



Quail's Tales

www.HillandDaleGC.org

President's Preface

June , 2008

We're already at the end of another Hill and Dale gardening year. Peggy will be taking over as president, but I guess it'll have to wait one week.

Thanks to Katie and company, the annual spring perennial plant sale was a resounding success. This means a thank you to everyone who helped.

When all dues are paid Carol Smith will arrange subscriptions for all to the National Gardener magazine. We can inform ourselves of upcoming schools and attend any of interest. Perhaps Lisa could publish a list in August of all books in our library. Many of the required reading materials are owned by the club.

At the MGC State Meeting our club received a Gold Seal Club of Distinction Award and Jeannine was surprised with a Lifetime Achievement Award.

The June meeting is the installation of officers and an appetizer buffet. Please give Peggy the support and encouragement you've shown me. And I thank you. –Sandy C



June 12 meeting—Installation

Officer installation for the coming year. President: Peggy Dapkus; VP and program chair: Sally Ouellette; Secretary: Chris Sechler; Treasurer: Carol Smith. Thanks to the outgoing officers: President: Sandy Cusack and VP and program chair: Peggy Dapkus.

Incoming Installation of new officers and Board will be conducted by Angela Paul

Standing Committees

2008

Awards

Flo Holzknecht

Horticulture

Lisa Steinkopf

Hospitality

EllieCase

junior gardeners

Lu Eaton, Jeannine Gundle, Nancy

Librarian

Adams

Membership

Lisa Steinkopf

Newsletter

Kathleen Postema

Nominations

Mar Sdawy, Sally Ouellette

Telephones

Sandy Cusack

Remembrance

Eleanor Guirlinger

Publicity

Eleanor Guirlinger

Angela Paul

Green sale	?
perennial sale	?
Yearbook	Nancy Adams Majorie Gordon Angela Paul
Ways and means	Nancy Adams Majorie Gordon
Webmaster	David Henry
Heritage Park gardens	Katie Wemyss Sandy Cusack

Outgoing officers and board members will prepare their usual tasty selection of snacks. Sally will have her mothers day present: a digital photo frame containing some of our events in pictures to view

Minutes of May 8 meeting

Minutes were read and corrected. Katie also worked at Festival of Arts.

Treasurers report submitted.

Web Site WWW.Hillanddalegc.org Dave announced that it is up, running and easy to navigate.

Plant Sale Katie reminded us to have our plants ready for the upcoming sale. House plants would be a welcomed donation.

Ruth Trombley has perennials that she is willing to donate if someone can dig these. Katie will arrange to do this.

Flo suggested that we contact the gentleman that gave a program on Dahlias and ask if he would be willing to donate some to our plant sale.

We will be meeting at the barn on Friday at 1:00 to mark and price the plants. On Saturday we will meet at 9:00 a.m. to set up for the sale which will begin at 10:00 and continue until 2:00 p.m.

New business: The cultural Arts Council requested a donation of \$50.00 to assist with the expenses for the annual Festival of Arts. Ruth Trombley made a motion that we make this contribution. Seconded and Approved Meeting closed at 8:14 p.m.

Respectfully submitted, Chris Sechler



Perennial Sales Results

Thanks to the digging and potting of many members, the pricing and sorting of more members and the excellent sale skills of other members, we netted more than \$700 from sales of our own prolific perennial plants. Thanks to Katie for heading up the effort and to all who worked on any aspect of it.

So.....

Thank you so much to all of you who helped in any way. Our sale was a big success. We were almost cleaned out by 2:00. We found homes for the few plants that were left.

Thanks again.....Katie

And our thanks to Katie for organizing this event.

Coming up

- **June 19** – Wellness Expo at Comerica's Livonia campus. Angela Paul and Winnie Chrzanowski will be there from 11 to 3, David and Jan Henry from 6 to 9. Our theme is dirt can make you healthy. Thoughts on presentation are welcome.

- Future of the Rouge River: If you are interested in providing input into planning for the future of the Rouge River, please plan to attend one of these public meetings:

Tuesday, June 24 - William M. Costick Activities Center - 28600 Eleven Mile Rd., Farmington Hills (between Middlebelt & Inkster)

Monday, June 23 - Plymouth Twp. Hall - 9955 N Haggerty Rd., Plymouth (North of Ann Arbor Rd)
Agenda

6:30-7:00 pm - Registration

7:00pm - 8:30pm - Presentation & Break-Out Sessions (Refreshments provided)

For a flyer, go to: <http://www.allianceofrougecommunities.com/>

Tuesday and Wednesday July 24-25 Judges Symposium Kalamazoo

- **July 27** – Garden Walk in Belleville from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. Advance tickets are available for \$8 at Belleville area locations until July 26. Tickets are \$10 on day of event and will be available at the library, 167 Fourth St. only. Brochures available at our June meeting.

Dues are overdue

May 8-10—Flower Show School was held at the Radisson Detroit-Livonia. The attendance was down somewhat and it has been decided to move the location to where the convention was held as they gave a much better price.

Holiday Inn, 3600 Plymouth Road, Ann Arbor (September)

A letter from our District Director regarding the flower show will be available at the meeting for your consideration

Horticulture

TRADESCANTIA

Tradescantia. Sound familiar? Or does spiderwort, wandering jew, purple heart, or Moses-in-the-cradle sound more familiar?

The genus Tradescantia covers a lot of ground. Not only does it include tropical plants native to Mexico, it includes herbaceous perennials native to Missouri. These plants have all received their names from John Tradescant the elder (1570-1638). He was an English naturalist, gardener, collector, and traveller. He began as head gardener to the Earl of Salisbury at Hatfield House, who initiated Tradescant in travelling by sending him looking for fruit trees. John went on many trips, always returning with seeds, bulbs, and cuttings. He is the father of John the younger, who also was a famous garden explorer, coming to America and introducing trees to England such as magnolias, bald cypress, and tulip trees.

There have been two fictional works written about them by Philippa Gregory, *Earthly Joys*, about John the elder, and *Virgin Earth*, about the younger.

Probably the most well-known Tradescantia is the wandering jew, or *Tradescantia zebrina*. This is a beautiful foliage plant, grown for its fabulous iridescent, multi-color leaves. These qualities have made it a very popular plant for containers, used as a "spiller". It is native to Mexico and can become a nuisance in warmer parts of the country where it can become invasive. The sap of these plants can cause skin irritation in humans and dogs, so be aware of this when bringing these plants into a home where the dog likes to nibble on your plants or just roll over them.

Another popular tropical form of tradescantia, is the purple heart, or *Tradescantia pallida*. It may also appear in books as *Setcreasea pallida*. It also hails from Mexico, and is very drought tolerant. Its best color displays itself in full sun and has also become popular as a container plant in the summer. Both of these plants are easily propagated from cuttings, so use them in your containers, take cuttings in the fall, and cultivate them in your house for next spring. In the tropics, these "hanging basket plants", as we know them, are used as ground covers, as we use myrtle or pachysandra. Legendary designer Burle Marx used masses of these in his flamboyant tropical gardens.

The spiderwort, or *Tradescantia virginiana*, is a beautiful perennial that most of us grow in our gardens. I have one called 'Concord Grape', which has very nice purple flowers. There is a relatively new one with yellow foliage called 'Sweet Kate'. They flower from late May through July, each flower only lasting one day. When the stems of the spiderwort are cut, they secrete a fluid that becomes threadlike and silky upon hardening (like a spider's web), hence the common name. This plant grew profusely at my grandmother's house around her water spigot on the shady side of her house. I always loved it but didn't know what it was until much later. I love the plant more for the memories it invokes, getting a drink with the old tin cup on a hot day-the water was colder and tasted better out of that cup--than anything else.

Go out and buy a tradescantia, and remember every time you see them, that long ago, the John Tradescants were out plant exploring and bringing these beautiful plants back so we could enjoy them today.

Happy Gardening!



Lisa

Critter spotting

Recently, I was at the Inn at St. John's for classes in family law. In one of the totally enclosed courtyards, one with a waterfall, was a family of mallards: mom and seven very little guys. She'd fly down the steeper parts of the falls and the kids would waddle around on the shore till they got to a place where they could jump in. Once she got them all (but for two kids who just didn't seem ready for that challenging hike) down to the lowest level, she'd hike up the slope on the side of the falls and the kids would trail along. And then....repeat. At least it keeps them occupied till they're strong enough to fly over the courtyard walls. There's no walking out of this place.

Sandy's the proud step parent of a clutch of baby ducks herself. The nest was in the midst of her garden and her lovable, curious mutt, Chowder, seemed to understand he had to leave the nest alone while the mom bravely sat it out in the face of a big black dog sniffing around.

Not so lucky was the mama robin who'd built a nest in the beams under our deck. Tootsie, who has learned that the electric fence will zap her if she gets too close to the edge of the yard, deals with this hard-won knowledge by refusing to come off the deck, regardless of inducements. That leaves her with lots of time to sniff around on the deck, which is how she discovered the robin brooding right below the deck floor. She snuffled and growled and pawed and drooled sufficiently to convince the robin she had chosen the wrong spot for her nest. It has been abandoned since the initial Tootsie sighting.

On a broader bird front, Independence Oaks sponsored a bird watching orientation for neophyte birders. Accompanied by an experienced birder, Terri, about 14 of us tromped through the various habitats in the Oakland County park listening and looking for birds. Our official tally was 34 species. I must have seen six or seven of them myself. I was the one that Terri finally had to take by the shoulders, position me in front of the bird, and help me rotate my head until that elusive bird HAD to be in my sights. Endless patience and good cheer by the other birders gave me time to spy a king bird, yellow warbler and Baltimore oriole, among those easily recognized bird feeder denizens.