



# Quail's Tales

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

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

November 2011

## President's preface

For those of you unable to attend the fall district meeting here is a short recap. The Venetian Club is a comfortable and spacious venue for this event and they provided a tasty lunch. We were able to sit wherever we chose during lunch. Lisa's morning program was very timely and informative. Marge also had a seasonal arrangement program and Jeannine and Lucille both won arrangements. It was a very nice day.

## November 10 meeting

The garden and fields are tucking it in for the season. Many of their denizens, however, are just lying in wait for next year. Long-time gardener and former District 1 director, Virginia Froehlich, knows "Plants That Make You Twitch, Itch and May Kill You." She'll share this important and entertaining information with Hill and Dale Garden Club members and guests. Presentation begins at 7:30, followed by the business meeting.

Hospitality will be provided **by Jeannine Gundle, Amy Langdon, and Shirley Perkins**

## October 13 meeting minutes

Meeting was called to order at 8:20 pm by President David Henry. The minutes of the September meeting were approved as printed in the October newsletter.

Angela Paul gave the treasurer's report. She reported that each of the three participating garden clubs made \$33 for the garden seminar.

Junior Gardeners are meeting Oct. 15 at 11 am at the downtown Farmington library.

Amy reported that the next Garden Therapy is a pumpkin. We need to press fall leaves for this project.

David reported that he attended a meeting of the Farmington garden clubs where Lisa was the speaker. Check out "Lively Arts" for all the garden clubs' meeting schedules/speakers should you have a free day.

We celebrated Ruth Trombley's 90<sup>th</sup> birthday with singing Happy Birthday and eating birthday cupcakes.

Hospitality for the evening was provided by Eleanore Guirlinger, Lu Eaton, Ruth Trombley and a friend and former member Diane Dunn.

Respectfully submitted, Sandy Cusack, recording secretary

### Garden therapy

Please keep an eye out for holly sprigs and berries for the December project, and please start collecting those small black TV dinner trays (about 5" x 7") for the January project. More empty toilet tissue cores are still needed.

### Horticulture—

#### Clean Air with Houseplants

I was recently at U of M hospital having some tests. While waiting, I was perusing their magazine selection and without looking at the title, I picked up the one with Antonio Banderas on the front (he's quite good-looking). The big surprise was, the magazine I selected was AARP magazine. I do not, as of yet, subscribe to this magazine, but was excited by the contents. Not only was there an article on the aforementioned Mr. Banderas, but a very good article about houseplants by Ken Druse. I'm thinking that maybe some of you receive this magazine (I hope I'm not insulting anyone) and you really should check out the article.

One point he mentioned, dealt with how plants make us feel: "Tending plants soothes our souls, lowers blood pressure, and may even extend life." It is nice, especially if one doesn't have a pet, to be responsible for something other than ourselves. As many of you are in your retirement years, you may have more time on your hands than you would like. Taking care of a few plants in your home may be just what you need. It has been proven that taking care of plants lowers our blood pressure and so it may extend our lives. Re-potting plants, watering and pruning them really is very relaxing and soothing. It has also been proven that 1 plant for every 100 square feet, removes any VOC's or volatile organic chemicals in the air, yet another way having plants in our homes could extend our lives. Of course, I've told my family that it is healthy to have all these plants in our home, but they think 1 per every square foot in every window is a little much. They're probably right. They do have clean air, though. No VOC's could survive here.

There are plants that clean the air better than others and I'll mention just a few. The best plant for removing chemicals is the Areca palm or *Chrysalidocarpus lutescens*. Also known as the butterfly palm, it releases moisture into the air, removes chemical toxins, and is beautiful to look at. Another good plant is the rubber plant or *Ficus robusta*, formerly known as *Ficus elastica*. It tolerates low light, cool temperatures, and is easy to grow. It is the best *Ficus* to remove toxins, but the *Ficus benjamina* or weeping fig does a good job also and is probably more well known. English ivy or *Hedera helix* is also a great choice for removing toxins and is a great choice for topiary. Boston fern, or *Nephrolepis exaltata 'Bostoniensis'* is a fabulous choice for chemical removal, but is not the easiest plant to take care of, especially in the winter. It loses a lot of leaves and this can be a deterrent to some people. One might find the spathiphyllum lily or peace lily easier to maintain, with the added bonus of flowers. Heart-leaf philodendron, *Philodendron oxycardium*, snake plant, *Sansevieria trifasciata*, Norfolk island pine, *Araucaria heterophylla*, and spider plant, *Chlorophytum comosum 'Vittatum'* are other common, easily obtained, plants that can help extend your life with fresh air and lower blood pressure.

Happy Gardening!

Lisa



### *Critter spotting—A room of her own*

Since the time they moved in, Tootsie (six years) and Roxie (four years) have always slept in our bedroom. Between them they have three choices of beds: the one we bought for Toots when she was new, the old comforter we laid down for Rox when she showed up and a brand new Costco super soft pillow bed. Those should be enough sleeping accommodations for two pooches of no great size. And usually they are.

In fact, with winter coming on, any one of those locations is generally sufficient for two dogs that will snuggle on a two-dog night.

Or, if the comforter begins to slide off our bed, we'll often find Toots wound up in however much fabric she can ease to the carpet.

At least that was the story till Girls Weekend last summer. Among the attendees was Jessica, a college student in-law relative of niece Kate. Once all the beds were appropriated, those left standing had to make do. Jess chose the walk-out level where she lined up the cushions from the sleep sofa bed on the floor and covered them with a sheet. She's short and the arrangement fit her just fine. It also fit Tootsie, who had found a new pal and slept next to Jess during her weekend stay.

When Jess left, Tootsie took to snoozing on the sleep sofa cushions, now returned to their proper place. She'd never climbed on that sofa before. Now she spent hours during the day, just resting where Jess had slept.

Then, one night, Tootsie wasn't in any of her beds. Left outside after last call for a potty break? Nope. Yard was clear.

Toots had moved herself, which is all a dog needs for sleep accoutrements, to the sleep sofa downstairs. What was left of Jess was on those cushions and it called to Toots in the evening. Despite the call of the cushions and maybe of a room all to herself, she's not spent a whole night down there. Sometime after we're all in bed, up trots Toots, returning to sleep with the rest of the family that still lives in the house, rather than with ghosts of loves past.

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