlorophyll, the green pigment, is masked by other pigments. Yellow and white variegations are caused by

imperfect or absent chloroplasts. In a white or yellow edged leaf, the green pigments function normally in the inner layer, but the outer layer lacks chloroplasts, making the edge white, or contains a version of chlorophyll called protochlorophyll, which creates yellow edges. Variegated plants are often weaker and less floriferous, with smaller and fewer blooms. Never buy a variegated form of your favorite plant, such as a hibiscus, expecting the same spectacular flowers, because you will be disappointed. Buy your variegated plant, knowing you just want the fabulous foliage, and when you get some flowers, consider it a bonus. If you notice a green shoot coming from your variegated plant, cut it off immediately, as it will overtake your plant.

Shelter is important for variegated plants, especially the thin-leaved white and yellow variegated types, which can brown if exposed to hot sun, wind, or extreme cold. You will see a perfect example of this at my house on Thursday. I have a very white variegated canna which is completely brown now from the sun exposure.

Variegated leaves are fabulous in arrangements. Popular now are the arrangements made with only beautiful foliage and the lack of flowers is usually not noticed. The best part is that they usually last longer than flowers.

Some of my favorite plants are the variegated monstera which you see a picture of, african violets, draceanas, and succulents. Outside, of course we all love hostas, cannas, iris, and hydrangeas. Actually, I haven't met a variegated plant I don't like. They add light to a dark corner and interest to a dull green landscape. Try a few variegated plants in your home and garden. You won't be disappointed.

Lisa

Critter Spotting

How does a fox—famed raider of henhouses and other country

establishments—wind up as road kill on thoroughly suburban Middlebelt Road? By not looking both ways before crossing a busy street. Defunct foxes alongside the road are a new phenomenon in the neighborhood. They're joining the raccoons, skunks, possums and an occasional very stupid groundhog as fodder for the returning crow population. Doubly good news: returning crows suggest that West Nile virus is not prevalent this year and the crows have returned to taking care of the road kill.

Birds do seem to be the focus of my observations recently. We're pretty much shed of geese. At least that's what we thought when the usual downy chicks didn't appear in the canal at their appointed time. However, kayaking around the lake, I saw geese by the score settling in on other people's lawns. Better than us, I thought, though I knew that no geese are better than geese that are just elsewhere.

Sure enough. The geese have moved on—to our backyard. We don't see much of them, but we surely do encounter signs of their former presence on the way to the water.

We no longer have a swan on patrol in the canal and suspect that Bruno the enforcer swan has moved on—to another lake or another sphere. He's patrolled every summer that we've lived on the lake, taking great pleasure in harassing the geese and ducks, who took great pleasure in staying just out of reach of his vicious bill.

The local egret is making himself more visible than usual by taking to perching on the top of our boat cover. He needs a respite from the blackbirds that constantly peck at him when he goes trolling alongside their nests in the marsh reeds. By now they should have figured out he's fishing, not looking for little blackbirds. (Or maybe they know more than I can take in with my occasional looks outside.)

Humming birds have always liked the bee balm in the front garden. Its bright red petals easily attract them and they seem to have a fair amount of nectar to share. I was particularly taken with the organized nectar sipping of one small hummer. Rather than flit from flower to flower in classic hummer fashion, she moved from petal to petal on a single blossom until she'd dipped into almost every petal on it. She was full in no time.

The swallows are nesting again this year under the low bridge that crosses the mouth of Forest Lake. As I paddle under it, the birds fly out in all directions. At least they usually do. My last trip, one very scared little swallow sat resolutely—and very still—on her nest, eyes closed, hoping that I wouldn't notice her. Of course, I did—but I pretended otherwise. We both survived.

Meanwhile, the muskrat mom continues her endless traverse of the canal, bringing something from one side to the other. With only her nose sticking out of the water, it's not easy to figure out what she's ferrying about.

Naturally the groundhogs are still around. The garden is in such riot that it's impossible to tell if it's groundhogs, chipmunks or the new (large) family of rabbits that are making the crocosmia rattle when there's not a breath of air. Last night the bee balm was thrashing wildly in the calm—right outside the kitchen window. Sure enough, as I charged out the front door, a very alert groundhog dashed for the backyard, where we suspect he has found a way under the shed, frustrating our attempts to fill up every entry to that (apparently vast) underground facility.

--Mar Sclawy © 2006