

# OPEN GATE GARDEN CLUB OF MICHIGAN

## December 2023 Newsletter

**MEETING:** November 13th AT 6:15 PM

**EVENT:** Holiday Party

**LOCATION:** Father Harvey Activity Center



### Holiday Gathering: December 13th

Thank you to everyone who has played a role in making this Holiday Gathering a fun and festive evening. So many individuals have been involved in making this event a success. You are truly appreciated!

**Members:** Please bring pair of scissors and wire snips may be useful to cut thin wire, trim greens, adjust the bow. Wear your festive attire...antlers, bells, festive sweater:)

**Greeters:** Norm and Nancy Kilgore

**Food Crew:** If you have not RSVP'd for the Party, please call or text Kathy Girgen...810-252-4072. We are trying to put together an accurate count. Please remember your dish to pass. If you have any questions about this, please contact Kathy as well.

If you are bringing an appetizer, we hope to have appetizers in place by 5:50 pm. Appetizers and beverages served from 6-6:30.

**Set Up Crew :** Setting up decor on tables. Tables are already physically in place and set up.

**Please arrive at 3:30 for set up.** Should be done early if you would like to return home and come back. Many hands make light work!

- Sherry Lahey (please make reminder contact 3:30 pm)
- Lynn Ronthi
- Kathy Girgen
- Michelle Kusnier
- Nancy Kilgour
- John Kusnier

**Clean Up Crew:** Tables remain in place. Clean up simply involves clearing table clothes, wiping down tables and straightening the room.

- Martha Romanowski (please make call and announcement at meeting end)
- Linda Rice
- Nicolette Ellinghausen
- Cara Wahl
- Karen Hall

**Membership:** Look for Member information corrections at next week meeting.

**January Speaker:** Mary Butler-Moore: Forgotten Harvest volunteer

Ms Moore volunteers at the warehouse, farm, and pantries which are the lifeblood of the organization. She fell in love with the organization's work after volunteering at the Forgotten Harvest Farm in 2017 where she learned the "why" and "for whom" the work was being done.

Forgotten Harvest Farms is the culmination of a dream that has been in the making since Dr. Nancy Fishman, our founder, began the organization and had the audacity to believe that we could "rescue" healthy food — food that would otherwise go to waste in our landfills. Forgotten Harvest Farms is situated on more than 95 acres of land, donated for use by the Moroun Family. Since 2013, we have grown and harvested nearly seven million pounds of produce at Forgotten Harvest Farms. Forgotten Harvest Farms is located at: 9153 Major Rd, Fenton, MI 48430.

Forgotten Harvest's mission is to relieve hunger and prevent nutritious food waste in Macomb, Oakland, and Wayne Counties. It envisions communities that work together to end hunger and increase individual, neighborhood, economic, and environmental health. The organization was formed in 1990 and now operates 50 refrigerated trucks out of a 77,000 square foot facility with 16 truck bays and has 200 emergency food providers that distribute the food to those in need. The service they provide is much needed as 40% of the food (78 billion pounds) in the U.S. is wasted annually and there is an estimated 38.3 million people experiencing food insecurity. Their main facility/headquarters is at 15000 Eight Mile Rd, Oak Park, MI 48237.

For more information, to donate or volunteer, go to: [www.forgottenharvest.org](http://www.forgottenharvest.org)

## **Why Are Poinsettias *the* Christmas Flower?**

Native to Mexico, the plant is called *Flor de la Noche Buena* (Flower of the Holy Night) due to its resemblance to the Star of Bethlehem.

In their native region of southern Mexico, poinsettias flower during the winter season. It's a perennial shrub that was once considered a weed and will grow 10 to 15 feet tall in the wild. The Aztecs used the poinsettia bracts to make a reddish-purple dye for fabrics and used the sap medicinally to control fevers. The colored "flowers" are specialized leaves called bracts, while the actual flowers are inconspicuous beads found in the center of the bracts.

According to Mexican lore, a young child, Pepita, did not have a gift for the baby Jesus at a Christmas Eve service. She was penniless, so all she could do was pick a bouquet of weeds to offer. The angels felt compassion for her plight. So, after Pepita set the flowers at the crèche of the nativity on Christmas Eve, the angels transformed the weeds into beautiful red flowers. This is why red and green are the colors of Christmas today.

Now, the reason blazing red (and now pink, white, orange, plus combinations of these colors) poinsettias are the Christmas flower in the United States is an accidental discovery by Joel Roberts Poinsett (1779–1851), an American statesman and the first U.S. ambassador to Mexico in 1828.

An amateur botanist, Poinsett saw the red flowers when visiting the Mexican town of Taxco in the state of Guerrero, shortly before he was thrown out of the country for trying to buy Texas from the Mexicans for a million dollars!

Poinsett was so impressed by the beauty of these plants that he sent cuttings back to his plantation near Georgetown, South Carolina, where they were propagated and called the “Mexican Fire Plant.” The plant was shared with botanical gardens and growers across the country.

Soon, the plants became popular across the U.S. and were renamed for Mr. Poinsett.

But the reason poinsettias became so popular is due to Paul Ecke and his inventiveness. Ecke, who lived in California, discovered a technique that caused seedlings to branch, resulting in a fuller plant. He began growing the plant in the tens of thousands for Christmas when other flowers were scarce.

To promote poinsettias as a Christmas plant, he sent the crimson-leaved plants to TV studios nationwide, including “The Tonight Show” and Bob Hope’s holiday specials.

Today, Poinsettias are the most popular Christmas plant and the best-selling potted plant in the United States and Canada.

## **Minutes Open Gate Garden Club Member Meeting Nov 15, 2023**

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**6:13 p.m.** St John Activity Center

Welcome to visitors. Thanks to all who provided hospitality for this Silent Auction Event.

Brook was introduced by Linda VanCamp. Brook would be going around selling 50/50 tickets (1-\$1, 6-\$5).

Lynn Behr announced proceedings for the evening:

- 6:20-7:00 Bidding on items and eating
- 7:00 Meeting
- 7:30 Any items with no bid would be cut to half price
- 7:45 Bidding end, followed by Live Auction

**7:10 p.m. Business Meeting**

Thank you notes were read from Heart Hospice (donation) and Adopt-A-Pet (ground clean up)

Still need location for Summer Picnic, 2024.

Looking for Nominations Committee Chair

Christmas Party signup sheets are available. Sign up for your preference to bring: appetizers, desserts, salads, sides. Ham and Chicken will be provided by the club. Please let Lynn Behr know if you will NOT be attending (need a count for food).

Norm Kilgour announced that the directory corrections handed out at the beginning of the evening had more corrections. Revisions will be available next month.

**7:20 p.m. Break**

**7:45 p.m.**

- 50/50 prize of \$118 was won by Suzanne Kelly
- Door Prizes:
  - Book, won by visitor (Kathy)
  - Candle holder won by Kay Baxter
- Cara Wahl conducted a spirited live auction for two Pontoon Boat Rides”
  - Nicolette won the bid and selected the Lobdell Lake ride, including a gift card to Cancun
  - Ray Barth won the bid for the Lake Fenton ride

Meeting adjourned at **8:30 p.m.**