

Forest West Garden Club Newsletter

May 2006

May Luncheon
Saturday, May 6, 12:30 PM
Brookwood Community Cafe
1752 FM 1489, Brookwood
~ \$20/person

*Find past newsletters, the latest calendar, the photo gallery
and other fun information at our web-home,*

<http://www.cybertoad.us/FWGC>

April 11th, 2006 Minutes

The Forest West Garden Club met in the home of member Elva Nelson on April 11th. Refreshments were provided by Mary & Charlotte.

Yard of the Month goes to the Huey's on Golden Forest, their begonias have been blooming since 2000.

Treasurer, Elizabeth Evans, reported a balance of \$1,766.43 after payment of all dues to Federation & State.

A sign-up sheet for the upcoming years hostesses/co-hostesses was passed around, along with one for our May luncheon at Brookwood.

It was Zone 9's turn (ours) to help provide refreshments & door prizes at the Federation meeting. Suzanne brought a basket of goodies for our club to donate as a door prize.

Joyce noted that the Amaryllis she purchased at our meeting last year is again blooming.

Suzanne announced that she given her first public speaking engagement for Master Gardeners at Katy Public Library, the topic being Earth Friendly Gardening.

Kathy's gardens will be featured in the Rose Society's home tour.

Elaine shared info that she will be a co-writer on a reader's gardening blog on the Houston Chronicle website.

Charlotte passed a sign-up sheet for the Wharton trip.

Lindsey provided the program on Pot-et-Fleurs, showing how to make them & sharing stories of ones she had made in the past. The club made some to take home using materials they had brought, along with flowers Lindsey had purchased. Everyone participated & had fun.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned

In my garden there is a large place for
sentiment. My garden of flowers is also my
garden of thoughts and dreams. The thoughts
grow as freely as the flowers, and the dreams are
as beautiful. ~ *Abram L. Urban*

From the President's Pen...

As we close this year for Garden Club, I reflect back to all that we have done and accomplished, but most of all, I thank all of you for adjusting to the changes and letting me serve as your president.

Programs anchored our club with the variety of topics and interests. September's tour to the Tolliver's backyard was a visual surprise! We were inspired by each inch of the garden and pond. Our annual December party had us relaxing while we took in Jean and Stacy's Christmas decorations. We encouraged Stacy to open a business to decorate trees as she is so talented. Our own rosarian, Kathy Hyatt, awed us with her informative rose information. She is another member with lots of gifts! I bet many of us were out buying the Earthkind or Knock-out roses. A topic I can't ever remember having was Evelyn and Mary's House Plants. The tips for care and rotation helped us all! We loved the plants that we all went home with. Mine is still thriving, how about yours? Charlotte and Stacy's Container Gardens were beautiful and inspired us to garden in small spaces. And, Lindsey's 'pot-et-fleurs' program showed us all how to showcase plants and flowers for the holidays. It was easy so we don't have any excuses not to do this even for summer.

From member Elva – “Please urge everyone that can possibly attend, to the HFGC May meeting. My dearest friend, Trixie Bond is doing a program on edible flowers and everyone will get a taste!”

Friday, May 12th

“The Magic of Cooking & Garnishing with Edible Flowers from Your Own Backyard” by Trixie Bond.

From the President, cont...

New to the programs were a couple of raffles which added additional excitement to our meetings. Also, new is our awesome website created and maintained by Elaine. She should win an award for it! And, now, she's even showcasing gardening with a wider audience with her Chronicle Garden Blog. Also, new was the trimming of our business and committee reports so that we have more time for programs. The winter flower share for horticulture will have to be repeated as it was so interesting. It was modeled after the Federation showcase that I went to see in January. We'll definitely try it again. Way to go for our Ways and Means---Sue and Lindsey! They outdid themselves with the new grower and variety of plants. It enabled us to forgo our Spring Sale since we did so well this fall. A special thanks to all of you who supported this effort.

So, as we celebrate in May the close of Garden Club, we can look forward to a new year. This summer the officers will be working hard to come up with additional programs for you.

Thanks to all of you who opened your homes this year to host us, and to those of you who volunteered to host next year. Thanks for all you great cooks this year. Most of us found that we skipped dinner knowing that a special supper was waiting for us. (Elaine is keeping our recipes for us on line.) More thanks to all of you who presented this year and will do again next year. I can't wait! Happy summer! Sip some of Elizabeth's tea, eat Mary's famous lemon cookies, and dip a spoon into Robbie's homemade sorbet! And, most of all enjoy your gardens!

Suzanne Milstead

May tips for more color from Dr. Tom Harris,

www.plantanswers.com

- ❖ Get the begonias and impatiens in quickly if you expect them to fare well when the heat arrives. Wait to mid-month to plant periwinkles. Do not water overhead.
- ❖ Don't plant vinca until at least June 1.
- ❖ Hot weather plants include firebush, lantana, poinciana, esperanza, firespike, caladium, coleus, begonia, moss rose, hibiscus, bougainvillea, purslane, cannas and blue princess verbena.
- ❖ As the weather gets warmer, regular fertilizing of your pot plants with a water soluble product will bring rich color to your environment.

More regional reminders...

Tending Roses After Flowering

As soon as shrub roses finish their first flowering (or their only flowering in some cases), it's time to prune them lightly. Make cuts on flowering stems just above the next lower node containing five leaflets that face away from the center of the plant. Fertilize after pruning, but do not pile on the mulch.

Solving Gardenia Problems

Gardenias may fail to bloom for three reasons: less than half a day of sun, sandy soil without proper fertilizer, and insect problems that dehydrate the plant. All three can be fixed by making sure the plant receives enough sun, using acid-formula fertilizer, and controlling the piercing and sucking insects. For the latter task, use insecticidal soap or pyrethrin sprays.

(Regional Reminders from National Gardening Association website, April 27th 2006, Coastal and Tropical South, by Nellie Neal, Baton Rouge, LA)

Bring on the Butterflies

Nothing gets a child hooked on the natural world faster than watching a larva feed for days, spin a cocoon, then emerge as a butterfly or moth. Garden so your patch of the world nurtures butterflies and other pollinators, and you'll grow better kids, too.

Nature-Deficit Disorder

In his landmark book, *Last Child in the Woods*, Richard Louv writes that, "baby boomers -- Americans born between 1946 and 1964 -- may constitute the last generation of Americans to share an intimate, familial attachment to the land and water." Without those ties, the next generations will not see gardening, or small farms, or even conservation in the greatest sense as important. The consequences could be profound, both on the individuals who are emotionally cut off from their environment, and the habitat that sustains us.

In home gardens, the nurturing of nature goes on every day. By choosing a combination of flower shapes, sizes, and colors, you create an attractive garden to welcome bees, butterflies, hummingbirds, and other important pollinating insects. But consider two more factors: height of the flowers and your gardening practices. Both make a huge difference in the numbers of butterflies, dragonflies, bees, and other pollinators that visit your garden. By planting flowers at three heights -- ankle, knee, and thigh of the average adult - - you provide the multidimensional buffet they seek.

Always remember that the same controls that keep the aphids from devouring your tomatoes, even if they are organic controls, are toxic to many insects you'd like to have in your garden. Use targeted, predator controls whenever possible, and spray or dust only the affected plants, not the entire garden.

Plant These Butterfly Magnets

Some of the grandest, easiest-to-grow plants also are hosts for some of our most beautiful butterflies. Plant candle plant from seed now for sweet sulfurs; parsley, fennel, and dill for swallowtails; maypop for beloved gulf fritillary; and milkweeds for the monarchs. Teach your children about them, so they will understand nature's vital importance to their future.

Elaine Mesker-Garcia
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To Forest West Garden Club Member: