



CLAY BREAKING NEWS

MOUNT AIRY CLAY BREAKERS GARDEN CLUB

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Gilda Allen, President

Telephone # 301 574 4246

Sonia Johnson, Editor

Telephone # 301 627 8613

Arminta Donovan, Co-Editor

Telephone# 301 952 9558

Patricia Hall, Production Assistant

Telephone# 301 952 9067

PRESIDENT'S CORNER

"Classic Principles of Gardening"



Picture 1: Courtesy of Gilda

Gilda Allen: President Mt Airy Clay Breakers.

As the old year ends and we start a new year, the overwhelming emotion I feel at this time is one of thankfulness. We are all still here enjoying the bounty of our families, friends and gardens. As President, I am blessed and thankful to be surrounded by a group of talented and willing ladies. This has resulted in some noted accomplishments for which our club can be proud. I thank all of you for your participation and support throughout the year. I would be remiss if I did not mention special thanks to Lorraine Leonard for singlehandedly submitting an application for the new (Helping Hands CAR Community Partnership Therapy Project Award), for which our club won first place in the small category, and a \$25.00 check for the Butterfly Garden Project done with the children of the After Care School at Concordia Lutheran Church in Upper Marlboro. Lorraine has also been instrumental in scouting for talent among young people, resulting in students sponsored by our club winning in categories of the CAR and NGC Youth Poetry Contests in 2010. More recently Kyle Musselman won 1st place of the grade 7 category in the CAR 2012 Poetry Contest. Second place was won by Amaka Okeke for the 8 grade category and 5th grader Ezekiel Crampton received honorary mention.

As we enjoy the holidays, let us remember the birds. Provisions can be made not only with seeds but fruits also. I look forward to another productive and exciting year.

Sincerely,

Gilda Allen, President.

PROGRAMS AND ACTIVITIES

Our October meeting was hosted by Sonia Johnson at the home of Gilda Allen. Anne Deboeser, Accredited Flower Show Judge presented a program on 'Visual Design Principles'. She, in her usual refreshing style, ably demonstrated through a creative design the principles which are incorporated into a design. A flower arrangement consisting of two sunflowers and Yucca leaves- a little off balance- was presented to the ladies for their scrutiny. Led by Anne, they critiqued the arrangement. They concluded that the principles of balance and proportion were lacking in the arrangement. The deficiency in balance was corrected with the addition of foliage. The container, which was out of proportion with the design, was replaced with a smaller container. It was pointed out by Anne, that proportion impacts the distinction of the design- an attribute of floral arrangement. It was established that the design also met the other principles of contrast shown in the texture of the foliage and flowers, and rhythm, scale and dominance shown in the large sunflower blooms. A driftwood was added to the finished arrangement. Anne recommended the reading of the book "The Essence of Floral creativity" by Bob Thomas, which can be accessed from the club's library.



Picture 11: Courtesy of Pam Smart

Anne Deboeser demonstrating the principles of visual design at the Oct. 2012 meeting. Anne used an arrangement of sunflowers as her focal point and a wooden turntable to present all the visual aspects of the demonstration.

The November meeting hosted by Diana Morse, had as its highlight a program on Seasonal Table Design. Elaine Arnold presented a festive fall table with a centerpiece consisting of an anchor orange daisy flanked by golden rods, yellow mums, with colorful peppers on a leaf bed of savoy and red cabbage. The table also featured carved turnips as salt and pepper containers. Marilyn Berkut's table depicted a Christmas design featuring the colors of red and green shown in a flower arrangement of American Holly on a beautiful green tablecloth.

HORTICULTURE: Chairman Jessica Sherlock

POISONOUS PLANTS

Poisonous plants have been used through the centuries for both healing, when used in moderate dosages, and punishment, in their full-blown fatal dosages. Of course, they have been responsible for a large share of accidental poisonings as well. In the Renaissance, the Borgia family used a substance called "cantarella" to take care of their enemies. Its exact components are unknown but it is believed that it had some botanical ingredients. The Medici family sold an antidote, which must have worked because records have shown that they had repeat customers. Plants such as hemlock, famously used to execute Socrates, have caused untold injury to livestock over the ages. This plant is not the evergreen tree with small cones that is frequently planted in gardens, but rather a perennial known as *Conium Maculatum*, a European native resembling a cross between the herb Valerian, and the wildflower Queen Anne's lace.

Digitalis, as many know, can kill or cure- being a cause of heart attack to those that eat the plant, but it is an ingredient in many cardiac drugs. Because of its poisonous attributes, it is a plant that deer and rabbits will not eat. Daffodil bulbs brought back from the middle-east by crusaders, can also cause upset when eaten. For this reason, they too, remain uneaten by pests such as voles. Poisonous plants are so much more than a way to harm other beings, they are also a good natural way to guard your plantings from garden pests.

OPHELIA'S GARDEN

In Shakespeare's Hamlet, ACT IV sc. V, Ophelia, Hamlet's recently-dumped girlfriend has a famous "Mad Scene" in which she wanders about handing flowers to the major figures of the court. Upon closer inspection, the "mad scene" is quite sane, when one takes into consideration the symbolic meaning of the flowers presented to each particular character. For example, she sends Fennel- a symbol of adultery and flattery- to the King, who killed Hamlet's father to legitimize the adulterous affair with Gertrude, Hamlet's mom. She distributes Rue, a bitter herb previously used in cooking but fallen out of favor to modern tastes. It is a cause of spontaneous abortion amongst livestock that eat it accidentally, and intentional abortion in humans. There are quite a few other herbs mentioned in Ophelia's monologue.

CONSERVATION: Chairman Diana Morse continued to inform us on various invasive plants such as Kudzu, which was introduced as a means to stem soil erosion. Mention was made of Poison Ivy, Italian Arum, Tree of Heaven, Purple Loosestrife and Garlic Mustard. We were again encouraged to contain if not rid our gardens of these species.

DESIGN: During the fall months of September, October and November, Design Chair Joyce Meyer made presentations of lovely flower arrangements depicting the following three designs: vertical, horizontal and a linear design of an inverted T consisting of Japanese Holly and Pink Carnations.

PUBLICITY Marian Moreland, Chairman

The following articles were submitted and included in the Monthly Publications of the Marlton Community Advocate.

OCTOBER, 2012 Publication

New President is Marlton Resident

Gilda M. Allen, new president and resident of Marlton, presided over the meeting. Gilda is a former Environmental Program Specialist with the District's Department of the Environment. She established numerous school gardens throughout the District that created habitat for wildlife and used landscaping practices to manage storm water run-off while providing environmental learning labs for students. She established the annual Anacostia River Environmental Fair that has provided thousands of youth with boating, fishing, and water related hands-on experiences. Many dignitaries such as Al Gore and Bill Nye, the Science Guy, have celebrated with the children.

In 2007, Gilda received the Living Legend Award from the Living Classrooms of the National Capitol Area. In 2009, Gilda received the Green Award from the *Washingtonian Magazine* for her work in environmental education. Because of her commitment to get young people outdoors and her love for the natural world, she speaks to groups interested in creating children's gardens. This interest led her to create an outdoor play space and pollinator garden for her grandson. Over the years, she has served the garden club in many ways. Gilda's responsibilities, experiences, and willingness to serve others make her an excellent choice for the 2012-2013 office of president.

Herb Gardening: The program for the evening was "Herb Gardening" by Ann Young, Master Gardener. She introduced new herbs and brought many old ones in pots to share with members.

Blue Ribbon Winners: Armintha Donovan, Julie Harrison, Sonia Johnson, and Lorraine Leonard all received blue ribbons for horticulture entries at the Prince George's County Fair.

Butterfly Garden for Children: During the summer, the butterfly garden was established for the after-school children's program at Concordia Lutheran Church.

Green Tip for the Month: Driving over 60 mph is like paying 24 cents more per gallon for gas.

NOVEMBER, 2012 Publication

The Mount Airy Clay Breakers Garden Club of Upper Marlboro met at the Marlton home of Gilda Allen, President. The program for the evening was *Visual Design Principles*.

Member, Anne Deboeser, Accredited Flower Show Judge, provided a floral arrangement using two sunflowers with yucca as greenery. Conservation Chairman Diana Morse, reported on Invasive Plants in our area, and Horticulture Chairman Jessica Sherlock, reported on Poisonous Plants in our gardens.

The following members received beautification awards for their yards and gardens from the Prince George's County Park and Planning Commission at the 42nd annual awards dinner. Iona Black of Brookwood and Armintia Donovan of Marlton received Golden Trowel Awards for five successive years of superior sustained maintenance. Holloway Park on Rosaryville Road, which is maintained by Mount Airy Clay Breakers, also received the Golden Trowel. Julie Harrison received an award for three years and Sonia Johnson, both of Marlton, received an award for two consecutive years superior sustained maintenance. Pat Hall of Maryvale received an award as a first time entrant. Concordia Lutheran Church Children's Garden, which is maintained by the Mount Airy Clay Breakers, received an award for three years superior sustained maintenance.

Upcoming Events for November

November 8-9: Environmental Studies School in Derwood

November 10: Members will make floral arrangements veterans.

November 13: Fundraiser, Franklin's Restaurant in Hyattsville

Green Tip for the Month-Lower Amount of Wasted Food!

America is a land of plenty, but plenty of the food it produces is needlessly going to waste, costing us all a lot of money, and harming the environment. It costs our country about \$1billion to dispose of all this wasted food, and as it rots, it releases methane gas, a greenhouse gas that traps 23 times more atmospheric heat than CO₂. Halving food waste would reduce America's environmental impact by 25%. Stopping it entirely would be like taking 20% of our cars off the road. In addition to the environmental impact, there is the financial toll that wasted food takes on household budgets and the actual waste itself.

DECEMBER, 2012 Publication

The program theme for the Mount Airy Clay Breakers Garden Club's November meeting was "Seasonal Tables". Guests for the evening were Dr. Christopher Puttock, Research

Associate, Smithsonian Institution, NMNH (US) and Rochelle P. Bartolomei of Chesapeake Natives, Inc. They showed a video and told of their activities at the Mt. Airy Mansion Greenhouse. Chesapeake Natives, a non-profit organization that propagates native plants is cleaning up the greenhouse on the grounds of Rosaryville State Park in Upper Marlboro in order to use the spa, organize, and plant seeds. For more information contact Chris Puttock at 202-262-9773(cell)

Green Tip for the Month-Cleaning the Inside of your Microwave Oven

It's a pain to clean the inside of the microwave. Whatever you have to do get the zapped-on gunk out of there, don't use a conventional cleaner. It gets in the air you breathe but also the food you are heating. Most chemicals in these products should not be heated to the temperature generated by the microwave. Either use half of a lemon or distilled white vinegar with water in a microwave-friendly bowl, preferably glass, and heat for five minutes. The steam generated by either mixture will loosen food residue. Wipe it away with a damp cloth. The lemon or vinegar will leave behind an especially pleasant fresh natural scent.

CLUB'S ANNUAL FLOWER ARRANGEMENTS

Some of the ladies met on November 10, 2012 at the home of Gilda Allen and took part in making 24 flower arrangements which were delivered to residents of the Bradford Oaks Nursing Home. We thank Marian Moreland, Jackie George, Linda Millette, Julie Harrison, Iona Black, Pam Smart and Jessica Sherlock for their participation in this project.

OTHER COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES

The Mt. Airy Mansion is undergoing a restoration in its Greenhouse which was built in the 1930's. Christopher Puttock, Horticulturist and Research Associate, Smithsonian Institution, along with Rochelle P. Bartolomei of Chesapeake Natives, Inc. spoke briefly at our November meeting about this project. They informed us of the plan to plant about 10,000 native plants by 2013. There are plans for demonstration gardens and developing gardens around the greenhouse. Volunteers are involved in the work of weeding and cleaning on the grounds. Clay Breakers Elaine Arnold and Pam Smart took part in some of the cleaning and weeding activities.

MORNING OF DESIGN

On October 10, 2012 a morning of design was held at St. John's Episcopal Church hall, Fort Washington, MD. It was hosted by Tanta Cove Garden Club on behalf of District 1. Linda Millette, Gilda Allen, Mary Beth Cecil and Elaine Arnold were in attendance. Mary Beth, Arbor House Manager, with the assistance of Elaine, put on a Trunk Show at the event which displayed items from the gift shop.

ANNUAL CHRISTMAS PARTY

The ladies met at the beautifully decorated home of Iona Black on December 13, 2012 for their annual Christmas Potluck and gift exchange. It was a delightful evening in which the ladies feasted on a sumptuous meal. The Mount Airy Clay Breakers Silver Tray, awarded annually to members for outstanding achievement, was presented to Lorraine Leonard for season 2012-2013. Lorraine won a white ribbon for her vegetable arrangement entered in the Horticulture Show of the Annual Prince George's County Fair 2012. Another highlight of the evening was the 'Christmas Ornament Contest' which was won by Arminta Donovan.

The winter gardener reminders:

For those of us who still want to flex our muscles in the garden, there are still a few things we can do in our gardens in February or late winter: Garden beds can be cleared of dead plants, weeds and debris accumulated during winter. The dead leaves of bearded Irises can be cut. Also it is suggested that Liriope and ornamental grasses be cut at this time.

SPRING CALENDER: 2013

DISTRICT 1 AWARDS / ELECTION MEETING Thursday, March 14 at the US National Arboretum.

There is no such thing as an ordinary flower. Charlotte Gray, 1937.