

Flora & Fauna

For the Butterflies

One of the most delightful things to see in the garden is one or more colorful butterflies flitting from flower to flower. Large or small, bright or subdued, butterflies are a joy to watch and they serve a very important purpose. From pollination to pest control, every garden should have a few plants to attract some lovely fluttering wings, especially today as many species of butterflies are threatened or disappearing.

Butterfly gardens can be any size: a window box, part of your landscaped yard, a wild patch in the backyard, or a few potted plants on the patio. There's no hard and fast rule. Plain and simple, if you plant it, they will come. Here are a few helpful recommendations to get you started:

- **Step 1: Make a Butterfly List:** Before you begin planting, find out which kinds of butterflies are native to your area. Check out www.theButterflySite.com to find a list of native species in your area. Make a list of all the different kinds of butterflies you would like to attract.
- **Step 2: Make a Flower List.** Once you have your list of butterflies, make a list of flowers and plants they both feed on and lay eggs on. Adult butterflies will visit for a longer period if they find plants to lay their eggs on (host plants). Be prepared for your host plants to get munched on by growing caterpillars! **Tip:** Plant a variety flowers that will produce blooms throughout the season.
- **Step 3: Make Your Garden Plan.** Once you have your flower list, make notes on what each one looks like, how tall it grows, whether it is an annual (must be replaced each year) or perennial (grows year after year) and what conditions it thrives in. This will make it easy to figure out how much room you'll need and what your finished garden will look like. You can check with a local greenhouse or nursery or pick up a gardening catalog to order the flowers you want.
- **Step 4: Add Some Accessories.** If you have the room, consider adding a butterfly house, which has slots the ideal size for keeping birds out while giving butterflies protection from the wind and weather. Additional nectar sources such as butterfly feeders, which can be purchased from most gardening stores, offer a nice supplement to your flowers and a steady food source that will keep the butterflies in the area.
- **Step 5: Provide a shallow water source.** Butterflies need to drink, so leave out a shallow pie pan with wet sand at the bottom. Butterflies will drink the liquid around the sand and feast on the extra salts and other nutrients in the sand.

Fast Facts about Butterflies:

- Butterflies are cold blooded. This is why you will often see them basking under the sun's heat.
- Butterflies can see red, green, and yellow.
- Butterflies cannot fly if their body temperature is less than 86 degrees Fahrenheit.

GUARANTEE SYSTEM.

**1518 Steele Ave SW
Grand Rapids, MI 49507
Phone: 616-451-0787
www.guaranteesystem.com**

Cleaning Corner:

Tips for Quicker Cleaning

Don't stress out about an untidy home when guests (expected or unexpected) are on their way over. Here are a few ways you can get things cleaned up in almost no time at all:

1. **Move to the music.** Turn on some rock n' roll music to help keep your energy level high as you move from room to room and task to task.
2. **Keep it together.** Instead of running back and forth to get a forgotten cleaning item, keep all your cleaning supplies in one bucket that you can carry with you.
3. **Use Your Guests' Eyes.** Only worry about the rooms your guests are likely to see: the living room, dining, room, kitchen, and bathroom. Then, look at each room as a guest might. See where your eyes are drawn first and start there.
4. **Dim the lights!** Your guests won't notice a few spots on the floor in soft light or candlelight. Plus, it will create a more intimate and festive mood!

April

- | | |
|------|--|
| 1492 | Spain gives Christopher Columbus his commission of exploration to discover a new trade route to India |
| 1684 | A patent is granted for the thimble |
| 1789 | George Washington is inaugurated as the first president of the United States of America |
| 1923 | Insulin becomes generally available for diabetics |
| 1931 | Jackie Mitchell becomes the first female pitcher in professional baseball. She struck out both Babe Ruth and Lou Gehrig at the age of 17 |
| 1963 | Soap operas "General Hospital" and "The Doctors" premier on TV. "The Doctors" ended in 1982, but "General Hospital" is still running today |
| 1976 | Apple Computer is formed by Steve Jobs and Steve Wozniak |

Health Advice: Skipping on Sipping Soda

Soda, pop, soft drinks, cola – whatever you call it, Americans love those bubbly beverages. The average American downs almost 48 gallons of soft drinks a year, according to *Beverage Digest*, a publication that tracks industry trends.

Soda is essentially liquid sugar and acid (translation: empty calories and unhealthy stuff). All those empty calories result in weight gain, increased risk of diabetes and heart disease, and other health problems. Plus, drinking soda means we're getting too much phosphorous and not enough calcium, and that puts us at increased risk for osteoporosis (weak bones) and tooth decay. Other symptoms of soda overload include irritability, restlessness, tension, insomnia, and headaches.

Diet sodas are no better (remember, "diet" doesn't mean "healthy.") Diet sodas have been shown to increase the possibility of weight gain by 41%! The "sweet" taste of diet sodas may not contain real sugar, but it causes your body to crave actual, sweet food. This means there's a higher likelihood that you'll reach for more food, and end up with more weight gain.

It should be pretty clear that order to get healthier, we have to skip the soda. For many of us, it's a task that seems easier said than done. However, even the most sugar- and caffeine-addicted soda junkie can cut back and ditch the soda habit for good.

Here are a few suggestions you should find helpful:

- **Get some perspective.** Soda doesn't seem too dangerous in that brightly colored can or bottle. But did you know that there are 17 teaspoons of sugar in just one 20-ounce bottle? Scoop 17 teaspoons of sugar into an empty 20-ounce bottle of soda and put it in the fridge or keep it on your desk - wherever you normally drink soda. It'll be a powerful reminder of what you're trying to avoid.
- **Set a goal and write it down.** List the reasons for quitting soda on a piece of paper and hang it on the fridge. Do you want to kick the caffeine habit? Do you want to lose weight? Do you just want to be healthier?
- **Get enough sleep.** You'll be less likely to crave a caffeinated pick-me-up if you're well rested. So be sure to go to bed at a decent hour and make sure you get a good 6-8 hours of uninterrupted sleep.
- **Take it slow.** If the idea of quitting cold turkey makes you nervous or panicky, just work on reducing your intake over time. If you normally drink 4 cans of soda each day, cut back to three. Next week, cut back to two. The following week, cut back to one. Slowly reducing your soda will also help alleviate problems with caffeine withdrawal, too.
- **Make healthy substitutes.** To quench your thirst, substitute soda with healthier beverages like water with lemon, iced tea, carbonated water, fruit juice, or low-fat milk.

Kid Corner: What's for Dinner?

Just about every parent in the world hears this question with unrelenting regularity, "What's for dinner?" Unfortunately, in today's busy households, dinner tends to be an afterthought (especially at 6:00pm when you get home from work, both you and the kids are starving, and "there's nothing good" in the fridge). So, instead of a nutritious home-cooked meal, more and more families are opting for fast food, takeout, or pizza delivery.

Not only is this habit detrimental to our health, but it also eats up a large portion of our household budgets. Chances are you already know what goes into a healthy dinner, but it's finding the time to make that healthy dinner that's the real problem. Planning is absolutely key.

Here are a few suggestions to help you easily get tasty, nutritious meals on the table at least five nights a week:

Sunday: Plan and shop. Write down four favorite family meals you could easily prepare if you had all the ingredients at your fingertips. Keep it simple with dishes like: chicken, rice, and broccoli; turkey meatloaf, roasted potatoes, and green beans; pasta and meatballs with garlic bread; or turkey burgers with a side salad. Then write down all the ingredients you'll need and head to the store. The goal is to buy everything you need for the entire week so you won't be stuck empty handed later.

Monday: Double the servings. The meal you make tonight will be eaten again on Friday, so choose something that freezes well, such as: meatloaf, chili, chicken cutlets, etc. Cook up a double portion and put half in the freezer.

Tuesday: Eat up the perishables. Salad greens, asparagus, tomatoes, and meat have a short shelf life, so make sure they get eaten early in the week. Try whipping up an easy pizza from a ready-made crust for a quick meal. Top it with some tomato sauce, low-fat cheese, and a generous selection of vegetables like onions, peppers, mushrooms, olives, or spinach.

Wednesday: Make it easy. It's the middle of the week, so take it easy with a simple meal from the slow cooker. Start a pot roast with veggies in the morning, and by the time you get home, you'll have a sumptuous dinner ready to serve.

Thursday: Turn to the pantry. Now you can serve less perishable items in dishes like pasta, meatballs, and frozen veggies, curried couscous with almonds and dried cranberries, or barley soup with canned items like chickpeas and tomatoes.

Friday: Leftover night! Dinner tonight is easy. Simply defrost the leftovers from Monday night and serve with microwaved frozen veggies.

Extra Tip: If you or the kids are always starving before dinner is ready, put out a simple snack to tide everyone over. Cheese, grapes, crackers, apple slices and peanut butter, or celery and carrots with a bit of dip will be enough to hold hunger at bay.

Makes 12 patties

Ingredients

- 3 pounds ground turkey
- 1/4 cup seasoned bread crumbs
- 1/4 cup finely diced onion
- 2 egg whites, lightly beaten
- 1/4 cup chopped fresh parsley
- 1 clove garlic, peeled and minced
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1/4 teaspoon ground black pepper

Directions:

1. In a large bowl, mix ground turkey, seasoned bread crumbs, onion, egg whites, parsley, garlic, salt, and pepper. Form into 12 patties.
2. Cook the patties in a medium skillet over medium heat or on a hot grill, turning once, to an internal temperature of 180°F (85°C).
3. Serve on a whole wheat bun with your favorite toppings like tomato slices, lettuce, onions, and pickles.

Note: This recipe can also be used for turkey meatloaf or turkey meatballs.

Is ground turkey healthier than ground beef?

Not exactly. Ground turkey offers almost identical nutrition when it comes to fat, calories, protein, and iron levels when compared to lean ground beef. The keyword here is *lean* - at least 90% lean, 10% fat.

Ground turkey tends to be a bit drier and have less flavor, so it requires more seasoning than ground beef.

However, when it comes to price, ground turkey is generally cheaper than ground beef.

Six Ways to Create Better Curb Appeal

The first thing guests see when they arrive at your home is the front of your house. They notice the landscaping, the window shutters, the color of the front door – even if they don't consciously realize it. It all gets noticed and it all creates an impression. So why not start the spring season off right by sprucing up the outside of your home and maximizing its curb appeal?

Here are six ideas to get you started. Try tackling just one each weekend to make the project more manageable:

1. **Get rid of the clutter.** Mismatched lawn ornaments, old holiday decorations, hoses and hose reels, kids toys and sports equipment, gardening tools and other items should get put away in the garage, shed, or side porch when not in use.
2. **Trim the hedges.** Overgrown plantings can block views of the front door and give your home a wild rather than welcoming look. Prune bushes and trees and mow the lawn. Make sure any planters on the porch are filled with living plants and flowers, not dead or wilted ones.
3. **Fix the flaws.** Stand in front of your home and make a list of all the little fixes that need to be done: peeling paint, crooked shutters, sagging gutters, missing shingles, and cracked windows. Now that you have your "to do" list, roll up your sleeves and get to it!
4. **Light it up!** Outdoor lighting can make your house look welcoming at night, plus it's also a must for safety. Consider lanterns that hang from the porch, landscaping lights to illuminate the architecture of your home, or pathway lights to light the walkways.
5. **Coordinate the hardware.** Make sure your door knobs, hinges, door knockers, house numbers, mail box, porch lights, and other metal accents all match. It will create an attractive and sophisticated look.
6. **Dress up the driveway.** Oddly enough, most people forget about the driveway when they start fixing up the outside of their home. Cracks and holes in the concrete should be patched. A fresh coat of sealer will make even the most tired-looking driveway look like new. To create an interesting look, consider adding brick edging along the driveway. Use the same bricks along flowerbeds or plantings to tie the whole look together.

Carpet Talk: Cleaning Tile and Grout

Just about everybody has some tile and grout in their home – usually in the bathroom or kitchen – that could use a little cleaning. If you have some grout that looks a bit discolored and needs to be lightened, try this at-home remedy.

Step 1: Add enough household bleach to a scouring powder to make a cleaning paste. Make sure to use a powder that does not contain ammonia, which produces a dangerous reaction with bleach.

Step 2: Scrub the paste over the dirty grout with a soft bristled brush. (An old toothbrush works great.) Then rinse with cool water.

Step 3: To clean particularly stubborn stains, leave a small amount of the cleaning paste on the stain and cover with plastic. This essentially creates a poultice that keeps in moisture and helps draw out the stain and reduce scrubbing time. Remove it the next day and continue the cleaning procedure.

Note: Do not use this mixture on natural stone such as marble. The bleach will cause permanent damage. Also, be sure to wear rubber gloves and keep the area well ventilated. Take care not to step in the paste and then walk across your carpet. You could accidentally bleach the color out! Once you've finished scrubbing the area, rinse thoroughly with water.

Of course, if serious cleaning needs to be done, call Guarantee System at 616-451-0787. We've got specially designed tools and products that can power through the worse dirt and grime.

GUARANT@@ SYSTEM@.

1518 Steele Ave SW
Grand Rapids, MI 49507

PRSRT STD
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
GRAND RAPIDS, MI
PERMIT #1254

This issue of Neighborhood News brought to you by:

GUARANT@@ SYSTEM@.

Phone: 616-451-0787

Fax: 616-451-8303

www.guaranteesystem.com

Inside this issue you'll find:

- For the Butterflies
- Cleaning Corner: Tips for Quicker Cleaning
- Health Advice: Skipping on Sipping Soda
- Kid Corner: What's for Dinner?
- Recipe: Turkey Burgers
- Six Ways to Create Better Curb Appeal
- Carpet Talk: Cleaning Tile and Grout
- April Money-Saving Special

Money Saving Coupon

10% Off
Spring Cleaning with
Guarantee System

Minimum charge of \$119.00

If you can't use this coupon, give it to a friend!

As always, you have my Personal Satisfaction Guarantee. If it's not cleaned to your standards, we'll clean it again for FREE.

This coupon expires April 30, 2011