



Quail's Tales

www.HillandDaleGC.org

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

December 11, 2008

President's Preface

Now is the time when most of us begin to think about decorating our homes for the holidays. The outdoor lights come out of their boxes and a pine wreath with a big red bow finds its way to the front door.

Some of the most beautiful and unusual decorations are available right in our own backyard or as near as a brisk walk down a country lane.

KEEP IT GREEN. Here in Michigan we have at our disposal an almost limitless supply of gorgeous greens. Our Christmas workshop on December 11 at 7 p.m. will be a challenge to see what we can come up with to make and take home a centerpiece we have put together. Start gathering berries, ribbons, sticks, ornaments for added interest. Happy Holidays!
—Peggy Dapkus

December 11 meeting program

Caring and Sharing—good news, good times, good friends and some snappy ideas—is the theme of our holiday greens design workshop this year. There are so many talented designers in the club (five arrangers, two of whom are members of the arrangers guild) who promise to lend a hand to those less adept at creating holiday decorations. Seek out some great loose greens, your choice of ribbon and ornaments and bring the collection to the holiday greens design workshop to create a wreath or centerpiece that will brighten your door, your table, your heart. Suggested tools for the venture: wet oasis, clippers, gloves, garbage bags.

Ways and means will be available with suggestions and decorations to enhance your design.

Katie Wemyss will be selling her charming pine cone and nut trees at the meeting.

All members are expected to bring a snack to share. Hospitality will be provided by Flo Holz knecht, Jean Moran and Katie Wemyss.



Minutes of November 13 meeting

Meeting opened and printed minutes were approved.

Fiftieth Anniversary Dinner. We will have a dinner at Grand Celebrations on Grand River in Farmington on June 11, 2009 at 6 p.m. The club will host the dinner for all members and past presidents; others wishing to attend will pay \$15 for their dinner. Members belonging to the club for 25 years or more will be honored. Flo Holzknecht made a motion to do this, seconded by Amy Langdon and passed.

Heritage Park Gardens: Katie Wemyss and her committee have put the gardens to bed. She also planted several plants that she purchased at Steinkopf's.

Greens Workshop: Elie Case will purchase the greens for us. Orders were to be in by November 30. Everyone is asked to bring an appetizer to share at the December meeting.

Garden Therapy. Angela Paul offered to take over Jeannine Gundle's class when Jeannine goes to Florida.

New Business: Trowel and Error had a great trip to Belle Isle Conservatory. There is a great need for funds to maintain this facility. Ruth Trombley made a motion to donate \$100 to the conservatory. Chris Sechler seconded, motion passed.

Ruth Trombley told the club that her daughter will be on Channel 56 with her paint paper and crafts. Ruth will let us know the exact date and time.

Meeting closed at 9:12.

Respectfully submitted, Chris Sechler, Secretary

Coming up

December 16—Katie Wemyss invites all club members to her home for a Christmas Tea (and cookies) at 1 p.m. 23690 Glencreek, south of 10 Mile between Inkster and Middlebelt.

December 18-20—Farmington Community Chorus presents *Joy!* at the Orchard Ridge Campus of OCC at 8 pm. Tickets are \$15, available at the FCC ticket hotline (810.632.4067), from chorus members, at the Costick Center registration desk and at the door. For more information, visit the website: www.farmingtonchorus.com.

January 2009—R&R for Hill and Dale members. There will be no meeting. See you February 12.

2009 board hospitality

Feb. 2: Mar Sclawy

March 2: Nancy Adams and Marge Gordon

March 30: Kathy Postema

May 4: Amy Langdon

June 1: Sally Ouellette

June 11—Hill and Dale's 50th Anniversary Celebration

Garden Therapy

Let It Snow, Man. Bagging will be at Mar Sclawy's at 7 p.m. on January 6. Committee includes Kathy Postema and Linda Talacki. Classroom visits will be the week of January 12.

Happy Face Flowers. Bagging will be at Amy Langdon's the week of February 2. Committee includes Lisa Steinkopf, Jan Henry and David Henry. Classroom visits will be the week of February 9.



http://images.google.com/imgres?imgurl=http://www.inspirationline.com/images/mistletoe3.jpg&imgrefurl=http://www.inspirationline.com/Brainteaser/mistletoe.htm&usq=R8eUKJU4sGaT8eaE_mmUTE4eIXg=&h=267&w=319&sz=17&hl=en&start=13&um=1&tbnid=VUa28wJ-nOZ8LM:&tbnh=99&tbnw=118&prev=/images%3Fq%3Dmistletoe%26um%3D1%26hl%3Den%26sa%3DG *Horticulture*



MEET ME UNDER THE MISTLETOE

What Christmas movie would be complete without the couple kissing under the mistletoe? Mistletoe has been a part of Christmas tradition for hundreds of years. I know my mom always had the mistletoe kissing ball hanging in the arch in our living room. Decorating wasn't complete without it. Where did this tradition come from? Scandinavia is the origin of this peculiar custom. Legend has it that Balder, the god of Peace, was slain with an arrow made of mistletoe. He was restored to life at the request of the other gods, and mistletoe was then given into the keeping of the goddess of Love. It was then ordained that everyone who passed under it should receive a kiss, showing that it was the emblem of love, not hate.

Many Christmas songs have incorporated this custom : 'I'll Be Home for Christmas, The Christmas Song, A Holly Jolly Christmas, and of course "I saw Mommy kissing Santa Claus, underneath the mistletoe last night."

Phoradendron flavescens or mistletoe, is a semi-parasitic plant, growing on the branches of trees and shrubs. Mistletoe grows throughout the world. It grows on a wide range of host trees, and does reduce their growth, but with a heavy infestation, can kill the plant. Their evergreen leaves do photosynthesize, using the host plant mainly for water and nutrients. Mistletoe seeds are spread by birds through their droppings, but more commonly the sticky seeds stick to their bills and they wipe them on branches of trees where they adhere and germinate. The sticky coating is called viscin, which then hardens, attaching the seed firmly to the host plant. It is always produced by seed and cannot be cultivated in soil. Mistletoe was considered a pest, but was recently recognized as an ecologically necessary species. It is a food source for a wide array of animals and some dense growths of mistletoe in the western parts of North America are roosting and nesting sites for the Northern Spotted Owl. In Australia, 240 species of birds that nest in foliage have been recorded nesting in mistletoe. So instead of being considered a pest, mistletoe can have a positive effect on the environment. It also aids in many romantic endeavors at Christmas time.

Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!!!

Lisa

P. S. The dry air from our heaters can really wreak havoc on our indoor plants. Spider mites will

come calling. To combat this, put trays of pebbles with water under your plants to increase the humidity around them. A weekly shower from the sink sprayer is also beneficial.



Scholarship money available

District I Director Virginia Froehlich asks that we propose a college junior, senior or grad student to vie for one of 35 National Garden Clubs scholarships of \$4,000 each for the academic year 2009-2010. Eligible students should be majoring in agriculture education, horticulture, floriculture, landscape design, botany, biology, plant pathology and science, forestry, agronomy, environmental concerns, economics, urban or rural planning, wildlife science, habitat or forest/systems ecology, land management or related fields. One Michigan student will receive a \$1,000 scholarship and be entered in the competition for a national grant.

Application form is available online at www.michigangardenclubs.org or by contacting Virginia Froehlich. Completed applications should be sent **before the deadline, March 1, 2009**, to Michigan NGC Scholarship Chair Virginia Froehlich, 8537 Voigt Avenue, Grosse Ile, MI 48138-1057.

This 'n' that

- Many thanks to all who helped in the gardens last summer. Couldn't have done it without you. Sandy and Katie
- Hill and Dale nabbed a mention in MGC District 1's November newsletter for our website, www.HillandDalegc.org. Thanks to David Henry for creating and populating the site. If you've misplaced your newsletter, you can read it at the site.

Cooking with Katie (one recipe at a time)

Irene Shambaugh's Blackberry Wine Cake

½ cup chopped pecans

1 (2 layer size) box white cake mix

1 (3 oz) box berry flavored gelatin

4 eggs

½ cup vegetable oil

1 cup blackberry wine

Glaze:

1 cup powdered sugar

½ cup (1 stick) butter

½ cup blackberry wine

Preheat oven to 375 degrees. Grease and flour a bundt pan. Sprinkle pecans on the bottom.

In a large bowl, stir together cake mix and gelatin. Add eggs, oil, and 1 cup of wine; blend thoroughly.

Pour batter into the prepared pan. Bake 50 to 60 minutes until cake tests done. Remove from oven; turn out onto wire rack to cool.

Meanwhile, combine powdered sugar, butter and ½ cup wine in a saucepan; bring to a boil. Remove from heat, pour half the mixture over the warm cake; let sit for 30 minutes.

Pour remaining glaze, which will have thickened somewhat, over cake. (Or reheat the remaining glaze and spoon it over ice cream to accompany the cake.)

I have found that I don't use all the glaze. So you can probably cut the glaze recipe in half and still have enough.



Critter spotting

I'm always curious how long it will take the stay-at-home birds to figure out that the feeder is open for another season. This year was particularly thought provoking as I started out with seed and suet that had been stored in the garage over the summer. Would it be safe and acceptable to the usual (not particularly finicky) crowd of chickadees, sparrows, downies, squirrels and assorted hangers on.

First up—within the hour of setting out the feeder—was a chickadee that did her usual chickadee thing: grab a seed and fly away. Either she liked it and came back for more herself or a bunch of her clueless pals came by with the same routine. Chicks were flocking to the feeder, one seed at a time. They also tackled the suet, though their tiny beaks provided little access to the food.

The downies were there. The sparrows were there. The squirrels were there. A hawk was there. That ended one squirrel.

Not 15 feet outside our kitchen window, a hawk was lunging on something that had been lunging at the feeder. Steve thought at first: a sparrow. Way too big for a sparrow. Eventually it became obvious that a squirrel, usually quick and agile, had been neither and was now hawk food. But what kind of hawk? Out came the three bird books we own. A grey feathered bird, somewhere between 14 and 18 inches, with a breast of white and brownish rusty speckles, bare orange legs and talons, yellow eyes and a dedication to finishing up that squirrel despite two gogglers sharing binoculars on the other side of the window.

Perhaps a merlin? Too big and at the edge of its usual habitat. Could it be a peregrine? Known for roosting on cliffs and high buildings? Not likely in a place where trees are the highest thing around. Red tail? No red tail. Nothing in the books completely covered that hawk. We finally settled on a Cooper's hawk as meeting as many of the physical and environmental characteristics as we found in the books.

Trying to identify new birds in the area makes me marvel at birders, who can hear three notes, see a flash of color, follow it to a perch and then determine just what bird they're looking at. It takes dedication, skill and an interest in birds that far exceeds me and my bird books checking out what's at the feeder this season. Anyone care to offer up an alternative to the Cooper's hawk identification?

—Mar Sclaw y ©2008



Coopers Hawk



Merlin