

GARDEN CLUB OF DEARBORN ◀ FOUNDED 1915 ▶ April 2024


A Member of Michigan Garden Clubs, Inc. and National Garden Clubs, Inc.



GARDEN CLUB Newsletter

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A decorative border of green leaves and pink tulips surrounds the central text area.

 **President's Corner**

Spring has sprung! Now the delight of digging your hands into the soil begins. Have you ever considered the benefits of gardening? Here's a list to ponder:

1. Relieves stress (once you get started, instead of thinking about the to do list).
2. Burns calories-yay!!
3. Strengthens immune system
4. Better nutrition from vegetables
5. Meditative-a little peace goes a long way
6. Reduces risk of dementia
7. Strengthen bones- exposure to Vitamin D aka sunshine.
8. Can lower blood pressure.
9. Connects people.

Looks like it is good for you and good for the environment.
I'm asking each of you to plant one native plant in your garden area this year. This will make a difference. Let's be the change we want to see! Get out to the nurseries and greenhouses for some fun and inspiration.

PLEASE NOTE:

Our May meeting will be held on Tuesday, May 14 from 6:00 – 8:00pm at the First Presbyterian Church of Dearborn in the church hall with a presentation on the Duvall School butterfly garden. The evening time accommodates our speaker Robbin Makled, who teaches at the school and who will bring students with her to help present “Schooled in Gardening”. Robbin is a Duvall teacher whose program raises the butterflies and sets them free. Some parents may accompany the students.

Mr. John Kenrick, also known as Jack Apple Jr., will treat us to a reading of his book “Grandpa in the Garden” at the May meeting. The books will be available for \$10 each.

Mark your calendars for our annual General Meeting on June 17 at 11am with a presentation on medicinal herbs. A catered luncheon will be offered.

Dues are due! Please print out the 2024-2025 membership form which was emailed and bring it to our next meeting with a \$30 check for our Treasurer, Laurine Griffin. We will have extra forms at the meeting as well. We're starting early to ensure we can include all names in the next membership directory which we hope to distribute at the General Meeting in September. For those wishing to mail it in, Laurine's address is on the form. If you have any questions, please contact VP of Membership Carol Chrzastek 313-450-3441 / cchrzastek@yahoo.com.



As reported last month, our *Holly Berry Brunch* is moving to a new venue! On December 7th, the doors at the “DoubleTree by Hilton” hotel will open for our biggest annual fundraiser. Located just off Ford Road next to Southfield Freeway, this hotel will allow for more space in a holiday setting. A committee is in place but to date, we have no one to chair the event. Wanted! One Chair or two Co-Chairs for this year's event! After ten years of presiding over the HBB, Carol Chrzastek is stepping down. The committee will be available for advice and you would have plenty of support. Please consider volunteering and helping out for our premiere annual event.

Many thanks to Otto and Pauline Baumgart for bringing that eternal symbol of spring, pussy willow branches, from a tree in their yard to our meeting last month. The donations of both large sprays as well as small corsages made many recipients very happy. Formally known as *Salix Discolor*, the pussy willow thrives along the banks of streams and rivers. The fuzzy greyish white nub is the flower bud while the soft coating of hairs acts as insulation to protect these early bloomers from cold temperatures. The Willow has a long history of medicinal use. For thousands of years the bark has been used for pain relief and as an antipyretic. It contains Salicin, which is a natural form of aspirin. Thank you, Otto and Pauline!



C. McGarvey & P. Baumgart

Twenty-six members and nine guests - seven Meadow Brook members, as well as Emily Nietering and Marlene Wojtowicz (a former GCD member) - attended our April meeting. While many of us have visited the Meadow Brook estate at some time and cannot help but be filled with awe at the hall - the finest example of Tudor revival architecture in our country surrounded by beautiful gardens - most do not know the complete story. Our guests, the seven members of the Meadow Brook Garden Club, were honored when asked to present at our April meeting and prepared an in-depth show titled “Meadow Brook Garden Club: our Past, Present and Future”. As President Margaret Jelsma put it, they consider themselves the best-kept secret in Oakland County and our request provided the impetus to sort through 30 years of scrap books and photo albums, resulting in a PowerPoint which can be used again and again to promote their cause. We were, in essence, their guinea pigs, and while we were recipients of their shared knowledge, they also used the opportunity to evaluate the show and – once back in Rochester – critique and fine-tune it.

The Meadow Brook speakers, each of whom has many valuable years of experience working in the gardens, serving on committees and the board of directors - included Margaret Jelsma, Colleen Peters, Penny Brown, Claudia York, Sigrid Grace, Kim Scholtz, and Connie Yeo, and they covered:

- The complete history of both gardens and – more importantly – Matilda Rausch Dodge Wilson, their founder, a remarkable woman who, with her husband, John Dodge, bought a turnkey farm in Rochester to escape the pressures of city life, studied landscape gardens in England, and co-designed the rock garden, tea house, English garden, Pegasus garden, and gardens for her three children. Eventually, she and her second husband, Alfred Wilson, gave the 14-acre farm, the 88,000 square foot hall, and \$14 million to found Oakland University.
- Outlines of all the gardens, their plants, their unique features (the Pegasus garden is the only place decorated with Pewabic tiles; Matilda’s favorite flower is the Peace Rose, the estate has two Camperdown elm trees, the Golden Fleece statue in the Breakfast Garden was donated in 1940, and the Kitchen Garden produce ranges from rhubarb to miniature squash plants used in table decorations for hall events).
- How a Rochester social club whose members enjoyed visiting and looking at various gardens joined the Meadow Brook community, initially showing up to pull weeds, and how this has morphed into an organized club numbering 185 members.

Together the volunteers, who also see themselves as a social club, maintain the gardens, choose plants together with the hall, and host fundraisers. Finally, they honored the Matilda Dodge Wilson statue on the Oakland University campus, depicting her with a shovel in hand and the words “Visionary, Leader, Pioneer” which was unveiled in 2018. Urging us to come anytime with the encouraging words “the gardens are open and free!”, they wrapped up a superb presentation.



GCD President C. Casillas & Meadow Brook Garden Club Members

Our raffle prize winners won, appropriately, glasses for the eclipse that afternoon and a variety of gardening books. Rachel Pearson and Marietta Lynch each won a pair of glasses; Nanette Fisher won the Reader's Digest book "1000 Hints and Tips for your Garden"; Karen Marzonie won a book on hanging baskets, window boxes and other container gardens. Both our guests won prizes: Marlene Wojtowicz won a book on residential landscaping while Emily Nietering won Matilda Wilson's Resource Guidebook to Meadow Brook Hall.

Karen Marzonie and Rachel Pearson gave a brief overview of our Pollinator Enabling Garden (PEG) at the University of Dearborn's organic garden system after four enthusiastic volunteers started a spring clean-up on April 6. Karen and Rachel were joined by Cynthia Casillas and Mary Bugeia on a perfectly crisp blue-sky day. Because pollinators are starting to emerge, they didn't want to do too much clean-up but the mint was successfully attacked. Karen emphasized that our beds are raised so no one needs to kneel down and encouraged everyone to consider volunteering. Rachel passed out volunteer forms for the Fair Lane Gardens.

Clean Up Volunteers: Rachael Pearson, Cynthia Casillas, Mary Bugeia & Karen Marzonie (not pictured)



Before



Ta Da.... After

Additionally, our Garden Club members are being given the first chance to sign up for a symposium at Fair Lane on June 8 which will feature a top-notch speaker. Our board voted to donate funds to be used for the speaker's fee and subsequently, our Garden Club of Dearborn logo was added to the announcement flyer designating our club as one of the event sponsors. The day includes an introductory lecture, a hands-on design workshop, and a tour of the estate's restored first floor. Limited to 45 participants, the \$75 fee covers the program, boxed lunch and morning pastry snacks. See further details at "fairlanegardensymposium.org".

Terri Bungee reported on our Eagle Scout sponsored project, a walkway for the Nowlin school sensory garden. As the photos show, the project is developing nicely and when it is finished, Terri will make the date of the Eagle Scout inauguration known.



Terri also reported on the Bryant Middle School garden projects, including a new after-school garden club, a spring vegetable garden, and a summer butterfly pollinator garden. A non-profit group has donated some native plants and our Garden Club donation will go toward buying mulch.



The current Bryant school wish list includes potting soil, native plants, perennials for the butterfly garden, shovels to remove sod, a watering wand, and bench paint. Ruaa Bahrn is our contact at bahrnr@gmail.com. So far, the students have planted peas, broccoli, spinach, greens, radishes, and Swiss chard, and plan on making salads from their plantings. Please feel free to email Ruaa if you can donate or to learn the current status of what is needed.

Thank you, Terri, for serving as our liaison with the various schools in Dearborn and showing them that our Garden Club is keen on sponsoring and encouraging their garden-related initiatives!

Meet our new Michigan Garden Clubs logo:



*When a group of forty women representing 15 garden clubs in Michigan gathered at a meeting on **June 30, 1931** and agreed to create "The Federated Garden Clubs of Michigan", a logo featuring a pink apple blossom was created.*

The following year Michigan accepted the invitation to join the National Council of State Garden Clubs, Inc. and by then there were 34 Michigan Garden Clubs -with a total membership of 1800. Various changes with social media platforms in recent years necessitated a new logo, and various options were presented. The new logo features our beautiful state with the apple blossom, our state flower.

Peony plant protection points:

The ants are NOT eating the peonies. When a scout ant finds the nectar on the peony, she emits a pheromone or odor trail on the way back to her nest. At the nest, the scout alerts other ants of the food source. The recruited ants then follow the odor trail back to nectar on the peony flowers.

In turn, the ants actually provide the plant with some protection! While the ants are feeding on the nectar, they protect their food source by attacking other bud-eating pests by stinging, biting, or spraying them with acid and tossing them off the plant. Also, the ants are temporary. Once the peony blossoms, the ants will leave the peony flower and move on to seek other food sources.

The Fairlane Plant Sale takes place at the estate on Friday, May 17th from 9am-3pm and on Saturday, May 18th from 9am to 1pm. Native plants, garden art, bird houses, beehouses, perennials, herbs, vegetables and more will be available! The Fair Lane Garden Volunteers' Fundraiser is always a lot of fun and you are bound to bring home new ideas, too.

Twenty board members mingled with newcomers in Diane Rebori's home on April 11. Board members described their areas of responsibility, study groups were defined and advertised, and a good time was had by all. Thank you, Diane, for opening your beautiful home to us! By popular demand, Terri Bungee submitted the recipe for her delicious carrot cake bars (see recipe).

Carrot Cake Bars with Cream Cheese Frosting

Submitted by: Terri Bungee

Cake ingredients

One

- 1¼ cups unsweetened applesauce or oil
- 2 cups sugar
- 3 eggs

Two

- 2 cups flour
- 1 tsp baking soda
- 1½ tsp baking powder
- ½ tsp salt
- 1 tsp cinnamon



Three

- 2 cups grated carrots
- 1 cup shredded sweetened coconut
- 1 cup chopped nuts optional
- 1 tsp vanilla
- 1 cup crushed pineapple not drained! {use the pineapple in JUICE not syrup}

Cream Cheese Frosting:

- ½ c butter, softened
- 8 oz cream cheese, softened
- 1 tsp vanilla
- 1 lb. powdered sugar

Instructions

1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees.
2. Combine #1 ingredients. Add #2 ingredients. Stir in #3 ingredients.
3. Pour into a lightly greased or parchment lined 10x15-inch jelly roll pan.
4. Bake for 25-30 minutes or until a toothpick comes out clean. Let cool completely!

For the frosting:

1. Beat the butter and cream cheese until nice and fluffy. Add in the vanilla and powdered sugar and beat until nice and smooth.
2. Spread on top of the cooled cake bars and serve.
3. Store leftovers in an airtight container, in the refrigerator, for up to 3 days.

NOTES:

I have two 10x15 jelly roll pans and one fits inside the other so I know they are not all made the same size. When you are pouring the batter into the pan, if it looks like it's going to be a little too much, just put some of the batter aside and make a cupcake or two.

SUMMARY OF DISTRICT 1 SPRING LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE

by Linda Johnson, GCD District 1 Representative

On a sunny April 24th morning, nine of our Garden Club of Dearborn members traveled to Pleasant Ridge for a wonderful Michigan Garden Clubs District 1 Spring Leadership Conference entitled Spring Forward. We were well-represented by Mary Bugeia, Cynthia Castillas, Carol Chrzastek, Laurine Griffin, Linda Johnson, Rachel Pearson, Diane Rebori, Jo West, and Rose Wiggle.

About one hundred attendees heard inspiring reports by MGC State President Nancy Ryan, 1st Vice President Lisa Robinson and District 1 Director Anne Ryan. These were followed by speakers Stephanie Vemula from the Pleasant Ridge Garden Club and Caitlin Splawski from the MSU Extension Services. There were also small breakout sessions where members from a variety of local garden clubs exchanged and recorded ideas about Using Technology and Educating Homeowners.

Here's a summary of what was shared in the breakout sessions:

Session 1: What technology do you use and how is it working for you?

All clubs seem to have Communication Committees that use a variety of electronic ways to get messages out to their members and to the community at large. These include Zoom, Websites (both public and members only), the app Constant Contact, FaceBook, Group Emails, Electronic Newsletters, Cable TV and YouTube. All of these seem to be effective tools for our clubs.

Session 2: What is the best way to educate homeowners?

There are many ways that garden clubs provide information to their communities. These include inviting both city leaders and ordinary citizens to meetings, having tables at Farmers' Markets and Community Events, organizing Garden Tours, Flower Shows, and Family Activities. Other ways include advertising through local newspapers, cable TV, and Neighborhood Websites, sponsoring school projects such as Woodsy Owl/Smokey Bear contests and school gardens, and having community gardens such as pollinator gardens, trial gardens and Blue Star Memorial Gardens. Recognition of local gardens through Beautification Awards and yard signs that promote Garden Clubs, Pollinators and Smart Gardening have also been used effectively.

At the conclusion of the informational sessions, the Pleasant Ridge Club provided a delicious lunch buffet that included salads, sandwiches, fruit and cookies. The club also invited us to view their city gardens bursting with daffodils, tulips and flowering trees. Overall, the entire day was a treat for all of us. Personally, I have found both the District and State Conferences to be great opportunities to meet members from other areas and to share ideas, fellowship and great meals. Can't wait for the State Conference in Bay City!

DISTRICT 1 SPRING LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE

Photos: Linda Johnson

