

GALLATIN GRUBBER

March 2016

April Meeting

The club's monthly meeting on Monday, April 4 will feature Jane Mangold, Extension Invasive Plant Specialist at MSU, who will discuss all things new about weeds and other invasive species that affect our gardens. Many of you will know Jane from her appearances on Montana Ag Live.

Refreshments: Don Heyden, Amy Cox and Cindy Mernin.

Tomato Plant Fund Raiser

As part of our club's fundraising, we will grow tomato plants to sell at our annual Memorial Day weekend Plant and Tool Sale as well as to individual club members. The plants will be grown in 4 inch pots and available for distribution about June 1 at a cost of \$1 each. Varieties available will include: Goliath, Big Beef, Whopper, Celebrity, Early Girl, New Girl, Taxi (yellow), Sungold, Sweet 100, and Juliet. If you have other varieties you would like to have planted, let Don Mathre know (mathre@q.com) and get the seed to him by April 15, along with the number of each variety you would like.

Rocky Mountain Vegetable Gardening Guide

Our next meeting will be on Monday, March 7, at 7 p.m. at Hope Lutheran Church on South 19th Avenue. Our program will be presented by Cheryl Moore-Gough, who will talk about her recently released book, *Rocky Mountain Vegetable Gardening Guide*. Cheryl has a wealth of knowledge to share on vegetable production and invites you to bring your questions on this subject to the meeting. Copies of this newly revised book, plus other gardening books by Cheryl, will be available for purchase at the meeting.

Refreshments: Larissa Jackiw, Janice Hand, and Bonnie and Charles Hash.

Market Garden Update

We got our garden season off to a great start with our annual onion planting party at the MSU Plant Growth Center on Feb. 13, when a record turnout of 27 folks showed up to help. It was great fun, and we even had time to enjoy each other's company with refreshments in the PGC atrium. The next event will be a planting party to get the broccoli, cabbage, etc. planted on Saturday, April 16 at 9 a.m. in the PGC. More details will be forthcoming via e-mail. Then on Saturday, April 30 at 9 a.m. we will be gathering again at the PGC for a tomato transplanting party. Depending on the weather, we will have our first work party at the main garden in late April or early May to put up the deer fence and pea fences as well as getting all the rows staked out. Again, stay tuned via e-mail for the exact date and time.



Carefully counting seeds at the Feb. 13 planting party

Gene Ford

On Feb. 7, Gene Ford passed away from a rapidly growing brain tumor. Many of you will remember Gene for his talk to the club about growing a vegetable garden in Tok, Alaska. Gene was a trained horticulturalist and plant pathologist who spent his winters here in Bozeman working at MSU, and his summers in Tok. He was a member of our club and certainly will be missed.

Club Business

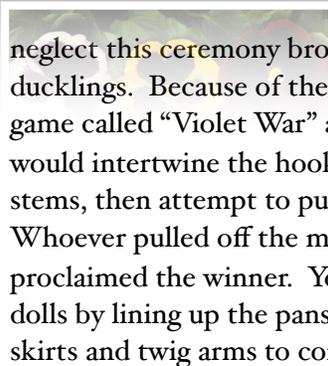
Treasurer Janne Hayward reports that club membership now stands at 79 paid members for 2016. Vice-president Pat Flaherty has agreed to do the required annual review of our 2015 financial records. The club membership approved granting a total of \$15,750 to 14 local organizations at the February membership meeting. The checks have been mailed, leaving us with \$2928 in the bank. In the coming months we will once again offer T-shirts, sweatshirts, and caps with the club's new logo on them. Stay tuned for the details. And don't forget the annual plant and tool sale on May 28. It will soon be time to begin collecting tools raising plants for that event. Copies of a new, full-color club brochure, designed by Susie Mathre, club president and professional graphic designer, will soon be available for distribution. After considering a proposal to raise dues, the board of directors voted to keep dues at their current affordable level, noting that members may make additional tax-deductible donations if they so desire.

Flower of the Month: Pansy

(Viola tricolor var. hortensis)

by Don Mathre

History: The name "pansy" is derived from the French word *pensée*, "thought," and was imported into Late Middle English in the mid-15th century as a common name for *Viola* because the flower was regarded as a symbol of remembrance. The modern pansy is really a hybrid of *V. tricolor* (the wildflower of Europe) and a variety from western Asia called "heartseae". The name "heart's-ease" came from St. Euphrasia, whose name in Greek signifies cheerfulness of mind. The sainted woman, who refused



marriage and took the veil, was considered a model of humility, hence the name "humble violet". In 1813, the first named variety was recorded, and by 1833 there were over 400 named varieties. Today, there are literally hundreds of varieties. American pioneers thought that "a handful of violets taken into the farmhouse in the spring ensured prosperity," and to neglect this ceremony brought harm to baby chicks and ducklings. Because of the violet's place in American hearts, a game called "Violet War" also arose. In this game, two players would intertwine the hooks where the pansy blossoms meet the stems, then attempt to pull the two flowers apart like wishbones. Whoever pulled off the most of their opponent's violet heads was proclaimed the winner. Young American settlers also made pansy dolls by lining up the pansy flower "faces" and pasting on leaf skirts and twig arms to complete the figures.

Cultivation: Pansy flowers typically show large "face markings" with colors of yellow, gold, orange, purple, violet, red, white, and near black. The plants like a sunny location with well-drained soil. The plants can grow as a perennial, but usually in the climate of the Gallatin Valley (Zone 4) they grow as an annual. If protected by a mulch, however, they may survive the winter. Gardeners usually purchase them as transplants at garden stores. Because they can tolerate a light frost, they are one of the earliest flowers that can be set out into the garden. They can grow to a height of 9 inches with flowers 2-3 inches in diameter.

Pests: Pansies have few pest problems in our area. Aphids and powdery mildew can appear near the end of the season. Both can usually be ignored.