

over the picket fence



Spring, 2023

March, April, May

**The Mason County Garden Club
Quarterly Newsletter**

(Since 1926-our 96th year)

www.masoncountygardenclub.org

**Member: Michigan Garden Clubs, Inc
Central Region and National Garden Clubs, Inc
Club No. 140 – District 5**





Thoughts From Our President:

Plant a Patch for Pollinators

Catchy phrase, isn't it? But I can't take credit for it. An owner of a native plant nursery in Florida used that phrase as we were talking about the declining insect population throughout the world.

I was shocked when traveling through neighborhoods in the small area of Florida that I visited. Everywhere new apartment complexes, condominiums, home communities, malls were using up acres and acres of wildlife habitat! Looking at the already established new communities, there were no trees and most of the landscaping was the same. I wondered if it supported any native insects.

You may say that Florida is a long way from Michigan, but the same thing is happening here, although on a smaller scale and it is happening throughout our vast country. An example of this is the condominiums built at the corners of Washington Avenue and Bryant Road. This was a 40 acre forest of mature oak trees. It supported lots of wildlife. Did you know that a single oak supports 452 species of caterpillars? It's true that some oaks were left around the fringes, but now it is mostly planted in lawns, turf grass, which is an ecological wasteland. It supports no life, but uses vast amounts of water and fertilizers that include both herbicides and pesticides. Where do these chemicals end up? In our water table, lakes, rivers?

Native plants support our native insects. Without those insects that pollinate the plants and fruits we eat, we wouldn't survive. Already 45% of insects in the world have disappeared. These insects provide for us, so we **must** provide for them. Our lives depend on it. We can do that by reducing our lawns and planting native trees, bushes and flowers. All life, including insects, need water, food and shelter. That's why it's important to optimize layers in our yards. We all like seeing the songbirds and beautiful butterflies and moths. But we have to feed them. I've heard people say "I don't want those creepies and crawlies in my yard, eating my plants, putting holes in them! I don't want bees in my yard because they might sting me or my children."

A study was done in 1961 by Richard Brewer. He studied the feeding rates of nesting Carolina chickadees, similar to our Black-capped chickadees. He counted the caterpillars brought to the nest to feed nestlings. Brewer found that the parents brought 350 to 570 caterpillars per day, depending on how many young were in the nest! Over the one nesting period, the chickadees fed their chicks 6,000 to 9,000 caterpillars in a 16 day period before the fledged!! Just think of how many caterpillars are needed to feed the young of robins, blue jays, woodpeckers etc. all at the same time!

Caterpillars are the preferred food for songbirds because caterpillars are soft bodied and contain lots of fat and protein. That makes it easier for their young birds to eat and digest. Insects with exoskeletons are difficult to eat. Because of the decline of the Monarchs, people are building way stations for it. Let's build some way stations for all our important insects. Think of your lawn "as an area rug, not wall to wall carpeting".

Plant a patch for pollinators!





March

- 3 Judy Olson
- 10 Julie Tews
- 25 Kim Beardslee
- 30 Jackie Lane

April

- 3 Melanie Bettinger
- 3 Carol Christofferson
- 3 Dianne Miller
- 3 Betty Orton-Cochran
- 5 Susana Griffin
- 8 Mary Ann Ferguson
- 10 Gail Burkhart
- 11 Idy Kiser
- 19 Maureen Myers
- 29 Gloria Merchant

May

- 2 Esther Genter
- 9 Deb Gundersen
- 10 Gail Martin
- 24 Joanne Krone
- 25 Sharon Fritton



Tews Tips and Tricks:

Get Ready to Garden!

Your brain says it's time to start digging in the dirt, but the weather says otherwise. There are still many things you can do to get ready for the gardening season, even if you can't stick a shovel in the ground. Start this year's garden prep by reviewing your notes from last gardening season. What worked well? What didn't? What are you going to repeat and what needs to be changed? Developing a plan for the season will make your time efficient, plus you'll save money by only buying things you want or need.

Check your tools, sharpen pruners, spade and shovels. Use a stiff wire brush to remove any rust on blades and use a little machine oil to help prevent further rust from starting. Inspect the wooden handles on your favorite tools. Use sand paper to smooth away any splinters or rough spots and apply linseed oil to seal the wood.

Organize your garage or the garden shed. This is a great time to hang new shelving or hooks so you can find your tools easily. Create a place for everything and put everything in its place.

Garden indoors and get a head start by planting seeds and summer-flowering bulbs for transplanting outside later. Wait until the ground is completely thawed before planting in the soil. Add spots of color in the garden and entranceways by enjoying cold-tolerant annuals and perennials, such as pansies, primrose, heuchera, columbine, cabbage and kale in containers.

Take a little time now to get ready for the season and you'll hit the ground running once you can dig in the dirt!

THINK SPRING!! Julie



Here are some photos of “happenings” after the last Newsletter was published.

January Luncheon at Jamesport Brewery



February Luncheon at El Rancho:

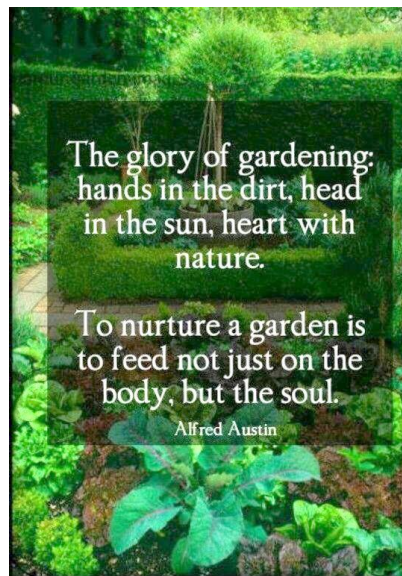


Village Manor

I meet once a month, usually in the afternoon of the first Friday of the month, with the independent residents at Village Manor. Typically 6-10 ladies participate in making “cups of cheer”. They love it! I enjoy working with them. One of the ladies is somewhat hyperactive and starts making numerous cups at the same time while really never putting much plant material in them. I need to keep reminding her to let the other ladies have the cups. She’s good natured about it and always helps me clean up afterwards. The ladies take 1 cup, sometimes 2, home with them and sometimes make another one for a friend. If any cups of cheer are not claimed, I take them to the assisted living portion of the manor. **Submitted by Sharon Morman**



February Cups of Cheer:



Earlier in December, the Mason County Garden Club held its annual Holiday Luncheon. In addition to installing new officers for 2023, the Garden Club held a raffle which featured mostly home-made/hand-made items. A tradition for more than 5 years, the proceeds from this raffle are given to a local charity. This year, the recipient of the \$500 was the Lakeshore Food 4 Kids program. The Garden Club selected the Food 4 Kids programs after hearing from members about this and 3 other well-deserving local charities. Meeting today to hand off the check were Sue Ann Hanson, President of Mason County Garden Club, and Tara Autry, Sara Ewing and Carrie Brandt of Food 4 Kids.



4th grader Trace Stumbrie entered his salamander sculpture in the National Garden Clubs, Inc. sculpture contest. Today he found out he won 1st place in the state in district 5 for 4th grade. He was awarded his 1st place certificate and gift card by Julie Tews of the Mason County Garden Club. Congratulations Trace! We are all so proud of you.





Garden Club Meetings and Events:

Upcoming State Events for Spring, 2023

March, 2023

- 3 - Member Meeting 10 AM —11 AM Zoom
- 17 - Member Meeting 10 AM —11 AM Zoom
- 25 - Houseplant Social 10 AM —Noon Otsego

April, 2023

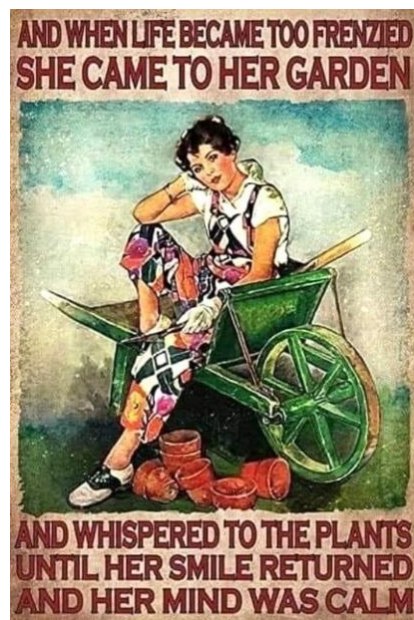
- 7 - Member Meeting 10 AM —11 AM Zoom
- 11 - District 5 President's Meeting - 11 AM Zoom
- 13 - District 3 Spring Leadership Meeting
- 21 - Member Meeting 10 AM —11 AM Zoom
- 26 - Spring Leadership Meeting 9:30 AM —2 PM Midland
- 28 - Spring Leadership Meeting 9:30 AM —2 PM Tipton
- 30 - NGC Annual Meeting starts

May, 2023

- 5 - Member Meeting 10 AM —11 AM Zoom
- 5 - NGC Annual Meeting ends 5 PM
- 19 - Environmental School; Course 2* 8:30 AM Manistee
- 19 - Member Meeting 10 AM —11 AM Zoom
- 23 - Spring Leadership Meeting 9 AM —4 PM Ludington

*Course 2 of Environmental School will be May 19- 20, 2023 in Manistee, MI. This is the second in a series of four courses. The focus of this course is Land and Related Issues. Garden club members can attend this course even if they weren't able to attend Course 1. This series of courses is being co-hosted by Portage Lake Garden Club and Spirit of the Woods Garden Club from

District 5. Registration will be done online at migardenclubs.org beginning in April, 2023. Contact Beth Markowski at markowski.beth@gmail.com for more information



Mason County Garden Club Meetings and Events for Spring, 2023:

March, 2023

23 – 1:00 pm – United Methodist Church – Social Potluck

April, 2023

27 – 1:00 pm – United Methodist Church – “Allowing for Nature in the Yard and Garden” – Matt LaMore, Owner Black Cap Nursery.

May, 2023

(Date to be Announced) – Based upon Spring temperatures – Field Trip – Loda Lake Wildflower Sanctuary
Huron-Manistee National Forest

20 – 9:00 am – Cartier Mansion – Petunia Parade Planting Day

25 – 1:00 pm – United Methodist Church – “Bigger Than Honey” – Kimberly Ambrose Co-Owner of Sister Bees



June, 2023

Saturday, June 3 – from 11:00 am – 1:00 pm – Leveaux Park – **Spring Plant Exchange and White Elephant Sale.**

July, 2023

Thursday, July 20, Friday, July 21 and Saturday, July 22 – **“A Day In The Garden – An NGC, Inc., Standard Flower Show.**

Flower Show-July 20-22-“How Does Your Garden Grow?”

This years’ Flower Show is July 20-22. The theme this year is: “How Does Your Garden Grow?” I wanted to let you know about some changes/additions to this years’ show so you can start planning ahead.

In horticulture, we have added a Section on “Container Grown Plants” where you can enter containers you put together for your house or patio for example. One class is of a pot with only one type of plant in it, either flowering or non-flowering. 2nd class is a pot with a combination of 3 or more different plants in it.

We will have petite designs and table artistry designs. More on those later.

We are having a “Youth” Division and hope to get children from 3-12 to make flower designs with us at the library.

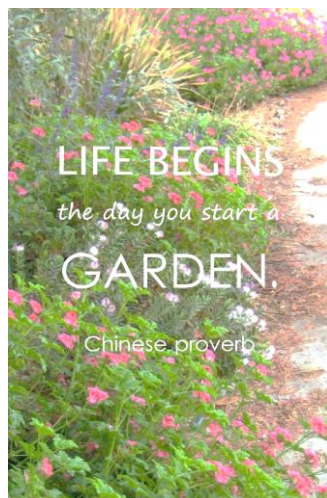
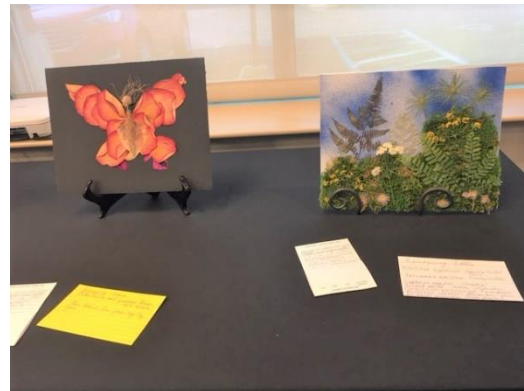
Also new is a Botanical Arts Division that has Photography, but also has Artistic Crafts—like what we did with Susan Joslin last August. The Photography themes are: “Break of Day,” “Sunny Day,” “Rainy Day,” and “End of Day.” So all you photographers out there can start looking for shots that would fit. All the pictures will 5x7 this year. The Artistic Crafts are: Decorating a watering can, Decorating a hat or making an 8x10 plaque (similar to what we did with Susan.). I kept pushing to include this area because I know we have so many talented ladies that do crafts—so don’t let me down! You decorate with any items that are living or once living (no plastic or silk flowers), but you can use flowers or seeds or beans or nuts, etc.

More later, including the complete schedule. **Submitted by Dawn Rollenhagen**

Flower Show Committee: Sharon Morman, Dawn Rollenhagen, Jackie Christensen, Carol Copeland, Melinda Dougherty, Sue Hanson, Carmen Muscat, Diane Nemitz, Randee Smith, Julie Tews



Examples of Flower Show Entries (Submitted by Dawn Rollenhagen):





Scholarship Applications:

The Mason County Garden Club has sent out scholarship applications to all three high schools in Mason County, WSCC, Mason County ISD, and new this year, to Gateway to Success Academy. The scholarship committee will make a decision at the end of April for a qualified Mason County recipient that is going into any field of horticulture, study of the environment, etc. to be awarded a \$1000 scholarship from our garden club.

Submitted by Chris Schulte

AAUW Used Book Sale:

The American Association of University Women (AAUW) Ludington Branch is having a **used book sale** on Friday, June 16th from 9 to 5 and Saturday, June 17th from 9 to noon at the United Methodist Church. All funds raised will be used for college scholarships for local HS graduates of 2023. We are now collecting hard and soft cover books, CD's, DVD's and records. If you have any that you would like to donate to the sale, please call Patty Otto at 231-845-7665 to arrange for pick up of your donated items! AAUW has had the used book sale starting in 1964 at Lakeview School and is our primary fund raiser for college scholarships! **Submitted by Patti Otto**



Recipes Submitted by Garden Club Members:

KIELBASA STEW

1/2 pound cooked link kielbasa, sliced 1/2-inch thick
1/2 cup chopped onion
2 tablespoons flour
2 cups water
are
2 teaspoons beef-flavor instant bouillon
3 cups coarsely shredded cabbage
1 1/2 cups cored and cubed apples
1 cup pared sliced carrots
1 cup cubed potatoes
1/2 to 3/4 teaspoon caraway seeds
1/4 teaspoon dried thyme
1 teaspoon pepper

In a large kettle, brown kielbasa, remove and reserve. Cook onion in kielbasa drippings until tender, stir in flour, Add remaining ingredients, except kielbasa; bring to a boil. Cover and simmer until potatoes tender, stirring occasionally, 20 to 30 minutes. Add kielbasa and heat. Makes about 4 to 5 cups.

Submitted by Sharon Morman

Molasses Sugar Cookie

3/4 cup shortening - soften and cool
1 cup sugar
1/4 cup mild molasses
1 egg
2 cups flour
2 tsp baking soda
1/2 tsp cloves
1/2 tsp ginger
1/2 tsp salt

Melt shorten and let cool, add sugar, egg and molasses. Beat well. Sift together dry ingredients, add to the first mixture, and mix well. CHILL for a few hours or overnight. Form into 1 inch balls, roll in granulated sugar. Place on a greased cookie sheet two inches apart. Bake at 375 degrees for 8 to 10 minutes.

Makes 3 dozen cookies. Enjoy!

Submitted by Marilyn Austin

Potluck Chicken Casserole

8 cups cubed cooked chicken
2 cans (10 ¾ ounces each) cream of chicken soup, undiluted
1 cup (8 oz.) sour cream
1 cup butter-flavored cracker crumbs (about 25 crackers)
2 tbsp butter or margarine, melted
1 tsp celery seed
Fresh parsley and sweet red pepper rings, optional

Combine chicken, soup and sour cream, spread into greased 13x9x2 inch baking dish. Combine crumbs, butter and celery seed, sprinkle over chicken mixture. Bake, uncovered 30-35 min. or until bubbly. Garnish with parsley and red pepper, if desired. Yield: 10-12 servings.

Submitted by Sue Smith

Zucchini Patties

2 cups grated zucchini, 2 eggs (beaten)
1/4 cup chopped onion, 1/2 cup flour
1/2 cup grated parmesan cheese
1/2 cup shredded mozzarella cheese, salt
2 tbsp oil

In medium bowl, combine zucchini, eggs, onion, flour, cheeses and salt. Stir enough to distribute ingredients evenly. Heat small amount of oil in skillet over medium high heat. Drop zucchini mixture by heaping tbsp. and flatten down with a spatula to form patty and cook for a few minutes on each side until golden brown.

Submitted by Sue Smith

The Best Fruit Salad Recipe 😊

You'll Need :

1 (29 ounce) can peach slices
1 (20 ounce) can pineapple chunks
1 (3 1/8 ounce) box dry vanilla instant pudding mix
1 lb of strawberries, (quartered)
1 banana, (sliced)
1/2 pint blueberries
1 bunch grapes (I use the red ones)
1 -2 tablespoon sugar (optional)

Directions: In a large bowl, combine peaches, pineapples, and vanilla pudding mix. This includes the juices from the cans. Mix well until pudding is dissolved. Stir in strawberries, banana, blueberries, grapes, and sugar if desired. Chill. **Submitted by Diane Davis**

Spring Gardening Tips from Martha Stewart

It's chore time! Stepping back into the garden after a long, harsh winter can be overwhelming, but it is also a time of relief. Even with a winter chill still in the air, there are plenty of tasks to start handling now if you want to get your garden in shape by the time the temperatures rise. A few words to the wise: Walking on or digging in soil when it is still frozen and wet may compact it, and plant roots need loose soil to live their best lives. So, if the ground is still too hard or fully saturated with water, stay off it and be patient.

Survey the Yard

First, look up and assess the trees. Make note of tree limbs that should be removed or cabled, especially those that overhang structures. Cut down last year's perennial foliage and toss it into the compost pile. Then, the ground plane: Rake mulch from beds planted with bulbs before foliage appears, and refresh mulch in other planting areas after soil warms. Lastly give a good once-over to all your hard-scaped areas: Check fences, steps and pathways for disrepair caused by freezing and thawing.

Got Gaps

Choose new plants for any parts of the garden that feel bare. Purchase or order perennials, trees and shrubs for spring planting. People don't often realize that nurseries and garden centers are happy to special order varieties you're after that they might not have in stock.

Prune Shrubs

Remove dead, damaged and diseased branches from woody plants. Thin and trim summer blooming shrubs such as butterfly bush, hydrangea and most roses.

Prepare New Beds

It's entirely possible to create a new planting bed where one has not previously existed. What's most important is to dig the soil, adding oxygen and relieving compaction, and then adding amendments like compost that jumpstart the creation of a rich, living soil. Clear the planting area as soon as soil can be worked, removing sod or weeds and debris. Spread a 4" layer of compost or well-rotted manure and any amendments over soil and cultivate it to a depth of 10 to 12 inches with a spading fork. Rake it smooth before planting.

Fertilize

Your garden is waking up, and it'll appreciate a little fuel. Apply balanced fertilizer (the numbers on the container should read 6-6-6 or 8-8-8) or fish emulsion around trees and shrubs when new growth appears. Spread high-acid fertilizer and pine needle mulch around acid loving shrubs like azaleas, camellias, blueberries or citrus. Begin fertilizing perennials when active growth resumes.

When in Doubt...Mulch

Possibly the single easiest thing you can do from both a functional and aesthetic point of view is to give the garden a fresh layer of mulch. A several inch thick layer of your favorite mulch, say wood chips, straw, even finished compost, gives everything a clean, tidied up look while helping to suppress weeds and retain moisture.





I hope you have enjoyed this edition of “over the picket fence.” Please help me out with future editions by submitting ideas, articles, recipes and suggestions. I want to be able to continue with the newsletter, as I feel it is important to be able to communicate in this way and you can be a big part in helping me do so. Stay safe and, hopefully, I will see you at the meeting this month. Yours In Gardening, Diane D.

For More Information, Check Out:

MCGC: www.masoncountygardenclub.org

NGC: www.gardenclub.org

MGC: www.migardenclubs.org

Club Collect

Keep us, O God, ever mindful of nature’s generous bounty May we always bear in mind it is ours in trust, to protect, to nurture and to enjoy.

Mrs. C.C. Caswell

