

over the picket fence



Winter 2024 - 2025
December, January, February
The Mason County Garden Club
Quarterly Newsletter
(Since 1926-our 98th 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:

Dear Friends,

We've wrapped up another year of good work, good times and good memories! We've said "goodbye" to good friends who have moved away from the area and said "hello" to new friends joining our club.

It's been a busy year as usual. We've reintroduced our Garden Walk since the Covid-19 pandemic. We've continued to beautify Ludington and White Pine Village with planting and caring for the gardens, memorials and downtown pots. Thanks to Julie Tews, her husband and committee members, Leveaux Park has been cleaned up and updated! We've planted and weeded petunias along Ludington Avenue.

We've worked hard at our fund raisers to contribute even more to our communities of Mason County. We gave \$1,000 scholarship to Bayden Webster to continue his education. We donated a cartful of non-perishable food and toiletries to the Salvation Army. We donated \$500 to the Circle S Rocking Children's Orchard for planting trees. We donated \$1,000 to the Mason-Lake Conservation District to provide wildflower seeds to school children. We donated \$1,000 to AFFEW U-Dig-It garden to provide water collection barrels for the gardens.

We've worked with youth at Mason County Eastern Elementary and Ludington Area Catholic schools and with the elderly at Ludington Woods and Village Manor. We've made 568 of "cups of cheer" to brighten the spirits of the elderly living in nursing facilities and Village Manor.

We've finished up the year with a Christmas party, delicious food and a generous raffle that will contribute another \$281 to a local charity. Now it's time to sit back for a couple of months, browse through the plant catalogues and think about what we want to plant in the spring.

I hope you all had a very Merry Christmas full of good cheer and family and I wish you a Happy, Blessed New Year! See you in 2025!!

Sharon



December

- 1 Kim AnDyke
- 2 Lori Longmore
- 5 Carol Campbell
- 7 Mary Reeds-Mortensen
- 12 Debra Purtee
- 21 Bobbi Clingan
- 22 Linda Burns

January

- 1 Sunny Emerson
- 3 Renee Mallison
- 4 Sharon Morman
- 6 Jackie Christensen
- 7 Gwen Jackson
- 9 Mary Margaret Scanlon
- 31 Sharon Bluhm

February

- 2 April Quinsenberry-Alvarado
- 13 Elsa Witt



Winter is a time of rest and hibernation, of waiting for the light to return. Just like seeds that wait silently in the ground, full of potential, we can just 'be'. During the dark months, plants submerge their energy into their roots. We can learn much from the seed and the natural environment. We too are a natural part of the earth and are affected by the seasons. We would do well to go with the flow of these natural cycles. It is not a time for doing too much. We need to slow down and pace ourselves, to preserve our energy - our energy levels are not as dynamic as during warmer months.
~ Tabitha Gale



Upcoming Mason County Garden Club Events:

January:

Thursday, January 23, 2025 – 12 noon – Winter Luncheon – Place to be announced.

February:

Thursday, February 27, 2025 – 12 noon – Winter Luncheon – Place to be announced





Michigan Garden Clubs, Inc.

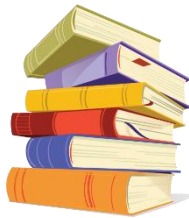
Upcoming Events Calendar

January

- 6** District Director's Meeting 2:00 pm Zoom
- 13** Members Meeting 7:00 pm Zoom
"Working to End Single Use Plastic Pollution"
- 14** D4 President Meeting 2:00 pm Zoom
- 20** D3B Presidents Meeting 4:00 Zoom
- 21** D5 Presidents' Meeting 10:00 am Zoom
- 22** D2B President's Meeting 4:45 pm Zoom
- 27** D6 Presidents Meeting noon Zoom

February

- 3** District Directors Meeting 2:00 pm Zoom
- 6** MGC Board of Directors Mtg. 10am Zoom
- 10** Member Meeting TBD
- 19** D2B Presidents' Meeting 4:45 pm Zoom
- 24** D6 Presidents' Meeting noon Zoom
- 25** D4 President's Meeting 2:00 pm Zoom



MGC Winter Book Recommendations

Fiction:

Lady Tans Circle of Women by Lisa See
The Covenant of Water by Abraham Verghese
The Coldest Winter Ever by Sister Soulja
The Frozen River by Ariel Lawhon
The Winter Garden by Kristin Hannah
The Alice Network: A Novel by Kate Quinn

Non Fiction

A Walk in the Park by Kevin Fedarko
Atomic Habits by James Clear
The Friday Afternoon Club: A Family Memoir by Griffin Dunne



NGC Penny Pines Program Is Now Plant- A-Tree (Note: The Mason County Garden Club's donations go toward planting a tree in the Manistee National Forest).

For many years, National Garden Clubs, Inc. and the USDA Forest Service have maintained a partnership sustaining our national forests through the Plant-A-Tree program. Plant-A-Tree, formerly known as Penny Pines, is a reforestation and forest education program.

From Penny Pines to Plant-A-Tree

As some of you may already be familiar with this program when it was called Penny Pines, the new name “**Plant-A-Tree**” better reflects the program’s mission and will help us reach a wider audience.

Additionally, we are also making changes to the donation process to make it more accessible and user-friendly. Even if you are already familiar with the original Penny Pines program, please read through the changes below.

- 1. DONATION AMOUNT:** Previously, we required donations in increments of \$68.00. Donors can now contribute any amount, starting from as little as \$50.00 to as large as \$10,000.00. This change provides greater flexibility for donors and enables a wider range of people to participate in the program.
- 2. CERTIFICATES:** As of May 31st, 2025, we will no longer be providing mailed certificates to donors. In an effort to “Go Green,” we will be offering digital certificates that donors can customize and print out themselves. We kindly ask that all donors provide their **email address** (even if donating by check) so that we can electronically send out tax receipts and online certificate links/instructions. We assure you that your privacy and personal information will be handled with the utmost care and security.
- 3. DONATING TO SPECIFIED FORESTS:** When donating, you may choose to have your donation go to where it’s most needed or you may select a National Forest; however, the Forest Service reserves the right to utilize funds based on need. If you specify a National Forest where there is no tree planting need, then the donation may be used for planting trees on another forest. *Please note, individual plantings will not be identified per donor (ex: if you donate to a forest, you would be unable to locate a specific tree that you helped donate).





Recipes Submitted by Garden Club Members:

Chilli Cheese Corn Salad

2 (15-16oz) cans corn (drained)
1 (15-16oz) can black beans (rinsed)
1 cup red or green sweet pepper diced (I use both)
1/2 c diced onion (I use more)
2 c Shredded cheese
1 c Mayo
1 (16 oz or less) Frito Lay Chili Cheese Corn Chips (I used regular because that is what I had) *break up chips and add just before serving...**Submitted by Jackie Christensen**

Hawaiian Cheese Bread

Ingredients:

1 loaf (1 lb) Hawaiian round sweet bread
1 block (8 oz.) Swiss cheese
3 slices red onion, finely chopped
1/2 C. butter, melted
3 garlic cloves, minced (or garlic salt)
1 tsp. salt

Directions:

Cut bread diagonally into 1-in. slices to within 1 in. of bottom. Repeat cuts in opposite direction. Cut Swiss cheese into 1/4-in. slices into small pieces. Insert into bread. Combine onion, butter, garlic and salt, spoon over bread. Wrap loaf in foil. Bake at 350 degrees for 25 - 30 minutes or until cheese is melted. Serve warm. ..**Submitted by Gail Burkhart**

Strawberry Pretzel Salad:

2 c. crushed pretzels
¾ c. melted margarine
1 tbsp. sugar
Mix the above together and pat "lightly" into a 9x13 pan. Bake @ 400 degrees for 6 minutes. Cool crust.

Cream together:

8 oz. cream cheese
1 c. sugar
8 oz. cool whip
Spread over cooled crust and refrigerate.

Mix one large strawberry jello with 2 cups boiling water. Mix well and let cool for awhile. Add 2 bags slightly defrosted/chopped strawberries. When slightly thickened, spoon over cream cheese mixture. Refrigerate. Enjoy....**Submitted by Dianne Miller**

Thank You Note From Gwen Jackson:

A big thank you dear Garden Club friends that sent cards and notes following the loss of my husband. They brought comfort and support. To Sue Ann, Diane, Mary Margaret, Deb and husband Jim who made the trip down to St Joseph for the Celebration of Life. Thank you so much. I wish each of you a blessed holiday season with family and friends. **Gwen Jackson**



This is what we do when we aren't gardening:

When Garden Club members aren't out enjoying their gardens, they are involved in other activities: Deb Gundersen and Diane Davis do Cardio-Drumming at the Scottville Senior Center every Monday...Deb Purtee enjoys hunting and shot a seven point deer during deer season, 2024...Dianne Miller performing with the Community Choir... Dianne Miller and Jeannie Knuth entertaining the residence at Our Friends House Daycare in Hart.



Getting holiday planters decorated for downtown Ludington:

On November 19th and 20th. Chris Schulte, her Downtown Planters committee and many others turned out on TWO DAYS to decorate the planters for downtown Ludington. First, to Nicklesen's Tree Farm to get the free greenery. Second, to downtown Ludington to put the greenery, birch branches and other seasonal decorations into ALL 20 of the planters along Ludington Ave and James St. Even though a bit chilly, at least the hard rain and snow held off!



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Holiday Luncheon: "Good Friends, Good Food and Great Season":

Our last meeting of 2024 was held on Monday, December 15th instead of Thursday, December 12th due to weather conditions. It was a potluck luncheon with installation of officers and a bag raffle, which brought in nearly \$300, which will be given, along with proceeds from our savings account, to three of our local nonprofits. There were beautifully decorated tables thanks to members who served as hostesses.



Sue Joslin



Gail Burkhart



Carol Copland



Judy Olson



Julie Tews



Melinda Dougherty



Sue Ann Hanson and Sharon Morman

Potluck, Christmas Raffle Bags, Special Recognitions:



Deb Gundersen gives the prayer.



We are ready to eat!



Raffle Items



Sharon presents an arrangement she made to Rhonda for her dedication to collecting money for Plant-a-tree. (Formerly known as Penny Pines).



Sharon receives a certificate for her 15 years of service to the Garden Club

Installation of Officers:

Outgoing Executive Officers:



Gail Burkhart, Sue Joslin, Judy Olson, Marilyn Austin,
Gail Martin, Sue Ann Hanson, Dawn Rollenhagen

Sue Ann Hanson Installs the 2025 Executive Officers



Sue Ann, Sue Joslin, Judy Olson, Dawn Rollenhagen, Gail Martin,
Gloria Merchant, Sharon Morman

2025 Garden Club Executive Officers

Immediate Past President - Sue Ann Hanson; Treasurer-Sue Joslin; Membership- Judy Olson; Secretary – Dawn Rollenhagen; 2nd Vice President – Gail Martin; 1st Vice President – Gloria Merchant; President – Sharon Morman (Missing in picture are Directors: Debra Tennant, Randee Smith and Sandy Luxford).



HAPPY★NEW★YEAR

New Years Resolutions for Garden Club Members:

- I will attend all meetings if possible
- I will be an attentive listener during meetings and at all programs
- I will share my thoughts and ideas during meetings
- I will accept a chair position or officer nomination if asked
- I will be an active participant in all committees I have selected
- I will notify the committee chair if I will not be available for a meeting or event
- I will find a replacement if I am not able to attend the meeting I am to assist the refreshment committee
- I will try to get to know every member of the club
- I will encourage new members to join
- I will pay my dues by December 31.

Here are eight New Year's Resolutions every gardener should consider as you start planning your garden for next year:

- 1) **Reduce Footprint:** From limiting chemicals in the garden to using eco-friendly equipment, there are many ways to reduce your environmental footprint outdoors. Instead of reaching automatically for an herbicide, why not use a manual weeding tool instead?
- 2) **Save Water:** Did you know that the average household uses 40 percent of its water usage in the garden, and much of that water is wasted? This year, make it a goal to save more of this precious resource.
- 3) **Attract Pollinators:** Welcome birds, bees, butterflies and other pollinators into your garden. Avoid using chemicals in the garden, and plant herbs and flowers to attract these important garden visitors. Consider poppies, sunflowers, lavenders, herbs and other flowering plants, which are beloved by many pollinators. Native plants are particularly good at attracting helpful pollinators to your garden.
- 4) **Grow Edibles ... And Share the Harvest:** Nothing tastes better than homegrown food, and you can't beat the health benefits of freshly picked vegetables and fruits. Growing your own edibles lets you know exactly where your food originated. That's a good thing with some of the recent food security issues we've been facing. Another tip: when you involve your children in the kitchen gardens, it will help ensure they enjoy eating these foods later in the dining room. Kids who grow their own foods tend to love snacking from the garden. Have a large surplus? Be sure to share some of that harvest with those in need.
- 5) **Save Work:** Make a pledge to work smarter in the garden, not harder. Instead of running back and forth for tools, bring them with you! Carry a plastic tub to carry your gardening essentials, and sometimes a note pad, cell phone or sunscreen. You can reduce those weeds from popping up later in the garden by mulching well early in the season. Instead of watering everything by hand, set up drip lines and soaker hoses that save money and time.
- 6) **Select Easy-Care Plants:** One way to make it easier on yourself this year is by picking plants that thrive in your area and require less work. For example, drought-tolerant yarrow couldn't be easier to grow in a sandy garden. Ask your local gardening center or master gardeners for easy-care plant recommendations for your area. Avoid invasive plants that will cause future problems. And consider native plants that flourish in your region and support your local ecosystem.
- 7) **Compost:** The first step to having a healthy garden is building healthy soil. By composting your yard and kitchen waste you'll save this trash from going to the landfills, while creating one of the best soil amendment products you can find.
- 8) **Have Fun:** No matter what you decide to grow in your garden, make a promise to yourself to have fun. Don't be so concerned with horticultural perfection that you forget how much you love gardening. Even if you only remember this one resolution, you'll be off to a good start.



I hope you have enjoyed this Winter edition of "over the picket fence." Thank you to those of you who contributed articles for the newsletter. 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. 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