



Quail's Tales

www.HillandDalegc.org

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

December 2009

President's preface

There are twelve members looking forward to going to Dearborn Garden Clubs's Holly Berry Brunch . Hope we all have a great time and perhaps consider it as a similar type event to be a fund raiser for us .We will report on it at our meeting. Perhaps this type of fundraiser although not without complications isn't quite as physically demanding as our beloved plant sales . We certainly don't want to forgo our plant sale but perhaps we could consider it as an event that alternates with another type of fund raiser every other year.

Another question was how we felt about the meeting at St Johns Lutheran Church. Was finding it very difficult? How was the lighting inside and out? Were you comfortable with the accommodations? So should we consider having future meetings there perhaps when winter weather is severe so we don't have so far to go outside.

A question about historic gardens has been raised is there an interest in historic gardens? Plants? Native plants? Do we have sources for or an interest in these types of programs?

An example of an historic home and garden is Warner Mansion



Again there is a need for someone to be a backup for Jeannine in her classroom and Angela may need someone to take over in her class. If you are able to help out please contact Jeannine and Angela. Remember our fund raisers help support the Garden Therapy projects. Perhaps if we do not have workers we need to reevaluate the program and our involvement.

No meeting in January. Recharge and we'll see you in February.

--Sally Ouellette





December 9 meeting

Plunge into decorating by making a topiary using an unlikely object. Sally Ouellette, H&G president and designer extraordinaire, will lead us in a holiday design workshop at the Heritage Park Visitor Center, starting around 7. Bring your own container (choose anything you love) and choice of greens. (See the Steinkopf Nursery offer in the enclosed flyer to help with the club's fundraising.) Sally will have a few topiary starter kits for sale at \$5 each. If you'd like that headstart on a charming topiary, call Sally to reserve yours. Greens are still up to you. Or, if you're committed to starting a topiary from scratch, bring a 4-inch pot, plaster of paris, and 6" to 8" sink plunger and moss in addition to the greens. Nancy Adams will have some oasis for sale at the meeting.

As always, our December meeting is a potluck. All members are asked to bring a snack and, of course, your own place setting and coffee cup. Katie Wemyss, Ann McMinn and Flo Holzknacht are scheduled to host.

November 12 meeting minutes

St. John Lutheran Church

The meeting was called to order by President Sally Ouellette at 7:28 pm.

Recording Secretary: The minutes of the last meeting were approved as written.

Treasurer: Angela Paul reported on balances in the accounts.

Sally gave a belated verbal "Thank You", along with a gift, to the returning Carol Smith for all the work she has done for the club over the last months

Nancy Adams brought Visions of Beauty Calendars for the members to purchase for \$6 (saving \$2 over the cost at the District I meeting). They were available at the sign-in table.

An extra copy of the fund raising Steinkopf Nursery flyer was given to each attendee with encouragement for usage and sharing. A "thank you" was given to Lisa Steinkopf for the generous offer.

A certificate of commendation was presented to Amy Langdon for 30 years as a Michigan Associated Flower Show Judge.

Sally brought several allium bulbs to share at the cost of \$2. Stories of dried allium blooms and the attention they garnered were told, which added to the interest in sales.

Gretchen Pugsley brought a magazine clipping of a possible item to make and sell at the plant sale in May. It was a small cement-like indented base with a hen and chick growing in it. The clipping was circulated.

Garden Therapy: Amy Langdon showed off a sample of the bird and nest on driftwood that was just done in the classrooms. The high schoolers loved it. A sample of the pinecone teddy bear project was passed around. Jeannine Gundle still needs a substitute for her time in Florida.

Awards: Flo Holzknacht reported that all items (yearbook, newsletter, photographs, website, garden therapy, etc.) were sent in on time. The only items we lack are youth related. Flo shared the possibilities of poetry contest entries, and Smokey the Bear/Woodsy Owl poster contest entries for the younger children (grades 1-5) and essay "Respect the World Around Us" entries for high schoolers with a \$1,000 prize for the winner.

Katie Wemyss invited members to her annual Christmas tea and suggested a cookie exchange. Possible dates were discussed.

Gretchen Pugsley brought Martha Stewart magazines and plastic name tag holders to share, inspired by her home painting project.

Meeting was suspended at 7:54 pm for the program, and resumed at 9:10 pm.

Hospitality: Ellie Case acknowledged the hospitality committee consisting of Angela Paul, Nancy Adams, Marge Gordon and Jean Moran who did the centerpiece.

--Respectfully submitted, Ann McMinn, secretary

Remembrance

Members are asked to remember Angela Paul, whose son is ill; Marge Gordon, who was recovering well until she was involved in a car accident.

Marty Figley was remembered at a service on December 2. She began as a garden writer for *The Observer* and *Eccentric* newspapers in 1987 and joined the Garden Writers Association that same year. She retired in 2006. She was a member of the Herb Society of America, an Honorary Life member of the Cranbrook House and Garden Auxiliary, an Honorary Life member of the Master Gardener Society of Oakland County, and an advanced Master Gardener in Oakland County. She entertained Hill and Dale and other local garden clubs and church groups.

Garden therapy

Jeannine Gundle is still asking for volunteers to take her Garden Therapy class for the months of February, March and April at Harrison High on the second Tuesday at 10 am. Please check in with Jeannine at the December meeting. It's less than an hour commitment.

Be sure to save the following items for future projects: Tide scoops, juice lids, pine cones (all sizes), dried flowers, cardboard cores from toilet tissue rolls and foam egg cartons. Amy Langdon will accept delivery at meetings.

Coming up

- January 5—Banish the January blahs with “The Gardens of Epcot” presented at 6:30 pm by Tom Hershberger, an advanced master gardener and past president of the MGSOC is the topic at the MGSOC meeting. Free to members, there is a \$3 fee for visitors, which includes refreshments. Soup and bread dinner may be purchased for an additional \$3. For more information, contact MGSOC Program Coordinator, DeeAnn Bauer, at <mailto:DMBauer@comcast.net>.
- May 15—Start marking those perennials now for our spring Proven Survivors plant sale and tag sale.
- May 25, 2010—MGC’s one-day convention “Seeds of Tomorrow” in Battle Creek

Views from the Corner Garden—Kissing under the Mistletoe



When I was at the farmers’ market on Saturday, I spotted kissing balls for sale. Those kissing balls got me wondering. What’s the story behind mistletoe? We all know that hanging mistletoe over a doorway at Christmas time is a tradition, but how did that tradition get started? Why do we kiss under it? And, just how does mistletoe grow?

The word *mistletoe* derives from two Old English words: *mistel* (dung) and *tan* (twig) or dung twig. Early people, therefore, believed the mistletoe grew from

birds and resulted from their landing in the trees. That's probably why the plant got that name.



Although mistletoes come in several varieties that are native in many parts of Eastern, Western, and Southern United States, the mistletoe we see in the stores at Christmas is *Phoradendron flavescens*. That's the one I'll be discussing.

Phoradendron flavescens grows on a wide range of hardwood species and requires a living host. These parasitic plants take their nutrients from the host tree. Despite that fact, they can produce their own food through photosynthesis. Mistletoes never derive nutrients from the soil. The leaves stay green all year and the plant grows waxy berries that are red or white. Flowers can be a variety of colors—from bright red to yellow to green. The entire plant is poisonous and can cause severe stomach cramps, diarrhea, and in some cases death. Birds, however, eat the berries and disseminate the seeds with no problem. The dissemination occurs either through droppings or by the birds cleaning the sticky seeds off their beaks onto the tree. The disseminated seeds sprout roots into the tree where the filament-like roots pierce the bark and root themselves firmly into the growing wood. It takes about six weeks for the plant to grow and about five years for it to flower.

Mistletoe, according to early European folklore, bestowed life and fertility; protected against poison; and served as an aphrodisiac. Long regarded as a sexual symbol, the ancients gathered mistletoe at both mid-summer and winter solstices. Using mistletoe to decorate houses at Christmas is a holdover from Druid and other pre-Christian customs. The traditions that started in Europe came to America's shores during the process of immigration and settlement.

Kissing under the mistletoe is associated with the Greek festival of Saturnalia and primitive marriage rites – no doubt, because the plant was thought to provide life-giving power and that it has the power to bestow fertility. The 18th-century English get credit for the kissing ball. At Christmas time, a young lady standing under a ball of mistletoe could not refuse to be kissed. That kiss could mean deep romance or lasting friendships. If a girl remained unknissed, she could expect to remain single the following year.

Whether or not these myths about mistletoe are factual is anyone's guess. Nevertheless, it's still a lot of fun to stand under the mistletoe and get a kiss.

--Winnie Chrzanowski © 2009

Critter spotting—The further adventures of Tootsie the Wonder Dog

"The course of true love never did run smooth." *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, William Shakespeare.

"Who cares to romp in the rain?" Tootsie the Wonder Dog.

Things began well enough when Tootsie and we were invited to Dick and Gail's home in Norfolk last year. They had acquired an English Spaniel, appropriately (I guess) named Darby. They had fenced their enormous backyard to give Darby maximum romping room. Though still a pup, he'd made the yard his playground and was willing to share it with the somewhat older (by a year and a half) Tootsie. It was June; the weather was perfect; and the dogs hit it off immediately. The humans lolled about and watched the dogs frolic, run about and play racy games.

Though she's fixed, Tootsie seemed determined to teach Darby the canine facts of life. As in: Try this, big boy. Darby did not try this—or much else. (How she knew what "this" was we had no clue.) Still the romping continued over our short visit.

With each of them now a year and a half older, we again traveled south to see Dick and Gail and Darby. We were assured the Darb was looking forward to renewing their friendship, and Toots seemed amenable enough when we told her we were going to Norfolk to visit Darby. (Of course, the word *ride* is enough to start her tail wagging.)

In the face of constant temps in the 70s, Gail had suggested that the humans bring their golf clubs for a final round before winter closed in. It started raining just about the Virginia state line, and kept raining the three days of our visit.

When it came time for the mandatory trip to the outdoors, Toots was reluctant. It was raining, and the grass was wet. Toots doesn't care to get her paws wet. Darby didn't care to go outside unless a human went with him. Dick and I took turns walking outside—in the rain—with the dogs. Toots learned in one trip outside that one of the back doors is always open for a quick return to the dry back porch. We'd take her out one door and she'd trot around to the other and let herself back in. She was in dire need before she'd even hint she'd like to head outside.

There was no romping in the rain (that wet paw thing). Try as she might, Tootsie could not interest Darby in some modified house romping. She used her best snarling and nipping techniques, but what had charmed him on their first meeting now intimidated the heck out of him.

The humans rode out the storm on a tasty diet of food and wine. Second morning there, Darby, usually a fussy eater, left his breakfast within reach of Tootsie's doggy senses, which zeroed in on turkey as well as kibble and finished off Darb's breakfast while he was still deciding if he was hungry. When breakfast disappeared, he decided he WAS hungry, trotted over to Tootsie's bowls...and drank her water, all that she'd left over from her first breakfast of the day.

Having overstuffed herself, Toots had an accident on the rug in the bonus room at 3:30 in the morning, compelling Steve and me to rummage in the laundry room for the necessary cleaning materials, only to have Dick rouse from a fitful sleep to advise that they were under the sink. When Toots announced a second try at 5:30, Steve took her outside, forgetting to unlock the back door. Persistent knocking once again roused Dick from slumber to let them both back in. The weather was clearing after three days, but it was definitely time to go home.

--Mar Sclawy © 2009



*Steinkopf
Nursery*

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Hill and Dale Garden Club and Steinkopf Nursery have joined together to bring you a unique fund raiser for Hill and Dale. Bring this flyer to the nursery when you purchase your Christmas trees, wreaths, and greens for the holiday

season. Steinkopf Nursery will donate 10% of the profits from your sale to Hill and Dale Garden Club.

Thank-you for your support and remember- all of the money raised stays right here in Farmington and Farmington Hills.

Have a wonderful Holiday Season!!
Flyer expires on 12/24/09.