



# Quail's Tales

*September 13 meeting*

## *President's Preface*

Now that the monsoons have stopped—mostly—maybe we can venture outside to the gardens and start getting them ready for winter. Does that mean I should probably forget about the spring clean-up in the back garden?? Maybe for yet another year. I know everyone else does better.

Six members enjoyed the Trowel and Error Heavenly Scent outing with a stop for ice cream at Guernsey Dairy on the return trip.

September's event is the Fall Fair at MSU Tollgate Gardens on September 15. This is also the date of the Farmington Hills Fall Perennial Plant Exchange in the parking lot of the city offices from 8:30 to 12:00. This is a good opportunity to thin out those lovely but overcrowded plants while you know what's what and where. Sometimes the perceptions change over the winter.

Does anyone have suggestions for the forsythia side of the Spicer House Gardens? It is woefully overgrown with Joe Pye weed and the aforementioned forsythia. Remove excess? Guess we'll need some real muscle and maybe a saw.

The District I Fall 2007 Meeting, "Fly Into Fall", hosted by the Canton Garden Club is being held October 11 at the Hellenic Cultural Center in Westland. The cost is \$22 per person and needs to be paid at the September meeting. Four Star Greenhouse from Carleton tells us what makes a "Proven Winner" and "Rehabilitation of Birds of Prey" by Karen Young will have some special guests of the feathered variety.

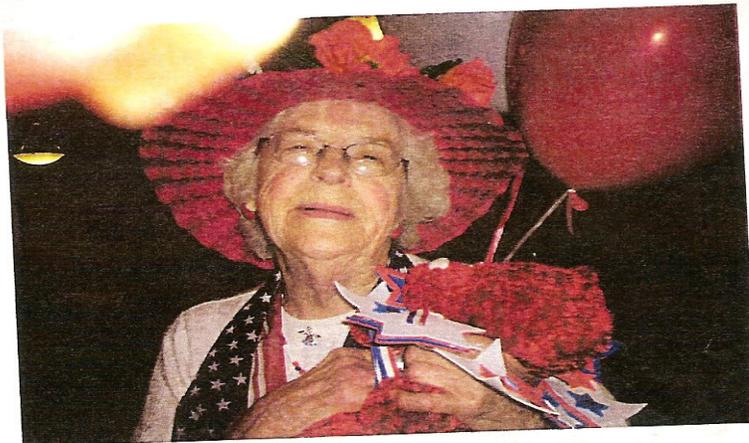
Get an early start on planning color into next year's gardens at the September 13 meeting with a presentation by Dr. James Neubacher.

--Sandy C.

## *September 13 meeting*

Who can resist dahlias? Certainly not James H. Neubacher, a passionate dahlia grower and gardener for many years. A retired educator from the Detroit public schools and a certified senior judge of the American Dahlia Society, Dr. Neubacher will share his love of dahlias, among other plants, starting at 7 p.m.

Say Good-bye to Blanche Richardson who will be enjoying Florida . You are the Best!



## *Minutes of August 9 meeting*

The meeting was held at the home of Peggy Dapkus. We enjoyed a delightful pot luck dinner meeting.

The minutes were read and approved. Extra copies of the minutes are available for club members. Treasurer: We have a total of \$8,536.45 in all accounts as of this date.

Trowel and Error: Jeannine will organize a trip to the Heavenly Scent Herb Farm on August 25. The group will meet at Orchard Lake and 12 Mile at 9:30 a.m. and car pool to the farm.

Junior Gardeners: Meetings will be held in October, December, April and June. Angela and Amy offered to assist Jeannine in October as Lu Eaton will be out of town.

Plant Exchange: The plant exchange will be held at the Farmington Hills City Hall on September 15 beginning at 8:30 a.m.

District One: The fall meeting will be held in Westland on October 11. The cost is expected to be \$20 [It is actually \$22.]. Carol Smith will collect the money in September and make our reservations.

A silent auction was held after the meeting to dispose of some of the club's unneeded items. Bids were taken and items awarded, and a good time was had by all.

Respectfully submitted, Chris Sechler, Secretary.

## *Trowel and Error*

Tollgate fall fair is the destination. September 15 is the date. We'll meet at the entrance to the fair at noon. Chris Sechler will pass a signup sheet at the September meeting so we'll have an idea of how many are expected to meet up. Tollgate entrance is located at 28115 Meadowbrook, just north of 12 Mile in Novi. Admission is free.

## *Garden Therapy*

Bagging will be Tuesday, October 2, at 9:30 a.m. at Katie's home. Committee includes Barb Glaser and Eleanore Guirlinger. As always, if you can't make your assigned bagging, it's up to you to find a sub.

## *Remembrance*

*Barb sent get well card to Betty Gurtowski and a condolence card to Lu Eaton.*

## *Coming Up*

**September 15**—City Plant Exchange at Farmington Hills City Hall parking lot, located on 11 Mile Road at Orchard Lake from 8:30 – 11 a.m. Hill and Dale members will trade perennials and discuss how to care for them.

—Trowel and Error goes to Tollgate. Details elsewhere in the newsletter.

**Oct. 6**—Junior Gardeners will create a twig weaving **Fall Fantasy** at 10 a.m. at the downtown library. Reservations required.

**Oct. 11**—District 1 Fall Meeting at the Hellenic Cultural Center, 36375 Joy Road, Westland. Tickets are \$22.. We are required to sign up as a group so if you plan to attend, please plan to pay Carol Smith \$22 at the September meeting only. It is the same day as our October meeting.

## Horticulture—Garden Journaling



Do you ever wish you knew for sure whether the plant coming up in your garden is a weed or not? You look at it, study it, maybe even take a piece to your local garden center to see if they can identify it. You don't remember planting anything there. A way to solve this problem is to start a garden journal. Recording where you've planted everything makes weeding much easier. If you didn't plant it there, it's most likely an unwanted inhabitant (weed).

A garden journal is your own personal account of your garden. It can include thoughts and dreams about your garden or it can be easily shared and not include any personal details at all. Just the facts. Either one is okay.

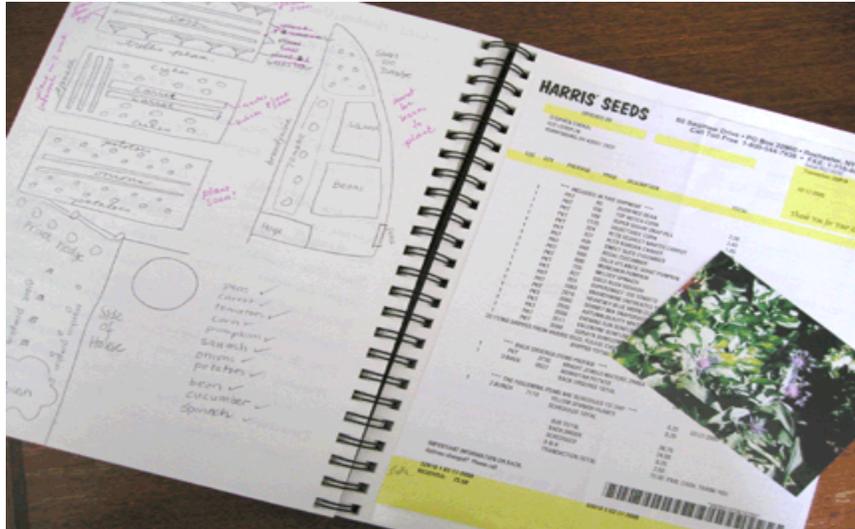
I find a spiral-bound journal works best for me because it lies flat and yet is expandable. Any notebook will work; it doesn't have to be expensive. There are garden journals that are available with plastic sleeves, graph paper, and pages already printed with information only needing to be plugged in in the appropriate areas. They can be very costly, but beautiful also and sometimes easier than trying to fill a blank page. Pure white paper in a new journal can be very intimidating. You can also keep your journal on your computer with all your digital pictures. The form your journal takes is purely up to you.

Things to include in your journal are:

1. Pot tags from the plants. I tape them to the page so I can read both sides. They can be very bulky, thus the reason for having an expandable notebook.
2. Seed packets. Cut them open and tape the whole thing to the page. Record when you planted them, when they germinated, how long before they flowered or produced their fruit, etc.
3. Plant receipts. Always keep the receipt so if there is a problem, you can return to the correct nursery and get help or a new plant. Usually the receipt has the nursery's guarantee and the stipulations of the guarantee on them.
4. Catalog pictures and details. Catalog pictures always show plants at their very best and usually at their full-grown size. I've noticed that Wayside Gardens has excellent pictures as do other nursery catalogs.
5. Photos of your garden are a must. Take photos in all seasons so you can see what is blooming in spring, early summer, late summer, fall, etc. Then you can determine where you need more color or less, for that matter. Also, it helps you remember where your bulbs are located. It is also great to take a picture with you to the nursery so the sales people can help with suggestions.
6. Diagrams of your garden. You don't have to be an artist to draw a crude diagram of your garden. Then you know where everything is planted and you've written down the name of the plant. When it comes up next spring and you're not sure what it is, you need only to reference your diagram to know.

NorthernGardening.com, there is a free garden journal that can be downloaded. It's very nice and inexpensive. Two books I love that help with garden journaling or nature journaling are *The Decorated Page*, by Gwen Diehn and *The Naturalist's Path*, by Cathy Johnson.

Just remember, your garden journal is a reflection of you and your garden. It can be as elaborate or simple as you want it to be. If you like to scrapbook, you can create a very elaborate, expensive, beautiful, journal. Scrapbook stores have great ideas and examples displayed and it is fun to look at other people's ideas and maybe some ideas of your own will come to you. The main thing is to have fun doing it and you can look back at your garden through the years. How fun!  
--Lisa Steinkopf



### *Start spring way early and give Sally a hand*

Sally Ouellette is horticulture chair for spring's Flower School in May 2008. To teach students how to judge, she'll need spring bulb flowers for them to assess. If you're willing to plant about six bulbs this fall, remember where you planted them, and deliver the blooms to her next May, please see Sally at the next meeting or give her a call. She'll order the bulbs. If your yard is deer-prone, ask for daffodils.

### *Katie's installment cookbook*

#### Chapter 2: Fruit Cocktail Cake

**1 cup sugar**  
**1 cup flour**  
**1 teaspoon baking soda**  
**1 egg**  
**Pinch of salt**  
**No. 2 can fruit cocktail**

**Topping:**  
**½ cup brown sugar**  
**½ cup coconut**  
**½ cup nuts**

Sprinkle each on top of batter. Bake at 350°

Mix all ingredients in a bowl. Pour into 9x13

--Gretchen Pugsley

## *Hospitality*

September: Kathleen Postema, Carol Smith, Mar Sclawy

October: Ellie Case, Barbara Glaser, Eleanore Guirlinger. And a reminder that if you can't make your assigned meeting, it's up to you—not the hospitality chair—to find a substitute.

## *Critter spotting*

Poor me, the critter who had to sit out this gardening season with a thrice broken ankle. It prevented me from doing serious mayhem to all manner of noxious weeds that infiltrate the garden. Of course, I discovered some interesting specimens as well, some of which I'd let flourish even if I could get to them. Not being able to walk in the garden has also undermined the groundhog watch. But there has been progress on that front—we think.

As we embarked on another season of groundhog torment and defeat, it came as quite a relief to learn that our local government found groundhogs to be just as much a pest as we do, with the result that we could legally hire a groundhog getter service to set traps of all kinds and remove the critters for \$50 a pelt, er, pop. For much of the summer we'd have one groundhog carted off only to find a new one in the trap a day or so later. We'd never had any luck trapping them ourselves and thought that that was because groundhogs were smart. Apparently not.

What they are is lazy. Far too lazy to pass up an attractive burrow under the air conditioner, the garden shed, the tool shed, the garden wall just because there was evidence of past mayhem to similarly furred critters at the mouth of that newly vacated residence.

After 15 or so groundhogs had definitely fattened the groundhog getter's wallet, he proposed a more lasting solution. For a mere \$850 more (and the last groundhog was on him) he'd fill in the current burrows (never a very useful deterrent in the past) and install a fabric in the area that just irked the heck out of groundhogs, got caught in their claws and frustrated them to the point that they'd find a new place to call home.

Having had a heart to heart with the sensitive young nephew about the need to trap groundhogs at all (after all, everybody got to be somewhere), we bought into the groundhog getter's alternative to endless groundhog trapping, and hired the installation. So far, so good, which doesn't mean that the groundhogs haven't found other attractive homesites on *our* homesite. Perhaps we just haven't found them yet. Nonetheless, we'll take our mini-thrill of victory where we can get it—though I am wondering why we're sinking into the backyard for no apparent reason....

—Mar Sclawy © 2007

## *My Monet Weigela*

