

Busy workers keep Cranbrook buzzing

Things are really buzzing at Cranbrook Gardens. Cranbrook's Spring Plant Sale is scheduled noon to 8 p.m. Tuesday, May 13, and 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Wednesday, May 14. Note the new hours for the sale.

The entrance to Cranbrook Gardens is at 380 Lone Pine Road, just west of Cranbrook Road in Bloomfield Hills. Park at the Cranbrook Church lot on Lone Pine Road across from the gardens and take a free shuttle to and from the sale.

Why the buzz? A special Golden Bee award is given to the House and Garden Auxiliary members who have volunteered the most hours in a year. The award is a beautiful gold bee lapel pin and is a coveted honor for the recipients. There are a lot of "worker bees" in the House and

Gardens Auxiliary, and you may wish to join and become a part of a great group of people. There are two sections: the House and the Gardens. The House section conducts fund-raisers for the upkeep of the house, carpets, art work, furniture, etc. The Gardens section keeps the greenhouse and gardens in tiptop condition and conducts plant sales for funds for the upkeep of the gardens.

There are places for volunteers in the office, library, gatehouse and other areas; even a small commitment of time is helpful. Pick up a membership application when you shop at the sale.

AT THE SALE
This annual spring sale features the very best in plant material. Don't forget a shopping list!

The wildflower rescue team has assembled for your choosing another large group of plants. In addition, there will be herbs, perennials and greenhouse plants, including orchids.

A children's shopping area again will be open. Unusual garden items and books will be offered at the Thistle Shop.

The wildflower rescue team goes to areas that are designated for renewal and saves the wildflower plants that would otherwise be plowed under and destroyed. The volunteers then care for them until sale time.

Greenhouse workers have been propagating many favorites and have been assembling dish gardens and specially mounted bromeliads. The orchid house is also overflowing with beautiful specimens. All Auxiliary volunteers will be wearing bright yellow neck scarves for quick identification. Some of them will be buzzing around to answer your gardening questions. They will also give advice about planting and care of the plants you buy. Look for them at their designated spot.

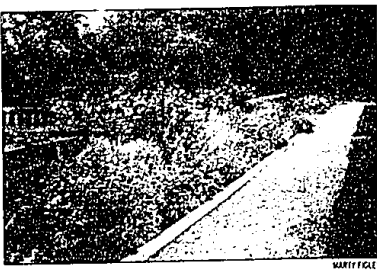
LECTURES, RAFFLE
Two free lectures will be given during the sale. The first, Rain Gardens: A

New Concept in Ecological Gardening, will be presented at 6 p.m. May 13 by Lillian Dean, coordinator of SOCWAS Healthy Lawn and Gardens Program. You won't want to miss this informative talk. Rain garden plan is to be sold at the perennial area.

Designing Container Gardens will be presented at 11 a.m. May 14 by Julia Dingle and Alison Muekinder of The Classic Garden. Learn about new and innovative combinations. The popular raffle will once more be conducted.

As of this writing, the following businesses have been very generous and donated exciting items: Tiffany Florist, Golden Walsh Nursery Inc., Blossoms, Telly's Greenhouse, Breath of Spring Florist, Bordine Nursery, Studio 330 and Michigan Gardener. Also: the wildflower, herb, perennial and greenhouse areas, Cranbrook Auxiliary, Marty Figley and Gerald Salerita.

VISIT CRANBROOK
Cranbrook Gardens is now open for visitors. Make a date



The border garden at Cranbrook is maintained by Auxiliary volunteers.

to visit the 40 acres of gardens so lovingly tended by the Auxiliary members. Bring a friend or two and enjoy.

Pre-arranged guided tours are available to groups. Cranbrook House is maintained for the public and is also now open for visitors. Groups of 15 or more may arrange a guided house tour; luncheon may be arranged for 20 to 50 people. Four weeks notice is required.

Cranbrook House and its 40 acres of gardens are part of the Cranbrook Educational Community, which also

includes Cranbrook Academy of Art and Museum, Cranbrook Institute of Science and Cranbrook Schools. For further information about the sale and house and garden visits, call (248) 645-3147.

Good Garden Ward
Alba: A part of a species name that means "white," i.e. white flowers.

Marty Figley is an advanced master gardener based in Birmingham. You can leave her a message by dialing (334) 953-2041 on a touch-tone phone line (area number is 248) 644-1314.

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Learn the right way to choose a PDA

"Which PDA should I buy? It's the rare day that I don't hear this question from a friend, neighbor, or family member. As someone who's spent the last half decade writing about the little marvels (PDAs, not my family), I guess I'm something of an expert, or so I've told people.

Admittedly, it's becoming increasingly complex to choose a PDA (a.k.a. personal digital assistant, or handheld PC). As with other consumer electronics, you face a dizzying array of brands, models, and prices. How can you make a smart decision? Have no fear: I'm an expert. (Note: if you're interested in PDAs that double as phones, stay tuned—I'll cover those in a future column.)

Start with price. You probably have a number in mind, and that will help narrow your choices. For instance, if your budget tops out at \$100, you have two options: Palm's \$99 Zire (www.palm.com), or whatever closest deal on last year's models you can find in

stores or online (try www.Overstock.com). The Zire is a solid entry-level PDA—stylish, easy to use, and capable—but its screen isn't backlit, so you won't be able to read it in low- and no-light situations.

At the \$200 price level, I recommend the Sony Clie PEG-S120 (www.sonystyle.com), which sports a gorgeous color screen, plenty of memory, an expansion slot, and one of my favorite features: a "jog dial," which lets you operate the unit one-handed.

Beyond \$200, things get a little trickier, as you have to decide between the Palm and Pocket PC operating systems—the core software inside the PDA. (It's not unlike choosing between Windows and Macintosh.)

Palm, Handspring, and Sony are the major manufacturers of Palm-based handhelds; Hewlett-Packard and Toshiba rule the Pocket PC camp. Microsoft makes the Best PC operating system, meaning those PDAs offer a more Windows-like interface.

Indeed, it's widely accepted—and I strongly agree—that Palm-based PDAs are much easier to learn and use than Pocket PCs. If you're a self-proclaimed technophobe or new

to PDAs, you may appreciate a gentler learning curve. That said, I've recently become smitten by the Hewlett-Packard iPAQ H1910 (www.hp.com)—a Pocket PC. It's remarkably thin and compact, but still loaded with features.

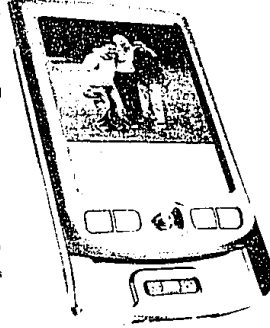
Meanwhile, Palm is back in the game with its best model in years, the Zire 71. Its highlights include a dazzling color screen, movie and music software, and a built-in digital camera. The iPAQ H1910 and Zire 71 each sell for \$299, making for a decidedly tough choice.

Don't look at me—I'm no expert. I'll discuss higher-end PDAs in an upcoming column.

In the meantime, happy shopping!

Rick Broida has joined The Observer & Eccentric Newspapers as a columnist who will write about computers and technology for the At Home section. Broida grew up in Farmington Hills, graduated from North Farmington High School in 1986 and Michigan State University in 1990 with a degree

in English. He resides in Commerce Township with his wife Shanna and their two children. Broida has written for over 13 years, mostly in computer and technology magazines, including Wired, PC Magazine, FamilyPC and Home Office Computing. Broida is a co-author of several books on handheld computing, including "How to Do Everything With Your Palm Handheld", third edition. Broida also started Tap, the first and only magazine for users of PalmPilot handhelds, which later became Handheld Computing, where he is editor. Readers who have questions for Broida can email him at rickbroida@excite.com.



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