



The Garden Gabber



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Monday, February 20

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 20, 2006
5:30 p.m. – Social Hour
6:30 p.m. – Dinner

Where: Peg's Catering
440 Grant Street
Akron, Ohio 44311

Program **Denise R. Ellsworth**
Extension Educator, Horticulture

Ms. Ellsworth received the Bachelor of Science from The Ohio State University, Department of Plant Pathology, Columbus, Ohio in 1992 She had minors in Art History and Italian and the Master of Science from The Ohio State University, School of Natural Resources, Columbus, Ohio in 1994 with Emphasis in Environmental Education

She is the Garden Writer, Akron Beacon Journal, Coordinator, OSU Master Gardener Program of Summit County and Educator in many areas of horticulture, including plant pests, plant identification, and botany.

Her areas of emphasis are Integrated Pest Management, Insects and Weeds in the Landscape and Plant and Insect Phenology

Her hobbies are running, , gardening, and enjoying the outdoors with her children, 8 and 12.

Board meeting Feb. 27, 7 P.M. at the Garden Forum, W. Market & White Pond

Club web site: <http://www.acorn.net/mgcaakron>

A Message from President Leroy Hart

So it's February Not much to do in the garden or even in the greenhouse. It's just time to go through the seed catalogues and plan for spring and summer. If you are going to start some seeds indoors, and I think I will this year it's time to get started. .

So far this has been an easy winter. You may ask, what do you mean by "an easy winter"? I think the answer is relative; it depends on who you are and where you are. For example - Last summer my wife and I took a bus tour through Newfoundland. We had a step on guide take us around the capital, St. John's. Somebody asked the guide, "What are the winters like here?" He replied, "Two years ago we had an easy winter, I only had to use my snowblower four times. This past winter I used it 40 times." Obviously he considered that to be a hard winter. For me, I would consider having to use the snow blower on the driveway four times a pretty hard winter. This year I haven't used it even once; therefore, it's an easy winter (so far).

Some other things about Newfoundland we learned that you might find interesting. We took a boat ride out into the ocean and saw lots of whales, right up alongside the boat. We also saw an island with thousands of birds and bird nests, puffins and other sea birds. They say the reason for the popularity of this island is that there are no predators on the island. In some places the birds were packed in shoulder to shoulder.

That evening we took a flight to St. Anthony's, about an hour and a half flight. There was no sign of civilization the whole flight, no towns, no buildings, nothing but trees and lakes and ponds. From the airport to St. Anthony's was a half hour bus trip. The bus kept slowing down and even stopping sometimes. We couldn't see why. The tour guide said that there were moose following us and sometimes crossing in front of us. Most of the trucks in Newfoundland have big heavy grills in front of the truck's radiator, called moose catchers.

Along the highways we would see gardens growing right close to the road. actually in the berm of the road. The guide told us that these were community gardens for the little communities . He said the reason for putting them alongside the road was because this was the only place they could find soil deep enough for a garden. We also saw many wood piles along the road. The guide said that these were community wood piles. In the spring all the people in the village would go into the woods and pull out the downed trees and bring them to the roadside and cut them into cord wood.

In these little villages, especially those on the seacoast, almost every house had vinyl siding. The guide said that they didn't have much else to spend their money on and the vinyl siding meant they didn't have to paint every year. Wind and salt sea spray are hard on paint.

Newfoundland is the poorest province in Canada. Their main source of income is fishing for cod on the Grand Banks. But only a few of them are allowed to fish. The cod have almost disappeared from the Grand Banks and they don't know why. Therefore, only a few fish are caught, with the government's permission, some are tagged and put back. The irony of the situation is that the locals can't fish, but other countries come with their factory boats to fish. As an alternative the Newfies went shrimp fishing, but gave up because the shrimp were so small. We did see thousands of lobster traps stored alongside the road waiting for the season to start.

We also went to Labrador, which is part of Newfoundland. There are only 37 miles of paved roads in Labrador and we traveled all of them.

(If you are interested, I could continue this travelogue next month.)

Membership Committee Report

As the Chair, I want to congratulate Richard (Dick) Cotton and Walt Starcher for each bringing in a new member in 2005. The other members of the S-Team strove to bring in new "blood" but were hampered by lack of potential contacts. The names of the people who will function on the New Member Search Committee - that's the S-Team - will be posted in the March Gabber.

I have Dick Cotton as the Assistant Chair listed with me on the Membership forms and we will be looking for some new member applications to be coming in.

I think that all of you are aware that the membership is falling to new lows this year. What are the reasons for this? I would appeal to all of you who have not renewed for 2006 -- reconsider your decision. All non-renewal persons will be contacted during the month of February by either Bill Moorehouse or myself to find out if you will renew. You should send your renewal checks directly to the 2006 Treasurer, John Lewis. His mailing address is in the 2005 Roster and is repeated here for your use:

John Lewis
3066 Roher Road
Wadsworth, OH 44281-9576

The club is "lean and hungry" this year. We have excellent programs for the Dinner Meetings lined up. We have interesting projects to be involved with. We have some new folks who have stepped into important roles for 2006. We are poised on the edge of a great revival; but -- we can't do it without members. That is the truth of the matter.

Jim Fee, Chair of the Membership Committee

S-Team Members from 2005

I will be contacting all of you who were members of the S-Team in 2005. I will be asking you if you will be involved in building the Men's Garden Club of Akron again. Expect either an e-mail message or a phone call early in February.

Jim Fee, Commander of the S-Team, MGCofA

Say a Prayer

Little Johnny and his family were having Sunday dinner at his grandmother's house. Everyone was seated around the table as the food was being served, When little Johnny received his plate, he started eating right away.

"Johnny wait until we say our prayer" "I don't have to," the boy replied

"Of course you do," his mother insisted. "We say a prayer, before eating, at our house."

"That's our house", Johnny explained. "But this is grandma's house and she knows how to cook."

About February

February, the Roman “Month of Purification” - our second month - gets its name from the Latin word, *Februarius*, through the verb, *februare*, meaning to “expiate” or “purify”. At the Festival of Februa, celebrated on February 15, the people repented of their wrong doings, and offered sacrifices to their gods.

It is said that the word, *Februarius* was associated with *Februus*, a name given Faunus. He was identified with Pan, “the god of purification and fertility in man and beast.” In February, during the Feast of Lupercalia, women were purified by the priests. Such officials would walk around the streets and when they met a woman, they struck her with goatskin thongs to assure fertility and easy delivery. On February 21, the Romans also celebrated the Feast of Feralia, public religious rites, honoring the dead. Therefore, this month was an important one in Roman life.

At first, February was not in their calendar which had only ten months. Then, about 700 B.C. Numa Pompilius (the second Roman king, following Romulus) changed the year of 304 days to a lunar one of 355. He added two months: January, at the beginning of the new year; and February, at the end. Numa gave this month twenty nine days with thirty in Leap Year.

Later in 452 B.C. the Decemvirs inserted February between January and March. Then, when Augustus Caesar changed the name of the month from Sextilis to August to honor himself, he took a day from February, leaving it normally with twenty-eight. He did this so that his month could have as many days as July, named for Julius Caesar. Consequently, February has remained the shortest month of the year.

According to an early writer named Versteegen, the Anglo-Saxons called the second month, “Kale-monath”. “Kale” or “kele”, meant the “kole-wort” (now termed “cole-wort”) or cabbage. This vegetable was used in making the soup which was the chief dish on the farmer’s winter menu. Since cabbage was the first vegetable to sprout in February, it got the name “sprout-kale” and February was named for it. The Anglo-Saxons also called it “Solmoneth” and sometimes “Pancake Month”; for at this time these pagans offered gifts of cakes to the sun god.

February, from ancient times, was mentioned as a period of uncertain weather and temperatures, along with heavy rainfall. There was an early English belief that the type of weather on February 12, 13, and 14 would indicate what it would be the rest of the year.

There is an old English superstition, which was brought to America and which is still widely accepted, especially in Pennsylvania that if the sun shone on Candlemas Day (commonly termed Groundhog Day) February 2, and the little groundhog saw his shadow when he ventured out of his winter hole then there would be six more weeks of cold weather. Therefore, a cloudy, rainy day on the second of February was welcomed by farmers; for they firmly believed it foretold the early coming of the spring season.

The February birthstone is the amethyst, the purple variety of quartz, which contains traces of manganese and iron. From times of antiquity the amethyst has been prized as a gem stone. “Amethyst” comes from the Greek word *ametthythios*, meaning “without drunkenness”, and the gem was worn to cure intoxication. However, wine cups, beautifully carved from large crystals of amethyst, were used in early times in some places.

The February flower is the violet and the alternate flower is the primrose.

Geranium Sale

It's time to start thinking about the geranium sale. The dates for the sale this year will be Friday May 12 and Saturday May 13. The place will be the same as last year. Chet Lowry has volunteered to be the chairman this year. He will have geranium tickets available at the February meeting. So contact your customers and get the tickets sold. Also try to get the money for the geraniums to the treasurer, John Lewis, by the April meeting or the days of the sale at the latest. We get a discount on the cost of the geraniums if we pay at the time of delivery.

The board has ordered 600 flats of flowers, This is 100 flats fewer than were ordered last year. Last year we had quite a few flats left over and they had to be disposed of at the May meeting. The board also has ordered more of the colors that sold out last year and fewer of the less popular colors.

The board also had to increase the price of a flat from \$18.00 to \$20.00. This was necessary because the grower has increased the cost to us a little each of the past two years. In the preceding years we have absorbed this increase ourselves, while taking a smaller profit. This time the board felt that we needed to increase the price. It is understandable why the grower has to increase the cost. Each year the price of plastic for the pots and trays goes up and this year the cost of natural gas to heat the greenhouses is much higher.

Deervik, Deer Repellent

Deervik is a paste-like substance which is rain-resistant, biodegradable and non-toxic. Apply it to porous cardboard tags and hang in trees and bushes at the level the deer eat or damage. It is extremely smelly in the container, but humans will not smell it once it is placed outdoors. One or two tags will protect a tree all growing season.

For low growing plants such as vegetables, hostas, and tulips, coat a stick in Deervik and place it in the ground near the plant. It also works to deter squirrels, groundhogs and rabbits.

Johnny Appleseed Broadcaster

The next issue of the Johnny Appleseed Broadcaster will be available at the February meeting. Please take your copy home with you. The board had the left over copies of the last issue mailed at considerable cost to the club. Let's have few left overs this time.



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