



Quail's Tales

www.HillandDalegc.org

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

February 12, 2009

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February 12 meeting program

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Horticulture HEARTS APLENTY

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One of the most well-known of these plants is the heart-leafed philodendron, or *Philodendron scandens*. This is one of the easiest plants to grow, tolerating good light or low light, and erratic watering practices. Of course, it would prefer good light and consistent water, but it will survive almost anything. This makes it a great plant for the beginner. It also comes in a variegated form and my favorite—a chartreuse color.

A very similar plant is the golden pothos, or *Epipremnum aureum*. This is used a lot in commercial buildings and office settings. It, like the philodendron, can take less-than-perfect conditions and survive quite well, thus the reason it is used so much in offices. It also comes in many different forms. The satin pothos, or silver philodendron—*Scindapsus pictus* 'Argyraeus' is another popular plant, similar to the two preceding plants. It has a green leaf with iridescent silver markings. It has the same care requirements as the philodendron.

A perfect plant for Valentine's Day is the Sweetheart ivy or *Hedera helix* 'Sweetheart'.



It is a beautiful english ivy with dark green heart-shaped leaves. Keep ivy evenly moist, never sitting in water, but never completely dry, either. They like bright light, but will survive a fairly dark corner. This ivy works well on a heart-shaped topiary frame or in a hanging basket.

If you prefer flowers, then there is a plant with heart-shaped leaves and flowers. I'm talking about the flamingo flower, or *Anthurium andraeanum*. The anthuriums are basically epiphytic plants, so they grow best in a mix of bark, perlite, and fern fiber, which is used for orchids and bromeliads. They will grow in soil, but do better in the mix. They also prefer a bright location and need to be kept moist. They would also benefit from standing on a tray of wet pebbles to keep up the humidity. If grown well, you will be rewarded with their shiny, plastic-looking, flowers ranging from white to red, and even purple.

There are two plants in the succulent family I want to mention also. String-of-hearts or *Ceropegia woodii*, is a South African native which has long, thin, trailing stems with small, opposite, heart-shaped leaves. They are dark grey-green with silver variegation on top and purple-pink underneath. This plant needs 3-4 hours of sun daily or it will lose its color.

The other succulent with heart-shaped leaves is the sweetheart hoyo or *Hoya kerrii*. This plant has very fleshy, opposite leaves. It also has sweet-smelling flowers. They are small, flat, star-shaped individual flowers joined together like an umbrella. There is also a variegated form of the sweetheart hoyo.

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There are two plants in the succulent family I want to mention also. String-of-hearts or *Ceropegia woodii*, is a South African native which has long, thin, trailing stems with small, opposite, heart-shaped leaves. They are dark grey-green with silver variegation on top and purple-pink underneath. This plant needs 3-4 hours of sun daily or it will lose its color.

The other succulent with heart-shaped leaves is the sweetheart hoyo or *Hoya kerrii*. This plant has very fleshy, opposite leaves. It also has sweet-smelling flowers. They are small, flat, star-shaped individual flowers joined together like an umbrella. There is also a variegated form of the sweetheart hoyo.

All of these plants are easy to grow and the heart-shaped leaves make them even more interesting. Instead of the usual boring flowers given at Valentine's Day, why not give this list to your significant other and get a long-lasting, exciting plant instead?

Happy Valentines' Day!!!
and Happy Indoor Gardening!!!!

Lisa



Winter is almost over in Michigan and we can see the deer wandering around now.

P.S. John thinks Lisa should have mentioned redbud, linden and catalpa too!

Scholarship money still 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

+ Carol Smith asks that you update her email in the yearbook to dlcas@talkamerica.net.

+ Sally Ouellette learned that when you need an egg for baking you can substitute unflavored gelatin dissolved in an eggshell's worth of water.

+ Global ReLeaf of Michigan, a 501 c 3 non-profit tree planting organization, will sell 4 - 6 feet (depending on species) bare root trees and shrubs for spring planting. The shrubs and evergreens are about 2 feet. Orders are being accepted until April 9 with a 5% early order discount for orders placed by March 10. Species available are:

<u>Tree List</u>		<u>Specialty Tree List</u>
Crimson King Norway Maple	Red Maple	
Serviceberry	Sugar Maple	Paperbark Maple
Red Flowering Crab	Bur Oak	Katsura
White Flowering Crab	Littleleaf Linden	Shumard Oak
Barlett Pear	River Birch	Camperdown Elm
Stella Cherry	Japanese Tree Lilac	
Honeycrisp Apple	Red Bud	
Tulip Tree	Hackberry	
	Showy Mountain Ash	

The trees are \$30 each or 3 or more for \$28 each. The shrubs and evergreens are \$18 each or 3 or more for \$15 each. Specialty trees are \$50 each. Nine pick-up locations to choose from. Pick-up date is April 25. Call 1.800.642.7353 for details or go to www.globalreleaf.org.





Critter spotting

What with the extremely freezing temperatures we've been experiencing, critter spotting is virtually impossible. Only groundhogs that live under human control could be wrested from their winter dens on February 2 to survey the chances (slim) for an early spring. The rest of the underground dwellers likely couldn't have found their way to the surface of the snow in any event. Unless maybe if they live alongside a major thoroughfare that's been plowed repeatedly by the various road authorities, all of which have exceeded their snow removal budgets for this season, I'm sure.

Nonetheless, Tootsie the Wonder Dog keeps watch through the night, barking at absolutely nothing that we can see or hear as we pop out of the sack to see what's driving the pooch nuts. No tracks in the snow. No motion sensitive light displays outside the window, no porch light at Ray's house, which means he's let his labs out for a late night comfort run.

Earlier in the winter, there was plenty to bark at. While superintending an aforesaid comfort run, Ray saw a stag and five devoted does parade through our adjacent backyards. Just about dawn, after Tootsie and I had had our (actually, her) early morning constitutional around the neighborhood and were snugly back inside, I spied what looked like a German shepherd in Ray's yard. That couldn't be right. The ears were right, the size was about right, but something was just not "shepherd." Only when it turned to trot across the ice in the canal did I spot what wasn't right. It was that darn bushy tail—the tail of a coyote. Off it went, undisturbed by any forces of nature or human that icy morning.

What (you may ask) did TWD make of the brazen coyote? In case she was suffering from a momentary lapse in vigilance, I nudged her to the window to observe the coyote trotting away. Here at last was her chance to validate her insane barking at nothing we could ever see. There it is, Toots, a predator, a creature that likely could eat you up if we could ever get you off the deck and into that huge backyard for a solo constitutional. There is something to bark at, to bark about. Whatdaya say? Not a bark, a growl, a snarl. Not a peep. It could have been a dust mote for all she cared—if she saw it at all.

—Mar Sclaw y ©2009

