

Johnston from page G6

the milk in two additions. Scrape the bowl with the spatula and beat only until smooth after each addition.

Divide the batter between the prepared pans and spread smoothly.

Bake for 35-40 minutes until the layers just begin to come away from the sides of the pans.

Cool the layers in the pans for 5 to 6 minutes. Then, with a small, sharp knife, cut around the sides to release. Cover each layer with a rack, invert, remove the pan, cover with another rack and invert again, leaving the right side up to finish cooling.

Prepare a flat cake plate or serving board by placing four strips of wax paper around the outer edges of the plate. Place one cooled cake layer upside down on the plate, checking to see that the papers touch the cake all around.

If you have a cake-decorating turntable or a lazy Susan, place the cake plate on it.

CHOCOLATE ICING

5 ounces (5 squares) unsweetened chocolate
1 cup heavy cream
1 1/4 cups sugar
1/4 cup (1 stick) sweet butter
1 teaspoon vanilla extract

Chop the chocolate into small pieces - it is all right for them to be uneven - and set aside.

In a heavy 2 1/2- to 3-quart saucepan stir the cream and sugar to mix. With a wooden or rubber spatula stir over moderate heat until the mixture comes to a boil. Then reduce the heat and let simmer for exactly 6 minutes.

Remove from the heat, add the chocolate, stir until it is melted, then add the butter and stir until it is melted. Add the vanilla and stir.

Partially fill a large bowl with ice and water. Place the saucepan of icing in the bowl of ice water and stir frequently until completely cool. Then stir constantly until the mixture begins to thicken.

When the icing begins to thicken, remove it from the ice water and stir/beat briskly with a rubber or wooden spatula until it becomes smooth and thick enough to spread - or about like a very heavy mayonnaise. It should take only a few seconds or maybe a minute or so of stirring/beat. If the icing remains too soft, return it to the ice water briefly, then remove and stir/beat again.

When the icing is thick enough, quickly spread it about 1/3 inch thick over the cake on the plate. Cover with the second layer, placing it right side up (both flat

sides meet in the middle), pour the remaining icing over the cake, and with a long, narrow metal spatula spread it over the top and sides of the cake. If you wish, form large swirls on the top, using the spatula to indent the icing from the outer rim toward the center in a rather abstract daisy shape.

Remove the wax paper strips by pulling each one toward a narrow end.

Ruth Mossok Johnston is an author and food columnist who lives in Franklin. To leave her a voice mail message, dial (313) 953-2047, mailbox 1902.

Gardening seminars scheduled

English Gardens will conduct free seminars this fall.

The seminars will take place 7 p.m. Wednesdays at the West Bloomfield store, 6370 Orchard Lake Road. Call (810) 851-7506.

Topics and dates are: "The Basics of Perennial Gardening," Sept. 4; "Updat-

ing Your Landscape," Sept. 11; "Plant Spring Flowering Bulbs Now," Sept. 18; "Attracting Birds to Your Yard," Sept. 25; "The Basics of Pruning Trees and Shrubs," Oct. 2; "Caring For Roses Through the Winter," Oct. 9; "Winterizing Your Garden," Oct. 16; "Decorate Your Home for the Holidays," Oct. 23.

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