

The Petunia Patch

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Date: March 08, 2010
Conservation/Horticulture

Location:First Congregational Church
Time:12:30 pm Social - 1:00 Meeting
Hostesses:Edie Jakubs/Jeannine Stone
Program:Weird Remedies for Less Toxic Gardening
Presenter:Victoria

Summary: Victoria from Glorious Gardens in Gobles presents fun and creative ways to keep our gardens less toxic and more beautiful. Glorious Gardens promotes a healthy respect for nature and sustained enthusiasm for gardening through agri-entertainment.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

March is the month to think green. We can all be a little or a lot of green on the 17th for St. Patrick's Day. Yet to be thinking 'green' we know that Spring can't be too far away. We can start dreaming of blue skies, warm temperatures, and plants and flowers blooming beautifully. I have already received my issue of Martha Stewart Living that is dedicated to gardening. It is so lovely and fun to read. It does make you feel Spring is near.

Let's continue to keep our Garden Club strong in membership and support our activities. Working on our projects is also an important part of our Club. Every member's efforts are appreciated. Many of our members will be returning from 'warmer places' by the next few meetings. We welcome everyone back.

Wishing everyone 'warm' thoughts.
Jan Buckley, President

SOUPER CHEFS

A delightful array of soups greeted us at our January soup luncheon meeting. We owe a 'tip' to the cooks who prepared the wonderful soups. The cooks were: Becky Berry, Roberta Butters, Sue Cunningham, Joanne Reed, Sharon Stringham, and Barbara Wittkop. Also, thanks to Anne Long and Margery VerBeek for desserts and beverages. The recipes are on the Garden Club web site.

FEBRUARY SALAD BAR

What could make a person think summer? A fantastic salad and some dessert thrown in for good measure. The following ladies were responsible for great salads at our February meeting: Annle Brown, Sandy Fenske, Pat Gaston, Kathy Straits, Deb Walter, Del Kelly, Marian Filbrandt. Thanks also to Jan Meltzer and Marian for providing delicious desserts and beverages.

Date: April 12, 2010
Horticulture/ Landscape Design

Location:Liberty Hyde Bailey Museum
Time:12:30 pm Social - 1:00 pm Meeting
Hostesses:Barb Bruce/ Sherry Edris
Program:Native Trees and Shrubs for your Yard
Presenter:Mary Ann Menck
Summary:We welcome Mary Ann Menck, owner of Mary Ann's Michigan in Paw Paw. She will provide information on incorporating native trees and shrubs into our home landscapes. Note: Meeting will be held at the Liberty Hyde Bailey Museum.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

April 4 - April 7 -> District IV Flower Show, DeVos Place, 303 Monroe N.W., Grand Rapids.
Theme: **International Table**. Free and open to the public.,
April 18 - April 21 -> District IIB Flower Show, MSU Pavilion. East Lansing.
Theme: **Floral Fantasies, Fairy Tales and Fables**. Contact Kathi Dominguez, 517-669-5112,

BLUE STAR MARKER

Our Blue Star Memorial marker was featured in the recent issue of the Thru the Garden Gate. Thanks once again to everyone who made this a memorable project.

THINK FLOWER SHOW

If you are interested in working in some capacity for the Flower Show, call Marilyn Arnott. The flower show will be held at the Bailey Museum on August 12. More details will be forthcoming at the March meeting.

SPICY NEWS

The virtues of cinnamon were in a Patch sometime ago. So, we'll go on from there to cover or really uncover what other spices are all about and hope you'll learn more about those powdery guys in the cute little jars. Spices have been the spice of life down through the ages. They were a means of trade for centuries and also wars were fought because of them. But where do they come from and what is their history?

Take for instance, nutmeg which has a twin - mace. Nutmeg grows on trees or shrubs of which there are eighty different species. You might be asking but what about the twin - mace? We'll get there shortly! Nutmeg is a tropical fruit. Nutmeg trees can grow up to 70 feet and are evergreen in the countries where they are grown, mainly Brazil, India, etc. They produce yellow clusters of flowers which turn into a golden fruit when ripe. The fruit is about the size of a pear. When ripe, the fruit opens and

SPICY NEWS (CONTINUED)

the kernels are partly covered with a red membrane. Mace is produced from this membrane - the twin. The kernels are the nutmeg - the other twin. Amazing!!

Nutmeg is used in many recipes, pies, cakes, cookies, etc. It is a spice that we are very familiar with especially at Thanksgiving time. Be sure to use this spice in recipes throughout the year. It's a winner!

In the next issue of the Patch, we'll try to uncover information about other spices

GARDEN CORNER

The gardening catalogs that have arrived this winter contain many new varieties guaranteed to give you something different for the 2010 growing season. Here is just a small sample.

TOMATOES

Red Robin - dwarf variety of cherry tomato that can be grown in an 8-inch pot or hanging basket set on sunny windowsills or outdoor patio. Plants grow 8 to 12 in. tall and bear masses of 1-1/4 in. full flavored tomatoes; 55 days.

ANNUALS AND PERENNIALS

Double Click Cosmos - a rare double-flowered cosmos. Very easy to grow, either by planting seed directly in the garden or starting indoors for earlier bloom. Strong-stemmed plants grow 24 to 36 in. tall and have attractive ferny foliage that makes an excellent filler for floral arrangements. The more you harvest flowers for bouquets the faster new buds arise. Prefers full sun. Two colors - Snow Puff and Rose Bonbon.

Burning Hearts Bleeding Heart - deep rose-red heart-shaped flowers with white tips are held atop a mound of silvery-blue, ferny foliage. Grows 10 to 12 in, tall. Tolerates some sun, but does best in partial shade. Unlike most bleeding hearts, this selection does not go summer dormant if give adequate moisture.

Double Shine Sunflower - Rich, golden-yellow, double blooms and lush green foliage add color to mass plantings, beds and borders. 5 ft. tall plants carry distinctive, fuzzy 5-in. blooms and will add drama and height to cut-flower arrangements. Blooms all summer long.

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GARDEN CORNER (CONTINUED)

Black Stem Elephant Ears - this variety carries large, glossy green leaves atop 3-4 ft. black stems. Pale undersides features black veining for a very dramatic effect. Looks great in beds and along borders. Can also be grown in containers and moved indoors through the winter in northern climates. Prefers partial to full shade.

GET AN EARLY START FOR SUMMER

You should start seed for transplants 6 to 8 weeks before planting time in our area, which is normally 2 weeks after the last predicted frost.

The best time to transplant is on a cloudy day or in the morning or evening hours when the sun is less intense. Water your transplants just before planting to help the root ball stay intact. Wait until the days are reliably warm because plants of tomato, pepper, and eggplant will not grow in cold soil. They will just sit there.

A BOUQUET OF KALE

At our November meeting Pat Gaston brought in a piece of her prized ornamental kale. Pat mentioned that her kale has survived three of our Michigan winters. Ornamental kale is also known as flowering kale because of its stunning flower-like appearance "like a bouquet. Ornamental kale's plant leaves come in a wide variety of colors. Some varieties are light green, purple, pink, burgundy, white and some are a two tone combination. Most varieties grow low to the ground and have ruffled leaves but some are tall like Redbor with its purple stems and deep green leaves. The Redbor is known to be a tasty variety of kale.

Can ornamental kales be eaten? Why not! Besides being used in cooking, kale makes a beautiful decoration on food plates, platters or as a centerpiece. Kale is known to be the most nutritious green on the market so why not indulge. If you are still uncertain of its edibility, check out references. Ornamental kale makes a real statement in the garden. So, whether you eat it or whatever, it will add a pleasing spot in your garden to admire.