

Herb society fund-raiser offers marketplace, presentations

BY MARTY FIGLEY
Special Writer

Martha Bickel of Bingham Farms has been a member of The Herb Society of America Inc., Southern Michigan Unit, since 1973 and has combined her love of herbs with the talent of painting and crafts.

Her husband, Roger, designed a formal garden in their former home in Birmingham, which was admired by many people when she hosted tour groups. Now that their children have "left the nest," they are enjoying their new home, where she grows her favorite herbs.

"Using herbs daily in my meal planning helps with our low-fat diet," Bickel said. "In fact, my book collection includes many out-of-print herbals that are a great inspiration to my cooking, and my painting."

One of her most recent projects was a wedding gift she designed for a friend's daughter, a Shakespearean actress, in New York City. It was a set of six Christmas ornaments depicting herbs associated with the Shakespeare plays in which the daughter had acted.

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until you know the characteristic of each. When using fresh herbs, use two to three times the amount of fresh as you would dried herbs. A "sprig" is generally the equivalent of 1/2 teaspoon.

Thyme gives much pleasure, in the garden, in the kitchen and when used in crafts. If this is your first experience using herbs, enjoy them for what they are, something that adds another dimension to the gardening experience.

TIMELY GARDEN TIPS

- To check germination of seeds, press several on two to three layers of soggy paper toweling; keep moist until seeds sprout.
- As perennials such as peonies begin to peep out of the ground, set cages in

Bickel is again busy painting herbal vinegar bottles and tiles, making rose potpourri sachets and men's scented travel sachets, kitchen aprons and painted garden gloves for the upcoming unit fund-raiser.

"Everything Herbal" will take place 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Saturday, May 10, at First United Methodist Church, Maple at Pleasant Road in Birmingham. The popular marketplace will offer a very large selection of herb plants, garden statuary, books, crafts and herbal food items during the day. Admission to the marketplace is free.

Herbal presentations will be given by members of the unit, beginning 11 a.m. Admission to these programs is \$5, payable that day and enabling participants to enjoy three lectures: "How to Grow and Use Herbs" and "Herbal Mustards and Vinegars and Their Uses" by Nancy Szerlag and "An Herbal Tea" by Pat Sagert.

Szerlag, of Grosse Pointe Woods, writes a garden column in the Saturday Detroit News and is hostess of "Garden Spot" on WDIV-TV. Sagert, a member since 1990, is the Tea Lady of Washington, Mich. For more information, call



Marty Figley

Herbal work: Martha Bickel has been busy crafting items for "Everything Herbal."

Louise at (810) 363-7365 or Bette at (810) 641-7799.

Bickel generously contributes her time and talents to unit activities and has held several positions in the unit. She has chaired a fund-raiser, been culi-

nary chairman of a special interest group and was the Herb Press newsletter editor.

She has attended herb society meetings and visited herb gardens throughout the United States and especially liked the Bishop's Garden at the National Cathedral. In June 1980 she attended the dedication of the National Herb Garden at the National Arboretum in Washington, D.C., with other unit members.

The very large National Herb Garden is wholly funded by The Herb Society of America and is designed to educate the public about herbs. The Southern Michigan Unit was responsible for the salad area of the garden when it was first constructed, and proceeds from "Everything Herbal" will be earmarked for that garden as well as the two herb gardens at Cranbrook Gardens in Bloomfield Hills.

Funds have also been used for the Children's Garden at Michigan State University, the library at national headquarters and horticultural scholarships.

Southern Michigan Unit members live in a wide area, including Troy, Farmington Hills, Livonia, Redford, Pontiac, Clinton Township, Westland, Birmingham, Orchard Lake, Bloomfield Hills, Rochester and as far away as Gray, Tenn.

place:

• Encourage the children to plant gourd seeds for a fun harvest.

• Take photos or make charts to indicate where bulb plants are growing, then next fall you'll know where to add new ones.

• Before setting seedlings in the garden, harden them by putting them in a sheltered spot outdoors (a little longer each day) for about a week.

Marty Figley is an advanced master gardener based in Birmingham. You can leave her a message by dialing (313) 953-2047 on a touch-tone phone, then her mailbox number, 1859. Her fax number is (810) 644-1314.



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