



Quail's Tales

June 2009

President's preface

Another Hill and Dale gardening year will be ending soon. Sally will be taking over as president at our meeting on June 11. This meeting will be for installing new officers and also to celebrate a big milestone, for the club will be in existence for 50 years. This is a reason to celebrate.

Thanks to Mar and Kathy for our annual spring perennial sale which was a big success. This means a thank you for everyone who helped.

In June we need to pay our dues and continue to receive the magazine sent to all members and to keep informed about upcoming schools of interest.

Please give Sally the support and encouragement you've shown me. It was a pleasure serving you!
—Peggy Dapkus

June 11 meeting

Happy 50th birthday to us, Hill and Dale Garden Club members. All paid members and former presidents are welcome to celebrate at Grand Celebrations, where Lisa Steinkopf will conduct installation of officers for the coming year. They are President Sally Ouellette, Vice president and program chair Lisa Steinkopf, Secretary Ann McMinn and Treasurer Angela Paul. Many thanks to Gretchen Pugsley and Carol Smith for planning the party and to the retiring officers, President Peggy Dapkus, Secretary Chris Sechler and Treasurer Carol Smith.

In order to attend the party as guests of the club, members must have paid their dues for the coming year.



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May 14 meeting minutes

Meeting opened and printed minutes were read.

District 1 meeting. The club was pleased to present a life membership to Mar Sclawy at this meeting.

Thanks to Flo Holzkecht, awards chairman, we received a wagon full of awards, She really made us all proud to belong to such an excellent club as each award was named. A lot of hard work from many members went into this.

Amy Langdon was given the Award of Excellence in recognition for all her contributions to the club.

Plant sale: We will be setting up and pricing on Friday (May 15). Please mark your plants and list growing information.

Heritage Park Gardens: Katie will be working on the gardens every Thursday morning at 9 am. Sandy will be there on Wednesdays at 6 pm. They have had very poor cooperation in this club project. If participation is not increased, we may have to give up this club project that we have done so long.

New business: We received a request from a former member who would like to rent our new LCD projector. It was decided that in this case we would lend the projector only if a member offered to take the machine to the meeting and run it. The member doing this would receive reimbursement for time and gas. Sally made a motion that this be done and Flo seconded. Motion passed.

Respectfully submitted, Chris Sechler, secretary



Perennial plant sale

The plant sale made a very nice profit after expenses for markers and plant sticks and gas and moving around money for Macauley Harris and his pal, Jon, who ran errands, set up signs and toted plants.

Kathy Heckman and Mar Sclawy chaired the event. Outstanding worker bee accolades to Ann McMinn, who had the best markers and more for her many unusual plants and contributed Flora (a most unscary scarecrow) and signs for the sales area. Other workers included (in no particular order) Kathleen Postema, Shirley Perkins, Carol Smith, Gretchen Pugsley, Flo Holzkecht (and Buzz), Sally Ouellette, Peggy Dapkus, Nancy Adams, Sandy Cusack, Ellie Case, Jeannine Gundle, Angela Paul, Chris Sechler, Katie Wemyss, and Amy Langdon. Ruth Trombley and Winnie Chrzanowski were out of town at sale time, but still managed to contribute plants. Sandy Donlon, a former member, dropped off loads of pots and came by the sale to say hi and pick up a few that had been filled. Some of the remaining members had competing obligations and some (we know who you are) just didn't help out.

Committee assignments for 2009-2010

Corresponding Secretary	Katie Wemyss
Awards	Flo Holzknecht (w ho would like help)
Garden Therapy	Amy Langdon, Winnie Chrzanowski, Betty Poole
Heritage Park Gardens	Sandy Cusack, Katie Wemyss
Horticulture	Winnie Chrzanow ski
Hospitality	Ellie Case, Peggy Dapkus
Membership	Kathleen Postema
New sletter	Editor Mar Sclaw y, Publisher Sally Ouellette
Nominations	Peggy Dapkus
Perennial Plant Sale	TBA
Publicity	Mar Sclaw y
Remembrance	Carol Smith
Telephone Tree	Carol Smith
Trow el and Error	Rotating Chairs
Yearbook	Nancy Adams, Angela Paul, Marjorie Gordon
Webpage moderator	David Henry
Ways and Means	Nancy Adams, w ill take orders for supplies, rather than have a display at meetings

Coming up

June 13—Junior Gardeners w ill create Blooms on Wheels at 10 am at the dow ntown library.

—19th Annual Ann Arbor Garden Walk. Gardens include:A country estate on 3+ acres w ith formal and informal garden rooms accented w ith stone, an extravagant, tropical paradise w ith pond and w aterfall surrounding a large lanai, a s small urban garden in a European setting, and an artist's studio and retreat using the garden as a show case. Admission is \$12. Tickets w ill be sold after May 15 at dow ntown Home &



Horticulture What's bugging you?

Before there were commercial insect-repellant sprays and wipes, there were insects and, consequently, people sought to repel them. As our forebears who lived in the days before Deet knew, many herbs and essential oils have excellent insect-repelling properties. And happily, there are a number that are easy to cultivate or are readily available at the health-food store.

As a bonus, many of the insect-repelling herbs are ornamental and fragrant as well as effective, thus doing double duty in the garden. [Ecologically friendly](#) and economical, natural insect repellants made from herbs act without the harsh chemicals present in many commercial repellants.

The herbs most well known for their insect-repelling abilities are bay leaf, chamomile, cinnamon, cloves, garlic, lavender, lemongrass, neem leaf, mugwort, pennyroyal, rosemary, rue, santolina, southernwood, tansy, and [thyme](#). Citronella and tea tree oils are potent essential oils that may be combined with herbs in insect-repelling sachets or liquid infusions to enhance their effectiveness.

Insect-repelling herbs can be planted in pots kept on windowsills to discourage insects from entering the house. Where climate allows, the herbs can be cultivated in a dedicated garden, or they can be added to an existing vegetable garden or flower bed. Many herbs are excellent companion plants. Because they discourage insects from damaging the plants around them, they are a great complement to

Garden, Matthaei Botanical Gardens, Dixboro General Store and Nicola's books.

July—our summer break to w ork in the garden and plan activities for the coming year. One thing to consider: Who w ill keep club memorabilia? Some members have run out of space and enthusiasm for maintaining lots of club history, such as 50 years of Garden Therapy programs and yearbooks. We'll be looking for ideas on w hat to do w ith this history at the August meeting so give it some thought and maybe chat up the topic while w orking in the Heritage Park gardens with Katie and Sandy.

August 13—First meeting of the new year.

other forms of organic pest control. Herbs with insect-repelling properties also can be grown in pots and placed around the perimeter patio to keep insects at bay when eating or relaxing outside.

Fresh herbs are "activated" by gently bruising their leaves—rubbing them between the thumb and fingers with light pressure. This brings the plant's oils to the surface of the leaf, releasing the fragrance and enhancing its ability to repel insects. Bundles and garlands of dried herbs may be hung near windows, doors, and in entryways to ward off insects. Dried leaves and stems can be crushed, blended with essential oils and a fixative such as cut orrisroot, and packaged in cloth sachets. The sachets can then be tucked into cabinets, drawers, sheds, and basement areas. Garlands of dried herbs can be hung near pet areas to repel fleas.

On camping trips, sachets that repel mosquitoes and gnats can be hung from tent flaps and camper doors to discourage these insects from entering. They can also be dangled from the arms of camp chairs and from hammocks. Fly-repelling herbs and sachets can be hung around cooking and eating areas. (downey sheets are supposed to work too)

CAVEAT: Pennyroyal, an herb in the mint family, is exceptionally effective at repelling flies, fleas, and gnats. However, the essential oil of pennyroyal is considered toxic and should not be ingested or handled, particularly by pregnant women. It should be noted that some herbs and essential oils are toxic and care should be taken when handling them. Herbs and herbal preparations to repel insects should be kept out of the reach of children and pets.

RECIPE

If you would like to try blending your own mosquito-repelling sachets, you will need the following:

1 cup (100 g) cut orrisroot or processed comcob	1/2 cup (20 g) dried lemon balm
1/4 cup (60 ml) citronella essential oil	1 cup (50 g) dried santolina
1/2 cup (25 g) dried lavender flowers	1 cup (50 g) dried mugwort
1/2 cup (25 g) dried rosemary	1 cup dried thyme

In a large glass jar with a screw-on lid, combine orrisroot or comcob litter with citronella. Seal, shake, and let cure in a cool, dry place for a few days. In a large glass or plastic bowl, combine herbs. Add cured fixative and toss gently to blend. Spoon this mixture into small cotton sachets and seal the neck of each with a rubber band. Tie with a piece of ribbon or twine and hang from a lawn chair, hammock, camp chair, tent flap, etc. Do not allow sachets to become damp—if using outside, protect from dew, rain, and the lawn sprinkler. When you're not using them, store your sachets in a resealable plastic bag or glass jar in a cool, dry place.



Listerine has thyme as an ingredient so is good as a repellent



Critter spotting

Spring critter counting is over. Twice a year, in May and October, volunteers for the Clinton River Watershed Council scour the bottoms and overhangs of Clinton River tributaries in search of benthics, tiny critters whose existence help diagnose the health of the stream. These critters are not easy to spot, and they're even harder to identify. Our understaffed team this spring (Winnie was in Peru) worked the stream beside Pat's house. This is our fifth year of monitoring; we are pros.

The process goes somewhat as follows: Mar and Geri don waders. In response to Mar's past complaints that size 2X waders are clown shoes on a size 6 foot (and she's not that graceful to start), we find men's size 9 waders in the monitoring kit. These waders are not hook-over-your-shoulder waders. These come all the way up your legs and have straps to fasten them around your belt. Oh, sure. With no waist to speak of, Mar has no need for a belt and isn't wearing one. We improvise with a rope. Boot legs are twice as long as Mar's legs. Fold over the boot legs at the knee and head for the water.

It's about 8 inches deep. This would be a jolly walk in water were it not for the underlying two feet of muck. Mar is instantly immobilized. Pat and Geri try pulling her free. No good. She's coming free but the waders are not. Mar must grab a wader leg below that knee fold and pull it from the muck, take a step and repeat. During that glacial progress, Geri is farther upstream netting muck and maybe some critters. Mar is dragging up behind her, dodging the net stick and trying to slog close enough to help dump the critter-containing muck into the collecting bucket. And so that goes for the half hour allotted for critter gathering.

One final heave and they escape the muck without falling in—not always how things go.

Back on land, critter ID begins. The muck is teeming with critters, many so small that they are barely visible. Suctioned from the murky water, plopped onto Petri dishes, placed under a field microscope, they're ready for identification. We are not. Armed with a fact sheet and two books on benthic organism identification, we cannot find pictures of what we're seeing in any of the references.

Pat checks a two-tailed darter that looks like it might grow into the three-tailed darter that's illustrated on one page. Have we inadvertently amputated a tiny appendage? Nope, there are lots of those two-tailers, but no pictures in the books.

And what's with all the legs on another specimen? Visible dorsal gills? Which side is dorsal? How do you turn over a critter that's the size of a dust mote?

Pat urges her college-age daughters to break from sun bathing and catch a look at some of these fascinating denizens of the neighboring creek. They are unmoved—and unmoving.

A few critters are large enough to identify with the naked eye. Those we find in the books, pop into preservative vials and neatly label with our considered decisions of what they are. We found dragonfly and damselfly nymphs, snails smaller than a Tic Tac, worms as thin as a thread and maybe an inch long. All those tiny two-tailers. And other critters—all thriving in the tiny creek running by Pat's house.

"Do you have mosquitoes?" we ask Pat. "Oh sure," she replies, "what with the water right here." We caught a couple of them, too.

—Mar Sclawy © 2009

Cooking with Katie (one recipe at a time)

Walnut-Cardamom Italian Crescent Cookies by Stacy Buatti

1 cup all purpose flour

**1 cup unsalted butter, chilled, cut into ½
inch pieces**

½ tsp ground cardamom

Pinch of salt

¾ cup walnuts

¼ cup granulated sugar

1 tsp vanilla extract

½ tsp grated orange zest

2 cups powdered sugar

Preheat oven to 325 degrees. Combine all ingredients except powdered sugar in a food processor fitted with the metal blade. Use a rapid on-off pulse until mixture resembles coarse meal. Then process continuously until the dough begins to gather together.

Roll 2 tsp of dough between the palms to form a rope of 2.5 inches long, slightly tapering it at the ends. Arrange the rope on an ungreased baking sheet in a crescent shape. Repeat with the remaining dough, spacing cookies 1 inch apart.

Bake until firm to the touch, about 20 minutes. Let cool on baking sheet for 5 minutes. Transfer the cookies to a wire rack.

Sprinkle powdered sugar on cooled cookies. Makes 2 dozen. Delicious with cappuccino, coffee and tea.



Sadly Kathy has conflicts with Thursday meetings so we bid her a fond farewell .