

BACK ACRE NEWS

Volume #57, Number 2

February 19, 2012

The Men's and Women's Garden Club of Findlay

Organized 1954

→ February 23 – Regular Meeting ←

Topic: Hosta Culture and Care with Sharon DeCooman and Ann Brickner

Refreshments: Larry Schock and Deanna Basinger

How do you say “Thanks”? In the business world, it is highly advised that one have a fifteen second resume/sales pitch at the ready to sell oneself or one's project at the drop of a hat. We should do the same thing to sell our Club. When someone compliments one of us on the Triangle Garden, for instance, we should be ready with our own fifteen second spiel. Nothing elaborate is needed; just something along the lines of: “Thanks. Our Garden Club members have a lot of fun recreating that garden every spring. We also enjoy getting together once a month to hear about and talk about all kinds of gardening. We'd love to have you join us. Our next meeting is [fill in the meeting time and date] at the Municipal Building. Won't you join us?” Put this in a way that is natural to you, your manner of speaking, and your interests.



If they express an interest, follow up with a personal touch – offer to pick them up, meet them in the parking lot, or whatever is appropriate.

If they beg off, mention that if they have an email address, you would be pleased to send them the next three monthly issues of our Back Acre Newsletter, which tells a little about our Club and what the discussion topics are (and get the address to me ASAP).

If still no sale, remind them to watch the meeting notices in the Courier, and feel free to attend any of our upcoming meetings that interest them.

If none of these get a rise, pat yourself on the back anyhow. At least you made the effort. And making the effort is what we all need to do to grow the Club and pursue our goals of spreading the knowledge and joy of gardening.

On the gardening front, for those of you into making maple syrup, this is the week to start – daytime highs in the 40's, and nighttime lows below freezing will get the sap flowing nicely. And, yes, maple trees in the city-wide tree lawns or your side yard can produce for the enterprising tapper. (So can Box Elder, but at a more dilute rate.)

John

Gee, what did I miss? Dick Schweitzer revealed his life-long love affair with popcorn - raising, popping, eating and sharing it with others – as he did with us all.

Next Month's Event: Meeting, March 22; Gladioli and Gourds, with *Bill Lanning*

News of Note: Our fellow Club member *Marilynn Beltz* has been hired by Ohio State University Extension as the new Master Gardener coordinator in Hancock County. She replaces Nancy Kronberg, who retired from the position in October. Marilynn will coordinate Master Gardener classes, programs and activities, as well as the Phone Club program on 1330 WFAN. She will also contribute occasionally to the Home column for The Courier's Weekend section, and manage calls seeking gardening information.

Son of Triangle (the sequel): Please take the time, if you have not already done so, to drive by the 'new' triangle at the intersection of Crystal Avenue and Blanchard Street. We will be asking for your opinions as the year progresses.

Bill Jones and *John Platt* surveyed the plot. It is a much larger triangle than our floral garden, but has interesting possibilities as a landscaped perennial park, even including small trees, according to Bill's practiced eye. There are, however, three major considerations facing our Club, should we decide to adopt this plot as a civic beautification project.

Money: Bill's top-of-the-head thought is in the range of one thousand dollars, depending on what we choose to do with it. This would be a one-time investment – since it would be a perennial planting, only minor expenses should be incurred in subsequent years. We have had tentative discussions about a second plant sale in late summer featuring day lilies and other perennials. This might be a good cause for further consideration. An internal fund drive, freewill donations, could augment the sale proceeds.

Water: Bill contacted an acquaintance at Bishop-Kandel Rentals next door to the triangle about a source of water – prime ingredient number one for any garden project.. We received a positive response, although not a commitment, as the owner is out of state at the moment.

Will: This undertaking would require some significant effort to establish, and to nurture over its first, establishing, year. Fall and spring cleanups of the perennials would be needed on a yearly basis. This ongoing effort is critical to our Club's image, and must have buy-in from the group, preferably with individual names attached. At the same time, it *cannot detract* from our signature project at the current Triangle. Here is where our recruiting efforts could bear fruit (gardening pun intended). New members could get in on a new project with which they could personally identify.

John has sent a letter to Mayor Mihalik expressing our interest in considering this as a beautification project, asking who in her administration we should be in contact with, and that we will be studying it over the coming months. We should decide whether to commit by early fall so we can do plantings as appropriate then.

There are still some Home and Garden Shows available to whet your appetite for spring (as if we need that):

Cincinnati Home & Garden Show®

February 25 - 26 & February 29 - March 4, 2012

www.hartproductions.com/home-and-garden-show/visitor-information.html

(Columbus) Central Ohio Home & Garden Show

Ohio Expo Center

February 25 - March 4, 2012

Sunday 10 a.m.-6 p.m. Tuesday- Friday noon-9 p.m. Saturday 10 a.m.-9 p.m. Closed Monday, February 27

<http://www.experiencecolumbus.com/event-detail.cfm?id=28361>

The Fort Wayne Home and Garden Show

Allen County Memorial Coliseum

March 1-4, 2012

<http://www.home-gardenshow.com/>

(Toledo) PRO Home and Garden Show

SeaGate Convention Centre

Friday March 09 - Sunday March 11, 2012

www.hireaprotoday.com/home_garden_01.html

Bonnie Plants tour is coming up in April. *Cathy Grossman* shared a message circulating among the Master Gardeners about this excellent company. I pass along a part of it so we can look forward to our visit even more eagerly.

Kids grow green giants in the Bonnie Plants colossal cabbage contest! It's easy going and growing green with the National Bonnie Plants Cabbage Program. Kids across America are learning to garden and some are earning a lot of "green" participating in Bonnie's Cabbage Program. This season, more than 1.5 million third graders in 48 states dug in and got hands-on gardening experience growing colossal cabbages, reaping hefty harvests and holding high hopes to win "best in state" and receive a \$1,000 scholarship towards education from Bonnie Plants.



To the left is the state of Ohio's winner, Skyler Huda. She grew a humongous cabbage and was randomly chosen by Ohio's Agriculture Commissioner as the state's winner. Skyler will receive a \$1,000 saving bond towards education from Bonnie Plants.

Each year Bonnie Plants, the largest producer of vegetable and herb plants in North America, with 75 growing stations across the country, trucks free O.S. Cross, or "oversized," cabbage plants to third grade classrooms whose teachers have signed up for the program online at www.bonnieplants.com. If nurtured and cared for, kids can grow green, giant cabbages, some tipping the scales at 40 pounds!

First launched in 2002, the program awards a \$1,000 scholarship to one student in each participating state. At the end of the growing season, teachers from each class select the student who has grown the "best" cabbage, based on size and appearance. A picture of the cabbage and the student entry is submitted to Bonnie Plants by mail or online. That student's name is then entered in a statewide drawing. The winners of each state's drawing are randomly selected by the Commission of Agriculture's office, state by state.

Why a cabbage? Cabbages were the first plant sold by Bonnie in 1918. The cabbages used for the 3rd grade program are OS Cross (over-sized), which is known for producing giant, oversized heads, making the process even more exciting for kids.

Hefty harvest time: In just 10 to 12 weeks, you should have a humongous head of cabbage you can be proud of. (Ed. Note: a cabbage also matures at about the end of the school year, eliminating the necessity of summer vacation care.)

Green thumbs and perseverance can pay off, providing participating children with a great sense of pride and accomplishment, a colossal cabbage, and for the lucky state winner- the beginning of an educational fund for college. To see the 2011 winners and learn more about the 2012 contest, visit www.bonnieplants.com

FEBRUARY FLOWER OF THE MONTH-VIOLET

By Bill Jones



Violet, viola, Johnny-Jump-Up and pansy, what's the difference? Actually all of the plants in the *Viola* genus are technically known as violets. Pansies are the cultivars belonging to *Viola x wittrockiana* and most other annual members of the *Viola* genus. Johnny-Jump-Ups are also annual members of the *Viola* genus but are smaller-flowered than pansies and only come in shades of purple, white, and yellow. Johnny-Jump-Ups are cultivars of *Viola tricolor*. The term, violet, is generally reserved for members of the *Viola* genus that are evergreen or semi-evergreen perennials. Neither *Saintpaulia* ("African violets") nor *Erythronium dens-canis* ("dogtooth violets") are related to the true *Viola*.

The flowers are formed from five petals; four are upswept or fan-shaped petals with two per side, and there is one broad, lobed lower petal pointing downward. The shape of the petals and placement defines many species, for example, some *Viola* species have a "spur" on the end of each petal while most have a spur on the lower petal.

One quirk of some *Viola* is the elusive scent of their flowers; along with terpenes, a major component of the scent is a ketone compound called ionone, which temporarily desensitises the receptors of the nose, thus preventing any further scent being detected from the flower until the nerves recover.

The common blue violet, *Viola sororia*, is the state flower of Wisconsin, Rhode Island, Illinois, and New Jersey.

When newly opened, *Viola* flowers may be used to decorate salads or in stuffings for poultry or fish. The young leaves are edible raw or cooked as a somewhat bland leaf vegetable.



The flowers, leaves, and roots of various *Viola* species are used for medicinal purposes, being rich in vitamins A and C. They also contain a type of antioxidant called an anthocyanin. *Viola* flowers are also used to make an herbal tea that is used in Chinese herbal medicine.

The Ancient Greeks considered the violet a symbol of fertility and love; they used it in love potions. Pliny recommended that a garland of violets be worn above the head to ward off headaches and dizzy spells.

Recipes as requested by our eager eaters:

Triple Layer Chocolate Bars (from Connie Schultz)

1 1/2 C Graham Cracker Crumbs
1/2 C Hershey's Cocoa (divided)
1/4 C Sugar
1/2 C Butter or Margarine (melted)
14 oz. Sweetened Condensed Milk
1/4 C Flour (unsifted)

1 egg
1 tsp Vanilla
1/2 tsp Baking Powder
3/4 C chopped nuts
12 oz semisweet chocolate chips

Preheat oven to 350 degrees
Combine crumbs, 1/4 C cocoa, sugar and butter
Press firmly on bottom of 13" X 9" pan
In mixer bowl, beat milk, 1/4 C cocoa, flour, egg, vanilla, & baking powder
Stir in nuts
Spread over prepared crust
Top with chips
Bake 25 minutes or until set
Store tightly covered

Pecan Pie Surprise Bars from Ann Brickner

Served at the March. 2006, Meeting

- 1 pkg. yellow cake mix, divided
- 1/2 c. butter or margarine, melted (I use Smart Balance shortening [like Crisco],
so I add 3 t. water with it - you can include this or leave it out)
- 1 egg
- 1 1/2 c. chopped pecans

Grease bottom & sides of 9x13" pan. Reserve
2/3 cup of dry cake mix for filling. In large mixing
bowl, combine remaining dry cake mix, butter,
& one egg; mix until crumbly. Press in prepared
pan. Bake at 350 degrees for 15-20 minutes
until light golden brown. Meanwhile prepare filling.

Filling:

- 2/3 c. reserved cake mix
- 1/2 c. firmly packed brown sugar
- 1 1/2 c. dark corn syrup
- 1 t. vanilla
- 3 eggs

In large mixer bowl, combine all ingredients; beat at medium
speed 1-2 minutes until smooth. Pour filling over partially
baked crust. Sprinkle with pecans. Return to oven and bake
30-35 minutes until filling is set. Cool. Cut into 24 bars.

Caramel Corn (from Virginia Blackford of RCA)

This recipe results in a non-sticky caramel coating similar to Cracker Jacks (or did when BB margarine cost \$.25/pound):

- 1 1/3 cups sugar
- 1/2 cup Kayro Syrup
- 1/2 pound Blue Bonnet Margarine (no other brand will work)

Boil over medium heat; stir constantly until it is a light caramel color, 10 – 15 minutes. Add one teaspoon vanilla, then pour
over 5 – 6 quarts of popped corn. Stir until corn is well coated. (add pecans and almonds if desired).

Men's and Womens's Garden Club of Findlay, Inc.

February Financial Report

Balance 1/1/2012.....	\$2,934.43
Receipts.....	\$ 238.00
Expenses.....	<u>(\$ 500.00)</u>
Balance 2/13/2012.....	\$2,672.43

Bill Jones, Treasurer

January 26, 2012, General Meeting Minutes

After a presentation on popcorn presented by Dick Schweitzer, the meeting was called to order at 8 PM, with 21 members present. The Secretary's minutes from the 11-17-11 meeting were accepted.

It was noted that the Treasurer's budget was accepted in the Executive Committee meeting earlier this date. The Treasurer's report as published in the BAN was accepted.

Other Committees:

Anita Lanning gave the Spark Plug award and a Certificate of Appreciation to Cindy Pierce.

Bill Jones reported that Jessica Pierce joined the club as a new member. 5 past members did not rejoin the club this year.

Cindy Pierce of the Publicity Committee will look into how the Club may use a web page, and what it might look like. She will be assisted by Cathy Grossman and Bill Lanning.

Bill Jones noted that the Triangle Committee meets on the first Thursday of the month at 9 AM at Panera, and members are welcome to join them.

More members were needed to provide refreshments throughout the year, and volunteers responded to provide refreshments.

Old Business:

Bill Jones reported that Melanie McAfee had noted a need for a group to provide planning and installation of landscaping for Habitat for Humanity homes. The funding is available. John Platt will contact Melanie to gain further information.

New Business:

There is a need for an assistant treasurer, and Ron Menges was appointed to fill this post by John Platt, effective 1-1-12.

Anita Lanning made a motion to adjourn. It was seconded by John Grossman, and the motion passed. The meeting was ended at 8:30pm.

(Refreshments were provided by Sharon DeCooman and Connie Schultz.)

Respectfully submitted by Connie Schultz, Secretary.

BAN on the web: a reminder that our newsletter is available on the web. It can help you introduce our Club to others. Our sister organization has the current issue and almost a year's worth of the back issues available at:

www.thegardenersoflima.org/OtherClubsNewsletters.html

Club Officers, 2012

President	John Platt (jplatt@wcnet.org)	Directors, 3 years	John Andrews
1 st Vice President	Anita Lanning		Pauline Andrews
2 nd Vice President	Cindy Pierce	Directors, 2 years	Sharon DeCooman
Secretary	Connie Schultz		Larry Schock
Treasurer	Bill Jones	Directors, 1 year	Marilynn Beltz
Past President	Cathy Grossman		John Grossman
BAN Editor	John Platt	National Director	Anita Lanning



National Web Site: www.tgoa-mgca.org Regional Web Site: www.acorn.net.cgjr
Check out the bargains offered to every TGOA/MGCA member:
Go to the **Members Only** page of the national web site. Password is **lily**
No internet access? Use your local public library!

