

# Over the Garden Fence



The Mason County Garden Club Quarterly Newsletter  
(Since 1926—our 86<sup>th</sup> year)

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

Member

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

## March 2012

Welcome to Spring! This is just too good to be true. The snow piles are gone; the robins are here; the daffodil, crocus and forsythia are blooming and it's only the middle of March. For those of you still in the South or West, don't worry about packing away your summer wardrobe you've been wearing the last few months. The current wardrobe in Mason County is short sleeves, short pants and sandals. For all of us here who have enjoyed a very mild winter and now have a full blown case of spring fever, Thursday, March 22 is the first Garden Club meeting of the new year. We are meeting at the **Cornerstone Baptist Church** on Nelson Rd at 1:00 for "Favorite Garden Tools and/or Gardening Tips". Bring two or three of your favorite tools and tips to share with your fellow gardeners. Sue Ann Schnitker will be our leader so we know it will be a good time.

I wandered lonely as a cloud  
That floats on high o'er vales and hills,  
When all at once I saw a crowd,  
A host, of golden daffodils;  
Beside the lake, beneath the trees,  
Fluttering and dancing in the breeze.  
William Woodsworth

### **Spring Tips**

Pruning has a major influence on shrub flowering. Over time, an unpruned flowering shrub becomes woody, with little new growth to support flower bud development.

**Spring-flowering shrubs** bloom on one-year-old wood (twigs that grew new the previous summer). Buds develop in midsummer through fall for the following spring. Pruning in the fall and winter removes flowering wood with buds. Springflowering shrubs can be rejuvenated or thinned in early spring before flowering or growth starts. Thinning can also be done right after bloom to maximize the next season's flowers. Spring-flowering shrubs include forsythia, Nanking cherry, quince, bridal wreath, spireas, viburnum, beautybush, lilac, honeysuckle, *and* weigela. On spring-flowering shrubs it is recommended to "deadhead" spent blooms (remove flowers after they fade). While time-consuming, deadheading conserves the plant's energy, which would otherwise be spent on seedpod and seed development.

**Summer-flowering shrubs** bloom on new wood that grew earlier this growing season. Summer-flowering shrubs are also pruned by thinning or rejuvenation in the early spring before growth starts. Summer-flowering shrubs include most butterfly bush, blue mist spirea, Hancock coralberry, mockorange, potentilla, Bumald and Japanese spirea, Annabelle and Peegee hydrangea, shrub althea or rose of Sharon, and St. John's wort. Removing older canes of flowering shrubs also allows better sunlight penetration into the shrub. This results in better flowering throughout the shrub, instead of flowers just at the top where sunlight is sufficient. On shrubs noted for their bark color, like red-twig dogwood, the new shoot growth has more brilliant color. Routine pruning at the base encourages new shoots, which have the desired red color.

April showers hang around  
To see if they can drown the ground.  
Resourcefully, the garden copes  
By raising yellow periscopes.

### **Upcoming Local Events**

March 22 First MCGC meeting of the year 1:00 at the Cornerstone Baptist Church, 121 N. Nelson. The topic will be "Favorite Gardening Tool or Tip" led by Sue Ann Schnikter

March 30 Take a Walk in the Park Day.

April 21 Earth Day Celebration led by local AFEW group

April 21 Mason Lake Conservation District Annual Seedling Sale, contact Linda Herremans at 757-3708x3

April 27 Michigan Arbor Day

April 27-29 West Michigan Builders Home and Garden Show at the Mason Co Fairgrounds

May 5 White Pine Village opens for the season

May 11 Ludington Farmers Market opens for the season at the N James St Plaza from 10-3 every Friday thru Sept

May 13 Mother's Day Plant Sale sponsored by the Memorial Medical Center Aux outside the south entrance to the hospital

May 19 Scottville Farmers Market opens the season from 9-1 in the bank parking lot every Saturday thru Sept

May 19 Petunia Parade planting at the Cartier Mansion

May 19 MCGC Spring Plant Exchange and White Elephant Sale from 9-12 at Leveaux Park on Ludington Ave.

### **Upcoming Michigan Garden Club, Inc. Events**

April 19-20 MGC Landscape Design School Course II in Ludington, contact Suzanne Townsend 690-9968

April 21-22 MGC Garden Study Course IV contact Bobbie Quick at [bquick50@gmail.com](mailto:bquick50@gmail.com)

April 24-26 MGC Flower Show School Course II in Okemos, contact

Lois

Snover-Hanson 517-694-8091

June 4-5 MGC State Convention at the Grand Traverse Resort in Acme "Honoring Mother Earth", contact Laurie Ordway 231-331-4018

Oct District V Fall Meeting at Crystal Mountain watch for further information

### **Upcoming Garden/Flower Events**

May 8-11 Tulip Time Flower Show hosted by the Holland Garden Club, contact Alyce Doss 616-335-3394

May 19 Annual Plant Sale in Acme, contact Sharma Zollinger 231-938-2726

May 19 Annual Plant Sale in Saugatuck, contact Mary Ryder 269-543-5024

May 26 Annual Plant Sale in Charle

June 3 Elk Rapids Garden Club Blue Star Memorial Dedication at the Rotary Park on US 31 at 1:00

Fair daffodils, we weep to see you haste away so soon

As yet the early rising sun has not attain'd his noon.

Stay, stay until the hasting day

Has run but to the even-song,

having pray'd together, we will go with you along.

Robert Hercik

### **Book Review**

Second Nature by Michael Pollan, described on the cover as 'A Gardener's Education' is not as much an instructional book for the reader as it is a memoir of Pollan's own gardening life.

The book is a collection of essays organized by seasons. Read it cover to cover, or peruse it seasonally as you garden through the year. It is a pleasure to read for those who enjoy well-written prose. The author describes experiences with his grandfather and his father, both gardeners, and his experiences in his own gardens. The gardening reader will relate to the personal happenings written with humor and knowledge.

This is not a book to pick up if you are looking for a 'how to' garden book. Instead, it is a wonderful reminder of why we garden.

Thank you to Deb Gundersen for sharing this review of a book she highly recommends

We all love the daffodils,  
We place upon our window sills.  
We like how their pretty faces,  
Brighten up our living spaces.

Is it Spring or Winter still?  
Look upon the nearby hill.  
Spring is here with tweet and trill,  
If there blooms the daffodil.  
Linda Burns

"Honoring Mother Earth" is the theme of the Michigan Garden Club, Inc 81st Annual Convention June 3-5 at the Grand Traverse Resort in Acme. District V (our district) is hosting this event and much work has gone into this to make it one of the best conventions ever. A Small Standard Flower Show - Walking in a Good Way; classes including landscape design going native, gardens for low maintenance, cooking with herbs and intro to biodynamic gardening to name a few; and a tour of the planned gardens at the Commons in Traverse City are just some of the things planned during this event. We have members already planning to attend and you would have a wonderful time. Talk to Sharon Morman or contact Laurie Ordway ([lordway@charter.net](mailto:lordway@charter.net)) for more information.

#### **PROTECTING AQUATIC ECOSYSTEMS**

Protecting Aquatic Ecosystems is one of NGC's Special Projects for 2011 - 2013. This project recognizes that it is of utmost importance and urgency that members of National Garden Clubs, Inc. identify and address critical water issues at local, state, regional, national and international levels because Water equals Life.

#### **Strategies for Protecting Aquatic Ecosystems To Safeguard Aquatic Ecosystems:**

Reduce water demand through effective conservation.  
Manage water within the bounds of an effective ecological flow prescription.  
Plan for ecological allocations during droughts.  
Protect source watersheds.

*Source: nature.org (The Nature Conservancy)*

**At home:**

What you can do - What you can save -

- |  |                            |
|--|----------------------------|
| 1. Turn off water when brushing teeth  | 3 gallons per day          |
| 2. Shorten your shower by 2 or 3 minutes   | 5 gallons per day          |
| 3. Fix leaky faucets   | 20 gallons per day         |
| 4. Wash only full loads of clothes   | 15 to 50 gallons per load  |
| 5. Water your yard before 8:00 a.m.<br>to reduce evaporation and wind interference | 25 gallons per day         |
| 6. Install a smart sprinkler controller  | 40 gallons per day         |
| 7. Use a broom instead of a hose to clean<br>driveways and sidewalks               | 150 gallons each time      |
| 8. Check sprinkler system for leaks, over-spray,<br>and broken sprinkler heads     | 500 gallons per month      |
| 9. Use organic mulch around plants   | Hundreds of gallons a year |

All day long blew the daffodils,  
Oh, what a sight to see,  
A myriad gold-gowned daffodils,  
Moved to a rhythmic glee.  
Teresa Hooley

Have you picked up your the new 2012 Year book? It's the best ever! A big thanks to Sue Ann Hanson, Sue Ann Schnitker, and Suzanne Townsend for all the hard work. The books will be available at the meeting so don't forget to pick up your copy.

Spring is in the air daffodils are everywhere  
All so colourful and bright shining in the golden sun light  
Waving in the gentle breeze attracting all the buzzy bees  
Yellow, orange, green and white, they all make such a lovely sight.  
Alana Fagan

## Attracting Pollinators

As you search the flower catalogs and garden centers this spring planning your flower beds and flowering pots, give some thought to the flowering plants that attract pollinators. Butterflies, hummingbirds and honey bees are called pollinators because they carry pollen on them from one plant to another, ensuring that plants reproduce. Flowers rich with nectar attract the pollinators. Nearly 80% of all flowering plants depend on pollinators. They are the most critical factor in the production of our fruits, vegetables and flowers. Things to look for in a plant to attract pollinators are -

- Brightly colored blooms
- Fragrance
- Trumpet-shaped blooms for pollinators with long tongues, such as hummingbirds, which can reach nectar deep inside the bloom
- Cup-shaped flowers for pollinators with small mouthparts
- Flowers with flat tops on which butterflies can sit while they sip the nectar

Have you registered for yet for Landscape Design School on April 18 and 19 right here in Ludington? This is Course II but, if you missed the first class, you can start the series now and pick up Course I in the future. This is such an opportunity to have a National Garden Club class offered by us and in our area. There is still time to register. Contact Suzanne Townsend (231-690-9968) [setownse@aol.com](mailto:setownse@aol.com) for all the informations.

As I'm sure you can tell, this edition doesn't have quite the polish of others in the past. Suzanne is under doctor's care today and it's her talents that are missing. Suzanne hope to see you at the meeting.

See everyone at the meeting and don't forget your tools and tips.  
Gwen and Suzanne