



Owen County Garden Club

Winter Newsletter

January 2010

Annie Bright, Editor 986-3335

Reduce, Recycle Reuse

When most of us were kids, disposable was not a word we heard very often. Kids today would have a hard time imagining a life without disposables. We throw everything from computers to paper towels in the trash. According to Fabian Cousteau, there is a trash pile in the middle of the Pacific Ocean as big as Texas! That is a lot of trash. Where does it come from? What does that do to the health of the ocean? Clean water is crucial to our survival; we all know that. If we continue to abuse the earth, our grandchildren will inherit horrendous problems. In the US we use 2 million plastic bottles every 5 minutes. Two Million? I am trying to imagine how big a pile that would be. Even if we recycle those bottles, the impact on the earth is incredible.

I went to Wal-Mart this week to pick up a few things. I came out with six plastic bags. One bag held one 2 liter plastic bottle of pop. I didn't need that bag. Another one held three rolls of paper towels. I had two cloth bags in the car, I forgot to take them in with me. Paper towels? I can remember life with out them. Now every kitchen has a roll. Cloth napkins are reserved for special occasions. I bet we all have some lovely napkins put away in a drawer some place. I say get them out and use them.

Our mothers brought groceries home in boxes most of the time. That was how the storekeeper got rid of his boxes. Our grandmothers probably had a shopping bag to tote things home. Today we are asked "Paper or plastic?" at the checkout. Americans use 60,000 plastic bags every 5 seconds. Plastic bags are made from polyethylene, which is derived from petroleum. We use 1.4 million paper bags every hour in this country. Is paper better than plastic? Paper is renewable and will biodegrade, but manufacturing paper has a huge impact on the environment. The next time the check out person asks me "Paper or plastic?" I vow to say neither. I am going to use those cloth shopping bags gathering dust in my car.

How many kinds of plastic bags do you have in your cupboard? I have two boxes of the zipper kind, one box of fold over lunch bags, a roll of cling wrap, a roll of waxed paper, and a roll of aluminum foil. I take my lunch to work, so I need all of that. That is what I tell myself. When I was a kid I carried lunch to school in an old lard bucket. Mom wrapped our peanut butter sandwiches in wax paper. We carefully folded that up and took it back home to be used again. I suppose we used that same piece of waxed paper for a week. Was that healthy? Were we exposed to germs? If so, we survived. A better option would be reusable containers.

My resolution for 2010 is to reduce the footprint I leave on the earth, to take the extra effort to reduce, recycle and reuse whenever I can. I hope you will join me.

Winter Meeting: *January 18, 2010*

Our winter meeting will be at the home of Angie & Louis Fender again this year. We will have a pitch-in dinner at 6 pm. The Club will furnish tableware and drinks. Following the dinner we will discuss plans for the coming year. If you have an idea for a program, a place to visit or meeting topic, please come to the meeting.

In case of inclement weather the meeting will take place the following Monday, January 25. The Fender's home is at 1494 Rocky Hill Road, north of town. Take West Street out of town and look for the Fender's 4 Star Meat sign on your right. Drive up the hill; turn left and go across the dam to park. Angie's phone number is 829-2679.

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JANUARY IS THE TIME TO PAY YOUR DUES.

THE GARDEN CLUB IS STILL A BARGAIN AT \$5 A YEAR. DUES MAY BE PAID AT THE WINTER MEETING OR MAILED TO THE TREASURER, NANCY KNAPP AT 2741 POTTERSVILLE RD., SPENCER, IN 47460.



2010 Perennial Plant of the Year Is Blue False Indigo

Baptisia australis

This showy native species has been popular with gardeners for many years because it is easy to grow and offers four seasons of interest in the landscape. In mid to late spring, foot long spires of intense indigo blue flowers rise above the foliage, commanding attention in the spring landscape. After the flowers have faded, the trifoliate, soft blue-green foliage takes center stage, forming a sturdy, upright, shrub-like clump 3 - 4 feet tall and wide at maturity. It makes a terrific backdrop for other perennials and ground covers growing at its feet. Taking the place of the spent flowers are 2 - 3 inch long, puffy seed pods which emerge green and then turn charcoal black when they ripen in late summer or early fall. They remain well into winter, providing that much sought after winter interest in the landscape. *Baptisia* is a very long-lived perennial. Over time, it expands to form a large clump with a deep, extensive root system. It is best left undisturbed and tends to resent transplanting.

Landscape Uses

Because of its commanding size, this shrub-like perennial makes a beautiful specimen on its own or in small groupings. It is commonly used as a backdrop in perennial borders, but also works well in native or meadow plantings. Deer usually do not bother *Baptisia*, and it attracts butterflies.

Origin

Baptisia australis is a native species of North America commonly found in prairies, meadows, stream banks, and open woods. Early Americans used this plant as a substitute for true indigo from the West Indies, which was used to make blue dye. It was the first agricultural crop ever to be subsidized in America.

Culture

Baptisia australis is very easy to grow and requires little maintenance if sited properly. It grows best in full sun, but will tolerate light shade. If it is planted in too much shade, it may not flower and may require staking. Average to poor soil is suitable, as long as it is well drained. Once established, *Baptisia* is drought tolerant due to its tough, deep taproot. No serious pests or diseases are known to afflict this plant. Deer seldom eat it. Cultivars in many colors will be available this spring.

Remember if you are throwing ice melt or salt on your walks and driveways, avoid the area near your plants and trees. Those chemicals are toxic to our gardens. Some mixtures of ice melt are more toxic than others. Read the labels.



DILL NAMED HERB OF THE YEAR

The International Herb Association picked dill as their special plant this year. *Unbelliferae Anethum graveolens* originated in southern Europe and western Asia. The common name - dill - comes from our Anglo Saxon ancestors. Dill was used as a calming tea in the old days. It was said to cure hiccups!

Easy to grow and very versatile, this plant is an attractive addition to the garden. Like most herbs it requires full sun and will self-seed. Dill plants do not like to be transplanted; sow seed where you want the plants to flourish. Tall plants produce feathery leaves and yellow blooms that resemble Queen Anne's Lace. The seed and the leaves are useful in cooking, preserving and baking. Here is my mother's recipe for Dilly Bread.

Dortha's Dilly Bread

Soften 1 pkg. dry yeast in ¼ c. warm water and set aside.

In a large bowl mix:

1 c. small curd cottage cheese, heated to lukewarm

2 T. sugar

1 T. minced onion

1 T. butter, softened

2 tsp. dill seed

1 tsp. salt

¼ tsp. baking soda

Once that is all mixed well, add:

1 egg and

the softened yeast

Then add 2-¼ c. sifted all-purpose flour and beat well.

Form into a ball, cover and let it rise until double in size. Stir the dough down and put it in a round 8 inch well greased bowl. Let the dough rise for 30 minutes. Bake at 350 degrees for 40 minutes, until crust is firm. Remove from oven and brush with melted butter.

D. Landreth Seed Company

If you aren't familiar with this company, check them out at landrethseeds.com. Started 225 years ago, they are one of the oldest businesses in America. Thomas Jefferson bought seeds from their founder! They specialize in heirloom seeds and carry a large variety of vegetables. The 2010 catalog is a treat and it is free! The cover is a reproduction of the 1884 cover. Call them at 1-800-654-2407 to order a catalog, if you don't have internet.

Clever Clovers Stop, Pop, and Drop - contributed by Elizabeth A. Blake

The Clever Clovers 4-H club is asking you to open your heart and lend a hand as we strive to collect 50 pounds of pop tabs to support the Ronald Mc Donald house at Riley Children's Hospital. Starting now, January 2010, we are encouraging Owen County to Stop, Pop and Drop. Stop before you throw that can tab away, pop it off of the can and drop it into a collection container throughout Owen County. Riley is changing lives and you never know when it might be your loved one that will need these services. The pop tab you donate today will bring a smile to a family in need. We have placed collection cans at the YMCA, Babbs Grocery, all three of the local banks and many more businesses throughout Owen County. Please call 829-5020 and ask for Elizabeth to find out where you can donate pop tabs. Thank you for helping today's 4-Hers support tomorrow's youth.

Thank You and a Pat on the Back

- **To Julie Coffin and her crew for keeping the Triangle looking beautiful all year. The garden there gives a bright welcome to those entering our town.**
- **A big thanks to all the people who took a turn at watering the urns this year. Some of them were spectacular.**
- **Thank you to the Brinsons for tending the garden at Cooper Park.**
- **Thank you to John Fuhs for emptying the urns again this year.**
- **Thanks to Angie Fender, Emily Redenbarger and their helpers for decorating the urns for the winter.**
- **Thanks to Connie McCain for organizing our autumn meeting and Sue Ciresi for being our auctioneer.**