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Genesee County Master Gardener Newsletter

Down to Earth



2018 Volume 16 #1



FEATURE ARTICLE

Pruning in Winter

I think winter is a fine time to reflect upon the garden year and plan for next year, snuggled up with a hot cocoa or coffee by the fire. Some people however, think winter is still a time to garden. So, if you are going to be a winter working bee, pruning is a great way to get your garden fix! Pick a calm, sunny day and choose your pruning tools and the shrubs and/or trees you wish to get into shape.

Some reasons to prune in winter are:

Being able to see branching clearly. Prune out any crossing, diseased or broken branches. This is a good time to scout for disease. If you find diseased branches, be sure to disinfect your pruning tools before moving on to another branch.

Our plants are dormant. It's a very good time to make changes, thin out canopies to increase air circulation, and shape the plant the way you wish it to be. Also prune out any water sprouts and suckers. Water sprouts are straight, unbranched stems that sprout from the base of a tree or shrub. Suckers spring from branches and grow at right angles. Water sprouts or suckers will not develop into well-branched limbs.

Get ready for Spring. If you can prune in late winter, you will have a jump on the season, and have one less chore to do in spring, and your plants will look great.

What plants can we prune in winter?

Most shrubs, except Evergreen shrubs, which are better pruned in spring or summer. Popular shrubs to prune in winter are: Butterfly Bush, Hydrangea (*Hydrangea paniculata* and *H. arborescens*), Smoke Tree, Viburnum and Rose of Sharon. I have personally pruned several of these shrubs with good results. Last year my two Rose of Sharons were pruned severely, as they were over 10 ft., and recovered nicely, flowering just a little later than normal. This coming winter, I will prune my Purple Smoke Tree, as it's getting taller than I want, with some wild branches. I'll also prune the Viburnums, as they are very tall again, with many

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1)

water sprouts and suckers. The Viburnums grow so quickly, I usually prune them severely every 2-3 years, and they spring back to 9 ft. in a year or two!

Trees can also be pruned in winter, and in fact, it is recommended that Oak trees only be pruned after November 1 and before April 1 in our Zone 5/5b. Trees that bleed sap should not be pruned in winter, but it won't kill them. A good example of a bleeding tree would be birch, dogwood or maple. These trees can be pruned in summer, although you won't be able to see the branching structure very well.

Oak trees in some areas of the State are susceptible to Oak Wilt (*Ceratocystis fagacearum*). In a presentation a couple years ago, we were informed that there have been no cases of Oak Wilt confirmed in Genesee County. This could change at any time, of course, so it's better to be safe. Oak wilt is a deadly fungus that can be carried to the tree by sap-feeding insects such as picnic beetles. The beetles are attracted to oaks with fresh wounds, which happen if the tree suffers a wound during the growing season. The beetles transmit the disease and almost certain death occurs to the tree.

Of course, fruit trees are traditionally pruned in late winter. This will result in some loss of flower and fruit, but the object is to promote vigorous growth and larger and better tasting fruits.

What NOT to prune in winter:

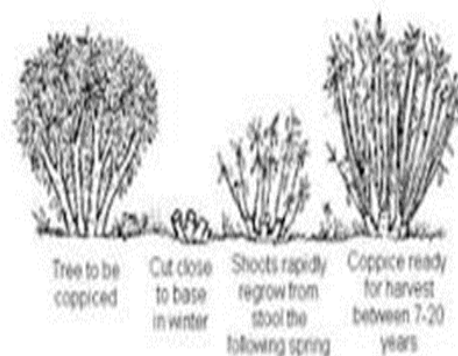
Note that early bloomers such as forsythia should be pruned after they bloom, otherwise you may cut off this years' flower buds. Also watch when pruning Hydrangeas, that *hydrangea macrophylla* should not be pruned in late winter, as it blooms on old wood. Do not prune lilacs, ornamental fruit trees (Flowering Cherry, etc.), once-blooming roses or bleeding trees (see above). Evergreens should be pruned in summer to early fall for best results.

While researching this article I came across information on another pruning technique called Coppicing. Coppicing and Pollarding are ancient practices used mostly in Europe to grow firewood, and to prune for aesthetics. Trees can be continually harvested for fuel and craft materials. By cutting a young deciduous tree, it will send out new growth in spring which can be harvested, usually in a few years. The best trees for this technique are oak, hazel, ash, chestnut and willow. Of these trees, the willow is the most useful, as it grows quickly, and is similar to hardwood in its heating capacity used as firewood.



Example of Pollarding

Coppicing is also used to bring out the colorful stems of red-twig and red-osier dogwoods. By pruning them to the ground each year, or removing select stems, the new branches are more colorful than the old stems. Although we call this pruning, it is, in fact, coppicing.



Coppicing is done by pruning at ground level, and Pollarding is done 8-10 feet above the ground. Since the middle-ages, pollarding has been used for pasture land. The method allowed animals to graze under the trees. In today's usages pollarding is useful to keep branches out of power lines, and for permaculture and biofuel applications. It can also be used to make a unique shape to a tree, for beautification.

Fairies, Flowers and Magic

Vienna Township Business Authority Recognition Award



This past month the Vienna Township Business Authority (BDA) honored the Genesee Master Gardeners Association in the category of "Community Beautification" for the work done at Bridge Park* in Clio.

Lori Fournier, project site manager, took the Bridge Park gardens from a park to an enchanted, magical world inhabited by fairies. After taking on the position this past spring her ideas of creating a fairy trail were embraced by the BDA and quickly became an addition to the weekly maintenance of the native perennials gardens.

Inviting members of the community to become involved in the project, fairy houses were designed and donated by fellow gardeners, community members and the Freedom Works of Genesee County business owners. In August the gardens and wooded trail were transformed into a magical fairy village with the Clio Cast & Crew community theatre bringing the fairies to life, sharing fairy etiquette and fable. The fairy event for children and families also featured a storyteller, the pied piper, Clio Center for the Arts provided crafts, and Bethany United Methodist Church coordinated a rock hunt and gave away prizes. The Master Gardeners set up a gardening center for a "make it take it" herb pots for the children to take home.



While it is Lori's Master Gardener training that brings beauty to the gardens of Bridge Park it is her imagination and passion for youth that bring a new perspective to educating young people on the environment and gardening. Her years as a sixth grade teacher and a member of theater contributed both to planning this event and creating a program and badge for the local Brownie Troop. The Flower Badge that she created for this project included an educational tour of the flower beds, planting tulip bulbs, facts about tulips, and their history.

Congratulations Lori on this recognition and honor for the Genesee County Master Gardeners. Creating this fun and educational component to the gardens is sure to continue to provide the community with joy and enchantment.



*Bridge Park is a handicap accessible park located on the corner of Vienna and Linden Rd. in Clio and is a registered Monarch Butterfly Waystation. The site had its origins as a potato farm in the early 1900's. After 113 years in the Acheson family it was entrusted to the Vienna Township to be preserved as a community park in October 2013



COOKS CORNER

GAME DAY CHILI

Ingredients

2 pounds ground beef chuck
1 pound bulk Italian sausage
3 (15 ounce) cans chili beans, drained
1 (15 ounce) can chili beans in spicy tomato sauce
2 (28 ounce) cans diced tomatoes with juice
1 (6 ounce) can tomato paste
1 large yellow onion, chopped
3 stalks celery, chopped
1 green bell pepper, seeded and chopped (optional)
1 red bell pepper, seeded and chopped
1 poblano pepper, seeded and chopped
3 tablespoons bacon bits
3 cubes beef bouillon
1/2 cup beer
1/4 cup chili powder
1 tablespoon Worcestershire sauce
1 tablespoon minced garlic
1 tablespoon dried oregano
1 teaspoon dried basil
2 tablespoons cumin
1 teaspoon salt
1 teaspoon ground black pepper
1 teaspoon cayenne pepper

Ingredients, Continued

1 teaspoon paprika
1 teaspoon white sugar
1 (10.5 ounce) bag corn chips
1 (8 ounce) package shredded Cheddar cheese

Directions

Heat a large stockpot over medium-high heat. Crumble the ground chuck and sausage into the hot pan. Cook until evenly browned. Drain off excess grease.

Add all the following ingredients, Chili beans to beer.

Season with the following ingredients, Chili powder to sugar.

Stir to blend, then cover and simmer over low heat for at least 2 hours, stirring occasionally.

After 2 hours, adjust salt, pepper, chili powder and cumin to taste. The longer the chili simmers, the better it will taste. Remove from heat and serve.

To serve, ladle into bowls, top with corn chips and shredded Cheddar cheese.

A message from Mary Wilson, state coordinator for the MSU Ext. Master Gardener Program

We wanted to take this time to touch base with you about our **need to meet National Extension Master Gardener Program standards**. As you probably already know, the Master Gardener Program is a national program which is administered by and through land grant universities such as Michigan State University. Within this framework, each university develops the state program mission and guidelines with the focus on developing an impactful program that meets national standards.

We're extremely proud to share that ***we surpass almost all of the National Standards!!*** **The exception, however, is the key national standard for the minimum number of annual volunteer and education hours for re-certification: 20 volunteer hours and 10 education hours.** All states have a minimum annual hours requirement and most meet or exceed this national standard. However, **our program falls below these standards with the current minimum annual hours requirement of 15 volunteer and 5 education hours.**

This topic was first discussed during the 2015 Strategic Planning process with the recommendation from EMG committee members to move the program forward as soon as possible to align with national standards. In 2016, and throughout this year, input was sought from individual EMGs and EMG groups and associations. Recommendations were consistent with the Strategic Planning committee. After talking about this for over two years, it is now time to follow through on these recommendations and change the minimum annual hours required for re-certification. **In 2018, the minimum annual hours re-certification requirement for MSU Extension Master Gardeners will become 10 education and 20 volunteer hours.**

What this specifically means is that during the 2018 calendar year, you should plan on completing and reporting in the VMS at least 10 education and 20 volunteer hours by December 31, 2018. *(Of course we encourage you to report all of your education and volunteer hours to more accurately reflect your true contribution and impact as an Extension Master Gardener.)*

For many of you who have been completing more than the required annual hours, this change in the minimum required hours will not be a challenge. But, if you feel this increase in hours will be a challenge, please know that MSUE staff and VMS Ambassadors are here to help you be successful. As always, we will continue to share approved volunteer opportunities and provide free education webinars. Again, let us know how else we can help.

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2

Pruning can be a satisfying chore, and I've always enjoyed either cutting with abandon on the Viburnums, or gently pruning roses to make the plants healthier and stay within bounds. Let's get out there this winter and prune some plants.

Sources:

Chicago Botanic Gardens
Farmer's Almanac
Garden Gate
MSU Extension Bulletins
P. Allen Smith's Garden Home
Permaculture Design

Article written by Cheryl Borkowski MG (99)



MGAGCM CHRISTMAS PARTY 2017



2017 and 2018 MGAGCM BOARD MEMBERS



Mel Kennedy - 1st Vice President; Alan Grove - 2nd Vice President; Vicki Laurin - President; Micah Hutchinson -Director; Michelle Chockley, VMS Ambassador; Bobbie Parkhill-Treasurer; Sylvia Hansen-Director; Christy Jones,-Director; and Dick Moldenhauer -Secretary.

SAVE THIS PAGE!

2018 Master Gardener Calendar – January 1 – February 15, 2018

Date	Event name	Time	Speaker(s)	Topic	Location
Mon., Jan. 8	Board meeting	1 pm-3pm			GCCARD Bldg.
Monday, Jan 15	M G Training Course begins https://events.anr.msu.edu/event.cfm?eventID=A5FD20E1F6937969	9 am-1 pm Every Monday through April 16	Multiple	Multiple	GCCARD Bldg.
Thurs., Jan 18	Membership meeting	5:30 pm social 6 pm speaker 7 pm meeting	Deb Hamilton, coordinator of Edible Flint	What is Edible Flint?	GCCARD Bldg.
Sat., Jan 29	2018 Winter Symposium https://mgacac.wordpress.com/events/	8:15 am – 4 pm			MSU Plant & Soil Sciences Bldg. E. Lansing
Mon, Feb. 5	Board meeting	1 pm-3pm			GCCARD Bldg.
Thurs., Feb. 15	Membership meeting	<u>5:30 pm social</u> 6 pm speaker 7 pm meeting	Gary Eichen, certified arborist	An Evening in the Gardens	GCCARD Bldg.

Introducing Micah Hutchinson

Board Outreach Manager



"I returned to Michigan and tore up my entire backyard" Micah shares, as she describes hand turning the yard to plant her first vegetable garden at her home in Flint."

Micah was inspired years ago by her Aunt Barbara, a Master Gardener in Oakland County, instilling in her a love of growing her own fresh vegetables. Micah had to be content with container gardening during her time in Boston, where space was limited. Moving back to Michigan several years ago, she was excited to finally have her own yard where she could grow everything she loved; tomatoes, cucumbers, green beans, beets, carrots, spinach, and lettuce.

Micah Hutchison, one of our newest board members, shares her love of plants and vegetables with her six-year old daughter, Avery and husband, Thomas commenting; "Looking through the seed catalog is a family affair!"



While Micah has applied her Master Gardener education to planting and maintaining the family garden, her husband has contributed his skills to building beds and constructing a chicken coop. Meanwhile, Avery, who is in charge of the carrots in the vegetable garden, has also planted her own flowerbed bordering her playhouse. Choosing a beautiful array of annuals including cosmos, zinnias and sunflowers it sounds like Avery has picked up her mother's love of nurturing plants.

As a Master Gardener, it is important to keep the focus on the mission of the Master Gardener in "making a better community." Micha shared, as she described her work with Edible Flint and the demonstration gardens. It was with a smile and pride she continued, "This summer we distributed 13 pounds short of 2 tons of fresh vegetables to the community!"



It is this enthusiasm and love for gardening that Micha brings to the Board in her new position as Director. Her commitment to community and mission will help continue growing the awareness of the contributions of the Master Gardeners; and support the education of the community, through the delivery of programs and project sites.

In considering a parting bit of wisdom, Micha reflects, "Enjoy the process." Enjoy the preparation, planting, maintaining, harvest and looking through the seed catalog to prepare for next year's gardens.

January Gardening To-Do List

A list of January gardening chores may sound like a misnomer, since the month of January can mean virtually no outdoor gardening, for gardeners in snowy climates. Getting trees and shrubs dormant pruned and ready for new growth is almost the only outdoor chore for cold climate gardeners.

On the other end of the spectrum, gardeners in warm, frost-free zones are enjoying their cool rainy season. These areas should be taking advantage of the sunny, wet months of winter to indulge in sweet peas and salad greens.

Wherever you garden, one garden chore shared across zones is pouring over the [garden catalogs](#) that arrive just before Christmas. In January, you have the time to really give them a careful look and start to place orders that will deliver those grand visions of your new, improved garden that always simmer in our heads during winter. This may be the most dangerous garden chore because it's so hard to resist ordering just one more packet of seeds or the perfect pot for the patio.

Whether you're staying warm indoors and gardening vicariously or you're outside getting things in order, here are a few more regional gardening tips to help you get through winter.

All Hardiness Zones

- Get your catalogs orders ready. You will probably need to edit them a few times since we tend to order more than we have room to plant.
- Check to see if your local garden centers have their seed racks up and ready to shop.

Rework your [garden design](#).

Review last year's [garden journal](#) and start a new one for this year by recording your seed/plant orders.

Check your [stored bulbs](#) and veggies and discard any that are showing signs of rot.

- Check outdoor plants for heaving. Mulch any plant crowns that have been pushed above ground.

[Recycle your Christmas tree](#) as garden mulch or a bird feeder.

- Feed the birds and provide them with some unfrozen water.
- Take a gardening class.
- Check for any gardening shows in your area.

[Sharpen your tools](#).



MASTER GARDENER ASSOCIATION OF GENESEE COUNTY MICHIGAN**Membership Meeting Minutes – November 16, 2017**

Call to Order: The meeting was called to order by President Vicki Laurin at 6:05 pm.

Review of Minutes: Motion and 2nd by Cheryl Borkowski & Nettie Sparks to accept the October 19, 2017 meeting minutes as presented. Passed.

Treasurer's Report: The beginning balance on 01OC17 was \$24,315.27. October income totaled \$801.88 and expenses were \$2,985.40. The ending balance on 30OC17 was \$22,131.75, including the Square account of \$300.10. Members who volunteered to perform an audit of the Treasurer's books are: Sue Crisp, Patricia Witte and Sue Byron. Thank you!

Due to the Holiday Party and Elections, there will be no project reports.

Old Business:

None

New Business:

Review and accept the 2018 budget. There were questions about the 2018 Bus trip figures in the proposed budget. They will get straightened out at the next Board meeting with discussion with the Bus Trip Committee. Moved and 2nd by Alan Grove and Sue Crisp to adopt the proposed 2018 MGAGCM budget as presented except for the 2018 Bus Trip figures which will be settled by the Board in their December meeting and reported to the membership in January 2018. Passed.

Thanks to: Pam Kvasnicka, Colleen Putinsky and Sandra Johnson for serving on the Nomination and Election Committee with Vicki Laurin.

We are having our 4th Master Gardener Volunteer Training class in two years, starting the week of January 15, 2018. Publicize the class to your friends and acquaintances. They can begin to enroll.

A special thanks to Michelle Chockley for serving 4 years as Treasurer and Christy Jones for serving 2 years as Director.

Announcements:

The election results are as follows: Dick Moldenhauer-Secretary, Bobbie Parkhill-Treasurer and Micah Hutchinson-Director.

Close of Meeting: Moved and 2nd by Christy Jones & Alan Grove to adjourn the meeting. Passed. The meeting was adjourned by President Vicki Laurin at 6:15 pm.

Respectfully submitted: Dick Moldenhauer, MGAGCM secretary

2018 Re-certification Timeline

January 1, 2018 VMS Hours access is closed - no hours can be viewed or entered until Feb. 10, 2018

January 8, 2018 ☞ Log into the Volunteer Management System (VMS) at <https://michigan.volunteersystem.org/> ☞ Click on "Complete Agreement Now" notice at the top of the VMS Home Screen ☞ Complete 3-step process (including payment of \$20 re-certification fee)

January 26, 2018 2018 Re-certification Period Closes

January 27, 2018 ☞ Log into the Volunteer Management System (VMS) at <https://michigan.volunteersystem.org/> ☞ Click on "Complete Agreement Now" notice at the top of the VMS Home Screen ☞ Complete 3-step process (including payment of \$30 re-certification fee)

February 9, 2018 2018 Late Re-certification Period Closes

Special Note: MICHIGAN MASTER GARDENER ASSOCIATION (MMGA) membership will be a separate process from re-certification.

Once re-certified, you will receive an email with further details about becoming an MMGA member. All MMGA memberships must be completed by March 1, 2018.

January 2019 Next Re-certification period will open. 2018 Re-certification timeline 2018 Re-certification Period Opens.

If you have any questions regarding re-certification, call Abi at 810-244-8531, or Michelle Chockley at 810-695-8014

Capital Area Master Gardeners' Annual Winter Symposium – *It's All About...The Ins & Outs of Gardening.*

Where: Plant and Soil Sciences Building on MSU's Campus in East Lansing

When: Saturday, January 27, 2018

Earn: 5 Master Gardener education hours

Cost: \$40.00 for CAMG members / \$50.00 for non-member Active, Certified EMGs / \$55.00 all others

A link to the association web site can be found at:

<http://mgacac.wordpress.com>



There you can find a link to the brochure, information about hotel rooms, vendors who will be at the conference (as they become available), a link to an area map, etc.

If you have questions, you can email: mga.cac@gmail.com.

2018 Speaker Schedule

Jan. 18, 2018, Deb Hamilton, Coordinator of Edible Flint. Speaking on "What is Edible Flint"

Feb.15, 2018, Gary Eichen, Certified Arborist. Speaking on "An Evening in the Gardens"

March, 15, 2018, Elly Maxwell, Entomologist at Dow Gardens. Speaking on "Garden Insect Ecology".

April. No Speaker. Awards Banquet.

May, 17, 2018, Rebecca Finneran, Horticulture Education Master Gardener Program Administrator. Speaking on "Smart Garden Presentation".

June and July 2018– No speaker needed.

August 9, 2018. Julia Hofley, Writer and Educator. Speaking on "Fall Finale in the Garden".

Sept. 20, 2018. Karen Golden, Owner: Variations Horticultural Services. Speaking on "Heirloom Tomatoes".

Oct. 18, 2018, Tamara Menas, owner: Michigan Native Butterfly Farm. Speaking on "Michigan Native Butterflies".

Dates To Remember

On January 18, 2017 our MGAGCM monthly meeting will be held at the GCCARD building, 605 N. Saginaw St, Flint, 48503. Beginning at 5:30 pm our social hour continues until 6:00 pm when our speaker, Deb Hamilton, will be speaking on "The functions and goals of Edible Flint".

Deborah has been employed with Edible Flint for 8 years and is currently the Garden Starter Coordinator. Prior to being employed with Edible Flint she was a General Motors employee who retired after 32 years of service.

She obtained a bachelor's degree from the University of Michigan (Flint) and a Master Degree from Central University with her major emphasis on business administration.

She is also a certified Master Gardener having taken the class in the Spring of 2016.

Her hobby is being a world traveler. She has visited five continents out of the seven and has visited many countries.

Start the New Year out by coming out and see what's going on with your membership.

Snack providers are:

Colleen Putinsky. Mel Kennedy , Gloria Roudebaugh and Alan Grove

NEED WINTER HOURS?

Carol Groat is looking for volunteers to help with planting peppers in all of her Grow Labs the last week of January and the first two weeks in February. It's a great way to get volunteer hours and help Carol with this long time project. If you can help out call Carol at 810-695-0881.

MGAGCM OFFICERS (2018)

President	Vicki Laurin
810-744-0725	laurinvicki@gmail.com
1st Vice President	Mel Kennedy
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2nd Vice President	Alan Grove
810-922-8776	plantdoc049@outlook.com
Secretary	Dick Moldenhauer
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Treasurer	Bobbi Parkhill
630-408-1710	bpark141@gmail.com

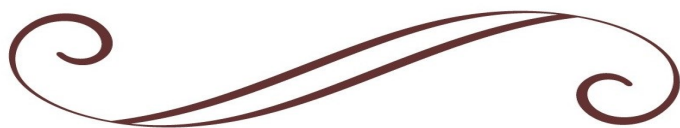
DEEPEST SYMPATHY TO THE FAMILY OF CHRIS JENSEN.

JENSEN, Christian A. Jr. "Skipper" - Age 75, of Grand Blanc, died November 24, 2017. Chris Jensen was a very special person. Chris and his wife Caroline were faithful shepherd's for Genesee Christian School Grow Labs (Master Gardener project) for many years. Even I especially enjoyed working along with Chris and Caroline at the school and the fellowship (dinner) that usually followed.

The students loved him because he loved them. And from many conversations shared we knew he also loved his family, wife, children, grandchildren, his church and a wide circle of friends.

So, Chris we will miss you but Heaven has gained with your presence. I can see you planting with kids now, but it's God's heavenly garden.

As you always said Chris, "Ole".



ARTICLE WRITTEN BY CAROL GROAT (MG 98)

THIS NEWSLETTER PREPARED BY:

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all_4_adventure@hotmail.com and of
counsel Ruth Simon.

CHECK OUT OUR WEBSITES

MMGA Inc Website at:

www.michiganmastergardener.org

MMGA Inc Facebook Page at:

www.facebook.com/MichiganMG

MGAGCM Website at: Genesee

County MG.org

MGAGCM Facebook Page at:

<http://facebook.com/groups/2169046232310/>

Link to VMS: <https://michigan.volunteersystem.org>

Abiya (Abi) Saeed

Consumer Horticulture Program Instructor

Master Gardener Coordinator

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Michelle Chockley, VMS Ambassador. 810-695-8014

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Plant & Pest Hotline:

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Hours: Friday's only, from 8:30 am-1:00pm

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AN AFFIRMATIVE ACTION/EQUAL OPPORTUNITY EMPLOYER

MGAGCM JANUARY SPEAKER

We look forward to hearing from Edible Flint's Deb Hamilton, Garden Starter Coordinator. She will be speaking on the functions and goals of Edible Flint.

Learn more about Deb and Edible Flint on page 12. Plan on coming out on January 18, 2018 and giving Deb Hamilton a warm Master Gardener Welcome!