OPEN GATE GARDEN CLUB OF MICHIGAN

October 2026 Newsletter

Photo by Ray Barth

NEXT MEETING:

October 21, 2026
BOARD MEETING 5 PM
In the Activity Center Library
MEMBER MEETING 6:15
In Father Harvey Activity Center

PROGRAM: Top 10 Tree Problems of 2026
SPEAKER: Jeremy Hertz-Family Tree Doctor

HOSPITALITY: Mary Kay Schmelzer is the leader for October Hospitality. The volunteers need to bring a dish to pass for this meeting are:

- Janice Cooley
- Ray Barth
- Geno Essenmacher
- Patsy Essenmacher
- Patti O'Keefe
- Jeanne Martin
- Kathryn Wright
- Kathy Schwatch
- Susan Bammert

Please call or text Mary Kaye at 248.820.7505

MEMBERSHIP: Many thanks to our mentors for their time introducing our new members to the club. Debbie Tegard-Harroun, Debbie Scribner, Martha Romanowski, Judy Lytle, Pat Laycock, Norm Kilgour, Nancy Kilgour, Tina Imeson, Carla Goll and Lynn Behr**.**

AND THE WINNERS ARE: Kim Fisher and Janice Cooley both won quilts in the Fenton Art Council Raffle. They purchased their tickets before the OGGC September meeting.

WITH FOND MEMORIES: The world lost a good man on October 4th of this year at the age of 96. Dick Johnson was a member of the OGGC, joining in 2001. From the beginning, Dick was a very active volunteer. He helped with the gardens at St. John, helped set up and cleanup at summer picnics, and set up the garden gate signs around town for the garden tour. Dick held the office of Treasurer for many years. Our fondest memories though, are of the poems he wrote and recited prior to every meeting. Dick received the title of the OGGC first and only Honorary Member several years ago. Below is a copy of one of his poems.

October 2007
I never thought I would live on streets of gold
But nature's beauty is a sight to behold
The once green trees have changed their hue
And their falling leaves don't make me blue
Burning bushes add ruby red to the scene
Nature's jewels for all to be seen
So you see we're double blessed
When Mother Nature does her best
For when Old Man Winter does his thing
We will not see such beauty 'til next spring

GARDEN TOUR 2027: We need one or two volunteer(s) to begin an apprenticeship as Garden Tour chairperson. Kay Baxter was an apprentice for the 2025 tour, chaired the 2026 tour, and her final commitment is to mentor the next apprentice(s).

This is a wonderful opportunity to work side by side with a wonderful mentor and to have her as a backup for the 2028 tour. The tour chair and committee chair job descriptions are available on our web site, and most chair positions are filled with those who have been in their role for many years. Also, of tremendous importance, the gardens for next year have been chosen.

The duties of the tour chair are sporadic during the year until mid- June. At that point final assessment of the volunteer needs and communicating with committee chairs along with arranging for purchase of garden bench and homeowner gifts begins. The tour chair needs to be available the Friday evening prior to the tour and all day of the tour itself.

The tour is a very popular event for our community and a great way to represent our club. Many of our attendees look forward to attending every year.

Please do not approach this request with fear or self-doubt. You will have tremendous support. Taking this position is a wonderful contribution not only to the club and the community, but a chance to meet many members of our clubs and get to know them better.

Open Gate Garden Club Member Meeting
Sept 23, 2026

6:15 p.m. St John Activity Center

6:20 p.m. Dinner

7:00 p.m. Business Meeting

1. Ann introduced Nicolette as the "Sunshine Lady", (part of the club Secretary position) who sends out cards for various reasons (illness, surgery, congratulations, thinking-of-you, etc.) If anyone knows of a reason that a card should be sent out, please contact Nicolette and she'll send one out.
2. Lynn Behr spoke about the Silent Auction (Nov 18th). Amy Doyle will be running this year's event. Some suggestions for donations to the Silent Auction were home/garden goods, services, gift cards (donated, not purchased), events (dinner, boat ride), wine, holiday décor, baked goods, etc. Members are encouraged to bring a guest to this fundraising event. Last year (2025) about $2200 was raised. Kathy Girgen will be helping Lynn, Kim Church is in charge of set up (beginning at 3:15 p.m.). Help is still needed for the Cashier table. Bidding for items begins at approx. 1/3 the value. At 7:30 on the evening of the event, items will be red-lined and no more bids will be allowed.
3. Please submit any corrections to this year's Yearbook to Nancy Kilgour.
4. Lynn Behr spoke about the Christmas Party (Dec 9th). Help still needed for Holiday cheer table, set up begins at 3 p.m., set up for stage (Karen Poloski). There will be food lists and Phone lists, and Christmas cards to sign and send
5. This year's Garden Tour generated $5400 in sales, with approximately $3300 in net proceeds.
6. The following positions will not be returning next year:

a. President (Ann Barth),
b. Treasurer (Norm Kilgour), and
c. Speaker Program (Ray Barth).

7. If you're interested in any of these positions, contact the individuals who will be happy to have you shadow them for the remainder of the business year.
8. Hospitality needs more volunteers. Sign-up sheets will be available at future meetings.
9. Thanks to Kim Fisher for hosting an exceptional Summer Picnic this year, including live music and TONS of food.
10. Thanks to Patti O'Keefe for hosting this fall's Perennial Exchange.

7:20 p.m. Break

7:35 p.m. Speaker Presentation – ***Windowsill Orchids in Michigan*** by Ray Kondel (1972mcchevy@gmail.com) Feel free to contact Ray if you have any questions.

Orchid Culture

- Most grown on the side of a tree or rock
- No/little soil
- Very dry season and wet season
- Rainwater with composted materials
- Constant air movement
- Grow well in indirect sunlight

Phalaenopsis (common "Home Depot" type)

- Very common, keep water out of plant crown
- Roots must dry out between watering
- Require large aggregate potting mix, fertilize lightly (1/2 strength)
- Leave old flower stalks on plant, cut a\@ first node
- Grow near east or west window, indirect light

Dendrobium (Snowbird special)

- Strong cotton-candy fragrance
- Quit watering around Thanksgiving
- Resume watering when shoots are 2-3" long
- Fertilize during growing season
- Grow near south or east window
- Pot in layered mix of large aggregate and moss

Brassavolo cattleya

- Many types and hybrids
- Let them go bone dry then water well
- Fertilize lightly in Spring months

- Use a large aggregate with pad of moss below the plant
- Grow near a south windowsill

Epidendrum
- Grow very tall
- Dry winter, water well during Spring/Summer
- Use a large aggregate with pad of moss below the plant
- On or near south windowsill

Oncidium
- Wester window sill
- Nice fragrance, colorful
- Keep potting mix damp (no stagnant water in saucer)
- Fertilize lightly every other watering
- Use a large aggregate with pad of moss below the plant

Cymbidium
- Colorful, but not very fragrant
- Keep potting mix damp during summer
- Use a large aggregate with pad of moss below the plant
- Grow outdoors in Spring through Fall (30 degrees)
- Grow indoors near south or west windowsill

Catasetum
- Keep potting medium damp during growing season (summer)
- Use a large aggregate with pad of moss below the plant
- Stop watering in the Fall when leaves begin to yellow
- Resume watering when shoots are 2-3” long
- Repot every other year
- South or west window, direct sunlight

Potting media
- Large aggregate (broken terra cotta pots, etc)
- Quality Spagnum moss (resemble caterpillar)
- Layer of large aggregate in bottom of container
- Pots/containers of terra cotta
- Terra cotta trays unglazed to raise humidity
- South, east, and west windows

- Water should be RO (Reverse Osmosis) or distilled. Watering with well or city water not recommended
- Keep warm in the summer and cool in the winter
- Use a fan on a time if air movement is not present in the growing location.

Summer break
- Take orchids outside
- Benefits include rainwater, dappled sun, humidity, ad breeze
- Problems include hardening the plants when returning to inside (cover w/screen for about a week), insects, rodents

Pests
- Mealy bugs – kill w/ 70% alcohol
- Ants – terro traps
- Spider mites – isolate plant, run fan, spray w/Dawn soapy water

8:42 – Drawing
Book (Herbs, Spices, Flavorings) – Nancy Kilgour
Welcome Mat – Barry Considine