



The Garden Gabber

Newsletter of
the Gardeners of Greater Akron
Affiliated with The Gardeners of America Inc.,
The Men's Garden Clubs of America, Central Great Lakes Gardeners



Published Monthly:

Volume LXXV

February 2016

Number 2

President:

Pat Pickard
1247 Robinson Ave.
Barberton, OH 44203
☎330-848-0687
Email: cbordner@neo.rr.com

1st Vice President:

Steve Hoot
41 Richard Dr..
Munroe Falls, Oh 44262
☎330-688-1875
Email: hootfs@att.net

2nd Vice President:

Ken Bell
1472 N. Medina Line Rd
Akron, OH 44333
☎302-593-8362
Email: callmeishmael196@yahoo.com

Secretary:

Sue Godard
2613 Cardington Green
Uniontown, OH 44685-7526
☎330-699-0509
Email: sstaats511@aol.com

Treasurer:

Robert N. Bell
1832 Sandy Lake Road
Ravenna, OH 44266-8202
☎330-673-3553
Email: mrrnbell@hotmail.com

Historian

Leroy Hart
633 Schocalog Road
Akron, OH 44320-1937
☎330-836-1407
Email: gardengabber@neo.rr.com

National Director:

Mary Ann Ferguson - Rich
1166 Broadview Rd.
Tallmadge, OH 44278
☎330-630-9625
Email: mafr43@hotmail.com

Monday, February 15

Make plans to attend each monthly meeting. It's a great opportunity to socialize, enjoy good food, and to learn more about gardening and our environment.

When: Monday, February 15, 2016
5:30 p.m. – Social Hour
6:30 p.m. – Dinner

Where: St George Orthodox Church
3204 Ridgewood Rd
Fairlawn, OH 44333

Program: Janet Kowalski – Summit County Extension
“*Integrated Pest Management*”

Board Meeting Monday February 22nd at 7:00 PM
Faith Lutheran Church, 2726 West Market St., Fairlawn, Ohio
All members are encouraged to attend board meetings

Greetings from the Weed Factory. February has arrived, winter has not, and Punxsutawney Phil says we'll have an early spring - and I believe him! The mild conditions have allowed me to spend time in the yard that I would not be allotted in a regular winter. I must admit most of my time is just piddling around, which consists primarily of playing in the compost pile and turning my pile of shredded leaves. It gets me outdoors (I like to experience the day) and I figure whatever I can get done now is something won't have to do later. The mild weather also gets me thinking about my annual ritual of starting plants in the basement. While it is way too early to actually plant I get an itch to start tooling up. I have started flats in my basement for many years and learned a lesson or two (like starting the plants too early) so I'm pretty comfortable with the routine. I have been scaling back the last few years primarily stating Zinnias, a flowering vine or two, and peppers. If you have never started plants from seed indoors I recommend giving it a try. It is not hard and you can grow plant varieties that you just can't get at a local garden center. Donzell's sells most of the starter material you will need like soil, trays and inserts.

February is also the month that the denizen of the dark comes out of hibernation to breed. I am referring to skunks. I run in the evenings and I am starting to see more of them moving about. I try to give them a wide berth if at all possible although I have come very close to actually stepping on them in the dark. Fortunately everybody stayed calm - both me and the skunk. This past summer I had a skunk hanging out around my bird feeders and getting fat on the grubs in my backyard. The skunk would show up just after dusk and I could look out about any time during the night and see him rolling and tumbling across the yard. He occasionally let out a "toot" which would require me to get up and shut the windows. But I was good with it because he didn't bark and I figured whoever he sprayed I probably didn't want them in my back yard anyway. Better than a watch dog. Such a deal.



My summer guest, with a solid white pate

This month Janet Kowalski from the Summit County Extension will be giving a presentation on Integrated Pest Management – I'm talking about bugs and not the neighbor kid. Ann Bryant from Columbus will be giving a talk in July about soil management through the use of cover crops, and in September Hadley Stamm of PPG Industries will be speaking about the Lime Lakes Reclamation project. We will also have an update on plans for the Geranium Sale and volunteering opportunities galore. So please plan on attending and please bring a friend!

Pat
02-05-16

Editor's note – The picture in the above greeting was submitted in black and white!

Geranium Sale Advanced Information

It was recommended to me by some members of our board that we get information out early in regards to the Geranium sale. The dates of the sale are May 6 – 7 on Mother's Day weekend. We will have sign ups at the March and April meetings. We have had great participation for this sale in the past. Chuck Keach has already volunteered for the overnight shift as well as the sale chairman. If we could have two more; that would be ideal. We are looking to expand the scope of the sale. There is a possibility that we could get a nursery from Lake County to bring perennials and sell them from their truck. This would add a new dimension to the sale. With the winter we have had; we can only hope that the spring is warm and sunny so that our offerings are appealing to the public.

Program Planning Survey

Our 1st Vice President, Steve Hoot has included a survey on the next page to get your input on guest speakers for next year. He is starting this very early and with your help should be able to line up the speakers that you would like to hear talking about the subjects that interest you. Please fill out the survey and turn it into Steve at the next meeting.

We Miss You

Two of our club members, Louise Gifford and John Lewis have been dealing with serious health issues over the last few months. Please keep them in your thoughts and send a card or give them a call. We hope to see them at our dinner meetings in the near future.

The Gardeners of Greater Akron

Program Planning, Topics and Ideas Survey 2016-2017

1. What general subjects should be addressed at our meetings?

2. What Speaker or programs would you recommend for possible future meetings? Have you heard a speaker or heard about a speaker who you feel is outstanding?

3. What location around the greater Akron area would be a special "find" for a tour and/or meeting?

4. What is "happening" in the Akron area that would be of special interest to our membership?

5. How might we improve our program format to attract new members and keep our present members?

Here, the latest tips and tricks from Paul James, host of *Gardening by the Yard*

1. To remove the salt deposits that form on clay pots, combine equal parts white vinegar, rubbing alcohol and water in a spray bottle. Apply the mixture to the pot and scrub with a plastic brush. Let the pot dry before you plant anything in it.
2. To prevent accumulating dirt under your fingernails while you work in the garden, draw your fingernails across a bar of soap and you'll effectively seal the undersides of your nails so dirt can't collect beneath them. Then, after you've finished in the garden, use a nailbrush to remove the soap and your nails will be sparkling clean.
3. To prevent the line on your string trimmer from jamming or breaking, treat with a spray vegetable oil before installing it in the trimmer.
4. Turn a long handled tool into a measuring stick! Lay a long handled garden tool on the ground and next to it place a tape measure. Using a permanent marker, write inch and foot marks on the handle. When you need to space plants a certain distance apart (from just an inch to several feet) you'll already have a measuring stick in your hand.
5. To have garden twine handy when you need it, just stick a ball of twine in a small clay pot, put the twine through the drainage hole then put the pot upside down in the garden. Do that and you'll never go looking for twine again.
6. Little clay pots make great cloches for protecting young plants from overnight frost and freezes.
7. To turn clay pots into a hose guide, just stab a roughly one foot length reinforcing bar into the ground at the corner of a bed and slip two clay pots over it; one facing down and one facing up. The guides will prevent damage to your plants as you drag the hose along the bed.
8. To create perfectly natural markers, write the names of plants (using a permanent marker) on flat faces of stones of various sizes and place them at or near the base of your plants.
9. Got aphids? You can control them with a strong blast of water from the hose or with insecticide soap. But here's another suggestion; one that's a lot more fun. Get some tape and wrap a wide strip around your hand, sticky side out and pat the leaves of plants infested with aphids. Concentrate on the bottom of the leaves because that is where the little buggers love to hide.
10. The next time you boil or steam vegetables, don't pour the water down the drain. Use it to water potted patio plants and you'll be amazed at how the plants respond to the "vegetable soup".
11. Use leftover tea and coffee grounds to acidify the soil of acid loving plants such as azaleas, rhododendrons, camellias, gardenias and even blueberries. A light sprinkling of about one quarter inch applied once a month will keep the pH of the soil on the acidic side.
12. Use chamomile tea to control damping-off fungus which often attacks young seedlings quite suddenly. Just add a spot of tea to the soil around the base of seedlings once a week or use it in a folier spray.
13. If you need an instant table for tea service, look no farther than your collection of clay pots and saucers. Just flip a good sized pot over and top it off with a large saucer. And when you've had your share of tea; fill the saucer with water and your table is now a birdbath
14. The quickest way to dry herbs; just lay a sheet of newspaper on the seat of your car. Arrange the herbs in a single layer. Roll up the windows and close the doors. The herbs are dried to perfection and your car will smell great.