



Quail's Tales

www.HillandDaleGC.org

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

President's preface

March 2011

March is here and I have a whole month to wear green and not be made fun of. I wear it almost every day, but I fit in with everyone else this month. Anyway, Happy Saint Patrick's Day! Wear green this month! (With pink or orange preferably.)

Mar and I attended a planning meeting with the other two Farmington Hills garden clubs this week. It was a very productive meeting and we have two events planned with them this year. The first is a picnic on June 25, tentatively at the Spicer House on the back patio. Our garden club is in charge of bringing the main dishes, the other two garden clubs the salads and desserts. This will be an informal setting to eat together and get to know one another better. The second event is taking place on September 10, also tentatively at the Spicer house. This will be a horticulture day, with two sessions, one a "make it and take it", which will be a choice between a container for outside, or a fall flower arrangement. The second session will be a wonderful speaker. Please put both of these dates on your calendar and plan on attending.

This month Janet Macunovich will be here discussing making fabulous containers with us. Make sure to attend and bring a friend. We all know what a wonderful speaker she is.

Wear green!



Lisa

March program Thursday the 10th 7:00 p.m.

Janet Macunovich, horticulture maven and all around green thumber, presents Canned Goods: Gardens in Containers. Get a jump on spring—and any other season that calls to you. Janet's expertise will have us all canning our gardens in no time.

Katie Wemyss is bringing slides of past meetings and events. There will be viewers for members to review them and take away all that they wish. Slides remaining after the April meeting will be disposed of.

We'll be gauging interest in repeating *Proven Survivors*, our homegrown plant gala in May. Bring your thoughts and be prepared to volunteer for the event.

Hospitality will be provided Amy Langdon, Peggy Dapkus and Gayle Schwartz.



February minutes

Minutes will be presented at the meeting.

Proposed by-laws amendments

We'll be voting on amending the by-laws as follows:

Amend Article IV, Section 1 to add the following to the end: The duties of the office of president and vice president-program chair may be shared by two or more members if they are so elected.

Amend Article IV, Section 3 to delete the second sentence, which now reads: A member must serve as a board member a minimum of one year before holding elective office.

There will be further discussion before voting at the March meeting.

Garden therapy wish list

Garden therapy still needs empty small medicine bottles for the April project. Please bring these items to the meeting. Baggers for the April project are Lori Adams, Winnie Chrzanowski and Amy Langdon.

District 1 spring meeting

The Garden Club of Dearborn is hosting the spring meeting for District 1 at the historic Dearborn Inn on April 14. One of its new members, Nikki Schmit, will be speaking on her specialty, daylilies. She serves as President of the American Hemerocallis Society's Region 2 and is also a member of the Creative Flower Arrangers Guild and the Southern Michigan Daylily Society, so she definitely knows her stuff.

Afternoon program will be a spring floral design demonstration by Thomas Figueroa, Michigan Vice President of Nordlie, wholesale supplier of floral and design goods. Attendees at the meeting will receive a one-day Nordlie shopping pass, thanks to Joan Micou, District I Eastern Area Chair, who negotiated the "perk" for District 1.

\$25 is due to Angela Paul by March 25 if you plan to attend. Best thought: bring your payment to the March meeting.



Coming up

- April 14—District 1 meeting.
- May 4—Hitomi Gilliam, creative floral designer, will speak and demonstrate her craft at the Detroit Institute of Arts Friends of Art & Flowers (FAF) spring lecture. Ms. Gilliam is a floral artist who creates unique creations of ephemeral beauty. She has received numerous honors and awards. A flora designer, with a horticultural background and a love of the arts, Ms. Gilliam is dedicated to expanding the horizons of the floral industry and bringing more creativity to it. Luncheon follows the demonstration. \$25 for lecture/demonstration only; \$50 for lecture/demonstration and luncheon Call 313.833.4025 or email tburns@dia.org. Tickets are limited.
- May 17-18—Junior League Gardeners plan a standard flower show at the Grosse Pointe War Memorial, 32 Lakeshore Road, Grosse Pointe Farms. May 17 includes a subscription wine and hors d'oeuvres party, \$20. May 18 show will be open to the public free of charge from 10 am to 4 pm. Flower arranging lecture at 2 pm will be presented by Marge McGoff, international flower arranger and judge. \$5 at the door. For info please contact Patti Schollenberger at 313.622.8732 or pschollenberger@aol.com or general chairman, Joan Micou, at 313.886.6999, jmicou@sbcglobal.net.

This 'n' that

Allergy alert. At least one club member is allergic to shrimp. If you have a food allergy, be sure to let hospitality committee know of it. If you're providing hospitality, including potlucks, please avoid shrimp.

Share the experience. As noted at last month's meeting, Hill and Dale and the other two Farmington area garden clubs are exploring sharing programs and events. In support of that effort, here are the remaining programs of the season for

Farmington Garden Club, meets at noon at Heritage Park Visitor's Center:

March 7: Making Your Own Miniature Design with Gloria Minnebo;

April 4: Plants for the Approaching Season by Joe Barson of Barson's Nursery;

May 2: Summertime Entertaining with Betty Bock showing creative ways to spice up table arrangements for those spring and summer weddings, showers, graduations.

North Farmington Garden Club, meets at noon at Farmington Hills Library, 2d floor auditorium

March 8: John Macinnis of Tollgate explains the maple sugar process;

April 12: Lillian Dean of SOCWA presents residential rain gardens;

May 10: Colleen French of French Garden Creations assists in making herbal treats.

Exercise that green thumb: Gleaners Community Food Bank is planting a vegetable garden at Grand River and 10 Mile (west of Halstead) again this year. Last year's garden produced more than 3,000 pounds of tomatoes, onions and peppers for hungry folks in the area. With more volunteers, the plan is to double the output. If you're interested, contact Lisa or Mar, who can put you in touch with the volunteer leader.

Views from the corner garden—The Magnificent Mango

As I slurped my way through a magnificent mango recently, I got to wondering how they get to my local store, where they come from . . . you get the picture. I decided it was time to learn more about these delicious, messy, healthful fruits. One fact that surprises me is that the mango is related to the cashew, pistachio, Jamaican plum, poison ivy and poison oak (<http://www.freshmangoes.com>).

The *Mangifera indica* is a tree that can grow to 130 feet with a crown radius of 33 feet. The trees themselves are quite attractive. They don't like cold weather and like to live in a frost-free climate. Temperatures below 40 degrees Fahrenheit will kill the flowers and fruit. Tropical climates suit them, and many believe the mango originated in India and spread to other areas like the Philippines, Asia, Africa, and the Americas with the onset of trade.

Because mangoes aren't seasonal like apples or oranges, they are not harvested at a particular time of the year but rather when they ripen. Mangoes usually mature in about 100-150 days after the flowering process has ended. When the fruit is ready for harvest it will show full color. A ripe mango will be soft to the touch and it will have expanded in size and filled out. Getting the fruit off the tree is done by shaking or thrashing the tree.

According to the [gardenguides.com](http://www.gardenguides.com) website (www.gardenguides.com), shaking or thrashing the tree will remove the fruit. Shaking "should be done in a gentle manner . . . Thrashing your tree is a much better option. To thrash, take a long rope and strike the tree's branches. This will knock off the ripened fruit without harming the tree."

Once the fruit is harvested, it needs to be handled as gently as possible. Mangoes bruise easily. The mangoes should not be stored in temperatures less than 50 degrees Fahrenheit. Place the fruit on a tray or in a storage bin to complete the ripening. "It is best to place the mango stem side down at room temperature" and to cover it with a mesh cloth. Like the tree, the fruit likes warm temperatures and needs sunlight to extend its storage lifespan (www.gardenguides.com).

Mangoes show up in the stores mostly from February through September. They come in several varieties, and they don't resemble each other. That means you cannot judge a mango by its color.

According to the book, *The New Healing Foods* (pages 426-429), the mango is one of the most commonly eaten fruits in the world. They "originated . . . more than 4,000 years ago and have been used in folk remedies ever since." Not only do mangoes taste good, they are full of lutein, antioxidants, vitamin C, and vitamin A. Half a mango has only 70 calories, no saturated fat, no cholesterol, no sodium and is low in carbohydrates. Studies have shown that the lutein and antioxidants in mangoes help prevent age-related macular degeneration. (I wish my grandma had eaten these when she was young.) The vitamin C and A not only fend off cataracts but also "gobble up free radicals, substances that may contribute to cancer and heart disease . . ." Sounds to me like we should all be eating mangoes daily.

Mangoes come in so many varieties—thousands according to www.freshmangoes.com--I don't even want to try to list them all. When we shop for mangoes in the grocery store, we probably find the four most common varieties: Kent, Keitt, Harden, and Tommy Atkins. All four are grown in Florida and come from Indian strains.

This tasty fruit can be used as a replacement for peaches in almost any recipe. Mangoes can be incorporated into almost anything. You can marinate meat with mangoes. Use chopped or diced mangoes in muffins or breads. Or, for a real treat, make a Mango Dos Leches cake. Whatever you do, apparently it pays healthy and tasty dividends to add a mango or two to the daily diet. —Winnie Chrzanowski © 2011

Critter spotting— Spring's on the wing

The first robin of the season (at least as far as I know) perched in the weeping cherry tree waiting its turn at the bird feeder. Date: February 10. What's with that? We grew up hearing that robins were an early sign of spring. Given our February's record-setting fourth most snowy February in recorded history I'm thinking this robin had a lot to learn (if it didn't freeze to death before it got the word) about when spring arrives in Oakland County.

Turns out robins have a wide range. They thrive as far north as Newfoundland and British Columbia year round, and will migrate as far north as Alaska in summer. So how come I've not seen them around here this early in the year?

Mayhap they don't favor our feeder provender. They like bugs and berries—another reason I'm thinking they shouldn't be hanging in our garden in February. I usually don't encounter them till they set up their nests, usually beginning in April. They'll produce up to three broods a season, each brood getting its own new nest. They like to nest in dense foliage. Our akebia vine is one of their favorites, so I'm often vying with an irate mama bird when clearing out the garden leftovers in early spring.

Because they're territorial when nesting, at least I don't have to worry about a mess of robins setting up a condo in the akebia. At other times, though, they're quite gregarious, especially in their winter territory, rather like us humans who flock to Mexico and then hang out with folks just like us from the north.

We know of some birds that didn't make it through the winter. We're not quite sure what killed the sparrows that Roxie keeps finding in the melting snow. She's been using it as her personal refrigerator. We didn't notice her stash till I found her spitting out tiny feathers on the living room carpet. Whence come these feathers? I asked her. She didn't spill a thing. But a couple days later, she tried bringing a half frozen half carcass into the house. We're wondering what else the spring thaw will deliver to Roxie's indiscriminating palate.

(Robin stats courtesy of Dewey, T. and C. Middlebrook. 2001. "Turdus migratorius" (On-line), Animal Diversity Web. Accessed February 27, 2011 http://animaldiversity.ummz.umich.edu/site/accounts/information/Turdus_migratorius.html.)

—Mar Sclawy © 2011

