



# Garden Club Newsletter Gardening For All Seasons March 2009

<http://www.chesapeakegardenclub.org>



## Dates to Remember

### March 2009

- 1-8 Philadelphia Flower Show
- 5-8 Art Blooms at the Walters
- 8 Daylight saving time begins
- 13 District II Annual Meeting
- 17 CGC Meeting**
- 20 First Day of Spring
- 24 FGCM Annual Meeting

### April 2009

- 9-11 London Towne Daffodil Show
- 12 Easter
- 21 CGC meeting Induction of Officers**
- 22 Earth Day
- 23 Towson Garden Days
- 25 MHGP Queen Ann County
- 25-26 Sotterly Garden Fair
- 29-30 Garden Study Course 2



## March Birthdays

- Wanda Kuhn the 3<sup>rd</sup>
- Rosanna Noyes the 14<sup>th</sup>
- Vicki Trego the 26<sup>th</sup>
- Deb St John the 29<sup>th</sup>



## Treasurer's Report

Just a reminder our \$40 dues for the 2009 fiscal year are due. I will be collecting them at the March and April meeting. Also, if you haven't already selected your lunch and sent your check for the birthday luncheon, please do. We need to give the information to the restaurant. Sybil

## March Meeting

**Location:** Old Field Inn Prince Frederick  
**Program:** 51<sup>st</sup> Birthday Celebration



## Plantings from the President

WHAT A BEAUTIFUL SNOW DAY (inside looking out) and to think our editor and Vice President are basking in the sun in Florida and missing all this.

Don't forget the District II meeting on March 13<sup>th</sup>, call me for carpooling details.

Our March 17<sup>th</sup> meeting will be at Old Field Inn, in Prince Frederick.

We will be celebrating our 51st Birthday luncheon. Let's all be there at 11:00 am., we will have a short meeting there. Be sure to let Patti know your choice for lunch, Quiche & Salad, or Soup & Salad and send a check to Sybil.

Patti created an arrangement for the March 5-8 "Art Blooms at the Walters" exhibit.

On April 21<sup>st</sup>, we will install our new officers at All Saints Church.

We will not be giving out the new yearbook until our April meeting, we will collect dues (\$40) in March and April.

JoEllen has agreed to submit her Butterfly exhibit at the first annual "Garden Fair at Sotterly" on April 25 and 26.

It would be nice to take a trip to Bowie on April 26<sup>th</sup> for Bowiefest Day and visit Lisa's Wild Bird Center.

Don't forget the District II meeting on March 13<sup>th</sup> and the Federation Meeting on March 24<sup>th</sup>.

*WOW! I made it with the help of all of you, thank you so much for making my presidency fun and we sure were busy!*

MaryAlys

Tickets are available for sale for the 2009 Maryland House and Garden Pilgrimage. Ticket cost is \$30. See Sybil.

## A Little Bird Told Me



### Canadian Stuff By Bernie Halloran

This is a test.  
No looking into the paragraph below.  
Name five things Canadian.  
Ready, go!

Go ahead write them down if you have to, but don't read any further until you've named five things Canadian like the Maple leaf flag, the Mounties, Canadian bacon, the official languages French and English, Canadian Broadcasting Company, "O Canada," the national anthem, 'Eh,' pronounced 'Aye,' hockey, Red Rose tea, Eh.

Famous Canadians like Pamela Anderson, Peter Jennings, Dan Aykroyd, Raymond Burr, Brendan Fraser, Jack Kerouac, Leslie Nielson, Mary Pickford, the Dionne Quintuplets and Celine Dionne don't count.

Come on this is a bird column, you silly goose. Yes, the Canadian goose, *Branta Canadensis*, like the birds ingested into Flight 1549 that landed in the Hudson River. The same geese about which the fair-minded and forward-thinking Sean Hannity cried, "Get rid of the geese so that humans may live."

After being hunted to the point of extinction in the 1960s, there are now more than 1 million geese in the United States and many of them are now non-migratory descendants of the birds raised under well-meaning restoration efforts.

The giant Canada goose subspecies, *B. canadensis maxima*, used to breed from central Manitoba to Kentucky. Now thousands just hang around year-round. You can't miss them with their 5-foot wingspans and chubby ten to twenty pound bodies.

The ornithologists at Cornell University explain the current non-migratory situation this way: "Programs to re-establish the subspecies to its original range were tremendously successful, and in fact, in some places were too successful. The numerous introductions and translocations created a number of resident populations, and the geese have become a nuisance in many urban and suburban areas." Just ask the folks from Flight 1549.

Building a tall fence along the US-Canadian border will not keep them out. So what do we do? Airports have a nasty habit of being built near wetlands, which geese like as much as golf courses and homes near lakes. Well, whose rights are being trampled here: the geese, the golfers, the McMansions folks or airplane crews and passengers?

More importantly, is there a solution? The geese cannot be rounded up and sent back to Canada as Bill Riley might suggest, but their eggs can be addled, or covered with corn oil so they can't hatch. Addling shuts down the embryonic process, a technique approved by GeesePeace, an obviously pro-bird organization. At least it's better than doing what the US Department of Agriculture Wildlife Services does. The USDA rounds up the birds and gasses them. That doesn't sound nice.

The Audubon Society and PETA support addling, which might give you some idea of the size of the bird-strikes-plane problem. Between 1990 and 2007, the number of bird strikes increased from 1,750 to 7,600. Last year 8,000 hits were reported.

But there may be yet an even better solution, which although not approved by Rome, may be shovel-ready – it's contraception. You won't see OvoControl being advertised on late night TV, but if you act now, for only \$10 per goose, per year, the result is the same as egg addling; except we don't need an army of volunteers, all we need is a guy in a golf cart.

Since 1990 the Federal Aviation Administration has been compiling bird strike statistics which shows that *only* 12 percent to 15 percent of bird strikes result in some damage to aircraft. In the majority of strikes -- 85 percent or more -- nothing bad happens to the plane. The bird (think Starlings) either bounces off the plane or goes through the engine, which causes discernible damage to the bird but not to the plane. In a small percentage of cases you get plane damage, and in a smaller percentage you get catastrophic damage.

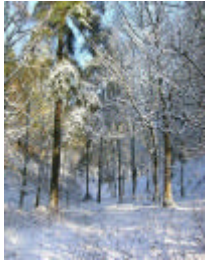
The next time you're flying to Canada, where there have been no bank failures because of sane regulation, you can lean over to the passenger next to you and whisper something like this:

When a plane is taking off, it is going 170 miles per hour and accelerating to several hundred m.p.h. The engine's fan blades are rotating at between 3-4,000 rpm and the tips of those turbofan blades are actually traveling at the speed of sound or faster —700 to 800 mph. If an 8-10 pound bird hits one of those fan blades, there's a tremendous energy transfer from the bird to the engine, and that's basically why a bird can cause serious damage to an aircraft engine. Now think of a bunch of birds.

It comes down to the physics equation for kinetic energy: Energy is proportional to mass times velocity squared.

Remember that. Bottom line: don't feed the geese and don't shoot them, they're protected by the Migratory Bird Act. Eh.

## Conservation Corner



### Are You Heating and Air-Conditioning The Great Out of Doors?

By Bernie Halloran

A lot of heat has been coming from Baltimore Gas and Electric customers this winter about out-of-sight electric bills. In fact, enough heat has been generated to have the Public Service Commission (PSC) conduct three days of hearings with BGE.

And what have people been told? That this winter was 22 percent colder than last winter. That electric rates have increased 12 percent since last winter. That natural gas prices have increased 5 percent in the same time. And one eye-opener: that billing periods can vary between 28 and 34 days, requiring 5<sup>th</sup> grade arithmetic to make yearly comparisons.

Without context, these numbers explain next to nothing. Even better, since Constellation Energy – an unregulated company and parent of BGE, a regulated public utility – plans to sue the State of Maryland in Federal court, it didn't want to and didn't have to testify to the PSC.

So let's cut to the chase. There are three big things you need to know about to understand your electric bill: 1) **thermostats**, 2) **insulation R-values** and that 3) **heat flows naturally from hot to cold**, or in the winter, inside to out.

**R- Values:** For our part of Maryland, the US Department of Energy recommends an R or resistance value of 49 for attics and R-38 in cathedral ceilings. Floors over unheated spaces should be insulated to R-30. Wood-framed walls have had an R-13 requirement for a long time, but if your home is brick and block, the odds are you probably have no wall insulation at all.

When our house was built just five years ago, the builder installed a sloppy pattern of Fiberglas bats, six inches thick for an R-value of 19. With gaps between bats, that's not good. To understand what kind of insulation you have and what its R-value is, use this table.

To bring your attic floor up to R-40, figure out what you've got and then what you need to add. I paid for an additional R-30 of blown-in cellulose insulation – 8.5 inches -- to bring my attic up to R-49. I covered all the delivery ducts

too. The cost of this installation job should be recovered in a matter of months.

What you see:	What it probably is	Depth (inches)	Total R-value
Loose fibers	light-weight yellow, pink, or white	fiberglass	=2.5×depth
	dense gray or near-white, may have black specks	rock wool	=2.8×depth
	small gray flat pieces or fibers (from newsprint)	cellulose	=3.7×depth
Granules	light-weight	vermiculite or perlite	=2.7×depth
Batts	light-weight yellow, pink, or white	fiberglass	=3.2×depth

**Thermostats:** If you heat your house with an electric heat pump, calling for more than a 2 degree increase in temperature will cause your furnace to turn on its resistance coils, sometimes called emergency or auxiliary heat. Resistance heating is the least efficient and most expensive way to heat your house. Turning your thermostat down to 55 at night and then up to 68 in the morning will cause your electric furnace to run in its most power-consuming, least efficient mode until the upper temperature is reached.

Heat pumps work very efficiently when the outdoor temperature is in the 50- degree range. As the outdoor temperature drops, the heat loss of a home is greater and the heat pump needs to operate for longer periods of time to maintain a constant indoor temperature. Around 37 degrees, many heat pumps reach what is called the balance point. At or near this temperature the heat pump needs to run constantly to produce enough heat to maintain a comfortable indoor temperature. Watch your electric meter spin.

As the outdoor temperature continues to drop, the heat pump needs help from its electric resistance heat coils. These coils resemble the glowing wires inside your toaster and consume vast amounts of electricity as they burn to keep you warm.

Manufacturers can make heat pumps operate at different levels of efficiency. The more heat a system can produce, or remove, from a given amount of electricity, the more efficient it is. A common measurement of this performance is the Seasonal Energy Efficiency Ratio (SEER). SEER numbers can vary widely if you compare old heat pumps to new ones. Twenty year old heat pumps often had peak SEER numbers of 6. The minimum SEER you can buy today is 10. The highest SEER heat pumps made at present are a tad over SEER 16. Any heat pump that has a SEER rating above 14 is very high efficiency. Replacing an old pump makes economic sense. The best thing you can do to keep your electric bills low is keep the heat you paid for in your house by making sure it's insulated properly.