



Quail's Tales

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

October 2012

President's preface

September has come—and gone—quickly, and my gardens are looking pretty shabby. I have started weeding and cutting back my flowers and plants. I have left the cone flowers for the wild canaries to feed on, but that's about all.

Regarding my illness: I had a lumpectomy but there were two areas where the margins were too close. I had a second incision lumpectomy and the surgeon scraped the entire margins again. Still, there were two cells outside those margins.

What to do about them? I called the doctor I used to work for and asked him to look over all the results. He also talked to the head of physicians for breast surgery, and she also reviewed my results. She confirmed that I could start radiation without further surgery.

So, by the third week of November, I will be all done with this medical problem, God willing.

I love autumn and hope I will be able to enjoy it. Cider, pumpkins, cool nights, spooky moon, falling leaves that crunch when I walk. I also have a distant memory of the smell of burning leaves—when we were allowed to do that. It's a time for cozy nights, nestled in with a good book and a cup of tea. Enjoy the season.
—Kathleen

October 11 meeting

After putting the garden to bed, consider what you'd like it to wake up to in the spring. To help us get an early start on bringing the garden to life, Walter "Dr. Chip" Hickey will discuss planting spring flowering bulbs at the meeting.

If you'd like to expand the early arrivals beyond daffs and tulips, maybe find some plant that deer don't devour, this program is for you. Bring your questions and your notebooks to learn from this Master Gardener and Michigan Certified Nurseryman.

September 13 meeting minutes

The meeting was called to order by co-vice presidents, Katie Wemyss and Jeannine Gundle in the absence of President Kathleen Postema. There were 18 members present.

Angela Paul gave the treasurer's report and reported that the board at its last meeting directed her to send \$50 to Kathy Heckman in appreciation of all her help at the last plant sale.

The new Garden Therapy books were distributed and Amy Langdon announced that we were starting our new year of garden therapy at this time.

The district meeting will be Wednesday October 17 at Vladimir's Restaurant in Farmington Hills beginning at 10 a.m. with coffee at 9:15. The cost is \$25 per member. Treasurer Paul needs the money turned in to her by October 3.

The Holly Berry Luncheon, sponsored by the Dearborn Garden Club is being held at the Dearborn Inn on December 1 at a cost of \$30 before October 31 and \$35 after that date. See Angela Paul regarding this event.

Prior to starting the meeting we took a walk around the gardens, identifying the various plants. It was a beautiful evening weather-wise. Then after our walk and snacks, Katie Wemyss gave a very interesting talk on the history of the land and ownership of the homes in Heritage Park.

The hostesses for the evening were thanked. They were Sally Ouellette, Ann McMinn, Linda Talacki. The October hostesses are Gretchen Pugsley, Diane Dunn, Shirley Perkins and Eleanore Guirlinger. —Joanne Bryngelson, Secretary



District 1 meeting, October 17

Registrations were to be in to Angela Paul by October 3 for the District 1 meeting, Water Wise, with a speaker on water conservation and drought tolerant plants and a design program interpreting all things “water.” If you haven’t registered and wish to attend, call Sherry Sanelli, District 1 director at 586.752.3734 to inquire about late registration.

Garden Therapy

November’s project is (reasonably enough) Perky Turkey. Bagging chair is Flo Holzknicht with help from Gretchen Pugsley and Linda Talacki during the week of October 29 and November 2.

December bagging chair is Mar Sclawy with help from Sally Ouellette and Ruth Trombley during the week of December 3 and 7.

Please be responsible for obtaining a sub if you can’t make your scheduled appointment. Information on all bagging dates is set out in the Garden Therapy. If you plan to be out of town on your turn, consider trading dates with someone as early as possible.

This ‘n’ that

- Getting an early start on indoor projects, Joanne Bryngelson and Angela Paul headed to Gladwin for quilting time. We’re not quite sure what that entailed. If you’re quilting-inclined, find out more from them at the October meeting.
- Katie Wemyss offers this thought: Kindness is a language that the deaf can hear and the blind can see.

Horticulture— water wise gardening in case you cant go to district mtg

What are the two biggest users of water in your home? Toilets and landscape watering. In fact, during the summer, half of all household water use is for the lawn and garden. However, it’s possible to dramatically reduce your water consumption, lower your water bill and still have a beautiful, productive garden. Just follow these eight steps:

1. Add organic matter to your soil.

All soil is not created equal. Soil is essentially a collection of mineral particles of different sizes. If most of the particles are large (sand), water drains through rapidly. If most of the particles are small (clay), water will penetrate the soil much more slowly. The solution for either problem is the same: add organic matter. Organic matter, in the form of compost, chopped up leaves or composted manure will improve the texture and water-holding capacity of your soil. Add at least an inch of compost each year.

To learn more about improving your soil, read [Building Healthy Soil](#).

2. Deliver water directly to the roots.

Drip irrigation and [soaker hoses](#) ensure that up to 90 percent of the water you apply to your garden is actually available to your plants. Sprinklers can claim only a 40 to 50 percent efficiency. Drip irrigation minimizes evaporation loss and keeps the areas between plants dry, which also helps limit weed growth. Our [Aqua Cones](#) are an economical and effective way to get water directly to the roots of individual plants. The [Flat Soaker Hose](#) delivers water slowly and evenly in garden or landscape beds.

3. Use mulch to retain water and reduce evaporation.

A six to eight-inch layer of organic mulch can cut water needs in half by smothering thirsty weeds and reducing evaporation. Organic mulches retain some water themselves and increase the humidity level around plants.

Organic mulches include chopped or shredded leaves, straw, compost, salt hay, shredded newspaper, grass clippings and rotted hay. Inorganic mulches include [Pro Weed Mat](#), [Fiber Tree Rings](#) and [recycled rubber Tree Rings](#).

For more information about mulches, read [Choosing the Right Mulch for Vegetable Gardens](#).

Plants & Water 101

During photosynthesis, green plants use water and carbon dioxide to make their own food. They take up water through their roots and transport it up through the plant to the leaves.

Carbon dioxide is taken up through microscopic pores in plant leaves called stomata. When the stomata are letting in carbon dioxide, water vapor escapes through a process called transpiration.

Transpiration cools the plant (kind of like perspiration). Water vapor can also condense on leaves and enter the plant through the stomata.

Water Facts

- Vegetable crops are 80 to 95% water
- Average garden soil will store two to four inches of water per foot.
- Growing vegetable crops need about one to two inches of water per week.
- An average-size tomato plant transpires about 30 gallons of water during a season.
- A corn plant transpires about 55 gallons from germination to harvest.
- One reason the air beneath a shady tree is cooler and more pleasant is because the air has a higher moisture content from the transpiration of nearby leaves.

4. Use free water.

Rainwater is the best choice for your plants. It's clear, unchlorinated and free. Use rainbarrels or a cistern to collect water from your downspouts. A 1,000 square foot roof will yield 625 gallons of water from one inch of rain. To figure out how much you can collect from your roof, use the [Rainfall Harvest Calculator](#).

Our [Rain Barrels department](#) has barrels in several sizes, along with diverters and linking kits so you can increase your storage capacity.

5. Reduce your lawn.

Turfgrass is one of the most water and labor-intensive types of "gardens" you can have. Consider planting groundcovers or low-maintenance perennials instead.

For more information, read [Be a Grower, Not a Mower](#).

6. Plan before you plant.

By planning your garden before you plant, you can take advantage of the characteristics of your site, such as sun, shade, wind and soil. Group plants with similar water needs. Also consider how your plants will get the water they need. Will you need to carry water to demanding plants in a remote corner of your yard? Planning will save you time and energy down the road.

7. Choose plants carefully.

A plant that's satisfied getting most of the water it needs from natural rainfall will require a lot less work from you. For [drought-tolerant perennials](#), choose varieties that are native to your area (or a region with a similar climate). These plants will be naturally adapted for your local climate and soils. For example, a plant that thrives in the Pacific northwest will likely require lots of additional water in the much drier conditions of Colorado.

For more plants that are well-suited to your area, call your local [cooperative extension](#) or talk to someone at a local garden center.

8. Take good care of your plants.

Healthy plants need less water, fertilizer and pest controls than stressed plants. By keeping on top of tasks, such as weeding, thinning, pruning and monitoring pests, you'll be able to ease off on watering.

Critter Spotting—Camp—and more

Tootsie and Roxie love going to camp, our name for the kennel where they're pleased to stay overnight or for a couple weeks. It's not a grand place, but the staff are warm and welcoming, and the dogs' enthusiasm reflects this care. Furthermore, they don't charge extra to instill Tootsie's eye drops or to give the pooches play time with other like-minded dogs of similar size.

Sociable Roxie marches right in with nary a backward glance at the folks leaving her to a world of new pals and play. Tootsie takes a mournful look over the half door, as if asking if we really mean to leave her behind. Convinced that she's got the situation scoped, she also trots off to see whom she can boss around besides the long-suffering (but secretly passive-aggressive) Roxie.

While waiting to pick up the pooches at the kennel a couple weeks ago, I noted a calendar on the wall, featuring a picture of a dog that looked surprisingly like Roxie.

No sooner did the words, "Gee, that looks like Roxie," spill from my lips than the tech confessed that indeed, Roxie was Ms. September.

We've never had a celebrity in the family before, and while we were impressed that others had noticed her incredible loveliness, we were also concerned that Tootsie apparently had gone uncelebrated. If Toots missed her month, she doesn't seem to have noticed. We're keeping it all low key.



This kennel insists on current vaccinations for all residents. So we were surprised when we woke at 5 a.m. a week after their latest visit to Roxie, honking and spitting up phlegm. A lot of phlegm, and a lot of honking. No help for it but to head to the 24-hour emergency vet. As I was dressing, Steve recalled that we'd gotten email from the kennel advising that despite their best efforts, one of the small dog group had developed kennel cough, which usually takes about a week to incubate. And so it was with Rox: six days after coming home, she's honking like a goose—and easily as puzzled as we about the situation.

Despite the towel I spread on the back seat to contain the phlegm, Rox insisted on crawling into my lap and continuing that phlegm-thing, all over my coat. Turns out it's easily washed out of clothing (still not sure about the carpet).

Kennel cough is highly contagious. Yet Tootsie seems to be staving it off, despite regularly licking Roxie and nibbling on her face and back (don't ask; we have no idea).

—Mar Sclawy © 2012



Past presidents of the Farmington Garden Club gather during a recent meeting at Grand Celebrations in Farmington. Credit [Joni Hubred-Golden](#)

Since 1932, Farmington area gardeners have found a place to share their passion in the Farmington Garden Club.

Joann Jenkins, who presided over the group this year, said the club became part of the Federated Garden Clubs in 1934. Past club members included Edessa Slocum, the last family member to live in the historic Governor Warner Mansion in Farmington, and Ellie Spicer, whose family once owned the land that is now Heritage Park.

Jenkins said she has been a member since 1972, when gardeners were required to attend three meetings and also have a member sponsor them. Meetings were held during the day, at [Longacre House](#) in Farmington Hills.

"We always dressed up for our meetings, and the hostesses served our tea and coffee from the silver sets we just sold," she said. "We used china cups and saucers."

"For some of us, it's our excuse to put a hat on," member Jan Dolan said. She joined the club in 1966, shortly after moving to the Farmington area from Ohio. She met a club member and mentioned that she enjoyed gardening.

"I ended up as president the next year," Dolan recalled.

When more women began working during the day, the Hill and Dale Garden Club was formed, offering night meetings. And when their waiting list for membership started to grow, the North Farmington Garden Club was launched, Dolan said.