



Quail's Tales

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Hill and Dale is a member of Michigan Garden Clubs and National Garden Clubs

September 11, 2008

President's Preface

Installation of new officers and board members was conducted by Angela Paul on June 12. Thanks for a job well done, Angela.

Time to get started for our new gardening and horticultural projects. There is still so much to learn!

Heritage Pak Gardens are looking just fine since we got rid of all those ugly weeds. A few hours a week is all it takes. Volunteer!!

Enjoy the rest of the summer!!

—Peggy Dapkus

September 11 meeting

Welcome Mary Fitzpatrick a member of the Taylor garden club.

We have had a interest expressed in what to do with pressed flowers or leaves and Mary is experienced in sharing this information and will provide a project for us as a demonstration at 7:15

Minutes of August 14 meeting

A pot luck dinner was held at the home of Katie Wemyss, after the dinner and meeting we toured Katie's lovely gardens

Our District I Director, Virginia Froelich was a guest this evening. She explained how our club connected with the Michigan Garden Clubs and reviewed the many activities they are involved with.

Yearbook: Nancy Adams announced it is almost finished and will be in the member's hands soon.

Trowel and Error: The next meeting will be at the home of Sally Ouellette on August 23rd. She suggested you bring rubber gloves as we will be making puddle stones using sand and cement.

Junior Gardeners: The first project will be corn husk dolls. Please save corn husks and bring them to the September meeting.

Membership: We now have thirty-four members including the associate members.

Heritage Park: Katie and Sandy and their committee have been working regularly on the gardens and they look great.

Awards: Flo is asking for 5x7 photos of your garden to be included in an award she will be submitting

Jean Moran did an arrangement using interesting gourds and explained her interpretation

The meeting closed at 8:25 p.m.

Respectfully submitted

Chris Sechler

Secretary

Coming up

- **September 13**—Zonta International golf outing to benefit Haven's START program starts with registration and a continental breakfast at 7:30 am followed by a shotgun start for 9 holes of golf at 8:30. Heather Highlands in Brighton. Lunch, awards and prizes will follow. Registration: \$55. See the sign-in table at the meeting for registration forms and more information
- **September 16**—*Lavender—How to Grow and Use*. Last in MSU's Evenings in the Garden 2008 series. You'll learn about different kinds of lavender, its medicinal, culinary and aromatic benefits and make a lavender-rosemary fire starter. Class runs 6:30 to 8:30 pm at Tollgate Education Center, 28115 Meadowbrook Road, Novi. Fee: \$25 includes fire starter kit. Call Linda at 248.858.0887 for more information and availability.
- **September 20**—Free family fun day at Tollgate Farms Fall Fair (say that three times fast) runs from 9 am till 3 pm at address shown above. There are activities for the entire family, harvest foods for purchase, free parking.
- **October 7**—District 1 fall meeting. See details elsewhere in the new sletter.
- **October 11**—An Herb Extravaganza is set for 9 am to 2 pm at Oakland County Executive Office Conference Center, 2100 Pontiac Lake Road, Waterford. \$40 fee includes morning refreshments, box lunch and handouts. Program includes Getting Started With Herbs, Using Common Herbs to Nourish Immunity, The Fragrant Path: Growing What You Use and Using What You Grow. Registration forms will be available at the sign-in table at the September meeting. Registration ends September 22.

District 1 Fall Meeting

A Harvest Happening is set for October 7 at Crystal Gardens Banquet Center, 16703 Fort Street, Southgate. Phone 734.285.2210. It's being hosted by the Grosse Ile Garden Club, home club of Virginia Froehlich, District 1 director.

Schedule:

9:15: Register, coffee, shop.

10: Business meeting

11: *Autumn Jewels: The Science Behind the Scenery*, presented by certified Advanced Master Gardener Cheryl M. English.

12:15: Luncheon of soup, Maurice salad, rolls and butter, dessert pastries, beverage.

1:15 *Harvest Tablescape Demonstration*, presented by Christopher and Joseph of Christopher and Company Special Event Productions.

2:30 Adjourn

Members planning to attend should pay their \$22 registration fee to Carol Smith at the September meeting. Deadline for registration is September 30. (note: we will be having Cheryl as a speaker on a different topic at one of our meetings)

This 'n' that

No Surprises! Here's the schedule for board meeting hospitality for the year

Sept 29: Eleanore Guirlinger

Nov. 3: Carol Smith, Sandy Cusack

Dec. 1: Katie Wemyss

Feb. 2: Mar Sclawy

March 2: Marge Gordon, Nancy Adams

March 30: Kathleen Postema

May 4: Amy Langdon

May 28: Sally Ouellette

Oh, and...Garden therapy bagging and meeting hospitality are the only requirements (other than paying dues) for club membership. Do check to make sure you're signed up for both activities. Sally has raised the ante for hospitality this year. Centerpiece designers will briefly explain the rationale of their designs as an additional educational component of the meeting.

Lest you miss an intriguing adventure between club newsletters, you can request a weekly update of horticulture and garden-related activities in the area by contacting Carol Lenchek, lenchekc@oakgov.com, Environmental Programs Coordinator for MSU Extension-Oakland County, and requesting to be added to the Oakland Gardener weekly email blast.

Horticulture

WHAT ABOUT WEIGELA?

Weigela? What about it? Is it worth growing? It is if you want fabulous flowers in the spring and intermittently throughout the growing season. Also, if you like hummingbirds, it is worth growing.

How about fabulous foliage in green, burgundy, or variegated?

I've given you plenty of reasons to grow weigela. Now let's learn a little more about it. It is in the caprifoliaceae or honeysuckle family. They grow anywhere from 1 foot to over 5 feet tall, depending on the variety. It is named after Christian Ehrenfried Weigel (1748-1831), a German scientist. It has tubular or funnel-shaped flowers and as I mentioned before, the hummingbirds

love this shrub. They are great in a mixed shrub border and the foliage is fantastick, as

Sally demonstrated at last month's meeting, with her fabulous arrangement.

A couple of varieties I would like to mention are new to us this year. 'Shining Sensation', a very shiny, burgundy foliaged plant, and 'Camavale', a green leaved variety with pink, white, and red flowers on the same plant. The fall color is great on this variety also.

This is just an introduction to the weigela family and next month we will discuss some more varieties.

Have a great day!!!

Lisa

Critter spotting

It seems I'm not the only one who deals with the local fauna. Actually, "dealing" seems a bit limiting in recounting Jan and David Henry's recent groundhog experience. It started with sounds—in the attic. I think we all assume that those roly poly groundhogs are not built for climbing. Jan and David subscribed to that antiquated theory for starters. Here's Jan's blow-by-blow account of dealing with a critter INSIDE the house.

From the start, "there was a disagreement on the animal size. Ending that debate was actually a big incentive for getting the thing out, so we could finally see what we had!

"Wikipedia, one of my sources for finding out about this creature, says they are accomplished swimmers and climbers. That could explain why, one August Sunday morning, I awoke to loud, pumping wall scraping. We have two birds, but there was absolutely no way.... I got up to investigate, and discovered the sounds and vibrations were coming from one of our inside walls. I still suspect that this was the first place it fell into after entering a garage wall through a hole in the wallboard.

"See, after I notified David of the lights mysteriously being turned on in the garage, he covered up that hole and all was okay. That was until a few days later, on this particular Sunday, that the noise erupted in the interior wall. That wall is directly opposite a point where the critter could have entered from inside the garage. Hmmm. After it clawed its way back up the wall, it scampered around in the attic space above David's office.

I heard it sniffing and whining around by (what I learned later) were the attic soffits. It ran around up there for a while. Then we didn't hear anything. The next place I heard it was above my office, between my office and the bathroom. I thought it was above.

“Like, how could anything fall down into the wall? David had been up in the tiny crawl space, and didn't see an obvious entry. But since I was the one who sat in this room part of the day, I heard it most, and finally realized—and then convinced David—that it was not in the ceiling, but in the wall. I listened to it claw up and down the wall for days. It can drive you crazy! Near the end I used my stethoscope and heard it breathing.

“During all this time, all others thought this thing was a mouse. Or a bat. Or as the animal control guy said, maybe a squirrel. Squirrel I could agree to. But to everyone, including David, I said absolutely, it is not a bat or mouse. Do you really feel vibrations from a mouse? Then after it died, I marked the spot on the wall in pencil. That's where we found it. Never underestimate the power of a woman's senses! :-)

Oh, and because of the ickiness of the whole mess, I begged for experts to be called in. You know, punch a hole in the wall, reach in and take this thing out of there. But it doesn't happen that way. They naturally want to go in through the attic, and I wish they could, because of all the supposed animal leftovers up there. But when I answered the door I was looking at two men who I knew would not fit into the tiny 12' by 17' opening into the attic, where if you're an inchworm, you risk getting your behind speared by nails in the roof. I didn't want to imply anything rude, so I just said I wasn't sure if their boss told them how small our attic entry was. The result was: not past their chest. So they were quite happy with the infrared camera David had left up there.

“I learned a lot about groundhogs. After the babies are born in May, they live with the mother and are fed by her until about 6 weeks old. After that, they are taken one by one to a new den where they will learn to live on their own. The mom returns to this relocated spot to check on the young. David reports seeing a large animal in the garage during the hog ordeal. I think that may have been the mother, coming to check on her exiled baby. Well, the baby didn't behave itself. Instead, it bounced off the garage walls, turning on the lights, alarming the lady of the house. So the man of the house boarded up the hole, and then the baby had to forage on, farther into the darkness of the interior. Unfortunately, it fell into a hole. Game over.”

I could relate to that drama. Some time back Steve and I had a similar, but far less traumatic experience, with squirrels. Just as winter was giving way to an early raw spring rain, Steve opted for a roaring fire. It was a hearty looking fire pile when he touched it off, and it burned quite nicely even as smoke billowed into the living room. He'd opened the draft, he swore, as he ran for pots of water to pour on the flames, I ran to open the front door and looked up to see if the chimney was drawing at all. What I saw was an incredibly irate mama squirrel sitting on the edge of the chimney and roundly haranguing us for disturbing her nursery, somewhere inside that snug chimney space.

Far more inept than Jan and David when it came to critter eviction, we called a chimney sweep to take out the nest. He put down tasty snacks that weren't poison, but which did urge critters to go looking for water. He waited an hour and came back to sweep out the nest.

It was quiet down that chimney and he dropped the nest to the basement where he found amid the sticks and leaves the body of one tiny squirrel that hadn't made it out. He capped the chimney but that didn't stop the bereft mother from returning to the chimney for several days, where she sat and chattered, calling for the baby that hadn't left with the rest of the family.

And thus we all learn: there is no easy dealing with wild critters in the house. Things end badly—for the people, the critters or both.

—Mar Sclaw y ©2008