



The Latest Dirt

LaPlata Community Garden Club

September 2007

www.laplatagardenclub.org



Upcoming Events

September 24 - 26

Flower Show School Course IV
Timonium

October 5

LPCGC Trip to Lewis Ginter
Botanical Gardens

October 12

District II Semi-Annual Meeting,
9 - 3, Bowie Comfort Inn

November 10

Moonflower Garden Club's There's
no Place Like Home for the Holidays

November 15

Behnke Nursery Holiday Open
House, 6:30 to 9 pm, Beltsville

December 1

La Plata Garden Club Holiday Design
Show, 10:30 - 3:30, Christ Church
(see page 5 for the details)

President's Message

Fall is coming and it can't get here fast enough to suit me. This has been a challenging summer, with the extreme temperatures and lack of rain. Most gardeners I have talked to have lost precious plants. So, now is the time to think about renewing and revamping the garden and your lawn. It's also time to plant some spring bulbs and add fall color to the garden with pansies and mums.

Raking leaves is an important part of the fall season. I just read an article that said not to rake all the leaves off the grass, just mow them into small bits and let them stay to decay and replenish the soil. You can also use your shredded leaves to mulch your garden beds. I have so many leaves that some will stay on the lawn, some will mulch garden beds and the majority will go into my compost pile.

If you don't already have a compost pile, make one with leaves, grass cuttings, yard waste and kitchen scraps. Within a year you will have some beautiful compost that your plants will love.

Dianne Shisler

Our Next Meeting

September 27, 2007

We will be visiting the home of Tom and Sue Lewis for discussion and viewing of conifer gardens. For directions to the house, see the program guide or the website at www.laplatagardenclub.org!

Save the Dates for our upcoming meetings!

There's still lots of fun flower and gardening information to look forward to in our upcoming meetings. Remember to write these dates on your calendars so you don't miss any of them!

September 27 - Conifer Gardens (Tom and Sue Lewis)

October 25 - Deer Abatement (Ron Bush)

November 17 (Saturday) - Luncheon & Design Workshop

Plus, don't forget about our first Holiday Design Show on December 1st!

Treasurer's Report

For Period June 27 through August 12, 2007

Balance from previous report	\$9,728.25
INCOME	
Memberships	40.00
Fire Hall Rental	31.00
Wine & Cheese Event	640.00
EXPENSES	
Newsletter	138.08
Fire Hall Rental (2 months)	100.00
Postage	39.44
Gift Certificate	127.00
Keller Bus	100.00
Wine & Cheese Event	674.35
Star Garden Expenses*	2,258.28
BALANCE	\$7,002.10
(Of the balance, \$5,104.96 belongs with the Star Garden, and the remaining \$1,897.14 is in the general account.)	
Melissa Leitner, Treasurer	

A garden is a friend
you can visit
anytime!



Wine and Cheese Party

It was an elegant night under the stars at the Memorial Star Garden in La Plata. The Garden was in pristine shape. The many Tiki lamps provided a friendly ambiance along with the candlelit centerpiece on the lavishly prepared table serving the fruit, cheeses and crackers. Market umbrellas provided more flare. The musicians played on as the gentlemen "bartenders" in white shirt and black tie served the guests.

Thanks to all who participated in making this a fun party:

Chef Gary Fick of The Crossing

Musicians Scott and Kelly Putz

Bartenders Tom O'Farrell and Mike Rose

Committee Members: Linda and Richard Lockhart, Jean Middleton, Elaine and Dick Miller, Jane and Tom O'Farrell, Joyce and Mike Rose and Diane and Don Shisler

Photos from the Wine and Cheese Party



Bird Talk

I am fresh from my wonderful trip to England with my three grandsons. What a memorable time we had, including feeding the myriad of swans on the Thames at Windsor. Of course, the ducks stayed on the perimeter in the hope of catching some stray food which had got away from the greedy swans. I think they could eat nonstop if you let them!

These mute swans lead me to tell you something about their history on the Thames. They are actually herbivores but to watch them eat up the swan food readily available at a nearby eatery for a small fee, would lead you to think otherwise. Since the fifteenth century, the annual Swan Upping is held the third week in July. As co-owners of the swans on certain stretches of the Thames, the Company of Vintners, the Company of Dyers and the Queen's Swan Marker (on behalf of Her Majesty), have the task of rounding up the swans and examining them, especially the cygnets, for any injury or disease and for the purpose of counting them. Many injuries are caused by thoughtless use and leaving behind of fishing lures and lines and schoolchildren are now taught how they, too, can help with the protection of the swans.

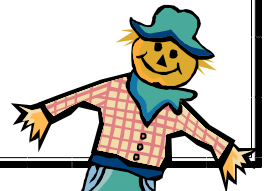
During medieval times, swans were eaten as a delicacy at banquets but that is rarely done nowadays, although it still can be occasionally experienced at state banquets. How could you possibly eat swan after having fed them, admired them and seen how they could inspire such beauty as the "Swan Lake" ballet? On our final day in England, again at Windsor sitting under one of the majestic chestnut trees which line the entire length of the Long Walk (three miles in length), I was delighted to see a lapwing. I mentioned this bird in an earlier newsletter article and reported that one had been seen in America as it had strayed from its migration route.

Unfortunately, I have read that England's bird population is on the decline for various reasons. This seems to be the norm nowadays wherever you go. Let us try and do our part in helping those birds that come into our gardens, as they reward us many times over with their beauty and song. Can you imagine waking up in the morning to a silent world?

The hummingbirds are leaving us to begin their incredible journeys and we will miss them until next spring. Now comes the time to get our feeders filled for all the other birds which we continue to enjoy, although 'enjoy' may not be the correct word to use in one instance recently. A goshawk swooped down to our birdbath/feeding station, and picked up a mourning dove for his lunch and proceeded to eat it right in the tree in front of our bay window -the cheek of it! I tapped on the window to make him fly out of our sight at least. Goshawks prefer to fly through wooded areas not to circle high in the sky and then swoop down as their wings are shorter but the tail is longer than some other species.

Happy Fall birdwatching!

Gloria Groeger, Bird Chairman





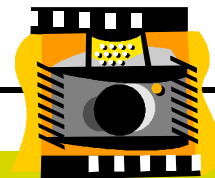
Recording Secretary's Minutes

The minutes of our montly meetings are now located on our website, www.laplatagardenclub.org, under "Newsletters - Minutes." In the future, please review the previous month's minutes prior to coming to the meeting so that you can vote on their approval!

Photography Awards

The Federated Garden Clubs of Maryland is accepting applications for a number of photography awards. The Harry Reynolds and the Dessie Moxley Awards are for any tree or shrub photograph. The Mary Fitzpatrick Award is for a flower arrangement photo and the Annette Richter Award is for a photo of a native plant (vine, shrub or flower). All submissions should be 5 X 7 color prints. Complete information on these awards as well as the application for submission can be found at the Federated Garden Clubs website. All applications must be submitted to the State Awards Chairman before November 1st. So get that camera out and take some pictures of your beautiful gardens.

Awards Committee

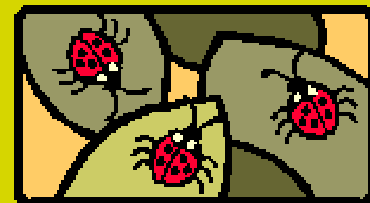


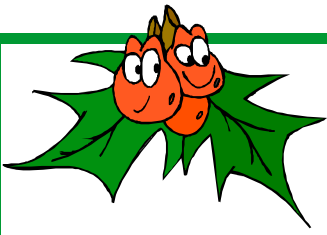
Fall Lawn & Garden Tips

- Monarch caterpillars are now feeding on wild milkweed and cultivated butterfly weed. Swallowtail caterpillars are feeding on dill, fennel, parsley, carrot and Queen Anne's lace. Let them be so that they may complete their lifecycle and emerge next year as butterflies.
- Mid-August through mid-October is the best time to start new lawns and renovate or overseed existing lawns. If your lawn area contains more than 50% weeds, consider a total lawn renovation.
- The type of ladybugs that are now congregating on our homes and will eventually come indoors are called multicolored Asian lady beetles. Although they are beneficial and do control many garden pests, they can also become nuisances when they gather in large numbers and enter our homes. The best way to keep them from coming indoors is prevention -- seal off cracks and other entry points with caulk, insulating foam or install weatherstripping around doors and windows. Vacuum up any that enter the home and dispose of the vacuum cleaner bag. Do not smash them because they exude an orange-yellow liquid that can stain. They do not damage outdoor siding and do not breed while they are indoors.

From "Maryland Home and Garden", published by the Maryland Cooperative Extension Center, University of Maryland

The Latest Dirt is published in February, May, July, September & November by the La Plata Community Garden Club, La Plata, Maryland for its members.
For more information on the club, see www.laplatagardenclub.org
Mary L. Grant, Editor





La Plata Community Garden Club

Holiday Design Show

The first annual Holiday Design Show hosted by the LPCGC will be held on December 1, 2007 at Christ Church, 112 Charles Street, La Plata, MD from 10:30-3:30. Various designers will demonstrate holiday decorating techniques. An array of vendors will be available, a silent auction and shabby chic sale will also take place during the day. The cost will be \$10.00 in advance and \$12.00 at the door. Holiday cookies, made by our club members, a warm holiday beverage, coffee and water will be available. It is going to be a fun, festive day. Please mark your calendar and plan to attend and bring a friend or two and buy some Christmas gifts and learn some decorating tips.

FLORAL DESIGN

Chair, Mary Beth Chandler

- Table top tree decorating
- Mantel decorating
- Door decorating
- Table decorating
- Assembling floral center pieces
- Pine cone tree decorating

SHABBY CHIC SALE

Chair, Cheri Brady

Jennie Lewis
Judy Ruth
Helen Vanasce

ADVERTISING

Chair, Marge LaMar

Sharyn Suiter
Judy Ruth
Maureen Chiarizia

FACILITIES

Chairs, Judy Ruth and Carole Raucheisen

Sherri Zimmer
Gingie Winkler

VENDORS

Chair, Cathy Cornette

- Jewelry
- Stained Glass
- Woven Baskets
- Purses
- Home Plates
- Art Work

SILENT AUCTION

Chair, Nan Stout

Maureen Chiarizia
Barbie Walter
Joyce Rose

REFRESHMENTS

Chairs, Linda Lockhart/Elaine Miller

Jessi Thibault	Marcia Poling
Irene Poole	Jean Middleton
Jane O'Farrell	Liz Shiflette
Polly Zimmerman	Marge Mahaffey
Carole Flowers	Judy Ruth

WE NEED VOLUNTEERS to help with advertising, vendors, refreshments, shabby chic sale, silent auction and facilities (set-up, clean up, registration, door prizes). We also need items for the silent auction and shabby chic sale. The shabby chic sale is NOT A YARD SALE. We are looking for nice items with a holiday theme. Do you have or know of someone who would donate an item or service for the silent auction or the shabby chic sale? Items donated will be picked up. Just call Nan Stout for the Silent Auction or Cheri Brady or Jennie Lewis for the shabby chic.

To make sure this event is a success, please volunteer or donate an item. If you can volunteer or have an item or service to donate please call the Chair of the committee or Carole Raucheisen or Judy Ruth.

Massive trees give "goose bumps"; date back more than 1,000 years

So read the subtitle of an article appearing in the Washington Times of Sep 2, 2006 (yes, 2006). Reciting info from the article, a Virginian who hunts giant trees for a hobby has discovered a 40 acre forest of ancient Cypress trees. The old growth forest is about 80 miles SE of Richmond along the "swampy" Nottaway river. The land is owned by a paper company and the state of VA is negotiating to buy the forest as part of their Natural Heritage Program. This state program works to protect rare natural areas. (Hopefully the state of MD has such a program(?))

The cypress stand is accessible only by canoe. Gazing at the forest the hobbyist was moved to say, "This is like primeval. You look around for T.Rex." Quoting from the article, "The forest is a remnant from the days when towering Cypress and Tupelo trees lined the swampy rivers of the Southeast. Loggers cut virtually all those trees in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. "It's a remarkable discovery," said U. of Arkansas geo-sciences professor David Stahle, an old tree specialist. Only "two one-hundreds of 1 percent" of the SE's Cypress-tupelo forests escaped the saw."

Got big trees anyone?! Many of us know of a grand old tree here or there. But this forest reportedly "featured monster tree after monster tree." While the article contains no estimated heights for the trees, it stated the diameter of a stump nearby was between 31 and 32 ft. Also the cypress "knees" were nearly ten ft tall, and the estimated tree age was from 1,000 to 1,500 years old. Breaking out my GOLDEN field guide to trees of N. America, the guide reads, "the Cypress grows 100 to 125 ft. tall and from 3 to 5 ft. in diameter...woody "knees" from a few inches to several ft. tall protrude above water..." But the field guide redeemed itself somewhat with the note, "Like the giant sequoia and redwood, baldcypresses are of ancient lineage, attain large size and venerable age."

The Time's article noted the "oldest known trees east of the Mississippi are cypresses in a preserve on the Black River in N. Carolina. They are at least 1,700 years old." Before you grab the kayak and head for the Nottaway River, we actually have a stand of large cypress trees in So. Md. They're at the Battle Creek Cypress Preserve which is in Calvert Co, just south of Prince Frederick. This preserve (ph 410 535 5327) is about 100 acs and open year around (except Mondays). Admission is free, and while administered by Calvert Co. govt., it's actually owned by The Nature Conservancy. The cypress trees there are much younger - from 75 to 100 yrs old/about 100ft tall, but it's worth a visit. Standing on the elevated walkway that winds through the watery preserve, in the midst of these unique and beautiful trees, could be either primeval - or merely breathtaking. You choose!

Jeff Foster, Member, Conservation Committee

La Plata Community Garden Club
PO Box 214
La Plata, MD 20646