

Over the Picket Fence



The Mason County Garden Club Quarterly Newsletter
(Since 1926—our 85th year)

www.masoncountygardenclub.org

Member

Michigan Garden Clubs, Inc., Central Region, & National Garden Clubs, Inc.

March 2011

Snow, snow, snow, go away –
Let the dandelions nod & sway.

-Frank Harney



Our new 2011 Yearbooks are here! For those of you who have not picked up your copy, they are available from Sue Ann at Cartier Mansion on Mondays, Tuesdays and Wednesdays between the hours of 10:00am and 4:00pm. They will also be available at our first meeting of the year--March 24.



Please make the following corrections to your new Yearbook:

Sharon Morman

Pg. 8--add birthday—January 4

Pg. 32--change email provider to: frontier.com (not frontier.net)

Claudia Wilks:

Pg. 36—add new email address: crwiam4zinnias@yahoo.com

Helen Woirel:

Pg. 36--change email address to: helenwrl@hotmail.com

Finally...it's March!

Believe it or not, there are things to start doing for and in your garden as soon as weather permits.

- If you haven't been monitoring it, **turn your compost pile now**. Dampen it and begin turning it regularly to get it to heat up so you can enjoy the production of good compost faster. If you haven't started a compost pile, start one this month.
- **If you haven't already planned your season's plantings, do it now**. Take advantage of companion planting that can strengthen and reinforce plant vigor while repelling pests. For example, nasturtiums and marigolds repel white flies and aphids.
- **Build a cold frame** to acclimate seedlings and tender plants to ready them for transplant in May and June.
- **Start seeds and bulbs** now to be ready for the last threat of frost in late Spring.
- **Mulch early bulbs** especially if you didn't do it last fall. This will protect those fragile stems poking through.
- **Dahlia tubers stored last fall can be started late in the month**. Lay on a bed of sand and begin watering. (Avoid overwatering and too much warmth.)
- **Attend to your indoor plants too**. They've just come through a long winter and need a bit of fertilizer. Repot those that are root bound. Avoid overwatering as weakened plants are more readily subject to disease and root rot.

From the Fall 2009 issue of The National Gardener...

"Bright'ning Our World
 Let us march like daffodils
 Across life's barren hills,
 Claiming ground without a sound,
 Jericho's brown walls tumbling down
 Before our golden trumpets.

--Dorothy Stevens, Old York Road Garden Club, Jenkintown, PA



This year's newsletters will feature herbs and include information and recipes in each issue. If you have a favorite herb and recipes for its use, please share the information with us.

Fennel

This versatile herb freshens you breath, soothes winter coughs and even provides a good source of potassium.

- Breath Freshener -Munching on 5 to 10 fennel seeds sweetens your breath naturally.
- Soothe a cough - Make some fennel tea. The herb contains compounds that may help loosen chest mucus, as well as soothe a sore throat and relieve coughing spasms.
- Fennel Tea - 1 to 1 1/2 teaspoons fennel seeds
 - 1 cup water
 - honey

To brew, combine fennel seeds and water in kettle and bring to a boil; steep for 15 minutes, strain, then sweeten with honey.

- Fennel Salad - An excellent salad any time of year
 - 2 apples - chopped (healthy carbs)
 - 1 fennel bulb - thinly sliced (potassium)
 - 1/2 cup pistachios (protein)
 - 4 tablespoons low-fat balsamic vinaigrette dressingCombine apples, fennel and pistachios. Add dressing and toss. Serve immediately.

If you want to spend time on the fun stuff, hire a landscape service to handle the annual lawn cultivation and renewal project. [ContractorNexus](#) can help you find a qualified service in your area.

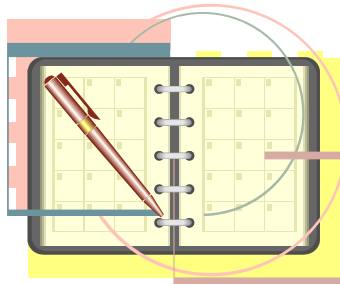


Butterfly Weed

Butterfly Weed is currently featured on the National Garden Club, Inc website (www.gardenclub.org).



This bushy, herbaceous perennial is 18-30 inches tall by 18-24 inches wide, and is known for its large, flat-topped clusters of bright orange flowers. Butterfly weed is a type of milkweed (a group of plants with milky sap that is poisonous to most insects). Its bright flowers attract hummingbirds and butterflies as well as larval host for the monarch and queen butterflies. Butterfly weed prefers full sun and well-drained soil and is drought tolerant. It is easily propagated from cuttings or seed. Aphids can be a problem on the stems and buds when flowering. Butterfly Weed is a great choice for meadow plantings and other naturalized plantings and grows very well as a native plant of Michigan.



**MICHIGAN GARDEN CLUBS, INC. & NATIONAL GARDEN CLUBS
2011 DATES TO REMEMBER**

www.michigangardenclubs.org & www.gardenclub.org

- May 10 District V Spring Meeting "Fairies in the Garden " in Tustin at the Kettunen Center hosted by the Cadillac Garden Club with the help of the Morning Glory's Garden Club. A Floral Design Workshop, at a cost of \$10, will be limited to the first 45 member to sign up.
- May 27-30 National Garden Clubs, Inc. Convention, Washington, DC
- June 9-11 Michigan Garden Clubs, Inc 80th State Convention, "Growing Gardens—Creating Communities," at the Midland H Hotel In Midland. Nancy Stark will be installed as our new state President. Marilyn McIntosh, current President of the Edelweiss Garden Club in Gaylord, will be our new District V Director.

2011 MGC STUDY SCHOOLS

- May 3-4 Environmental School, Course III (Sturgis) "Air Related Issues"
Contact Pat Hjertos 269-496-4815
- August 9-11 Flower Show School, Course I, Okemos, Michigan
Contact Lois Snover-Hanson 517- 694-8091 or Kathi Dominguez 517- 669-5112
- September 8-9 Landscape Design School, Course I, Cornerstone Baptist Church, Ludington.
Contact Suzanne Townsend 231-757-2565

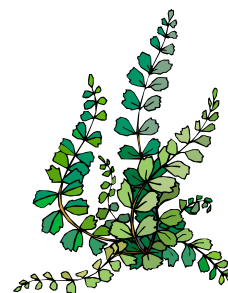
COMING LOCAL EVENTS

- March 12 Ludington Area Center for the Arts--Ladies Afternoon Out Tea Party and Reception, 3-5pm at the Art Center
- March 15-16 Ludington Area Center for the Arts--Exhibition of women artists in Mason County, Noon to 5:30 pm
- April 15 Mason Lake Conservation District Annual Spring Seedling Sale, Mason County Fairgrounds starting at 9:00 am
- May 7 White Pine Village opens for the season
- May 14 Farmers Market opens in Scottville from 9-1:00 pm in the West Shore Bank parking lot.
- May 14 Petunia Parade planting day. Meet at Cartier Mansion 9:00 am. When planting is finished, join planters at the Bandshell in the Park for hot dogs and brats provided by the Optimists
- May 15 MCGC Plant Exchange at 1:00 pm in Leveaux Park

Ferns

A place in the shade becomes a wonderland...
If well-placed ferns are used.
But so many varieties are offered...that I become confused.
There are parsley ferns, cinnamon ferns, lady ferns—
and today I was introduced to a hay-scented fern...
with the fragrance of new-mown hay.
I found the holly fern, the sensitive fern, and the
beautiful maidenhair fern.
But I chose the hardy Christmas fern—it expects so little care.

Where Mocking Birds Sing by Reba Wall



***Polystichum acrostichoides* or Christmas Fern can be used in a "green garden" as a ground cover.**