

CLAY BREAKING NEWS

Mount Airy Clay Breakers Garden Club

Fall/Winter 2011

Member of District 1

National Capital Area Garden Clubs, Inc.

Theme of the Year: Protecting the Environment

PROGRAMS

September meeting was hosted by Lorraine Leonard. A new and interesting main feature was added to our program activities. The ladies submitted questions on gardening, which were researched by Linda and Gilda. The answers shared by Gilda resulted in a discussion among the ladies. The following were some of the questions raised:

- a) Are there plants mentioned in the Bible that may do well in church containers?
- b) What are the preferred fertilizers for use in the garden?
- c) What is the hardiest lavender for our area?
- d) What can be done to eliminate ants inside and outside?

The new season started with a container garden competition which was won by Linda Millette, with an unusual presentation of a beautiful lady's shoe which contained succulents like hens and chicks. Linda will hold the silver tray for the year. Lorraine Leonard, Gilda Allen and Sonia Johnson also won prizes for their presentations. The meeting in October was hosted by Elaine Arnold. Guest speaker, Joe Mudd, a Prince George's County Master Gardener informed us of the main element involved in integrated pest management; that is placing plants in conditions best suited for them, thus making for hardier and healthier plants better able to withstand diseases and pests. Native plants were highly recommended. At the meeting in November which was hosted by Jackie George we were presented an interesting talk by Gene Sumi, education coordinator of Homestead Gardens. The theme was sustainability and balance in the environment. We were encouraged to put into motion practices which will enable our gardens to better take care of themselves. Growing plants which are not problematic, like natives and eliminating invasive plants, are ways to put our environment on a path where it can sustain itself. The proper use of fertilizers and pesticides was another way to regain and sustain a balance in the environment. He pointed out the damage to the environment of the excessive use of fertilizer especially high in phosphorous and nitrogen. He recommended organically based fertilizers and soil amendments such as composting. Mention was made of corn gluten which acts as a weed killer as well as a fertilizer. Serenade, a biological fungicide can be used to treat common fungi leaf spot, and powdery mildew. An application of milky spore is effective in grub control for 10 years.

LIFE MEMBERSHIP

Congratulations to Anne Deboeser, Joyce Meyer, and Marian Moreland who were recipients of Life Membership to the National Capital Area Garden Clubs, Inc. They have excellently served as members of the Mt. Airy Clay Breakers and the wider community of garden clubs for 34, 33, and 25 years respectively. Anne and Joyce were honored earlier in the year, while Marian was honored at the meeting in September.

COMMITTEES' REPORTS

Conservation Chair Diana Morse introduced us to the composition of a wetland. She continued her presentation at the October meeting with an informative talk on how wetlands play a major part in the production of the food we eat. Pam Smart, in the absence of Linda Millette; Design Chair explained a sheet which listed suggestions on how to keep flowers fresh after they are picked. Linda followed up at our meeting in October with a presentation of various kinds of designs in containers. A sheet was distributed which listed such designs. In November we were told by Linda, of the elements and principles of designs. Elaine Arnold; Horticulture Chair encouraged us, as our gardens are important in preserving the environment. She continued to remind us of the devastating effect of some alien ornamental plants and the alien bugs which are not accompanied by their natural predators. She encouraged the use of native plants, as they provide food for birds, and other wildlife. A broadening of foundation planting was suggested to cut back on lawn space.

AWARDS

Congratulations to Iona Black, Arminta Donovan, Julie Harrison, Sonia Johnson, and Linda Millette who won Awards at the 2011 Prince George's County Beautification Awards held September 28. Arminta and Iona were fourth year recipients of the superior sustained maintenance program. They will qualify for the golden trowel award in 2012. Holloway Park Gardens also was recognized for four years of superior sustained maintenance. The garden of the Concordia Lutheran Church, which was worked on by some of the ladies of the club, also won an award for two years of superior sustained maintenance. Although we have not agreed upon this activity as a club project, we may consider adopting it as such next year.

A TIME TO REMEMBER

The eventful summer and early fall had affected a few planned activities. The club's participation in the Prince George's County Fair in September was thwarted because of the torrential rain and flooding in our area. A scheduled visit by Vickie Godwin, NCAGC President, to the meeting in October had to be cancelled because of the tornadoes in Virginia. Vickie would have shared on her project which is the sponsorship of 5 rain gardens at the U.S National Arboretum.

CIVIC DEVELOPMENT

The club continued to be involved in our community in a number of ways. On Saturday, October 9 club members; Lenay O'quinn, Joyce Meyer, Linda Millette, Mary Beth Cecil, Julie Harrison and Gilda Allen made twenty two flower arrangements which were delivered to the Bradford Oaks nursing home by

Gilda, Julie, and Linda. The club embarked on a new project over the summer instructing elementary school children on growing a garden. The after school activity involved having the children plant an herb garden, the produce of which they ate. This was followed by a pizza garden. They made pizzas from the produce of this garden and again enjoyed what they ate. The club continued to maintain the Holloway Park Garden. Julie and Mary Beth planted pansies in the garden in the fall.

MEMBERSHIP

Mary Woodruff was installed as a new member at our November meeting. Mary is a friend of Elaine, and we look forward to a wonderful time. Welcome Mary! Over the past year Jackie Pugh, and Mary Jane Bishop have resigned from the club. Both have served in the following areas: Mary Jane as recording secretary, and President; Jackie as corresponding secretary, and recording secretary. All the best to Mary Jane, and Jackie.

PERSONAL NEWS

Elaine Arnold, Marian Moreland, Anne Deboeser, and Ann Williams had experienced health challenges over the past six months. Remember them in your prayers. Our sympathy went out to Pam Smart, and Lenay O'quinn who lost their mothers this year. Gilda Allen and Iona Black have recently retired. Gilda retired from the District Department of the Environment after 22 years. She worked as Environmental Program Specialist and developed Environmental Education programs for young people. Iona retired after 16 years as a teacher at the Surrattsville High School. Before this career stint Iona had served for 40 years in the US Air Force.

REMINDER OF UPCOMING PROGRAMS & ACTIVITIES

A tour of River Farm; Headquarters of the American Horticulture Society is planned for April.

We look forward to the visits of 2 NCAGC board members in 2012. Vickie Godwin; NCAGC President is to visit our meeting on January 12, 2012. Danielle Brabazon (the new Director of District 1) is scheduled to visit on May 12, 2012.

District 1 Awards meeting will be held March 3, 2012 at the US National Arboretum. The Awards meeting of the National Capital Area Garden Clubs (NCAGC) is scheduled for March 27, 2012. All are invited.

GARDENING CHECKLIST

- 1) During the fall months cut back perennials and remove the debris. Leave seed heads on late bloomers to feed wildlife, and the cut back these items after the birds and critters have had their way with them. Repair, replant and renovate your lawn. Seeding, fertilizing, adding lime, de-thatching and core aerating are all good fall projects. (Reminder from Arminta Donovan).
- 2) Early spring is the best time to divide many types of perennials which require thinning or replanting. Weed preventer should be applied to the lawn before March to prevent new weeds from germinating.

- 3) Apply fertilizer to evergreen plants in spring.
- 4) In February cut ornamental grass to about 6".

CHRISTMAS 2011

This was indeed a season of events. The ladies met at the home of Marilyn Berkut for the annual Christmas potluck. They exchanged gifts and feasted on sumptuous dishes.

District 1 Holiday Tour

Julie Harrison

Seven club members and one guest went on the District 1 Holiday Tour of the Olde Dominion on December 3rd.

We started our journey in Cheverly, Maryland where the bus picked up most of the people going on this trip. We made a stop in Oxon Hill for more of our group then on to Virginia to pick up Vickie Godwin and her husband.

We traveled to Hanover Virginia to visit the Hanover Court House for the Festival of Trees then on to the Hanover Tavern where we had an early dinner and did some shopping. Our next stop was the Lewis Ginter Botanical Gardens for a tour of the Garden Fest of Lights and holiday displays in the conservatory. It was an awesome sight. Of course we had to shop at Ginter's fabulous gift shop. The last part of the tour was the Richmond Tacky Light Tour. We picked up a guide who was very knowledgeable and gave interesting tidbits of information about some of the homes decorated for the holidays.

The trip was enjoyed by all even though we got home late

Oxon Hill Manor Christmas Tea

Julie Harrison

On December 14 nine club members and one guest attended the Christmas Tea held at the Oxon Hill Manor. We celebrated Iona Blacks retirement in a beautifully decorated room with a fireplace banked with lovely red poinsettia where four musicians were seated and played Christmas music for all to enjoy. We dined on tea sandwiches, fruit, scones and an assortment of deserts and tea's.

The Oxon Hill Manor is a lovely building with tall ceilings, several large fireplaces decorated for the Holidays and beautiful views of the Potomac River. We should make this an annual event as each Christmas they do the Holiday Tea.

After the Tea we took a side trip to visit an outlet store to buy some Christmas items we just had to have.

MERRY CHRISTMAS!