



Garden Club Newsletter

Gardening For All Seasons

December, 2008

<http://www.chesapeakegardenclub.org>



Dates to Remember

December 2008

Dec. 5th – Plan a Trip to Federation Flower Show at Clyburn in Baltimore. “A Winter Wonderland”

Dec. 6th – Design Women Show LaPlata

Dec 10 Trip to Hammond Harrow House

Dec. 16th - Christmas Party at Denise's home, Pot Luck, and \$10 gift

December 25 Christmas Day

January 2009

January 1 New Year Day

January 20 Executive Board Meeting



December/January Birthdays

Baby Jesus December 25

MaryAlys Sweetman January 1

Susan Charbonneau January 9

MaryJo Blaine January 13

December's Meeting is our Annual Christmas Party!

December 16

10:00 am

Meeting

Party to follow the meeting

Denise Wesolowski's Home

820 Monarch Lane

Huntingtown, MD

410 535 9214

Potluck and \$10 Gift exchange

Horticulture

Combination Planting

Multiple plants of different types growing in one container

Design

Parallel Design

p. 206 Flower Show Handbook 2008

Plantings from the President

Hello All,

Our Christmas greens table put me in the spirit so after three days at the Festival of Trees I started pulling out some of my decorations.

We had the most beautiful Hospice tree at the show, many thanks to Denise and her work crew.

I believe our Greens table did pretty well, money and bills have not all been turned in yet so we don't have a final count, I hope to give a report in January. I want to thank everyone for all the help at the Festival - many hands make for light work - and you all came through as always.

Next is the Christmas party December 16th, at Denise's home. Everyone please bring a covered dish plus a \$10 gift. (Garden related)

January meeting is the Executive Board only and in February we will have a program by Lisa Garrett on planting a garden for butterflies.

Note:

Carolyn Balderson has been in the hospital a couple times for the past month, but hopes to come to the Christmas party

Sandy Wolf has not been well for the last three weeks and has just been diagnosed with Lymes disease

See you'll on December 16th -
Mary Alys



Treasurer's Report

Submitted by Sybil Russell

November 11, 2008
Balance \$4,680.26

A Little Bird Told Me



Strange Stuff about the American Robin

By Bernie Halloran

Turdus migratorius

Sometime this summer, who knows when...it was really hot outside, Saucey and I were taking our after lunch break when zoom, off she goes onto her perch in the family room. It was bird alert, not squirrel alert.

Outside there were four robins just lying on a patch of dead grass (we know what caused that.) At first, they looked dead. Their beaks were open, feathers were all puffy, wings and legs were out at odd angles and they were not moving.

Then one did; it just got up and hopped away. As I watched, a couple of the robins changed poses and puffed up still more. They looked like they were going to explode. Was

this decomposition or were they "anting?" I have no idea how long the birds were engaged in this goofy behavior before Sauce noticed them, but we watched for about 10 minutes and, eventually each bird just hopped away, looking perfectly fine for all the weirdness. What were they doing?

What was the world like before Google? I can hardly remember. Seems what Sauce and I were witnessing was simple sunning behavior. Apparently, it's not that unusual. These little critters need to absorb vitamin D just like the rest of us, but there's a hidden advantage to this sunning behavior: the heat of the sun forces the mites in their feathers to rise up to where the birds can remove them, or the mites just get up and leave.

In early November, there was an article in the Capital Gazette about Robins *Turdus migratorius* of all things. In November? Who knows, it was probably a space filler, but we can do better than that by digging just inches deeper. Try these facts on for laughs.

The robin is the largest thrush in North America and widely and familiarly known in the United States and Canada as the (Are you listening Sarah Palin?) the 'American Robin.' To millions of people it is better known as the crow. Crow? Who are these people, certainly not Real Americans?

The early English colonists gave it the name 'robin' probably because it resembled the robin redbreast of Merry Olde England, but they failed to notice the close relationship between our robin and their blackbird, which is a true thrush, *Turdus*. The two birds are very similar in habits, general deportment, and voice, although different in plumage.

An American Robin can produce three successful broods in one year. On average, though, only 40 percent of nests successfully produce young. Only 25 percent of those fledged young survive to November. And, from that point on, about half of the robins alive in any year will make it to the next. Despite the fact that a lucky robin can live to be 14 years old, the entire population turns over on average every six years.

Although the appearance of a robin is considered a harbinger of spring, the American Robin actually spends the winter in much of its breeding range. However, because they spend less time in yards and congregate in large flocks during winter, you're much less likely to see them.

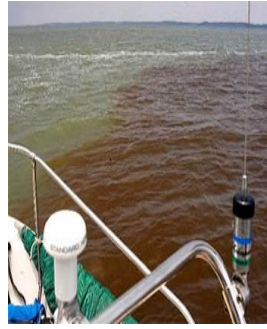
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Robins nested in a trellis off my porch, and I watched them daily until they disappeared but there was no sign of shells, not on the ground beneath the nest, nor (well after they were gone) in the nest itself. I have come across Robin's eggshells over the years-- why not these? What do Robins do with the shells once the birds are born? The nest is pretty crowded--do they just nudge them overboard? Pick them up and carry them off and drop them from the air? Do other creatures take them? Why are these shells not easier to find than they are?

A parent removes the shells and carries them in its bill far from the nest and then drops them. This behavior is to protect the nest and young against predators. If the shells were dropped over the side of the nest, a predator would have a clue about the location of the nest.

So there, better coverage than the Gazette: *Bernie Boid Person* wishes to extend an apology and tip of the top comb to that charming and careful reader of facts, *Mrs. George Russell*, who cheerfully reminded him that all Ruby-throated humming birds (*Archilochus colubris*) do not fly south for the winter. She knew 'cause boid-brain Bernie wrote about it. D'oh.

Conservation Corner



THIS IS NOT CAPTAIN BERNIE RUNNING AGROUND, IT'S AN ALGAE BLOOM

The All-American Solution: A Law Suit

By Bernie Halloran

Who would have thought 38 years ago that the *Environmental Protection Agency* would become an oxymoron? Over the years, sailors like me have watched as the Chesapeake Bay became more and more disgusting. Wasn't the EPA supposed to do something about that? Wasn't there some clean water act passed somewhere back when? Aren't governmental agencies supposed to actually enforce the law?

This year, fish kills and algae blooms set new records. Indeed, there's nothing like sailing through thousands of dead little fish. It's the kind of sailing experience we sailors look forward to.

Yes, algae blooms may actually occur naturally. They may be red or brown or green, but what's happening beneath the surface is this: everything is dying. And just what has the EPA done about that?

Then there's the Chesapeake Bay Foundation, an organization that's been around since 1967. The Merrill Center, the foundation's multi-million dollar (32,000 sq.ft. at \$200 a square foot in 2000) headquarters may well be the very greenest office building on the face of the Earth, and a tour is only \$5.00; but the foundation as an effective lobbying arm for Chesapeake Bay restoration has been impotent. And I have steadfastly refused to contribute to it for just that very reason.

Well, low and behold, the worm has turned. Noticing that the EPA's 2010 deadline for cleaning up 'dirty waters' won't be met, The Chesapeake Bay Foundation has actually, finally, taken meaningful action. No, not another very, very green building from which to

observe the deterioration of the Bay, but a lawsuit.

Well, not an actual lawsuit, but the CBF has filed a notice of intent to file a lawsuit. To which – who could not make this up – Assistant EPA Administrator Benjamin H. Grumbles, replied: “The restoration of the Bay requires action from everyone. EPA will continue to work with its partners for results and strategies bla, bla, blah.” No, Grumbles did not say where the money would come from, but he’ll be out of a job come next year anyhow. Grumbles doesn’t have to worry.

We can continue to do our part in saving the Bay from further damage by practicing “Bay Wise” gardening practices (I have a Baywise Demonstration Garden by the way) and keeping the pressure on or supporting these people:

The Chesapeake Bay Foundation, the Maryland Watermen’s Association, the Virginia State Watermen’s Association, the Maryland Saltwater Sport Fishermen’s Association, former DC Mayor Anthony Williams, former Governor Harry Hughes, former state senator Bernie Fowler, former Virginia natural resources secretary W. Taylor Murphy and our current elected officials.

Recipe Corner

Quick Quiche

Leftover ham, sausage or bacon
1 cup Swiss cheese or any firm cheese that you have handy (grated)
1/3 c onion cut fine
Sprinkle the above ingredients in a greased quiche pan
Blend on low speed
2cup milk ,1/2 cup bisquick, 4 eggs, 1/4 t. salt
1/4 t. pepper
Pour over the cheese onion, etc.
Bake at 350 for 50 – 55 minutes
Let it set before cutting.
Submitted by JoEllen

One gardener’s trash is another gardener’s treasure!



I have a dinning room table with Duncan Phyfe Style legs that I would like to sell.
Contact JoEllen 301 855 7595

Just A Little Something

T'was the Night Before Christmas

T'was the night before Christmas and all through the yard:
The branches were bare and the ground frozen hard.
The roses were dormant and mulched all around;
To protect them from damage if frost heaves the ground.
The perennials were nestled all snug in their beds;
While visions of compost danced in their heads.
The new-planted shrubs had been soaked by the hose;
To settle their roots for the long winter's doze.
And out on the lawn, the new fallen snow;
Protected the roots of the grasses below;
When what to my wondering eyes should appear;
But a truck full of gifts and all gardening gear.
St. Nick was the driver- the jolly old elf-
And he winked as he said, "I'm a gardener myself.
I've brought wilt pruf, rootone and gibberellin, too-
Father can try them and see what they do.
To help with the weeding I've brought a Weed-Bandit;
And to battle the bugs a floating blanket.

To seed your new lawn, I've a patented sower;
In case it should grow, here's a new power
mower.
For seed planting days, I've a trowel and a
dibble;
For the feminine gardener, some gadgets she
loves;
Plant stakes, a sprinkler and waterproof gloves.
A fungus agent for her compost pit;
And for pH detecting, a soil-testing kit.
With these colorful flagstones, lay a new
garden path;
For the kids to enjoy, a bird feeder and bath.
And last but not least, some well rotted
manure.
A green Christmas year round these gifts will
ensure".
Then jolly St. Nick, having emptied his load,
Started his truck and took to the road
And I heard him exclaim through the motor's
loud hum;
Merry Christmas to all, and to all a green
thumb. Anonymous



Merry Christmas

Reminder:
Please email your items by the 3rd of every
month for publishing in the newsletter.