

THE *Garden Club of Dearborn*

October 2024

NEWSLETTER

BOARD MEETING

November 6, 2024
10:00 am
McFadden Ross House

Upcoming Events

Festival of Trees
Performing Arts Center
Nov. 24 - Dec. 1

Holly Berry Brunch
Doubletree Hotel
Dearborn - Detroit
December 7

October Birthdays

7 Carol McGarvey
19 Marie Komnenic
22 Cathy Booth

November Birthdays

21 Ruth Ann Johnson
30 Janet Damian

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www.gardenclubdearborn.org



PRESIDENT'S CORNER

Who knew our founding fathers were gardeners?! Our presenter, Virginia Froehlich, certainly does! I was so surprised to learn about them. I imagined them riding on horses and fighting battles.

All the time. It just goes to show that there is time to appreciate our gardening, giving us peace and fulfillment.

I'd like you to ponder the variety of positions available in our club for the next two years. No previous experience is required. I do promise that you will learn you can do more than you ever thought. I have experienced so much from being president of your club. My learning curve leaped upwards. Let me tell you a secret.

It was teamwork with loving experienced women and men who cared to share. Lifting our club to a level of excellence. These positions are not solitude and isolation. They come with talent, wisdom, generosity and encouragement.

So

if you receive a phone call, answer the calling. You will bloom and grow to heights unimaginable.

NEXT GCD GENERAL MEETING

November 11, 2024 – 11:00 am

First Presbyterian Church Dearborn

Topic: Hands-on Workshop

Decorating Holiday Wreaths, Centerpieces & Tabletop Trees
for Festival of Trees Benefit for Children's Hospital of Detroit.

Hosts: Shawn Tambeau & Nan Fisher

Brilliant October sunshine accompanied us as we entered the church hall on October 14th as everything came together for a perfect autumn meeting. President Cynthia Casillas led us in the Pledge of Allegiance and we happily welcomed Shirley Barrick back into our club. Welcome, Shirley! We are so pleased to have you with us again! Our club numbers are rising with every meeting and it's easy to see why when hostesses, awards, speakers, school programs and ongoing enthusiasm for gardening and the environment come together and make us a very enticing, attractive, and interesting club to join. Much hard work is paying off, and it's all a team effort.

Cynthia read the names of those who submitted forms for the Festival of Tree participation. **Please plan on attending our next meeting, November 11th at 11:00am, for the annual Hands-on Workshop** where we decorate holiday wreaths, centerpieces, and tabletop trees for the festival to benefit the Children's Hospital of Detroit. You will be recognized for your work even if no form was submitted; your name will not be with our Garden Club but don't let this deter you from joining in. *Please bring an extension cord and a glue gun if you own one.*



Our 2024-2025 yearbook (directory) is out and has been distributed to all members and what an all-inclusive little book it has turned out to be! With more detailed information than ever including birthdays, program descriptions and host listings, we can be proud of and thankful for this comprehensive publication. Please use this as your first resource to answer any general questions you may have.

With our Holly Berry Brunch at the Double Tree by Hilton just around the corner, efforts to make this one the best ever are in full swing! Terri Bungee has secured \$2300 in sponsorship money and a number of enticing prizes are making their way to her basement where they will be placed in baskets, wrapped in clear, shiny foil and topped with ribbons. Bravo, Terri, for your tireless efforts of pounding the pavement, knocking on doors, and endless patience when you are told "the manager isn't here right now, can you come back later?" Hats off also to Linda Johnson who has made all our ribbons this year – no small task! As did Jennie Somers for the past couple years as well! All of your ribbons are the "crowning glory" on every prize and we are truly grateful, recognizing how long this takes.

If you signed up to solicit a donation for our brunch, now is the time to approach prospective donors. We must remember that other clubs and schools are out collecting as well and the sooner we approach businesses, the sooner we can hopefully meet with success. While we can't always control how much a donated prize is worth, we are always grateful and express our thanks. Raffle items donated by members should have a minimum retail value of \$30.

Our guest at the October meeting, Susan Seta, surprised everyone with a bag of yummy Brazen Bagels along with spreads. Who doesn't love a fresh bagel? Susan also decided at the October meeting to fill out the paperwork to become a GCD member as well. Thank you, Susan! Along with some delicious pumpkin bars (which everyone labeled a spice cake) from Rose Wiggle, plus treats from Jo West, we settled down for a few announcements.



S. Seta

Jo West announced that with a variety of board and general positions changing at the end of June 2025, members should consider stepping up to help our club. *Your club needs your help!* Board positions change every two years. Take some time to look at the Organization Chart listed on pages 22 & 23 of the new Yearbook and see if there is any position that you may be interested in filling for the 2025-2026 season. Being involved is a great way to learn club workings as well as get to know individual club members on a more personal level.

Our Garden Club will hold the first meeting of 2025 on January 13 at 11:00am, featuring a speaker from Allegria Village (formerly Henry Ford Village) on the topic of brain wellness and how to stave off dementia, a most timely topic. Please note this meeting is not included in our new 2024-2025 directory as the board just recently decided to add it to our annual calendar.



R. Wiggle & L. Johnson

Linda Johnson brought her usual donation of beautiful harvest-themed door prizes. Winners at the October meeting were Rose Wiggle, Mary Bugeia, and Kim Kovacs-Gucwa. Some went home with the winners while Jo West took others to The Commons, Corewell Health Senior Living where the staff expressed great thanks to our club. Thank you, Linda, for that lovely splash of orange and yellow color added to our meeting! Also another thank you goes to Jo for bringing joy to the residents and staff at The Commons!

Karen Marzonie announced the awards for which she has submitted our club. Karen has been most diligent in researching awards for which our club qualifies and every submission requires great detail, supporting facts, and exact forms to be completed. Great thanks to you, Karen, for highlighting our achievements at all three levels: the Michigan, the Central, and the National Garden Club levels! Even if we won't know the outcome for several months, it's a compliment just to be considered and among the clubs competing for these awards. Karen also brought delicious cherry tomatoes from the gardens at Fair Lane for an extra treat.

Mary Bugeia chose to read the astilbe excerpt from the book “100 Flowers and How They Got Their Names” this month. Author Diana Wells describes how Pere Armand David, the French Lazarist monk who discovered the astilbe in China, was sent there to establish a boys’ school in Peking but because he was such an ardent and successful botanist, he was released from his duties in order to collect plants. This followed French and British gunboats securing an 1860 treaty from the Chinese allowing exploration of their country and permitting Christian missionaries to work in China. Pere David sent thousands of specimens back to Paris but only about one-third of them survived. In Greek, astilbe means “without brilliance” which refers to the inconspicuous and small flowers that adorn its stems. I’ll bet most of us didn’t know that the astilbe is a common relative of the hydrangea, did we? Because not all missionaries survived their missions, Mary emphasized our need to appreciate plants and what it took to bring some of them back to the Western world.



When Virginia Froelich – self-proclaimed “Writer, Speaker, Humorist” – started speaking, we were in for a treat. She chose the topic “Founding Fathers, Founding Gardeners” (or alternately “Founding Fathers, Green Thumbs”) from her portfolio but began by condensing her extensive resume and mentioning various classes available. When she mentioned her past presidency with the Ikebana International, Detroit Chapter 85 and heard about our February 2025 presenter, she congratulated us and said it’s hard to find a good program, and how lucky we are to have one scheduled (Ikebana, Japanese flower arranging, we learned, is exhibited at shows but arrangements are not judged).

Explaining her chosen wardrobe of a white sweater adorned with sunflowers, sunflower



C. Casillas & V. Froelich

earrings, and yellow glasses, she plunged into a fascinating topic. In a nutshell, “Founding Fathers, Founding Gardeners” examines how our founding fathers were vested in gardening along with the significant contributions made by several of them to the landscape of our fledgling country.

To any history lover, let alone plant advocate, Virginia’s talk was fascinating and painted a portrait of our early leaders we rarely consider. With her talk, mentioning the highlights is a major challenge, there were so many! But here goes.....

While George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, John Quincy, and Benjamin Franklin were all early garden advocates, they differed in location and style. Washington and Jefferson had large plantations in Virginia, Quincy had a small farm in Massachusetts, and Franklin was interested in the economic and scientific value of plants, networking to exchange seeds (he'd even heard about tofu from China). Our colonies were the biggest export market for Great Britain and while a lack of labor prevented them from establishing a strong manufacturing base, they had plenty of land and sent tobacco, corn, etc. back to Europe. Consequently, America started to rely on agriculture as a major building block of our new nation: plowing, planting and political acts brought freedom.



Did you know? Washington wrote letters to his property manager from Manhattan in the summer of 1776 specifying that only native plants should be planted at Mt. Vernon. (NO English trees allowed!) Victory in our revolution meant he could lead a fulfilled life as a farmer, retiring at age 51 to choose the plow and watch fields of corn waving in the wind. Returning as a hero in 1783, he wanted to liberate his garden just as he had “freed the country”. Like Franklin, he saw wealth and independence in cultivated soil, appreciating sheer beauty and making Mt. Vernon a show of his standing in Virginia society. In 1784, he embarked upon a 700-mile trip, bringing back species from various locations to shape a true American garden, the first ornamental garden with exclusively native species. “Painting” trees with their arrangements, he combined aspens and black gum with tulip flowers and satiny magnolia leaves to create beautiful “floral art”.

Using Philip Miller’s “Gardener’s Dictionary” from 1731, Washington tracked plants and trees like a military man. Mt. Vernon became the most visited private home in the country and being the gentleman he was, he had to entertain each and every visitor. Washington also experimented with nourishing the soil, recognizing that tobacco exhausted the land, depleting its fertility.

Thomas Jefferson saw himself as a farmer, gardener, and philosopher. He needed a profitable business at Monticello to pay his debts and maintain an expensive lifestyle, and he wanted the beautiful to complement the practical. His favorite book? “Observations on Modern Gardening” by Thomas Whately, published in 1770 (and still available on Amazon!!), the first and most comprehensive study of what we call the English landscape garden (Jefferson was actually refused entry to the Woburn Farm in Great Britain as too many visitors had stolen plants there).

John Adams never intended to recreate the gardens he visited in Britain. His inherited 40 acres in Braintree, Massachusetts were not ornamental – he cultivated a kitchen garden with orchard. Like Washington, he also saw himself as a farmer first.

Have you heard of a Ha-ha? Well, now you have. A sunken fence or wall which prevents livestock from crossing a ditch and spoiling the view, Washington used this in landscaping while Jefferson built one at the White House south lawn.



And one last tidbit: our Constitutional Convention in 1787 had 55 delegates, most of whom were farmers, the backbone of society at that time. Attendees found discussions about their land a welcome relief during the four months of heated debate, and many parallels were drawn between power distribution and gardening.

Now are we all ready for a field trip to see some of this historical beauty?

Virginia Froelich earned a Master of Science in Administration degree from Central Michigan University, and a Bachelor of Arts degree, with majors in both English and Psychology, from Wayne State University. She also completed post-graduate work along with several legal assistant courses at Madonna University. She retired following a 35-year career as a writer and editor at Ford Motor Company.

Her experience, background and devotion to gardening is extensive and ranges from the Michigan Garden Clubs Life Achievement Chair from 2015 until now to past president of the Grosse Ile Garden Club (2006-2008) to more than a few titles with both the Michigan as well as National Garden Clubs. She currently offers four presentations and was recipient of the 2009 Wayne County Master Gardener Association "Unsung Hero Award".



Our first Garden Club GroupRaise meal donation at Buddy's raised \$229.94! About 26 members and various friends and relatives chowed down on October 17th and had a great time. This is an easy way to raise funds for our club. Let's do it again!



Many thanks to all those contributing to the Snow Woods neighborhood bench project with their plastic bottle cap donations! The collection – "Flip Your Lids for the Snow Woods Neighborhood Benches" – is ongoing through March 2025 considering how many pounds it takes to actually repurpose the lids and produce a bench. Please look for donation boxes at our meetings or bring your clean lids in plastic bags, which are all taken to the donation site at the Dearborn Recreation Center.

“Come!” said the wind to the leaves one day; “come over the meadow with me and play! Put on your colors of red and of gold, for winter is coming, the days they grow old”.



OCTOBER'S PARTY

By George Cooper

October gave a party, the leaves by hundreds came
The Chestnuts, Oaks, and Maples, and leaves of every name
The sunshine spread a carpet, and everything was grand
Miss Weather led the dancing, Professor Wind the band
The Chestnuts came in yellow, the Oaks in crimson dressed
The lovely Misses Maple, in scarlet looked her best
All balanced to their partners, and gaily fluttered by
The sight was like a rainbow, new fallen from the sky
Then in the rustic hollow, at hide and seek they played
The party closed at sundown, but everybody stayed
Professor Wind played louder, they flew along the ground
And then the party ended, in jolly hands around

DISTRICT 1 FALL CONFERENCE SUMMARY

Detroit Yacht Club on Belle Isle

September 26, 2024

By Linda Johnson, District 1 Representative

On a picture-perfect September day, the Michigan Garden Club hosted its quarterly District Conference at the Detroit Yacht Club on Belle Isle. Members attending from the Garden Club of Dearborn included Otto and Paulette Baumgart, Christine Berryman, Mary Bugeia, Carol Chrzastek, Wanda Unis-Flaim, Mariya Fogarasi, Linda Johnson, Carol McGarvey, Susan Seta and Jo West.

The hosting Michigan Garden Club has about 200 members who primarily live on the East Side: the Grosse Pointes, St. Clair Shores, etc. It appeared that there were about 300 of our district members gathered in the very spacious dining room featuring golden chandeliers, plaster medallions and other elegant architectural details. Fresh flower centerpieces and white tablecloths were on every table as we were served a delicious lunch of Caesar salad, turkey wrap, kettle cooked potato chips and cookies.



Hartig

The speakers were top notch. Dr. John Hartig gave a slide presentation about the Reclamation of Detroit's Waterfront as a Gathering Place for all. He pointed to many signs of improvement along the Detroit River, including the development of the RiverWalk, the return of wildlife such as bald eagles, falcons, sturgeon, walleyes, beavers, and river otters. Still in development are the Ralph C. Wilson Centennial Park and the Gordie Howe Bridge.

Dr. Hartig's presentation was followed by a slide show by Joseph Ferraro entitled "Beyond the Bloom". It featured closeup portraits of area insects ranging from honeybees to butterflies. With special camera lenses, he photographs their faces, antennae, and other minute (and colorful!) details.



Ferraro



Finally, conference attendees were offered the opportunity to take a quick drive over to the Oudolf Garden on the other side of Belle Isle.

This is a three-acre naturalistic public garden designed by Piet Oudolf, a world-famous ecological designer. He chose "perennials, grasses, shrubs and trees for their durability, and ever-changing textures for enjoyment in all four seasons."

The day was a gardener's delight for all who were able to attend.

The District 1 conferences are hosted on a rotating basis by member clubs twice a year, in the Spring and in the Fall. They are always an excellent way to spend a day close to home meeting other plant lovers while enjoying wonderful speakers and a delicious lunch. Can't wait for the next one!

