



# Quail's Tales

[www.HillandDalegc.org](http://www.HillandDalegc.org)

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

April 2009

## President's preface

March has come and gone so we can turn our thoughts to gardening projects. You don't have to spend a fortune to spruce up your lawn and garden. Start by pruning the dormant shrubs, then weeding and fertilizing the beds. The crabgrass preventer should be applied in early spring, (That would be now.)

If you're starving for spring color—a vase of water and cuttings from forsythia, quince and pussy willow will produce blooms in a short time, giving you a taste of spring.

Our plant sale is May 15-16 this year. Get ready to divide what you have too much of and bring them to Heritage Park. See you soon!  
--Peggy Dapkus

## April 9 meeting

"Healthy Salves Will Soothe Our Pains." Certainly the right thought for the beginning of the gardening season in southeast Michigan. Coleen French, of French Garden Creations, will demonstrate the compounding and use of healthy salves. Ms. French uses herbs from her own garden in creating not only salves, but also soaps and lotions, which will be available for purchase at the meeting. She also stocks aromatic oils.

*Hospitality...*

... will be provided by Sally Ouellette, Winnie Chrzanowski and Mar Sclaw y.

The March meeting went well thanks to Mar and Dave and Gretchen



## March 12 meeting minutes

Meeting opened and printed minutes were approved.

Plant sale: The plant sale will be held May 16. Mar Sclawy suggested we take cuttings of our house plants and get them rooted in time for the sale. Please include the name and growing information with each plant. Also, inform Mar or Kathy Heckman in advance the name and other information on the plants you intend to donate.

Junior Gardeners: Nancy Adams and her committee worked with 17 children planting carrot tops. The children really enjoyed this project and Nancy reports that her granddaughter's carrot is growing very nicely.

Hospitality: Gretchen Pugsley did the table centerpiece; she showed us how she put it together and explained that you could simplify it by using fewer flowers. She said often "less is more."

New business: Gretchen and Carol Smith are working on our 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration. Carol sent out "save the date" letters to the past presidents that we are hoping will be our guests. Gretchen suggested that we put the information in the newspaper. It would be great publicity.

David Henry and Sally Ouellette researched and purchased a LCD projector for the club. Mar used it at the meeting for her wonderful program, *Gardens of Japan*.

Katie Wemyss asked if the club would be interested in collecting grocery coupons to be mailed to members of the military. Everyone thought it was a wonderful idea. Send the coupons to Katie and she will see that they get mailed.

Respectfully submitted, Chris Sechler, secretary

## District 1 spring meeting

The April meeting is the **last chance** to order and pay for tickets to the District 1 spring meeting. Aptly titled *Showers and Flowers*, the meeting is set for April 28 at the Italian American Banquet Center, 39200 Five Mile Road, Livonia. Tickets are \$22. See Carol Smith to order your ticket.

## Perennial plant sale

What's in YOUR garden? Is there too much of it? In the wrong place? Just tired of it? Plan to pot up all those bountiful and/or unwanted plants to prepare for the perennial plant sale, set for May 15-16. Please let Kathy Heckman or Mar Sclawy know at the April or May meeting what plants you plan to bring, and as much information about them as you can provide: name, sun/shade; bloom time, color, height, etc. We hope to have a fact sheet to provide to purchasers to help them find the right place in their gardens for their new plants.

Do plan, however, to provide stakes or pot markings with the name of the plant for sale. When it comes to identifying plants, we're good, but we're not psychic.

Because the sale is set for the weekend after the May meeting, a sign up sheet will be available at the April meeting for members to choose when they'd like to work. Friday sale prep is very labor intensive so please consider signing up for a Friday session.

Ruth Trombley is offering up her perennial garden for the sale. At the April meeting we'll pick a day when members can help pot up Ruth's plants. And we'll have a sign up sheet to volunteer for that duty as well.

We plan to widen our inventory this year to include unusual annuals, sturdy house plants, extra pots and vases you may have around the house. If the aspidistra is getting too leggy, the spider plant too spidery, prune them back, plant the cuttings and bring 'em to the sale.



## ***Nominations for 2009-2010 officers***

The nominating committee of Sandy Cusack, Angela Paul and Nancy Adams proposes the following slate of officers for the coming year: President, Sally Ouellette (who automatically moves up from vice president/program chair); Vice President/Program Chair, Lisa Steinkopf; Treasurer, Angela Paul; and Secretary, Ann McMinn. Other nominations can come from the floor at the April meeting. Election will be at the May meeting with installation at the June meeting.

### ***This 'n' that***

The board agreed to renew the club's web hosting for two years and add SSL capacity to allow designated members to update the site. David Henry continues as webmaster. Anyone interested in contributing to the website directly should speak with him.

Kathleen Postema, membership chair, has been off cigarettes for more than a month. Be sure to encourage her. Many of us know how tough quitting can be.

### ***Coming up***

**April 22 – 26:** Festival of the Arts, sponsored by the Farmington Community Arts Council. More information available from [CANDMPRINTING@aol.com](mailto:CANDMPRINTING@aol.com). Ask for a copy of Lively Arts for April, May and June.

**April 29:** Detroit Institute of Arts Friends of Art and Flowers presents Chris Giftos, New York florist extraordinaire, creating floral masterpieces and discussing his book, *The Art of Floral Arranging*, at 11 am in the DIA lecture hall. Lecture and demonstration: \$25; lecture, demonstration and luncheon: \$50. For reservations call 313.833.4005 or register online at [dia.org](http://dia.org); for more information call 313.833.7967

**May 7 through September 15:** Evenings in the Garden, workshops at Tollgate from 6:30 to 8:30, will cover such topics as hellebores and other spring flowering plants, vegetable gardening, native plantings to attract wildlife, hostas. Each session is \$20. See the flyer included with the newsletter.

**June 2 – 3:** 78<sup>th</sup> annual state convention of Michigan Garden Clubs, sponsored by District III. See the March – May issue of the MGC newsletter or visit [www.michigangardenclubs.org](http://www.michigangardenclubs.org) for a registration form. President for 2009 – 2011, Lynn Dinvald will be installed. Other activities include workshops in photography, orchids, raptors, succulent gardens, contrived flowers; and tours of Kalamazoo. Hotel reservations should be made by May 8.

**June 11:** Hill and Dale's 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration with installation of new officers. All past presidents are invited to attend.

**June 13–19<sup>th</sup>** Annual Ann Arbor Garden Walk. Gardens include:

A country estate on 3+ acres with formal and informal garden rooms accented with stone, an extravagant, tropical paradise with pond and waterfall surrounding a large lanai, a small urban garden in a European setting, and an artist's studio and retreat using the garden as a showcase. Admission is \$12. Tickets will be sold after May 15 at downtown Home & Garden, Matthaei Botanical Gardens, Dixboro General Store and Nicola's books.

### ***SOCWA schedules spring events***

**April 18 - Making Compost the Easy Way**, continuous demonstrations by SOCWA volunteers, 10 am - 2 pm at the Detroit Zoo - by the camels, Woodward @ I-696

**May 9 - Making Compost the Easy Way**, 2 pm, 2:30 pm, 3 pm, 3:30 pm demonstration by SOCWA volunteers at Four Seasons Garden Center, 14471 Eleven Mile Road, Oak Park

**May 16 - Green Gardening: Reducing Garden Chemicals to Protect Our Water**  
10:30 am demonstrations by SOCWA volunteers at Four Seasons Garden Center



## Horticulture

### WHAT'S IN A NAME?

Recently I attended a program about making botanical names easier. It was given by the head of horticulture from the Royal Botanical Gardens in Burlington, ON. It was very interesting and informative.

As we know, common names are fine, but if you want to know the correct identification of the plant, you must know the botanical name. I've always thought that these were Latin names, but in reality, only 10% are truly Latin. First plants are placed in families. We seldom use this but it is where plants with similar traits are placed. Family names often end in 'aceae' which means 'belonging to, or having the nature of'. The next division and we are familiar with this, is the genus. This is a group within the family consisting of one or more species. The species or specific epithet, is the smallest unit and all species names are binomial or two words, the genus combined with a specific epithet. The two-word combination distinguishes this species from all other species in this division of the family. Example:

Family- Asteraceae

Genus- *Rudbeckia* (See picture above)

Species- *Rudbeckia hirta*

This can also be complicated further by adding a cultivar, or cultivated variety, name. These can be plants selected for a certain trait like weeping, dwarf, etc. Ex.- *Rudbeckia purpurea* 'Kim's Knee High'. The cultivar is always surrounded by apostrophes. We can also have hybrids, or the "x" factor. This comes from a cross of two plants, either naturally or by breeding. Ex.- *Dianthus x allwoodii*.

The species name is an adjective, a descriptive word describing a trait of the plant. Ex.--rubrum=red, flabellatus=fan-shaped, fistulosus=tubular, floridus(from the south?no)=flowering freely, ovata=egg-shaped. It is helpful to know the meanings of these words. For example, if I didn't want a plant with fan-shaped leaves, I wouldn't buy a plant with the word flabellatus in its name.

Pronouncing these names can be daunting. Pronunciation is either based on Classical Latin or Latin as taught in English-speaking countries, so depending on where you are from, the vowels are pronounced differently. We in the U.S. say clematis-cle ma (like rake) tis, in England they say cle ma (like rub) tis. Neither pronunciation is right or wrong. Overall, it is more important to know how to spell the word, than to actually say it.

Here are a few tricks for pronunciation:

~ with few exceptions, all syllables are pronounced

~ If it is named after a person, pronounce it like the person's name Ex. Fuschia named after Leonhart Fuchs (1501-1566) so it should be pronounced Fook sia not Few sha. Interesting.

~ 'J' is usually pronounced 'hard' like Jim

~ 'oe' is usually pronounced like 'ee' as in bee ex.- Ipomoea i po mee a (morning glory)

~ 'V' is pronounced hard

~ 'ae' is usually pronounced like meat

~ 'ph' is pronounced like an 'f' Ex.- Euphorbia is eu forb i a

~ 'au' is pronounced like aw as in crawl

Overall, it isn't as hard as it seems and usually most people know what we want when we give the common name. But to avoid all confusion about a plant, knowing the botanical name is best.

It is very interesting to learn where the names came from and how they were named. Quite a few names come from the person who discovered them, which makes sense. Hopefully, this didn't confuse you more. I found it very fascinating and worth studying more about.



Happy Gardening!

Lisa



Picture by Christian Kappelmann

**Red-winged Blackbird**  
*Agelaius phoeniceus*

Pictures by Marvin Fleisher

**Size:** 8 1/2 inches

**Diet:** Eats insects, weed seeds. Visits bird feeders singly or in large flocks for cracked corn, and seed mixes.

### *Critter spotting*

Yes, indeedly, we're ready for spring. We've all heard (well, most of us for sure) Ernie Harwell's proclamation on opening day of the baseball season that the voice of the turtle is heard in the land. Some folks think that the first robin announces the arrival of spring.

Nancy Adams reports that a pair of Carolina wrens have once again set up housekeeping in her yard. A predatory hawk nabbed one of a wren pair on the wing a few years back and that undercut wren housing values in the neighborhood a while. Perhaps their return signals an uptick in the housing market throughout the area.

At our house, we have different signals. The ice moves out of the canal and the Canada geese and swans move back in to build new nests for the kids. The redwing blackbirds return, whirring their calls throughout the marsh to advise any local denizens that they're back and do not take kindly to any critter that appears to be headed for a nest in the cattails. They're also stopping by the bird feeder for a free lunch. As are some grackles and starlings. Nobody invited them.

The migrating diving ducks settle on the lake for a week or so, chowing down on lake weeds and working up enthusiasm for the next stage of their annual trip north. We'll likely see them in the fall as well.

The muskrat heaves herself out of the water to check if the seawall is really so impregnable that she can't use the land side of it as a short cut to her nest in the water.

AND, the fattest groundhog in the world waddles through the garden on its way to a truly magnificent hole behind the garden wall. For a critter that's supposed to have hibernated all winter, this beast has fat reserves that should last it through May. Or—could it be—she's about to produce more groundhogs to plague us and the garden? At any rate, she is out and about, fortunately disdaining the first shoots to appear in the garden (mostly daffodils and thus distasteful to most critters), but obviously lurching, dining and consuming at nonscheduled feeding times a lot of other plant material in the vicinity. Definitely time to check out the fall blooming clematis that I planted last fall and surrounded with tomato cages to keep out the deer. But maybe not a dedicated groundhog.

--Mar Sclawy

*P.S* Nancy Goulette says Hi everyone! She must still have northern roots she didn't say Hey!