

over the picket fence



Spring, 2024
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:

I'm looking forward to another busy but fun filled year. I anticipate that all of you are too. This year we plan to have a Garden walk. I have been asked several times when we were going to have them again. Hopefully, the garden walk will be as well attended as it used to be.

As a service-oriented club, when we engage in our many projects, we are all acting as an ambassador to our community. When we are working at the gardens, plant exchange, plant sale, garden walk, or whenever we gather with people, try to use it as an opportunity to share the importance of good gardening and environmental practices.

We club members have so many projects that we do for the good of the community. Both MGC and NGC have awards for a lot of these projects. I've spoken before of how we are already doing these projects, so why not write up a short report, take some pictures and let them know about it. I'd like to see us do that for every eligible project. District 5 already sends the most applications for awards. I'd like to see our club send the most. Let's get started taking these pictures! *Sharon*



March

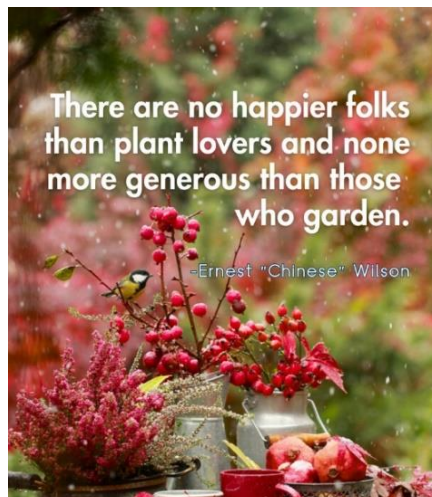
- 3 Judy Olson
- 10 Julie Tews
- 30 Jackie Lane

April

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

May

- 9 Deb Gundersen
- 10 Gale Martin
- 25 Sharon Fritton





Meet one of our newest members, Kevin Butterfield, who joined the Garden Club last year.

I am a twin, in a family of five, grew up in Bay City, Michigan. This is where I planted my first flower garden for my mother, who canned all of our vegetables from our large garden. I learned to love 3' Zinnias and Glad's. I even built a small window frame greenhouse with black water jugs for heating.

While in grade school and high school, where I met my sweetheart (Gail), I learned to play the clarinet and was in the marching band. I also studied the piano for about seven years. I was also on the high school swimming team.

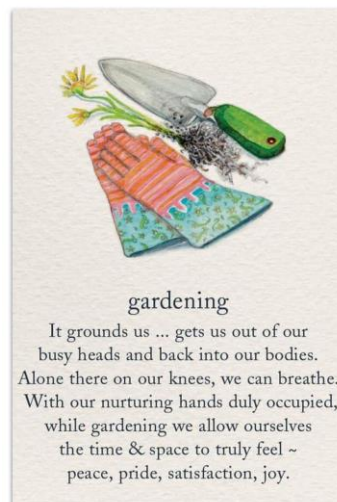
Before moving to Ludington in 1986, I was married to my wife Gail (Garwick). We rented a drafty apartment on Lavina Street near Tinkham Street. After moving to Ludington, my wife was hired by Pere Marquette Floral (Leonard and Sharlot Haggerty, owner 6 large greenhouses). Here my wife became familiar with arranging, starting, transplanting flowers in flats and urn liners. I would also assist with helping water plants and carry flats to cars for customers. As summer rolled into July, I would help plant poinsettia plant cuttings in 4" peatpots. We would run the green houses while the owner was on vacation.

We then said enough of the apartment drama and purchased a house in Hamlin Twp's Presidential Estates, where I live still. I retired March 31, 2023 from USFWS. In November I was hired at Meijer in Ludington as a General Merchandise Clerk. Here I have enjoyed working all different departments in the store except grocery and service desk where I haven't worked. At the beginning of this March I was reassigned to the garden center. I have been helping prep the garden center for the April opening.

My hobbies are gardening, landscaping my yard, raising my koi in my back yard pond, fish aquariums in the house, painting with Julie Tews, painting small bird houses, knitting, making cards with Kristen Connant and lastly cake decorating. My other interests are fishing, boating and kayaking. My wife and I enjoy feeding the birds and try identifying them and watching turkeys and deer in the backyard.

My wife and I have three boys who have left home. Jason works at Ludington Paint and Glass, Shaun, who is married and in the Marines and has two children, and Gregory who is working in Traverse City, MI as accountant assistant. We had two beagles which Jason and Shaun raised and competed showmanship, etc. in 4H at the Mason County Fairgrounds. We adopted a cat that showed up on our porch one day. Greg got a rabbit from the local Tractor Store.

My favorites in plants: TREES- white pine, hemlock, red bud, Japanese red maple and the October red maple. SHRUBS: fragrant Lilac, Holly, Button, Large Blossom red Rhododendron, Am. High Bush Cranberry. FLOWERS: -Waterlily or lotus, Giant purple Allium, Jack-n-Pulpit Marsh Marigold, and Primroses. GRASSES: Maidenhair grass and Kentucky Bluegrass for my lawn. Let's say my yard isn't big enough for them all! **Submitted by Kevin Butterfield**





In Loving Memory of Sue Smith
October 26, 1939 – March 3, 2024



On March 3, 2024, the Garden Club lost a beloved friend and member. Sue had been an active member of the club since 2016. Sue served on many committees, including Garden Therapy, Gardening Angels (and was also a volunteer at White Pine Village at the Farm House). She did Cups of Cheer and helped with the Downtown planters. At the Christmas luncheons, she and Gail Burkhart, as hostesses, would decorate beautiful tables. Outside of Garden Club, she volunteered at the Lakeshore Food Club. She was an active member of St. Simon Church. Sue drove bus for the Ludington Schools for 30 years. She was a very talented seamstress and quilter. She and her beloved husband of 65 years are the proud parents, grandparents, and, recently great grandparents, of a very lovely family. She will be missed by many.

Many members of the Garden Club attended the beautiful Mass from the Order of Christian Funerals at St. Simon Church for Sue on Saturday, March 9th. A beautiful flower arrangement had been sent by Dawn Rollenhagen to represent the Garden Club. It has been asked that Memorial Contributions be sent to the Lakeshore Food Club and The Historic White Pine Village. **Submitted by Diane Davis**

Look What We Did!

In January and February, those of us who stuck around to brave the Winter months (which weren't so bad this year), met for lunch at Stix and El Rancho restaurants.



Stix Restaurant





El Rancho



A Member's Craft:

Here are some pictures of my stepping stones I have been working on this winter. I found some plain cement stepping stones at Just Bargains in Ludington for \$1.49 each. I use to stencil back in the 90's, so I thought I would stencil the stones. I found a you-tube video on what paint and varnish to use for the outside. I plan to bring one to the May baskets.

Submitted by: Julie Haselhuhn



Scholarship Applications:

The 2024 Mason County Garden Club Scholarship applications have been sent out to the following schools: Ludington Area High School, Mason County Central, Mason County Eastern, Gateway to Success, West Shore Educational Service District and West Shore Community College.

We hope to receive applications by the end of April and give the qualified recipient their award by May 15, 2024.

Submitted by: Chris Schulte



Deb Gundersen, Sue Joslin and Rhonda Hildebrandt presented a check from the Garden Club for \$365 to Lena Bluestein of the Blue Hat Ministries, which was money raised from the "Christmas bag raffle" at the December luncheon.



Michigan Garden Clubs' Upcoming Events:



National Garden Clubs
Landscape Design School 1

Presented by:
Michigan Garden Clubs, Inc.
District 2B
The Garden Club of Greater Lansing
Wednesday & Thursday
April 17 - 18, 2024
TRINITY CHURCH
3355 Dunckel Road
Lansing, MI 48911

Registration: **Members Registration Fee: \$55**
Non-Member Registration Fee: \$90
REGISTRATION OPENS FEBRUARY 24, 2024
REGISTRATION DEADLINE IS: APRIL 3, 2024
All Cancellations will occur a 10% fee
No refunds after the registration deadline.

There will be a 10% late fee after the registration deadline, if late registration is accepted by the Chair.

Payment will be accepted on-line when you register. If you are unable to PAY on-line, you may request to pay by check. **BUT YOU MUST REGISTER ON-LINE.**

Please e-mail Ronalee Polad for instructions: rpomad@migardenclubs.org. All contacts will be via e-mail.



Mason County Garden Club Events:

March:

Thursday, March 28 - 1:00 p.m. – Social Potluck – Welcome back to all our Garden Club Members and a special welcome to the newest members of the club.

April:

Thursday, April 25 – 1:00 p.m. – Meeting and Program – “Bouquet De Fleurs” (Or How to Plant a Cutting Garden) – Colleen Weesie, Manager, Up North Garden Center.

May:

Wednesday, May 14 – 10:00 a.m. – Field Trip – Pete’s Woods (Huron Manistee National Forest).

Saturday, May 18 – 9:00 a.m. - Petunia Parade Planting Day.

Thursday, May 23 – 1:00 p.m. – Meeting and Program – “Presto-Chango-Heirloom Hydrangeas and Companion Plants”
Natalie Carmolli, Spring Garden Nursery Proven Winners.

Upcoming Local Events:

March:

March 15th-17th- St. Patrick’s Day in Downtown Ludington-Includes a 5k, live music, pub crawl, and more.

Saturday, March 16th -1-3pm -Annual JBC Beer Run -Hosted by Jamesport Brewing Company, This is a fun run where you drink a 6 oz. beer, then run a .25 mile lap, and repeat 3 more times for a total of 24 oz. and 1 mile. \$10 to enter and \$5 from each entry will go into the pot o’ gold. Fastest time takes home a trophy. Jamesport Brewing Company- 410 S. James St.

April:

Through April 20th - AFFEW Online Native Plant Sale - Garden & Single Species flats , plus individual Quart & Gallon plants may be ordered by visiting affew.org.

Saturday, April 20th – AFFEW Earth Day Celebration

Friday, April 26th-Saturday, April 27th- Annual Spring Tree Sale Pickup -Pick up is Friday from 2-6pm and Saturday from 9am-12pm at the Mason County Fairgrounds- 5302 W. US-10, Ludington. Sponsored by the Mason-Lake Conservation District.

May:

Tuesday, May 7th -10am - Big Sable Point Lighthouse - Opens for the Season -Big Sable Point Lighthouse- 8800 M-116, Ludington.

Saturday, May 18th, - 9am - Ludington Petunia Parade Planting Day - Along Ludington Avenue and around Ludington Municipal Marina, Ludington.

Saturday, May 25th-Sunday, May 26th -10am-4pm - West Shore Family Support Craft Fair-This show includes a variety of talented crafters & artists as well as food trucks. Rotary Park- Ludington Ave. & Lewis St., Ludington. For more information or for an application, visit supportwsfs.org.





Recipes Submitted by Garden Club Members:

Pesto Pizza

Spread green pesto on a purchased pizza crust.

Top with:

Artichoke hearts (reserve oil)

Cherry tomatoes cut in half and drizzled with artichoke oil

4 oz. mozzarella ball torn into pieces.

Sprinkle with black pepper or red pepper flakes and herbs of your choice.

Bake at 400° on the bottom oven rack for about 30 minutes. Check crust instructions as time may vary.

Submitted by: Deb Gundersen

Creamy Cauliflower Cashew Salad.....by Deb Gundersen

INGREDIENTS

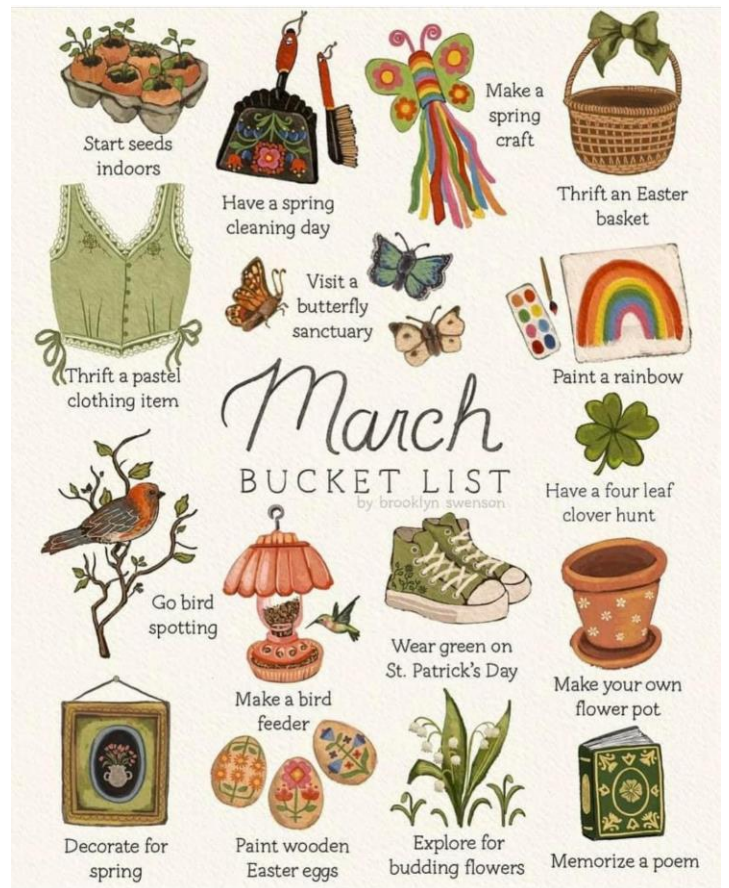
- 3 cups cauliflower, cut into florets
- 2 cups frozen peas, thawed
- 1 cup cashews
- 1/4 cup green onions, finely sliced, plus extra for garnish
- 1/4 cup Swiss cheese, grated
- 1/2 cup Greek yogurt
- 1/3 cup sour cream
- 1 (1 oz.) package dry ranch seasoning mix
- 1/2 teaspoon dried dill
- 1/2 teaspoon dried basil
- kosher salt and freshly ground pepper, to taste

PREPARATION

1. In a medium bowl, whisk together Greek yogurt and sour cream, then season with ranch seasoning, dill, and salt and pepper.
2. Toss together cauliflower florets, peas and cashews in a large serving bowl, then mix in Swiss cheese and green onions.
3. Drizzle dressing on top of salad and toss together until evenly coated.
4. Serve immediately or refrigerate for at least 15-20 minutes, giving flavors a chance to build.



10 Plants That Are Known To KEEP THE BUGS AWAY





Julie's Tips and Tricks:

How To Prepare Your Garden For Spring

It's time to start thinking about how to prepare your garden for spring planting. If your ground is starting to thaw and things around you are turning green, dig in! If you're in a colder area and your garden is still sleeping underneath a bed of snow, now is the perfect time to get organized and be extra ready once the warm weather comes your way.

Follow these 10 simple steps to get your garden ready for the spring and summer seasons ahead!

1. Take Stock of Tools

It's normal for pruners, shears, and other sharp gardening tools to dull with use. We recommend sharpening your tools and making sure everything – including bigger tools such as weed whackers and rototillers – are in working order before the spring season. Sharp, well-maintained tools are safer, and they'll make your work easier. You'll thank yourself later!

2. Evaluate the State of Your Garden

Depending on where you are, winter can be harsh on not only the plants in your garden, but also your infrastructure. Make sure raised beds, fences, containers, trellises, etc. have made it through the winter. If anything is damaged, consider fixing these things before anything else.

3. Make Sure Your Soil is Ready:

We don't want you to jump the gun and get started in on your garden too early. In fact, working soil that is too wet can be damaging. A general rule is to pick up the soil in your hands and try to form a ball in your hand. If the soil is moist enough that you can form a ball, walking on it and working in it can compact it too much. Wait until your soil is dry enough that it's more light and loose, and doesn't form a ball in your hand.

4. Test and Amend Your Soil:

Before adding new varieties to your garden in the spring, we recommend doing a soil test, and amending the soil as needed. It's affordable, easy, and will give your plants the best chance of thriving in your garden. If you didn't add a fresh layer of organic compost in the fall, we recommend doing so in early spring before you plant.

5. Clear Existing Growth For Wildflowers:

If you're planning on planting wildflowers, make sure to remove all existing growth in the early spring by rototilling or turning over the soil, depending on the size of the area. Wildflowers do best when planted directly on bare soil

6. Clean Up Leaves and Weeds - Only When It's Warm Enough!

We encourage gardeners to leave healthy plants like ornamental grasses and native flowers to stand over the winter, for both visual interest as well as food and habitat for pollinators and wildlife. In the cooler days of spring, many pollinators will still be hibernating.

Typically, it's safe to start cleaning up leaves when daytime temperatures are consistently in the 50s F. When spring comes, you can cut back grasses and herbaceous perennials, leaving a few inches of stem above the ground, to make room for healthy new growth. You can also remove spent annuals that may be leftover from the previous season.

It's important to pull weeds early and often, to make sure they don't take over or steal valuable nutrients and water from your garden plants. Leaves can decompose and add organic matter to your soil, but if the layers are too thick, they may inhibit growth from new plants.

(Julie's Tips and Tricks Con't.)

7. Prune and Cut Back:

Lavender, Butterfly Bush, Artemisia, and other woody perennials and shrubs that bloom on new branches should be cut back in the early spring. Make sure to wait until there is no more chance of a hard frost before you take this step. Evergreen or semi-evergreen perennials, such as Bearded Iris, can be cleaned up and trimmed back to help encourage new, healthy growth.

8. Divide and Transplant:

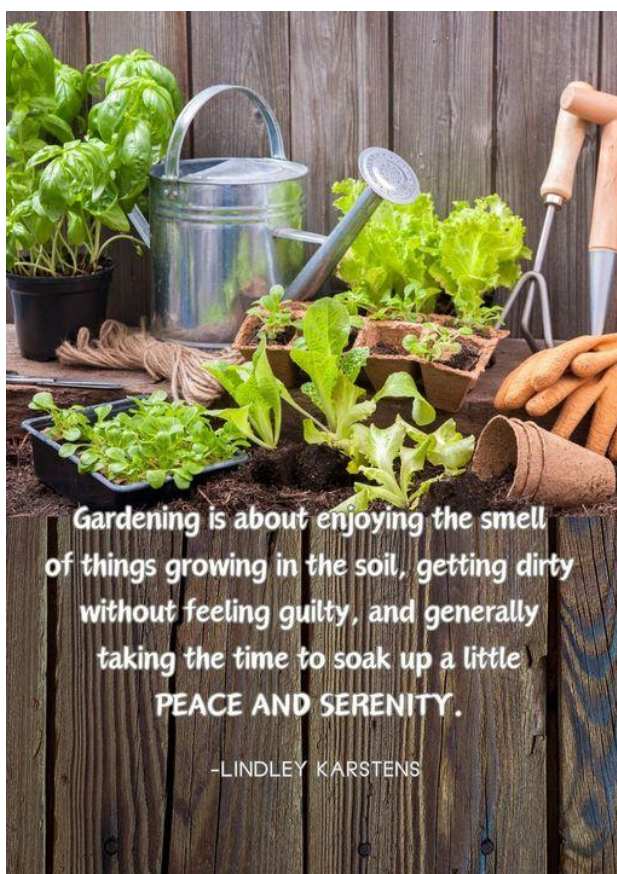
If you didn't get to this in the fall, divide and re-plant perennials such as Daylilies, Hostas, Bearded Iris, Ornamental Grasses, and Black Eyed Susan in the early spring, as soon as green stems emerge. This will help them stay healthy, continue growing, and help you expand your garden! (Or you can share with some lucky gardening friends.)

9. Stake or Support Plants:

Make sure to support your Dahlias, Peonies, Asters, Foxgloves, and other plants that have heavy flowers or tall, willowy blooms as needed in the early spring. Staking them early will be much easier than when foliage and blooms are in full swing. Metal 'peony rings' offer an adjustable height and allow flowers and foliage to grow up through the supports. Tomato cages can work, too. You can also make your own support system, using garden twine and metal or bamboo stakes.

10. Add New Plants:

With all of this early spring preparation out of the way, the next step is the most fun: add new perennial plants, bulbs, and wildflowers to your garden!





I hope you have enjoyed this Spring edition of “over the picket fence.” Thank you to those of you who contributed articles for the newsletter. Especially, thank you to Camen Muscat for her contributions. Please continue to help me with future newsletters 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. I’m sure you are, as I am, looking forward to the coming Spring and getting back into your gardens. Also looking forward to the Garden Club year with all the events and activities. Stay safe and healthy and hope to see you soon. **Yours In Gardening....Diane D.**

For More Information, Check Out:

MCGC: www.masoncountygardenclub.org

NGC: www.gardenclub.org

MGC: www.migardenclubs.org

Also check us out on our Facebook Page at Mason County Garden Club

Club Collect

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

Mrs. C.C. Caswell

