Letter from the Program Coordinator
Barslund Judd (juddbars@msu.edu)

Greetings Extension Master Gardeners!

This month sure has been hot. Over the last few weeks I have been gardening a bit less due to the heat. On the bright side, I have tomatoes. If only they’d hurry up and ripen! This has been a surprisingly pest free season for my vegetable garden. If you have been seeing any pests in your home gardens, don’t hesitate to send me pictures. It helps me to track pest issues in our area so that I can let other Extension agents know what to expect.

You may have recently received a letter from myself notifying you of a Volunteer Selection Process (VSP) deadline. This deadline is to start the VSP process. If you are a resident in the following counties: Shiawassee, Genesee, Bay, Midland, Tuscola, or Saginaw, this date is August 31st. Please refer to the letter you received for more information. The VSP process is required of all Extension Master Gardeners, this includes Emeritus members. It is also required of all MSU Extension volunteers.

I hope everyone is staying healthy, I miss you all very much. I’m only an email/Zoom/text away if you need me!

Barslund Judd

Here are a couple pictures from the VMS album

Don’t forget to put your pictures in the album!

**Left:** The lilies that escaped our furry rabbit friends—Sasi Vemuri

**Right:** Our Buddha is flanked by the ever blooming hydrangeas—Sasi Vemuri

If you are interested in writing an article for the DTE newsletter, please feel free to reach out to us! We love having new input and hearing new perspectives. We ask that articles have an educational component that is research based and utilizes solid sources.
How We Carry on Safely at the Edible Flint Educational Farm
by LaDonna Gamble

As most of you know, drastic adjustments were made in our lives due to the COVID-19 crisis. That included directives and guidelines from the CDC, the State of Michigan and Michigan State University that were implemented with our safety being a priority. Community food gardens were considered a priority to operate, but it was still important to do so safely.

Using a combination of guidelines from those mentioned above, we were able to plant, grow, and now harvest our crops at the farm! Unfortunately, the “educational” portion will need to wait until we can again accommodate larger groups, and we look forward to opening up to the public again! We also will not be able to accommodate large groups of volunteers that were extremely helpful in previous years. Examples were MSU Global Day of Service volunteers, University of Michigan-Flint nursing students, Kettering University Kagle Program students, and an Americorps-organized group of volunteers that included groups from Americorps, Consumers Energy and MSU Extension Master Gardeners. With only a small core of “regular” farmers (Michelle Chockley, Ginny & Sam Farah, Gevon’ Collins, Scott Poinset, and yours truly), can you imagine the big boost to our work those groups provided?

This year, we have been successful operating with the core group, a limited number of EMGs and a few regular “guests.” Following are some changes we have made to continue our work safely:

- Signage—We have signs posted indicating things such as proper hand washing, signs that you may be ill (and what to do) and an explanation to immediate residents of temporary changes.
- Hand washing mandate/instructions (signage and frequent verbal reminders)
- Sign-in/sign-out procedures as well as a requirement for volunteers to sign up for each shift they want to work. We want to keep numbers manageable for safety reasons.
- Facemasks in enclosed areas (sheds and covered hoop house)
- Only two people allowed at a time in the hoop house and proper spacing (10-15 feet wherever possible) in outdoor plots
- A new development in July has been the earlier than usual heat wave. We try to start work earlier in the day and encourage many more water and shady area breaks.

The good news is that even with the tighter restrictions now, we’ve been joined by nine Extension Master Gardeners! Thank you to Rudy Barron, Michele Ferguson, Sue Hendrix, Kathleen Hodges, Renee McGarry, Judy Sanford, Cheryl Borkowski, Marilyn Hurwitz and Bobbi Parkhill for checking us out!

Last year Michelle Chockly started a beautiful perennial garden along the street that is surely pleasing to the eye for passers-by as well as neighborhood residents. We have also managed to re-create our herb garden this year using some new plants as well as plants moved from the previous location near Hurley Hospital. In addition, the large raised beds were transported from there thanks to the muscle and heavy equipment from the Genesee County Land Bank. Repairs were made to the beds this year and they’re upright and ready to plant!  

(continued on page 5)
Victory Gardens
by Tammy Johns

During WWI, the National War Garden Commission recommended that people plant a garden in their yard. Due to the war, food shortages were predicted, and also, people needed something positive to do at home to keep their minds off of the war. They inspired students to get involved in gardening and called them “soldiers of the soil.” When it began to look like the United States and their allies would win the war, they changed the name of the gardens to Victory Gardens. Eleanor Roosevelt began a new Victory Garden campaign after Pearl Harbor was bombed during the Second World War. By the end of WWII, these Victory Gardens provided 40% of the produce in the United States.

Vegetables were the most common crops, but fruits and herbs were also grown. The victory garden was made up of lettuce, kale and Swiss chard which could be used immediately and those that could be canned or stored during the winter such as beans, beets, tomatoes, squash, etc.

Today, with the outbreak of a worldwide pandemic and possible food shortages, there is a new campaign promoting Victory Gardens. Garden groups and social media, both nationwide and locally, have created Victory Garden groups where people can share gardening tips, supplies, videos, and encouragement for one another.

Getting the most out of small spaces is important for many people planting their Victory Garden as many folks have small yards. Techniques such as succession gardening can give you a larger amount of produce and extend your access to fresh produce during the growing season. Seeds like lettuce and other greens can be planted every two weeks. You can also plant your cool season vegetables such as peas, lettuce, swiss chard and spinach in the early spring. Then when the soil temperature is at a minimum of 40 degrees Fahrenheit you can plant radishes, carrots, and beets. Your warmer season vegetables can be planted later in the season in late May or June after you have harvested some of your early spring crops, especially if you are planning on buying plants or have started the seeds inside of your home or in your greenhouse. Container gardening and raised bed gardens are other options as well. Planting vegetables amongst existing landscaping is also a wonderful idea.

To save space, you can also grow vining crops such as melons, beans, cucumbers, and squash on trellises or other vertical structures. This saves an incredible amount of area since with many of these plants, you should allow four to six feet in between rows that isn’t possible in a smaller yard. Another space saving technique is planting herbs or other vegetables along with companion plants. For example, even though you need three square feet per tomato plant to ensure enough root room, you can plant herbs such as basil, thyme and parsley in between your tomato plants. You could also plant lettuce between tomato plants in as much as lettuce doesn’t require a lot of space because it’s small and has shallow roots.

With the spread of the COVID-19 virus not solved yet, we all have more time at home to work in our vegetable and flower gardens. Working in your garden is good for your mental health; it gives you a sense of accomplishment and also provides for your family. We, as gardeners, already know this, and the Victory Garden movement has provided us with a wonderful opportunity to educate and encourage people who do not normally garden.

https://extension.psu.edu/victory-gardens-a-brief-history
https://www.canr.msu.edu/resources/planting_a_smart_vegetable_garden
https://www.canr.msu.edu/resources/garden_planning_calender
https://ngb.org/2020/03/23/victory-garden-2-0/
https://historyengine.richmond.edu/episodes/view/5943
https://marylandgrows.umd.edu/2020/05/22/grow-your-own-food-in-a-victory-garden/
Outreach News

By Kay McCullough

At this time, there are no upcoming events that need EMG volunteers. Stay tuned!

Gardener’s Logic Puzzle

Across
2. The more one gardens, the more one ______; and the more one learns, the more one realizes how little one knows.
3. To plant a garden is to believe in the ____________.
6. Your mind is a garden, your thoughts are the seeds. The ______can be either flowers or weeds.
7. Gardeners know the best _____.
8. If we had no ____________, the spring would not be so pleasant.
11. Plant and your spouse plants with you; weed and you weed ______________.
12. All the flowers of tomorrow are in the ________ of today.
13. A ____________ is but an unloved flower.
14. There are no gardening ____________, only experiments.

Down
1. Gardening is the art that uses flowers and plants as ________ and soil and sky as canvas.
3. __________ are flowers in the garden of life.
4. Life begins the day you start a ____________.
5. A garden is never so good as it will be ____________ year.
8. No garden is without its _____________.
9. Stop and smell the ____________.
10. Give a Weed an Inch and it’ll Take A ________.
Plants need water. Many people use sprinklers to provide water to their lawn or garden when there is not enough rain to water the plants sufficiently. How much water does a sprinkler provide? Do all areas around the sprinkler get the same amount of water? Do the following experiment to find out.

You will need:
- A sprinkler (or other irrigation system)
- 5 disposable pie tins, tuna cans, or other sturdy wide and shallow containers
- A waterproof ruler or tape measure
- A waterproof marker

Using the marker, number each container. Place the 5 containers in different spots of the sprinkler area. Turn the sprinkler on and let it run for 5 minutes. Using the ruler, measure the amount of water in each container. Check the water level in each pan every 5 minutes for a half and hour. Make a chart of the data you collected. How much water are the plants getting from the sprinkler? Do all the containers have the same amount of water? Which ones get more water? Lawns and gardens use about 1 inch of water a week. How long would you need to run the sprinkler to give the lawn that much water? What if it rains? When it is raining, put out one of your containers that you have emptied. How much water came down in rain? If you subtract the amount of rain how long would you need to run the sprinkler?

(continued from page 2)
We are already getting some beautiful harvest. Our plan is to donate the majority of the harvest to the Hurley Food Pharmacy as well as other Flint organizations in the business of distributing fresh produce to the community. Once the COVID-19 crisis passes, we will look forward to also distributing to residents directly. We miss our new neighbors dropping by and asking, “Do you have any green tomatoes?” “Got any okra in there?”, or offering advice related to how they did things on their farm growing up.

We are SO looking forward to being cleared to resume our contact with locals who want veggies or just want to stop and chat—and we will return to that mode once the COVID era ends. But in the meantime, we are happy we have found other ways to continue serving fresh and healthy produce to those who need it most. If you are interested in volunteering at this project, please contact VMS Ambassador Michelle Chockley so that she can get connect you with the farm manager (Ginny Farah) and team.
Time to Harvest ...... Cucumbers

by Mary Yelland

Cool as a cucumber may be just an expression, but it comes from the fact that cucumbers in the field are about 20 degrees cooler than the outside air on a hot day. Cucumbers are a member of the cucurbit or the gourd family. They have been cultivated for over 3,000 years and are thought to be native to India. However, they have never been found growing wild. There are many different kinds of cucumbers; according to the FDA there are nearly 100 varieties. Green, yellow, white and even orange varieties can be grown. They range from tiny fruits to those of 2 feet. They can be found short and fat, long and skinny and even ball shaped. Some grow on a bushy plant and others on a vine where trellising can improve quality and yield of the cucumbers.

Cucumbers are a warm season crop. They do not germinate if the soil is below 60 degrees. Ideal storage temperature is 50 to 55 degrees. The 40 degrees of a refrigerator can cause pitting but refrigeration is a better choice than the warm room temperatures that will cause a cucumber to over ripen and turn yellow. Because cucumbers are so high in water content, they are often waxed or shrink wrapped in plastic to seal in moisture and preserve them longer. For the most part cucumbers are eaten raw or pickled. Michigan is the number one producer of cucumber varieties best suited for pickling. To encourage further production, cucumbers should be picked as they ripen. Cucumbers are available in stores year-round and fresh in Michigan from July until frost. Cucumbers are eaten plain, pickled sweet or dill, used in salads, sandwiches or even cold soup. Here is a recipe for warm meat sandwiches with cucumber sauce known as gyros with tzatziki. Gyros (pronounced with a silent G) are traditional Greek sandwiches of lamb served on pita bread with tomato, onion and tzatziki – a yogurt cucumber sauce. This recipe is not meant to be an authentic gyro recipe but an Americanized one using chicken. The tzatziki sauce is also good as a dip for bread or veggies, a topping for baked potatoes, or even as a sandwich spread.

### Chicken Gyros with Tzatziki

- **Prepared chicken (recipe follows)**
- **Tomatoes diced or sliced**
- **Diced or sliced red onion**
- **Pita bread (warmed if desired)**
- **Tzatziki sauce (recipe follows)**

Top pita bread with prepared chicken, tomatoes, onions and sauce. Fold in half and enjoy.

If you wish to add other toppings try lettuce, black olives, green pepper, fresh cucumber slices, fresh avocado, or feta cheese.

#### Chicken Meat

- 1 lb. Chicken Breast cut into pieces
- 3 Tablespoons Lemon Juice
- 2 Tablespoons Olive Oil
- 1 Tablespoon Balsamic Vinegar (or other vinegar of your choice)

1 teaspoon Salt
½ teaspoon Pepper
1 teaspoon Oregano
¼ teaspoon Garlic Powder

Combine all ingredients in a resealable plastic bag. Let chicken marinate for at least 30 minutes and up to 24 hours. Remove chicken pieces from marinade and cook on grill or in a skillet until internal temperature of 165°F is reached.

#### Tzatziki Sauce

- ½ medium cucumber
- ½ teaspoon salt
- 1 cup plain yogurt (Greek yogurt is preferred)
- 1 teaspoon olive oil

½ teaspoon lemon juice
1 clove of garlic minced (or 1/8 teaspoon garlic powder)
¼ teaspoon dried dill weed (since it is in season, you may want to replace dried with ¼ teaspoon of fresh minced dill weed)

Using a food processor or hand grater, shred the cucumber. Sprinkle shredded cucumber with the salt. Let stand for about a half an hour. (This will help remove some of the water from the cucumber – cucumbers are over 90% water) Drain the cucumber and squeeze dry. Combine with remaining ingredients. The sauce is best chilled for a few hours before serving. Store in refrigerator for up to a week.
VMS Corner

Michelle Chockley—Lead VMS Ambassador  (Cell: 810-210-6685)
VMS Log in:  https://michigan.volunteersystem.org/UniversalLogin.cfm

Garden Watch 2020 Reminder:  Email Mary Yelland photos of your personal home gardens to post in the VMS photo album. We had 59 the last time I looked!  dmyelland@juno.com

Reminders for working on projects during COVID

The volunteer hours for 2020 have been waived. The only requirement for certified Master Gardeners is 10 education for 2020. With that being said, many of our Extension Master Gardeners want to be out working on their projects. There are two requirements if you wish to do so.

1. The 2020 COVID-19 non-food Project Safety Guidelines is to be signed and returned to Barslund Judd. You can download, type in your name and date and return to Barslund as an attachment via email at juddbars@msu.edu. This form is located on the home page of VMS under State Links (see below, example 1).

2. A column has been added to the approved project list, indicating if Barslund has received permission from the site for the Extension Master Gardeners to work there this year. Please check this list to assure that we have approval and that it is an approved project. This list also tells you what “Project Selection” to use when logging your hours. The approved project list is on the homepage of the VMS under Links (see below, example 2).
Note from MGAGCM President—Joanne Gensel

Hello Master Gardeners!

It’s hard to believe we are into JULY! How can time move so fast and so slow at the same time?!

I am so tired of living with the COVID-19 pandemic but we must continue to do our part to control this dangerous virus and keep our loved ones and ourselves safe. Please do the right thing. WEAR A MASK and SOCIAL DISTANCE. It is a small thing to do to protect each other and keep the medical facilities functioning for the very unfortunate ones struggling to stay alive with this highly contagious virus.

The native plant sale is postponed/cancelled until next year.

It appears that, with so many new cases of COVID-19 being confirmed every day, we will not see the loosening of restrictions for MGAGCM activities in 2020.

Watch your email for VMS announcements from Barslund regarding educational opportunities presented by our MGAGCM monthly speakers. If the speakers are willing to do a presentation via Zoom for upcoming months, a VMS notice will be sent.

Be respectful of each other–be kind–wear a mask and social distance!

Joanne

MGAGCM Board of Directors

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Upcoming Events:

MGAGCM Events:

Jan. 16: **Seed Starting 101** – Deirdre Hope  
*Project ID: Food: General Gardens*

Feb. 20: **Cactuses and Succulents That Will Prickle Your Fancy** – Barslund Judd  
*Project ID: Community: Beautification - Public Areas*

Mar. 19: **Michigan Invasives: A Look At The Past, Present and Future** – with Brian Van Patten  
*Project ID: Environmental Stewardship: Invasive Pests and Plants*  
*Cancelled due to COVID-19*

Apr. 16: **Extension Master Gardener Banquet**  
*Potluck – MGAGCM provides chicken and beverage – watch for link to sign up!*  
*Postponed*

May 16: **MGAGCM Native Plant Sale** at Davison Farmers Market  
*(Saturday, starting at 9:00 a.m.)*  
*Postponed until September 12th.*

May 21: **Flowering Plants for the Cutting Garden** – Jane Giblin  
*Cancelled and presentation changed to Yellow Stripey Things: Bees, Hornets and Wasps – Abi Saeed / Project ID: Environmental Stewardship: IPM - General*

June 18: **Meeting at Wojo’s**  
*(Wojo’s Speaker...TBA)*  
*Cancelled*

June 28: **Genesee County Extension Master Gardener Tour 2020**  
*(Sunday, from 10 a.m. – 5 p.m.)*  
*Postponed  
*Project ID: Community: Beautification – Public Areas (If you visit all the sites, you’ll get 3.5 Ed.-Hrs.)*

July TBD: **MGAGCM July Picnic**  
*(at Crossroads Village)*  
*Cancelled*

Aug. 20: **The Year in Blooms: Pollinators and their Relationship with Native Plants** – Vince Ste. Marie  
*Project ID: Environmental Stewardship: IPM - Pollinators*  
*Awaiting possible alternate speaker*

Sept. 12: **MGAGCM Native Plant Sale** at the Davison Farmers Market  
*(rescheduled from May 16th)*  
*The link has an order form, plant list, and plant information.*  
*Postponed to 2021*

Sept. 17: **Gardening for Pollinators** – Jay Blair  
*Project ID: Environmental Stewardship: IPM - Pollinators*

Oct. 10: **Fall Into Spring**  
*Cancelled*

Oct. 15: **Native Michigan Wildflowers and Why You Want Them in Your Landscape** – Sara Thomas  
*Project ID: Environmental Stewardship: Native Plants*

Nov. 19: **Holiday Party**

2020 MGAGCM meetings and or presentations are held on the third Thursday of each month in the GCCARD Building, 601 N. Saginaw Street, Flint, MI 48502-2009 *(except December & unless otherwise noted).*