

## Highlights in History of The Niles Garden Club

### Miscellaneous Dates:

**1955 - May** – Voted to add magazines to garden shelf at library & to provide flower arrangements throughout the year

**1956 July** – Sent \$1.00 for each member toward building of the “National Home” in St. Louis

**1957** – Niles Club of Home Gardens – the ‘founders’ were honored at a 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary luncheon at the Picwick Club. Charter members in attendance were Mrs. F.W. Richter, Mrs. Ralph Ballard, Mrs. H.B. Merrell, Mrs. J.F. Plym, Mrs. E.E. Barber, Mrs. Ralph Smith and Mrs. J. Walter Wood.

**1959 October** – Motion adapted to change the name of the club to Niles Garden Club.

**1996-97** – Fran Robinson gathered and organized our historical material to donate to the library when the new addition was finished.

**1999, September 14** (From Minutes) – The Donovan Smith Park was chosen by the “Charette Group” as the most beautiful spot in the City of Niles.

### The Information below was taken from news articles in scrapbooks dated 1938-1959:

**1938, Aug. 18** – “Grounds and Gardens of the Niles Club of Home Gardens members will be at their best Thursday for the annual pilgrimage sponsored by the club.” “Scores of out-of-town guests...are expected.”

**1939, June 14** – “Apple blossoms, forced into bloom, provided an attractive setting Friday afternoon for the April meeting of the Niles Club of Home Gardens in the home of Mrs. Ralph Ballard, Chicago Road.

**1941, October 3** – “Named dahlias formed the Study Theme for Niles Club of Home Garden members who met Friday afternoon in the home of Mrs. F.R. Eaglesfield, Topinabee Road.” “Mrs. Plym’s named dahlia display was of the ‘Jane Cowl’, which she raised in her garden.”

**1942, February 23** – “The first meeting of the new year is set for Friday afternoon, March 6, in the home of Miss Ella Champion, 1022 Broadway.” “The program committee will present the study theme for the year, an innovation for the club. The topic will be ‘What Some of the Outstanding Botanical Families have Contributed to the Decorative & Economic Life of the Human Race.’”

**1942, March 6** – “The Niles Club of Home Gardens members opened the 1942 season Friday afternoon with discussion of plans for an ambitious civic beautification project of which the city has long been in need---the planting of native shrubs along the west boundary of Silverbook Cemetery on US 31.”

**1942, October 2 Meeting** – “The program was opened with the reading of Edna St. Vincent Milay’s “Autumn” by Mrs. Ballard. Mrs. F.J. Plym presided.

**1942, March 9 Meeting** - at the home of Mrs. Louise Jerome – “The talk was entitled ‘The Coniferae’.” “Stressed was the thought that cutting of Christmas trees is not necessarily considered harmful by the Conservation Department, but that indiscriminate cutting of trees, without replanting, is deplorable.”

**1944, March 8** – “Tracing the origina of gardens and presenting descriptive material on several of the famous gardens in history, Mrs. E.E. Barber gave a paper on ‘History of Gardening’ Tuesday at the first meeting of the 1944 year for the Niles Club of Home Gardens.”

**1944, June 6** – “Opening with a discussion of the first colonial garden at Fort Ticonderoga, New York, situated at the head of Lake Champlain, built by the French in 1755, Mrs. Lawrence Plym presented a resume on ‘Colonial Gardens’ at the Tuesday afternoon meeting of the Niles Club of Home Gardens in the home of the president, Mrs. Frank S. Porter, 518 N. 4<sup>th</sup> Street.”

**1947, March 4** – “The 1947 season of the Niles Club of Home Gardens opened with a foretaste of spring with a lovely floral display at the home of Mrs. Ralph Ballard Tuesday afternoon.” “Mrs. Ballard arranged new seedling catalogs on a round table & members gathered around the table and made plans for their home gardens this season.”

**1947, July 2 Meeting** – “Following the picnic and discussion, a quiz was conducted by Mrs. Walter Boydston on identifying 50 species of leaves from familiar plants, trees and shrubs. Mrs. Sherman Hoyt won a box of Audubon notepaper for her score”

**1948, March** – “A booklet entitled “Nature Notes” written by Ralph & Mary Ballard, well-known Niles residents, was published this week by the Niles Club of Home Gardens and is being widely circulated in the area.”

**1949, March Meeting** – “Inscriptions and poetry inspired by gardens...highlighted the pre-spring meeting of the Niles Club of Home Gardens Tuesday afternoon. Miss Ella Champion read several poems.”

**1949, October** – “Approximately 14 members of the Niles Club of Home Gardens toured the gardens of Mrs. Morley Alger at Berrien Springs on Tuesday

afternoon..." "Mrs. Alger exhibited a beautiful variety of dahlias, now in blossom in her gardens, and gave a very informative talk on hybridizing of the flower."

**1950, May 2** – The Niles Club of Home Gardens, when it entertains Region Three of the Federated Garden Clubs of Michigan, will be host to about 200 state and regional officers, delegates & members of clubs representing the Federation.

**1950, September 15** – "Cascades of blossoms and bouquets poured into the main dining room of the Four Flags Hotel today as the annual Civic Flower Show, sponsored by the Niles Club of Home Gardens, got under way."

**1951, April 4** – Tickets for the flower arranging workshop to be held next Thursday, April 12, under the auspices of the Niles Club of Home Gardens, are now on sale, it was announced today, by Mrs. C. Marvin Hanewyk, club president."

**1952, June 26** – "The Children's Party Table scene in the living room of Mrs. F.J. Plym's home at 1231 Topinabee Road won the blue ribbon in the 'Dick and Jane are Six Years Old' exhibit in the Civic Flower Show on Wednesday. A cake decorated as a train was the 'piece de resistance'."

**1953, April 21** – "Instructions for teachers who will aid their students in preparing projects for exhibition in the Junior Flower Show have been delivered to Niles Schools, according to a report today from Mrs. Ralph Powell, Publicity Chairman."

**1953, June 3** – "A walk along wooded paths with some 200 different varieties of ferns was a unique feature of the June program for the Niles Club of Home Gardens members. Mrs. T. Walter Boydston's home on Range Line road was the scene of the outing. Informal box luncheons topped with fresh water cress were served from pine picnic tables on the lilac-banked lawn. A huge wooden bowl filled with varied types of ferns centered the table, and a different fern frond marked each place."

**1953, September 30** – "A women's club of specialized interest and whose enthusiasm and increasing knowledge of their subject is reflected in their gardens, is the Niles Club of Home Gardens. Organized in June of 1932, the club has provided maintenance of the summer house on the lawns of Pawating Hospital, formerly maintained the garden in the Broadway, Front and Second Street triangle park, and sponsored numerous civic flower shows."

**1954, April 14** – "The club voted to present a scholarship for a week's period at Higgins Lake Conservation School, and awarded the annual scholarship this year to Mrs. John Lagoni, a first grade teacher at Westside school.

**1954, June 2** – “Niles Club of Home Garden members were taken on a tour of European gardens by Mrs. Paul Eger and Mrs. F.J. Cropton, guests from St. Joseph. Members and guests also heard a horticulture report entitled “The Happy Month of June” given by Mrs. J. Walter Wood, and Mrs. Fred C. Henderson reported on the process of drying lilac and dogwood.”

**1955, May 24** – “A cordial invitation today was extended to all amateur gardeners and persons interested in flower arranging to take part in the Niles Club of Home Gardens 1955 Flower Show to be held June 22 on the lawn of the Henry W. Zimmer home at 610 Topinabee Road.”

**1955, May 17** – “The Niles Club of Home Gardens has been awarded a certificate of recognition for the most outstanding yearbook in the medium size club groups in Michigan.”

**1956, March 5** – “Mrs. Casper R. Grathwohl was hostess when the Niles Club of Home Gardens opened their 1956 season with a 1 o'clock luncheon in her home on 552 Grant Street.” “Mrs. Harold Fisher, of Niles, was the guest speaker. In her talk on Japanese Flower arranging and Oriental gardens, Mrs. Fisher, who lived 18 months in Japan, pointed out that the people of Japan are more artistic than military as many of us are led to believe.”

**1956, April 4** – “In her very witty and entertaining manner Mrs. Ralph Ballard gave a program on planting in the Niles areas and entitled her talk “From Green Thumb to Blue Ribbons: when the Niles Club of Home Gardens held its April meeting Tuesday afternoon.”

**1956, September** – “A spreading Burr Oak tree, believed to be at least 500 years old and perhaps the oldest of its kind in Michigan, may topple soon before the spread of a subdivision development west of Niles, Michigan. But it will fall only over the objections of the Niles Garden Club which is asking that the historic old tree be spared.”

**1957, March 5** – The Niles Club of Home Gardens, which this year will celebrate the 25<sup>th</sup> year of its founding, will open its 1957 season...in the home of Mrs. Wallace Coles, 533 Oak Street.” “The theme selected for the 1957 season is ‘A Many Splendored Thing’, including ‘A Glance Into the Past’, ‘A Look at the Present’, and a ‘Glimpse of the Future’.”

**1958, April 30** – “The Niles Club of Home Gardens was host Tuesday to more than 200 women who attended the annual meeting of District Three of the Federated Garden Clubs of Michigan, Inc., held at the Four Flags Hotel. Mrs. John Hoinville, president of District Three, and Mrs. Robert Turner, president of the Niles Club of Home Gardens, extended greetings from the local club.”

