

TWIGS

The Garden Club of Greater Lansing



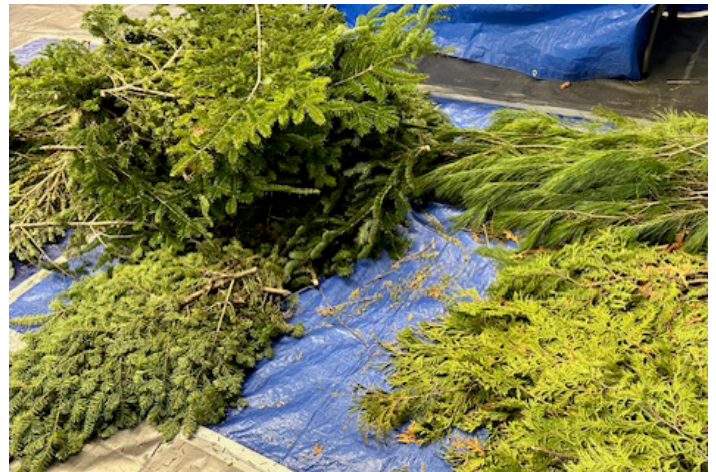
Member of: Michigan Garden Clubs Inc. District 2B, National Garden Club Central Region, National Garden Club Inc.

President's Message

I am not sure where the time has gone. We are in November and prepping our products for our Greens Market. So many people have had a big hand in getting us to this point. It started in the summer making pics, learning how to make bows, and how to wire pinecones.



We then went on to inventory of what we had and what we needed. With that information purchases were made, greenery was ordered.



Marketing material was produced, the website was updated and made live for people to place orders. To our surprise we needed to make a trip to pick-up the greens. A few members volunteered their day and vehicles to get the greens. All of this plus more has been done by many people in various roles. We are now at the hand building of swags and some wreaths that are a special order. Next up will be cutting boxwood, washing and then trees, and small to large arrangements. I can see the excitement by some of our new members as they are finding their artistic hand at producing wonderful products. This is just the beginning. We will have a busy week making and creating all the fun designs. Boughs will be cut and

bags filled from orders. Rope will be cut and rolled up for customers. So many hands, so many tasks.



Thank you. December will be upon us soon. The fun day of sales. Watching to see who is buying your design. Oh, that first sale when someone comes along and chooses your design is very fulfilling.



WHEW! We got through the excitement now come and celebrate at our Tea. This event gives us time to enjoy each

other's company, relax, taste good food and drink a variety of teas. Sign-up sheets will be available at the greens-making events. Please think about teaming up with folks to bring something. The team will make sure we have what is needed. For those who have been to **Mary's** home welcome back. For those coming for the first time she welcomes you into her home. Please carpool. While she can accommodate many vehicles it is easier if you can ride together.

Many of you know I am going to have hip surgery. The new year I go bionic. **Ann** will have her hands full as she is acting District Director with support from the Steering Committee. She is also going to manage the meeting for January and maybe February. Please help out where you can. **Ronnie** is also busy with our club and the District.

Start to think about topics or speakers for next year. Yes, we are at that time in January when we need to put things on paper, make contact and schedule our '25/'26 year. Ann will ask you for ideas. Ann is still looking for that Staging Chair for the Flower Show in '26. You will have a team of people assisting with this project. You have already experienced that team of people during the Greens Market.

Please send **Jenny** a get-well card. She has fallen and broke her ankle. I know she is miserable about missing this exciting time of Greens Market. In her previous years, Jenny was a key player in wreath making and design.

Many of our members are active in the community supporting MSU Extension, Master Gardeners, Design and Photography groups, Wild Birds Unlimited, Wild Types, Wild Flower Association, Tri-County Iris Society and MGC. We have an extremely active membership. We have a lot to be proud of.

Landscape Design Summary

The second of four courses in the Landscape Design School was held September 25th and 26th at the Trinity Church in Lansing, hosted by our local garden club. Speakers were **Tim Banfield PLA ASLA; Mike Holmes, Landscape Architect; Matthew Ross, Horticulturist; Leah Knapp, DVM; Tanya M. Moore, PLA, CPSI, ASLA;** and **Carolyn Miller, MSU Botanical Technologist** who spoke to our club earlier this year.

As in the first course, a wealth of information was presented. Tim opened the course with a discussion on the process of designing a landscape to serve the needs of those using it and how we, as the designer, must become the artist, engineer, advocate, and steward. He recommended considering multiple options before settling on a plan.

Mike followed with information on *Redesigning a Landscape* and urged beginning with the WHY before progressing to HOW and WHAT because discovering the WHY determines function and as we learned in the first seminar, form follows function. Understanding the WHY (ask seven times) determines the appropriate changes.

Matthew reinforced this concept by asking us to write a two-sentence vision statement for our property to help clarify our design intent. Connecting to our landscape is critical so we need to LOVE the finished project in order for it to be successful. Interestingly, of all the considerations given to selecting plants, color is the least important whereas testing your soil is critical. He offered the guideline that in order to create balance, 70% of cool-color plants should be complimented with 30% warm color plants. His second presentation highlighted his role in the process of developing the **Anishinabek Medicine Wheel, Forging Meadow in Traverse City**. The *Anishinabek People* believe that what we do today (healing trauma) affects the three prior generations and the three that follow. Interestingly, current research in intergenerational trauma (using mice) has documented that a conditioned fear response can be passed on for three generations, confirming former observations in human populations. The hypothesis is trauma modifies gene expression (epigenetic alteration) and the effects can be inherited.

Leah's presentation for this seminar was on another topic she was passionate about: *Overused, Often Invasive Plants and Native Alternatives*. She explained that while native plants are part of the natural habitat and have interdependent relationships with local species, non-natives are introduced, often invasive, and typically disrupt native species. It's important to understand that "invasive" depends on location, not just species as non-natives may be invasive in some areas and not others. The more generalized a plant is, the more likely it will be invasive since it can adapt to a variety of conditions. Non-native plants like the butterfly bush,

which aren't considered invasive in Michigan but propagate easily, can be controlled by removing the seeds at season's end. (*Interesting fact:* Cats are considered one of the single greatest non-native predators, killing billions of creatures each year.)

Tim gave the next three presentations. The first was focused on the historical development of landscaping design in this country, beginning with the primary concern of staying alive so forests were cleared to grow food, and ending with the practice of landscape architecture as we know it today. The second reviewed structures in the landscape, and the third discussed Accessible, Enabling and Therapeutic Gardens. He provided many examples of structures which can be decorative, functional, or both. (walkways, seating areas, water features, fences, pergolas, trellises, etc.) Hardscape guidelines included five-foot-wide entry walks, appropriate step rise/tread depths, and seating structures eighteen inches high. His final presentation was particularly interesting as most of us who are physically healthy don't often consider the importance of maintenance or making our gardens accessible for future use by including raised beds and 4-foot-wide walkways for wheelchairs or walkers. (*Helpful hint:* Making the soil the same height as walkway pavers facilitates ease of mowing.)

Tanya explained the importance of historical preservation, what criteria is necessary to qualify for grant monies, and shared her experience restoring the State St. Historic Bridge in Bridgeport and Cass River Trail. It was an involved and interesting process.

Finally, Carol (who spoke to our club recently) shared her knowledge and

experience designing pollinator friendly gardens to help replace what is expected to be a 90% loss of urban habitat by 2050. She reviewed native plant options for different soil types, sun and moisture needs, plant height, and maintenance requirements.

One of our presenters, (I think Leah) when asked what would be a preferred annual for pollinators, quickly responded Zinnia (true), which proves that even non-natives can play an important role in a pollinator friendly garden. Watering is also important during drought conditions which decreases nectar production.

Again, this was a very educational two-day seminar that provided us with a wealth of information we could use to design a landscape. Of course, it didn't stop me from purchasing over \$100 of perennials from Bendy Farm's fall wholesale-priced native plant sale (Plants are #8 on the list of 10 steps Matthew listed when designing a landscape.), then coming home and figuring out where to plant them! There's sometimes a disconnect between learning what you're supposed to do...and doing it.

Submitted by **Linda Sue Sulzdorf**

Horticulture

And suddenly it's December!!!! As I look around, I have 3 amaryllis that have successfully returned from being dormant. I can also see a couple of early purchase poinsettias, and a leftover mum. My east windows are filling fast with pleasures of the season, and I'm still finishing up the Halloween candy. Oops!! It's hard to put the brakes on. There are so many wonderful choices, and we all take pleasure in bringing back the treasures and colors of the season.

Holly has been a symbol of Christmas for many centuries. The Druids, Celts and Romans believed that evergreens, including holly, had magical properties and that their use would insure the coming of spring. Over time the prickly leaves of holly also symbolized 'protection'. Christians adopted holly as a symbol of Christmas, associating its prickly leaves with Jesus' crown of thorns, its red berries with his blood, and the evergreen quality with life after death.

Holly is an ancient plant and a lot of folklore has evolved about Christmas Holly. In Victorian times holly really began to be used as decoration inside people's houses. Even now, just a little holly can add a festive touch. The glossy, spiny, green leaves and bright, scarlet berries are welcome at this time of year and epitomize traditional Christmas colors.

The name "holly" comes from an Old English word, *holegn*, which means, "to prick". If you grow holly, you know how sharp those leaves can be when you try to prune them. Holly is a member of the Aquifoliaceae family; the holly we use at Christmas is the European holly, *Ilex aquifolium*. Holly is generally dioecious, which means that in the garden you need both male and female plants

to produce the fruit, or holly berries. The plants have simple, alternate glossy leaves. Male plants have the spiny leaf margin; female plants have a smoother leaf edge. The small, inconspicuous flower is greenish-white with four petals. Leaves can be either bright green or variegated white and green.

Species of *Ilex* include trees, shrubs, and climbing plants. The plants are slow-growing but some species can reach over 80 feet tall. Holly thrives best in full or partial sun, with well-drained organic soil. The berries are small fruits or drupes. A drupe is a fruit with a fleshy part or skin surrounding the seed or pit. Although we think of them as red, the holly berry can also be black, green, or yellow. They ripen in winter and provide a splash of color contrast in the winter landscape. Holly berries can produce discomfort if humans eat them, however they are an important food source for birds and other animals.

December is truly the time to "Deck the Halls" and enjoy the beauty of the season. A fun note about holly is that outdoors it lasts all winter!!

—**Barb Amundsen**

Landscape Design School

This team is already making plans for our Course 3 & 4. Facility and dates will be announced in the new year. Speakers will be contacted with specific topics. I hope we have some of our same presenters. We learned so much in Course 2.

December Celebrations

Reba Torongo
Carol Miller
Joan Lenhard
Deb Johnston