



The Garden Gabber



Affiliated with The Gardeners of America Inc. Men's Garden Clubs of America Central Great Lakes Region

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Monday, July 18

Make plans to attend each monthly meeting. It's a great opportunity to socialize, enjoy good food, and to learn more about gardening and our environment.

When: Monday, July 18, 2005
5:30 p.m. – Social Hour
6:30 p.m. – Dinner

Where: Bradley's at the Copley Community Center

Program Old Roses

Speaker: Janet Kurtz of Fox Head Farm, Marshallville, Ohio

Why is the year 1867 vitally important in the field of roses?

What exactly is the definition of an 'old' rose?

Why are we interested in old roses and why has Janet Kurtz devoted her working life to the growing and selling of them?

When your telephone person calls, let them know that you will be attending the meeting, or you will never find out the answers to these questions!

Fox Head Farm roses will be available for purchase at the meeting, don't miss out on the opportunity to acquire one of these healthy, hardy beautiful plants for your garden.

Could you bring **Silent Auction** items to this meeting?

Mary Ann Ferguson-Rich

Board meeting: July 25, 2005 7:00 p.m., The Fairlawn Park Garden and Civic Center, W. Market and White Pond, Akron.

Coffee provided, snacks welcomed. All members are invited to attend.

Club web site: <http://www.acorn.net/mgcakron>

A Message from President Mary Ann Ferguson-Rich

Is your garden dry, but growing? I am doing a lot of watering but I have been harvesting green onions, lettuce, peas and yellow crookneck squash. Tomatoes are already forming and this may be the year I get muskmelons, watermelons and pumpkins. Only in very dry, sunny, hot years am I successful with melons, but they are worth the trouble. This year I tried a muskmelon called Fastbreak and it has lived up to its name. The vines are growing quickly and are setting fruit this week. I don't use spray, so it is always a battle against the beetles and the borers and bacterial wilt, but so far these vines have been resistant. There is nothing sweeter than a muskmelon that has fully ripened on the vine, in a baking-hot summer garden. In rainy years like the past several however, they are impossible to grow in our area. While I complain about 90 degree heat, I have learned to take advantage of it in my garden.



Thank you to David Hawkins and the whole committee for putting on a wonderful strawberry festival. We had an attendance of around 80 people, many of whom were family, friends and visitors. The weather cooperated completely and the grilling was accomplished by 6:30. The covered dishes were numerous and tantalizing and it was a beautiful evening for a walk in the park. We hope to bring this event back again next year, as it proved to be extremely popular.

Make sure you check your August Gabber for the meeting location. We have plans to try out two potential dinner locations for the August and September meetings. **WE WILL NOT BE MEETING AT BRADLEY'S in AUGUST and SEPTEMBER.** We will be trying out the Akron Woman's City Club and Peg's Catering. At the close of the September meeting, we will pass out ballots and those in attendance will vote on which location to contract with for future dinner meetings. We may be starting at the new location permanently, as soon as October. If you want to be a part of the choice, you should make a point to attend the August and September meetings. You should make it a point to attend as many meetings as possible anyway! Majority will rule, so let your voice be heard.

And speaking of voting, at the national convention in Orlando in June, it was passed by a narrow margin of only 18 votes to increase the dues by \$10.00 in 2006. We know the membership is not going to be happy about this and the board met this past Monday and decided that for the first year, **OUR CLUB**, will pay the increase on behalf of our non-life members. Your dues will not change and we will absorb the cost in our budget. We may not be able to do it forever, but we are committed to making membership as affordable as possible for all of you. Dues will be collected earlier this year so watch your Gabber for the renewal form. Our list and money need to be at national by early January, so we will have to collect by November. The only good thing about this is that with an early return of membership forms, you will get your cards earlier, and your magazine subscription will not be interrupted.

The Horticulture Show will be held on September 10-11, 2005. Cathy Morgan and I are in charge and we are in the process of arranging for it to be held at the Main Library in Akron. Details will be announced by August and the show schedules will be passed out at that meeting. If anyone wishes to make suggestions for changes to the show schedule, please contact Cathy or me this month. At our August meeting, we will again have a **MINI-SHOW** to prepare for the big show. Prizes will again be offered for the best three entries in the mini-show. Last year Andy Bettick won two of them and Joyce Baldwin won the third. Who will be the lucky winners this year? Further information about the mini-show will be provided in the August Gabber.

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Plant Problem Diagnostics

Frank Mitch and I attended the Seventy-Fifth Anniversary Celebration of the Men's Garden Club of Youngstown. One of the seminars was led by Jim Chatfield from OSU Extension. The title was 20 Questions of Plant Problem Diagnostics. He said that proper diagnosis of plant problems is a key factor in plant health management. He said that treatment without diagnosis, as in medicine, is malpractice. But, how many of us when we see a problem in our garden or tree or lawn etc. start spraying or using some other treatment without knowing what the problem really is?

Diagnosis is a process used to come up with the best possible explanation of why a good plant has gone wrong. To make a proper diagnosis consider these questions. These questions are intended for the professional person such as an extension agent etc. but they can be used by the individual gardener.

#1 - What Is the Plant? For example is the tree a pine or a spruce?

#2 - What Is Normal for the Plant? What may be perfectly healthy for one plant may be a sign of a serious problem in another. As an example he showed a picture of a maple leaf with curled leaves. In most maples this is a symptom of serious disease, but in this species of maple it is normal.

#3 - What Are the Common Problems With the Plant? There are no problem free plants, all plants have their own set of diseases, pests, etc. But remember not all problems are caused by the common cause.

#4 - What Do You See That Looks Abnormal? Are there signs of insect feeding? Are there signs of a fungal disease? Some plant problems have a whole series of symptoms, not just one.

#5 - What Is the Overall Health of the Plant? This can help tell how long the plant has had the problem.

#6 - What Exactly Do You See? Different diseases can cause similar looking problems; for example, brown spots on leaves. However, the smaller details of the problem can distinguish between the diseases.

#7 - What Do You See on Other Plants? For example, if a number of different vegetables in the garden are dying they are probably not dying from a disease since most disease causing pathogens have a limited host range. If the damage is widespread it is probably from a major environmental factor such as extended flooding or improper herbicide use.

#8 - What Are the Plant's Site Conditions? Examine the soil in which the plant is growing. Is there good drainage? Is the soil acid or alkaline? Is the site sunny or shady? Is there exposure to wind?

#9 - Who Knows the Most About the Plant? A plant patient is not like a human patient, a plant patient cannot talk. However, asking questions of the person who takes care of the plant often yields the most important information. Mr. Chatfield had a funny example of this. A group of experts were at the University of Auburn trying to figure out why the football field had large bare spots. They were looking for bugs, worms, fungus etc. Finally they questioned the groundskeeper and he said that was where the cheerleaders led the cheers.

#10 - When Did Symptoms First Appear? Plants do not die overnight. With trees, for example, symptoms such as branch decay and bark peeling are long term but overlooked until the condition of the tree becomes critical.

11 - What Is the Horticultural History of the Plant? When was the tree planted? How was it planted, too deep, etc.? What has been the fertilization program? How is the plant watered? Have pesticides been used? How has the plant been mulched?

#12 - What Is the Environmental History? How harsh have recent winters been? Have there been droughts?

#13 - What Does the Client Think the Problem Is? For example, if you are helping a friend with a sickly spruce tree, you may find evidence of a gall and recommend treatment but that isn't your friend's problem; he was concerned that the tree wasn't as blue as it used to be.

#14 - What Diagnostic Tools Are Available? A soil probe can take soil samples for pH testing etc. A hand lens can check for mites and small insects and fungal fruiting bodies on leaves. Sharp hand pruners can cut twigs to look for stem damage. Digging tools can be used to dig around the base of a plant to check for girdling roots.

15 - What Additional Resources Are Available? Your fellow gardeners can help. Books are available. There are web sites. Sometimes samples of the problem must be sent to other diagnostic people such as extension agents or diagnostic labs.

#16 - How Do I Take a Sample? When a large number of small plants are affected take a whole plant, roots and all, to be examined. If only a localized part of the plant is affected send several samples of the affected parts; include a short section of healthy tissue.

17 - What Else Needs To Be Considered? After thinking of all the possibilities stop and ask: What else could cause the problem?

18 - What is the Diagnosis? There is always some uncertainty about a diagnosis but strive to come up with the best diagnosis possible. It is just as important to notice what you did not find.

19 - What Is the Significance of the Problem? Some diseases and pest problems really don't make any difference to the health of the plant. For example, powdery mildew on lilacs occurs every year and causes little damage to the plant. Most of the mites and insect galls on plant leaves cause little damage to the plant.

20 - What Are My Recommendations? Sometimes taking no action is the solution. If the problem is trivial and you are not concerned about it do nothing. Sometimes nothing can be done. In such cases removal of the plant is the best solution. When applying a solution to the problem remember that timing is important. For example some chemicals must be applied only in the spring.

Mr. Chatfield concluded his talk with an illustration of the diagnostic process. Sherlock Holmes and Dr. Watson went on a camping trip. After a good meal and a bottle of wine they lay down for the night and went to sleep. Some hours later Holmes awoke and nudged his faithful friend. "Watson, look, up at the sky and tell me what you see." Watson replied, "I see millions and millions of stars." Holmes asked, "What does that tell you?" Watson pondered and replies, "Astronomically, it tells me that there are millions of galaxies and potentially billions of planets. Astrologically, I observe that Saturn is in Leo. Horologically, I deduce that the time is approximately a quarter past three. Theologically, I can see that God is all powerful and that we are small and insignificant." Watson concludes, "So, Holmes, what does it tell you?" Holmes thought a minute, then spoke, "Watson, you idiot! Someone has stolen our tent!"

submitted by Leroy Hart

President's Message - Continued

Congratulations to Jim Bell, who has completed judges training and is now an Apprentice Judge. After judging five shows, he will join the other fully accredited judges in our club. This training is provided by the national organization and is based upon the national handbook. For those of you wondering what we get from national, trained judges are one of the benefits. Thank you Jim for taking the time to complete the course!

A big thank you to Vic Giannini, for preparing the Membership Roster. It's quite a job and he worked very hard on it. Those of you who did not attend the July meeting, will be receiving your copy in the mail shortly.

Don't forget to call David Rich at 330-630-9625 with your nominations for 2005 beautification awards. David tells me that he has only one nomination so far!

Member News

Life member Carl Parks died June 27, 2005 at the age of 87. Carl was a member of the club since 1987.

For many years he was the ultimate calling committee chairman. After every dinner meeting he recorded exactly who attended the dinner and who didn't keep their reservation to attend. At the end of the year he issued a report to each caller; this report listed each member who failed to attend. Because of his oversight and attention to detail of these records the no shows for dinner were few and far between.

Walt Starcher reported that Carl was a member of the original Big Tree Committee.

Carl will be very much missed by his family, friends, and fellow garden club members.

Submitted by Frank Mitch

Roster Additions

Edwards, Richard 4733 Rolling View Drive
Akron OH 44333 (330-)666- 4979

Parker, Lynn 1477 Centerview Drive
Copley OH 44321-1901 (330)666-2547



5157 Akron-Cleveland Road
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