

Over the Picket Fence



The Mason County Garden Club Quarterly Newsletter

(Since 1926-our 87th year)

www.masoncountygardenclub.org

Member

Michigan Garden Clubs, Inc.,
Central Region and National Garden Club, Inc.

December, 2013



"Christmas is forever, not for just one day, for loving, sharing, giving, are not to be put away like bells and lights and tinsel, in some box upon a shelf.

The good you do for others is good you do yourself."

Norman W Brooks, "Let Every Day Be Christmas"



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The Christmas Party and Potluck is at the beautiful Cartier Mansion at 409 E. Ludington Avenue on Thursday, December 5 at 1:00pm. Come and enjoy good food and celebrate this most wonderful time of the year with your gardening friends. We will also install our new officers and directors. Each member is asked to bring a dish to pass, including a serving utensil. Sue Ann Schnitker, Garden Club member and owner of Cartier Mansion, will provide drinks, dessert and paper goods.



*Christmas waves a magic wand over this world, and behold,
everything is softer and more beautiful.*

Norman Vincent Peale



We welcome new members -

Margaret Ewing, POBox 312, Ludington, MI 49431
maggie6877@yahoo.com Birthdate - 6/8

Karijo O'Donovan, 603 Third St, Ludington, MI 49431,
231-233-2696
kjodonovan@yahoo.com, Birthdate - 9/24

Dawn Rollenhagen, 1620 N. Lakeshore Dr, Ludington, MI 49431,
269-979-4890 Rollen4890@yahoo.com

The email for Julie Tews is djtews@gmail.com



*Christmas is not a time nor a season, but a state of mind.
To cherish peace and goodwill, to be plenteous in mercy,
is to have the real spirit of Christmas.*

Calvin Coolidge



What do gardeners do in the winter when we can't dig our fingers into the dirt? We dream about it. January is the perfect time to collect garden ideas and journal them. Three sections to your yearly winter gardening journal may include –

- Things I want to change that didn't work out so well last year.
- Ideas I have seen from other gardeners on the internet that I want to try.
- A section for pictures and sketches.



We can also focus on the little winter birds out our windows. Birds can use some extra food this time of year and a great way to feed them is by decorating pine cones with seeds and a little "extra" to fatten them up. Collect some large pine cones and tie string to the top portion of the cone. Microwave peanut butter or suet until melted and spread it over the entire pine cone. Roll the cone in bird seed and nuts. Let the pine cone sit for 30 minutes to harden and then hang it outside on tree branches for the birds to eat.

Instead of having an empty or frozen over birdbath just sitting in your yard this winter, fill it with bird seed, colorful Indian corn and red pepper berries. It makes a colorful outdoor centerpiece and the birds will love it. To attract other critters, you can add some apples, raisins, acorns and leftover nuts. Be sure to keep it in clear view of your home so you can enjoy the abundance of winter time visitors.



Christmas gift suggestions:

To your enemy, forgiveness.

To an opponent, tolerance.

To a friend, your heart.

To all, charity.

To every child, a good example.

To yourself, respect.

Oren Arnold

Upcoming Local Events



November 26 - January 5, 2014 Meijer Garden in Grand Rapids celebrates 19 years of bringing holiday joy to West Michigan with "Christmas and Holiday Traditions Around The World". The focus will be on the role of nature and natural materials in cultural traditions. With more than 42 cultural trees and displays, Santa, reindeer, carolers, carriage rides and much-loved Railway Garden, the annual exhibition delights guest of all ages.

December 5-7, 2013 Manistee's Victorian Sleigh bell Parade and Old Christmas Weekend.

December 5-6, 2013 Made in Michigan Holiday Market in downtown Hart. Friday 2pm - 9pm and Saturday 10am - 5pm

December 6, 2013 Christmas Craft Night at the Ludington Library.

December 6 - 7, 2013 "It's a Wonderful Life" at the Historic Ramsdell Theatre in Manistee.

December 7, 2013 Christmas Craft Fair at the Pentwater public school.

December 8, 2013 Afternoon Tea for COVE at the Cottages Clubhouse in Pentwater.

December 13, 2013 Annual Cookie Walk at Community Church in Ludington

December 14, 2013 Create a Wreath for Christmas at Redeemer Lutheran Church in Scottville. Call 757-2348 for reservations. Free - all materials provided.

December 21, 2013 The first day of Winter.

December 31, 2013 5th Annual New Year's Eve Ball Drop with fireworks in downtown Ludington

February 2, 2014 Ground Hog Day

Feb 6, 2014 "The Spirit of Harriet Tubman" at the WSCC Center Stage Theatre.

February 1, 2014 6th Annual Frostbite Homegrown Saturday in Manistee. The event includes ice carvers, live music, winter chili through the business district.



*Unless we make Christmas an occasion to share our blessings,
all the snow in Alaska won't make it 'white'.
Bing Crosby*

Did you know ?

The horticultural minds at Cornell University discovered that spiking paperwhites with one part gin or vodka to 7 parts of water stuns their growth enough to prevent their stems from flopping over.

You can use toothpaste to wash your hands to remove the smell of onions or garlic.

Before houseplants that have summered outside come in, make sure bugs aren't hitchhiking on the foliage. Fill a spray bottle with water and add 4 drops of dish-washing liquid. Carefully spray each plant, being sure to wet both the top and bottom surfaces.

When your hands are badly stained from gardening add a teaspoon of sugar to the soapy lather you wash them in and the stains will disappear.

The best time to prune evergreens is from December to March during the winter dormant season. It is recommended to not prune heavily in the spring because cuts made during the growing season will result in very dense growth on top. The dense upper growth can shade the lower foliage so much that it will die.

Green sweet bell peppers have twice the vitamin C of oranges. Red and yellow bell peppers have four times as much.



*I will honour Christmas in my heart,
and try to keep it all the year.*
Charles Dickens (A Christmas Carol)

National and Michigan Garden Club, Inc. Upcoming Events

December 7, 2013 The Cadillac Garden Club presents their annual Holiday Home Tour from 10:00am to 3:00pm. Call 231-510-9047 for more information.

December 10, 2013 The Muskegon County Garden Club is presenting a Small Standard Flower Show entitled "Holiday Magic" to be held at the Muskegon Women's Club, 280 Webster Ave., Muskegon from 2pm to 5pm. Open to the public and free of charge. There will be holiday floral arrangements and table settings, fresh holiday wreaths and swags, decorated candlesticks, etc. Contact Peggy Hartman at 231-744-3540 or Jan Hoffman at 231-740-6385.

April 21-22, 2014 Garden Study School-Course IV hosted by Michiana Landscape Study Club. Contact Bobbi Quick at bquick50@gmail.com

April 24-25, 2014 Environmental Studies School-Course III in Pleasantville. Contact Stacey Stutcher at fstutcher@yahoo.com

April 29-30, 2014 Landscape Design School-Course II hosted by District II in Ann Arbor. Contact Mary Pulick at marypulick@gmail.com

May 13, 2014 District V Spring Meeting. Details to follow.

May 17, 2014 Loda Lake Ribbon Cutting Ceremony to celebrate the completion of the Loda Lake Wildflower Sanctuary Infrastructure Enhancement Project. Detail to follow.

June 3, 2014 83rd Annual Michigan Garden Clubs, Inc. State Convention in Bath, MI. Watch for further information.

August 27-28, 2014 Flower Show Symposium in Cadillac. Presenters will be Design: Penelope Decker - "Color", Horticulture: Dorothy Yard - "Dwarf and Miniature". Contact Lynn Dinvald at ydoublelne@aol.co



*I heard the bells on Christmas Day
Their old, familiar carols play, and wild and sweet
The words repeat Of peace on earth, good-will to men!*
Henry Wadsworth Longfellow



If you want your Christmas cactus to grace your home with blooms for the holiday, it's not too late to start keeping it away from artificial light during the night time to encourage blooming. These plants appreciate normal household temperatures during the day but during the night they need cool temperatures near 55'. During the day they prefer reasonably bright light from an eastern exposure, with a bit of direct sun in the winter. It grows well in a mix of equal parts potting soil and fine-grade fir bark keeping the medium evenly moist all year. Feed monthly with 20-10-10 fertilizer, except when you're encouraging bud development. You can propagate the plant from cuttings, usually in the spring, and can give the new plants to your friends for the holidays.



*Gifts of time and love are surely the
basic ingredients of a truly merry Christmas.*
Peg Bracken



Where my love of gardening came from.....by Carmen Muscat

My love of gardening came from my father. He was a little European man who loved flowers, vegetables and especially his grape vines, for making barrels of wine. But, the most precious thing in his garden was his fig tree. He brought it back, illegally, from the island of Malta. Located in the Mediterranean Sea, this beautiful island is bountiful of olives, figs, and prickly pears. My father nourished this little starter plant, to grow into a beautiful tree, that gave luscious, juicy, red fruit each year.

I remember as a child, helping my father pick grapes for wine, and vegetables for minestrone. My father was an excellent cook. His stuffed eggplant was to die for.

My father's garden was a time for him ,as a little girl saw it, to be closer to God. That was until a rabbit would be seen and then he would take his sling shot out. If that wasn't handy, he would take his shoe off and fling it at the little fellow. I wonder where our rabbit stew came from, hmmm!

Over the years working in my garden, has brought back memories of being with my father and working in his garden.



Christmas isn't a season. It's a feeling.

Edna Ferber

Recipes

Flourless Peanut Butter Cookies from Judy Bertram

1 1/2 cup crunchy peanut butter 1 teas vanilla
1/2 cup soft butter 4 1/2 cups old fashion oats
1 cup sugar 2 teas baking soda
1 cup brown sugar Choco chips, nuts or fruit are optional
3 eggs

In a large bowl cream peanut butter, butter and sugar. Add eggs one at a time and beat well. Beat in vanilla. In another bowl combine oats and baking soda. Gradually add to creamed mixture. Stir in extras if using. Drop by teaspoon and tablespoon on ungreased baking sheet at 350' for 12-14 minutes.

Apple Walnut Cake from Carol Christofferson

4 cups coarsely chopped apples - not peeled 2 teas soda
2 cups sugar - 1 white and 1 brown 2 teas cinnamon
1/2 cup oil 1 teas salt
2 eggs 2 teas vanilla
2 cups flour - 1 white and 1 wholewheat 1-2 cups chopped walnuts
Mix - cream together: sugar, eggs, oil and vanilla. Sift together: flour, soda, cinnamon and salt and mix with creamed - then add apples and nuts. If thick add 1/4 cup milk. Bake 1 hour at 350'.

Love was born on Christmas morn.

Anonymous



*Peace on earth will come to stay,
When we live Christmas everyday.*

Helen Steiner Rice

*In Loving Memory of
Suzanne Townsend*



He Only Takes The Best

*God saw you getting tired and a cure was not to be
So He put His arms around you and whispered "Come live with Me"
With tearful eyes we watch you fade away
Although we loved you dearly, we could not make you stay.
A golden heart stopped beating, your hardworking hands put to rest
God broke our hearts to prove to us He only takes the best.
God will love you and keep you until we meet someday.*

This newsletter is dedicated to my very good friend Suzanne. The two of us have co-written this quarterly piece since its inception in 2006. The world has lost a special person with such compassion, strength, dedication and knowledge that is seen in so few of us. I was blessed to have her in my life.

See you at the meeting, Gwen and Diane Davis (who so graciously has added the graphics to this issue).