

Down to Earth

Michigan State University Extension Master
Gardener Program—Genesee County

Nov 2019
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Letter from the Program Coordinator

Barslund Judd

Happy fall y'all! I've been dying to say that. Michigan State University Fall Extension Conference was just held in Traverse City. Nearly all of the 600+ MSU Extension employees were in attendance. It was a great chance to network with other Extension agents from different backgrounds. I think we all came away with some great new ideas and plans for this next year.

On October 26th, the All About Bulbs educational event was held at Tollgate Farms in Novi. I'd like to thank Joanne Gensel and Michelle Chockley for helping with this event. We were also very lucky to have the help of Carmen Hamilton who is both an EMG and an employee of MSU Extension at Tollgate. This event was a combined effort between Genesee, Wayne, and Oakland county. Proceeds from bulb orders at these events will help support programming in these three counties.

I'm incredibly proud of the work that our volunteers do in the community. If you haven't had a chance to see it, Ginny Farah and LaDonna Gamble were recently included in a PBS video that featured Edible Flint! Check the video out when you get a chance! <https://www.pbs.org/newshour/show/flint-fights-lead-poisoning-with-farmers-markets-and-cooking-classes>

Last month Maureen Wildfong's name was drawn after she found the butterfly in the October. She won the book Bees of the North Central Region and Wildflowers to Support Them published by the MSU Extension. Be sure to look for the butterfly again this month and fill out the form. There will be a prize for the lucky winner!

Barslund Judd (juddbars@msu.edu)



Inside this issue

Letter from the Coordinator	1
Genesee County Humane Soc.	2
Bulb Basics	3
Outreach Report	4
Gardening with Kids	5
The Buzz!	6
Recipe	7
VMS Corner	8
Association News	9
Upcoming Events	10

Newsletter Committee

- Sue Crisp (**Project Report**)
- Mary Yelland (**Article Liaison**)
- LaDonna Gamble (**Hotline Articles**)
- Joanne Gensel (**Association Page**)
- Michelle Chockley (**VMS Corner**)
- Carol Pittard (**Editor**)
- Vicki Perkins (**Jr. MGs**)

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.

Extension Master Gardener Class Genesee County – Jan. 25, 2020 (Postponed from fall 2019)

We need your help in sharing this information with your friends and groups who may be interested. If anyone has questions, please contact Barslund Judd, juddbars@msu.edu

Link to sign up: [January 2020 Master Gardener Class Sign up Link](#)

Location: GCCARD Building
605 N. Saginaw St., Suite 1A
Flint, MI 48502

When: Saturdays, 9 a.m. - 1 p.m.
Jan. 25, 2020 - May 9, 2020
(including makeup date, no class April 11)

Deadline: August 15, 2019

Fee: \$325.00

\$ 25.00 for Volunteer Selection Process which includes the background check.
\$300.00 for training course, including 1,000-page training manual. There are no other out-of-pocket costs.

Featured MSUE Project

The Humane Society of Genesee County Gardens

Maggie Gregg - Project Lead

Maggie Gregg/Susan Crisp

The Humane Society of Genesee County is an independent, non-profit business relying solely on private and public donations along with community volunteerism. Quarterly orientation classes are held to recruit new cat cuddlers, dog walkers, gardeners and other volunteers.

The HSGC garden project consists of eight individual mixed perennial and annual gardens positioned along the front of the building, around the parking lot, at the Joyce St. exit, and the Dort Highway entrance. The large berm has a Memorial Brick Path running down its center.

The original gardens were created as a labor of love by EMG Terry Ashley, who is presently the HSGC volunteer coordinator, starting around the year 2004. She used Ruth Mott grants for plant material with some technical assistance from Genesee County Extension Master Gardener Volunteers. The large berm was once shaded by many large pine trees and in recent years, with their removal, has become a colorful wildflower garden interspersed with animal topiaries designed by an HSGC board member. Butterfly weed, swamp milkweed, or common milkweed are now found in all of the gardens contributing to the certification of the HSGC as a Monarch Waystation.

The gardens are planted and maintained with the help of the HSGC staff and volunteers, students earning community service hours for graduation, and interested community groups, all teaming with our Extension Master Gardeners. Annuals are donated by the community and planted on "Bring a Flat to Plant Day" in early June. Amy Hackett and her Mott Middle College students team with EMGs for Spring Cleanup/Garden Prep Day in late May and again in late October for Fall Cleanup Day.

Thank you to our many Extension Master Gardeners who have helped in the HSGC gardens at one time or another over the years. We are there weekly from late April through late October. Our goals are to provide gardening information as well as to provide a welcoming environment to visitors who come to the Humane Society of Genesee County.

Project Lead: Maggie Gregg **Co-Lead:** Colleen Putinsky **Graphic logo designer:** Sylvia Hansen



Top left to right volunteers: David Gregg, Maggie Gregg, Bob Andrews, LaDonna Gamble, Bobbie Parkhill, Terry Ashley, Marcia Jaremba, Cary Rouse, Colleen Putinsky, Susan Fischer, Marlene Klinert, Janene Rider, Sharon Kridner.



The Humane Society of Genesee County Gardens

G-3325 Dort Hwy, Burton, MI 48529. Located near the intersection of S Dort Hwy and Hemphill Rd, behind Maaco Collision Repair.

If you are interested in volunteering, please contact Maggie Gregg (maggiekg424@comcast.net)

Bulb Basics

Michelle Chockley

The definition of a bulb is any plant that stores its complete life cycle in an underground storage structure. There are five types of storage structures that include: true bulbs, corms, tubers, tuberous roots, and rhizomes.

True Bulbs - The best example of a true bulb is the onion. The rings you see when you slice an onion in half are actually leaves modified to hold food for the bulb when it is dormant. Garlic is also a true bulb. The true bulb has five major parts. It contains the basal plate (bottom of bulb from which roots grow), fleshy scales (primary storage tissue), tunic (skin-like covering that protects the fleshy scales), the shoot (consisting of developing flower and leaf buds), and lateral buds (develop into bulblets or offsets). Common flowering true bulbs include tulips, daffodils, hyacinths, amaryllis, lilies, and Dutch Iris.

Corms - A corm does not have visible storage rings when cut in half. This distinguishes it from a true bulb. The corm contains a basal plate (bottom of bulb from which roots develop), thin tunic and a growing point. Corms look like true bulbs but they do not grow outward in circular rings. Some have a furry covering and all are solid on the inside. The Water Chestnut is a good example of what the inside of a corm looks like. Flowering corms include gladiolus, crocus, freesia, and watsonia. The water lily is also a corm.

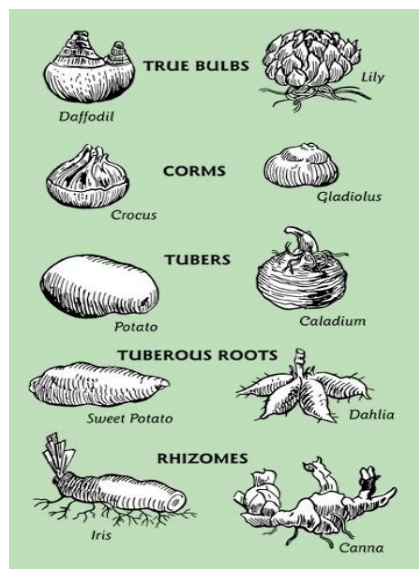
Tubers - A tuber differs from the true bulb and the corm by not having a basal plant from which roots develop and not having a protective tunic covering. Tubers are also underground stems, but not the base of the stem as in a corm. Tubers have multiple “eyes” (buds) and most of them prefer filtered sun. The potato and yam are tubers. Begonias, cyclamen and anemones are all examples of flowering tubers.

Tuberous Roots - The tuberous root differs from other root structures by the nutrient reserves being stored in an actual root instead of an enlarged stem. These are roots that form around a central stem. The sweet potato is a tuberous root that is where it differs from the yam. Some examples of flowering plants that have tuberous roots are dahlias, agapanthus and daylilies.

Rhizomes - Rhizomes differ from other storage structures by growing horizontally under the surface of the soil. These have elongated underground stems that sometimes emerge above the soil surface. Stems can be thick while others are thin like a blade of grass. All produce leaf growth from the top, and roots that emerge from the underside. Examples of rhizomatous bulbs are bearded iris, cannas and calla lilies. The cattail is a rhizome. Bermuda grass and mint are also rhizomes, and their small underground stems allow them to spread easily and become invasive.

We learned in our Master Gardener class that the primary function of the underground storage structure is to store nutrients so the plants will survive. We were taught to not cut back the foliage but to let it die back naturally so it could feed the nutrients back to the bulb. The bulbs require these leaves to manufacture carbohydrates and store energy for the next year, through photosynthesis. If you want to tidy up, the flower stalks can be cut back to where the foliage begins. But boy is that hard when you don’t want to look at the unsightly dieback in your neat garden. I remember Janet Macunovich saying at one of our conferences, “When it’s brown, cut it down.” That rhyme certainly applies to bulbs. If you plan accordingly, your other emerging gems in the garden will be growing and covering the dieback from bulbs.

Reference: <https://web.extension.illinois.edu/bulbs/bulbbasics.cfm>
<https://ucanr.edu/blogs/blogcore/postdetail.cfm?postnum=22668>



MSU EMG Outreach Report

Outreach News

Maggie Gregg

Key-Lore Dog Park/HSGC Fundraiser
7185 Gillette Rd., Flushing, MI
Saturday, October 12, 2019

On Saturday, Oct. 12th, Extension Master Gardeners participated in an Outreach at the Key-Lore Dog Park Fundraiser benefiting the Humane Society of Genesee County (HSGC). Many costumed dogs and their families Trick-or-Treated on a one mile wooded trail stopping at 15+ stations. Each station was decorated for Halloween and had the banner of a local business.



Extension Master Gardeners passed out dog treats, a flyer on “Pets and Poison Control: Your House Safer,” one announcing the January 2020 EMG class at GCCARD, and a Smart Lawn bookmark. 106+ sets of treats and information were passed out at this station on a very chilly afternoon.

EMG Michelle Chockley made the beautiful raffle basket containing assorted useful garden items that were donated by the Master Gardener Association of Genesee County Michigan (MGAGCM) to this event for the last several years.

It was a fun event with vendors, cider and donuts, trick-or-treating, costume parade and contest, baskets of goodies raffle, and other merchandise for sale.

EMGs Michelle Chockley (and her dog Ruby), JoAnn Zitterkopf, Karen Schilling, Maggie Gregg (and her husband David), and Kellie Fink (and her daughter and 2 granddaughters) manned the MGAGCM station this year.

EMG Maggie Gregg, class of 2002

If you are interested in volunteering at this event in the future, or at the Humane Society of Genesee County Gardens, please contact Maggie Gregg at maggiekg@424.comcast.net.

Gardening With Kids

You will need:

- A screen or absorbent cloth
- Paper: unprinted computer paper, colored cardstock, tissue paper, newspaper, egg cartons.
- A Blender
- Some seeds

1. Prepare your screen. Ideally, you will have a piece of screen in a frame (old picture frame?). You can use an old window screen as well. If screen is not available, you could use some absorbent fabric or heavy newspaper, however, your paper will not be as even.
2. Tear your paper into small pieces and place it in the blender. Fill the blender about half full. Add some warm water to cover the paper. Blend the paper until it is slushy, and no visible pieces of paper remain.
3. Add some seeds to the slush. Small seeds are best. Do not blend them with the blender as this could damage and kill the seeds. Just stir them in by hand.
4. Place your screen over a sink or tub to collect excess water. Pour the paper and seed mix over the screen spreading the mixture thin and evenly. If the screen is not available, you will need to strain off as much water as possible and spread the mix evenly on an absorbent cloth or heavy newspaper as thin as possible.
5. Let the seed paper dry. This could take a day or two depending on how much water is in your paper. A warm area with good air circulation will help.
6. After the paper is dry remove it from the screen. You can now cut it into shapes or write on it. Maybe use it to make a card or invitation. The paper with embedded seeds can be planted. If it is large, you should tear it up and plant the smaller pieces of paper. Just cover with soil and water and the paper should grow.



Across

1. A distinct style of garden that uses informal design, traditional materials, dense plantings, and a mixture of ornamental and edible plants. English in origin, it depends on grace and charm rather than grandeur and formal structure.

5. A style of landscape design that reduces or eliminates the need for supplemental water from irrigation, used in arid regions.

6. A process where a plant that is not cold hardy is taken indoors or otherwise manipulated to keep it alive through the winter.

7. The study of plant names and the identification of plants.

Down

2. Male flowers are on one plant and female flowers are on another plant.

3. A spot within a garden (or area) that differs from the general environment.

4. Ratio of Nitrogen to Phosphorous to Potassium in a fertilizer. These are the main nutrients required by plants.

The Buzz!

LaDonna Gamble



It may seem like there will be a lot of idle time on our hands once we put down our garden beds, but isn't it funny how quickly we fill those spaces with other activities, only to easily make room for gardening in the spring? Funny story—some fellow gardeners and I grew some popcorn with plans to pop it, relax and watch a movie when the harvesting was done. One gardener took the harvest home to dry out some more. Today she told me she tested a kernel in the microwave and it started to catch fire. So, we're going to just buy our popcorn like law-abiding citizens. Here are some of the Hotline calls we have been fielding.

A caller asked how to get rid of stinkhorn mushrooms

Stinkhorn fungus smells bad, and some might think it looks vulgar. Don't be scared by its appearance. Like most fungi, these are beneficial as they help break down organic matter and assist with nutrient cycling. The visible stinkhorn is the fruiting body of the fungus. If removal is desired, wear gloves while pulling them out. This won't eliminate the fungus as it is in the soil beneath but can remove the smell and the risk of pets or children eating them. We do not recommend any treatments for controlling mushrooms and highly discourage the use of homemade remedies as they can cause significant harm to your soil. Below is a brief descriptive article.

https://www.canr.msu.edu/news/stinky_dog_stinkhorn_mushrooms

Is this a good time to dispose of an oak tree that had oak wilt disease?

The short answer is, "Yes it's as good a time as any." But far more important is prevention measures in spring (avoid wounding the tree and practice early detection). Equally important is HOW to dispose of the diseased tree to avoid spreading the disease to other areas

https://www.canr.msu.edu/news/oak_wilt_disease_1

Caller's sumac tree is sending out shoots into his yard

Sumac is pretty aggressive and the shoots (sometimes referred to as suckers) can be a problem indeed. Even if you cut down the tree, the remaining stump can still reproduce along the roots underground. Sumac is sometimes grown as an ornamental. If this is the case, sumac can be controlled via trenching. Sumac is a native woody plant in the genus *Rhus* and is not the same as poison sumac which is a plant in the genus *Toxicodendron*. If this sounds familiar, it is because Poison Ivy is also in *Toxicodendron*. Here's more on how to control:

<https://ask.extension.org/questions/412443>

My asparagus beds were full of weeds and had a very low yield of asparagus

Before I answer this— a gardener I know introduced a second gardener to eating asparagus right out of the ground without cooking it. Surprisingly, the raw form didn't taste green or uncooked as it would seem. It was delicious—refreshing, tender and flavorful. The newly introduced gardener stood there and ate all the asparagus, leaving none to be harvested or shared. Oh wait, that was me! In answer to the question, asparagus beds, like many others, need to be weeded regularly so the weeds do not steal the moisture and nutrients the veggie needs. As the article below states, asparagus is an especially poor competitor with weeds, meaning if the weeds are not controlled, they will most likely be the culprits resulting in a low yield of the asparagus. Here is both an herbicidal and organic solution to prevent and control:

<https://articles.extension.org/pages/55580/how-can-i-keep-weeds-out-of-my-asparagus-patch>

Cranberries

Mary Yelland

Yes, cranberries are that red goo at the Thanksgiving table, but they are so much more. Native to North America, Cranberries are among the highest of all fruits in antioxidants. They are a cholesterol free, fat free, and low sodium food. Their uses go far beyond sauce.

Two plants are referred to as cranberries. The highbush cranberry is a viburnum, and while the berries are edible, they are not the true cranberry. The low growing plant of the genus *Vaccinium* is the true cranberry. Wisconsin is the country's largest cranberry grower, but Michigan does have a few cranberry growers with 250-300 acres devoted to the crop. Cranberries are harvested in September and October. While it is often thought that cranberries are grown in water, this is not true. This myth comes from the fact that harvesters flood the cranberry fields to harvest. The hollow berries float on the top of the water and can be corralled to harvest. 95 percent of the harvest is then processed in some form. Thanksgiving week alone accounts for 20 percent of US cranberry consumption, however the highest use for the fruit is juice or juice blends. The uses don't stop there. Cranberries can be used in breads, salads, relishes, soup, pilaf, stuffing, desserts and even more exotic fares such as cranberry catsup or mixed half and half with Dijon to make cranberry mustard. While you may want to experiment with new uses to add this nutritious fruit to your diet, here is a recipe for Rich Cranberry Coffee Cake. It uses fresh (or frozen) cranberries and makes a full sized, award winning, holiday cake. It also freezes well in individual slices for a quick snack.

Rich Cranberry Coffee Cake

1 package (8 ounces) cream cheese, softened
1 cup butter, softened
1 ½ cups sugar
1 ½ teaspoons vanilla extract
4 large eggs
2 ¼ cups all-purpose flour, divided
1 ½ teaspoons baking powder
½ teaspoon salt
2 cups fresh or frozen cranberries, patted dry
½ cup chopped pecans or walnuts
Confectioners' sugar



In a bowl, beat cream cheese, butter, sugar and vanilla until smooth. Add eggs, one at a time, mixing well after each addition. Combine 2 cups flour, baking powder and salt; gradually add to butter mixture. Mix remaining flour with cranberries and nuts; fold into batter. Batter will be very thick. Spoon into a greased 10-in. fluted tube pan. Bake at 350° for 65-70 minutes or until cake tests done. Let stand 5 minutes before removing from the pan. Cool on a wire rack. Before serving, dust with confectioners' sugar.

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- Cranberry plants are woody, low growing perennial vines. They are related to blueberries and require soil with a low (acidic) pH.
 - Europeans named the fruit "crane berry" because they thought the cranberry blossom looked like the head of a Sandhill Crane.
 - Pemmican, originally made by North American Indians and later adapted by Arctic explorers, is a paste of cranberries with dried and pounded meat mixed with melted fat. It is considered edible for years.
 - Fresh cranberries are typically sold in 12-ounce bags, which makes about 3 cups when chopped.
 - Fresh cranberries can be kept in the refrigerator for 3-4 weeks.
 - Cranberries are Wisconsin's largest fruit industry in both value and size.



What is Emeritus and How do you Apply for Emeritus status?

Michelle Chockley—Lead VMS Ambassador

Emeritus Application submission period: November 1st – December 15th

Application deadline: December 15, 2019

Emeritus status is used to designate active Extension Master Gardeners who are no longer able to fully meet the volunteer service requirement for annual recertification.

Emeritus status can only be granted with concurrence by the local Extension Master Gardener Coordinator (Barslund Judd) and the MSUE State MGP Designee. This designation is not intended for individuals who elect to pursue other interests or activities (i.e. job/career needs, raising a family, serving in other organizations, moving out of state, etc.). It is not intended for individuals who choose to be less active in the Michigan State University Extension Master Gardener Program.

Criteria:

1. Minimum of 500 hours of volunteer service
2. 10 continuous years of volunteer service
3. Exemplary service to the MSU Extension MGP
4. Have limited ability to remain active

Approved Emeritus EMGs are considered “limited active” which gives you the option to complete/report the annual hours or not complete the hours if you are not able. Regardless of status, all completed hours count and should be entered into the VMS. The difference for Emeritus is that if the annual hours are not completed, you can still continue in the program.

In January, you would still do the recertification steps of completing the Annual Code of Conduct and your certification status, which as an emeritus would be “Limited Active.”

If you meet the criteria and would like to apply, please contact Michelle Chockley, chockleym@gmail.com 810-210-6685. I will complete the form for you and submit it to Barslund Judd who will forward to Diane Brady. This is an online form and cannot be completed by hand. It only takes a few minutes to answer the questions and I am glad to help you!

Currently in Genesee County we have 189 EMG’s on our roster, of which 23 are Emeritus.

VMS Log in: <https://michigan.volunteersystem.org/UniversalLogin.cfm>

Forgot your password? Contact Michelle Chockley for a quick reset or request via the VMS login page.

Reminder: The 2019 annual required hours for Extension Master Gardeners and Advanced Master Gardeners is 10 education and 20 volunteer hours which are to be completed and reported in the VMS no later than December 31, 2019.

Master Gardener Association Genesee County

The Master Gardener Association of Genesee County Michigan (MGAGCM) is an association of Extension Master Gardeners (EMGs). Membership is optional for certified Extension Master Gardeners. The MGAGCM provides support to local EMGs through project funding, plant signage, and extra educational opportunities.

Greetings from Alan Grove, MGAGCM Interim Board President

Our next monthly membership meeting will be Thursday, November 21st, 2019, and is also the HOLIDAY PARTY. If you would like to help set up you may arrive about 2:00 p.m.. Official party time is 5:30 p.m.. It will be a potluck style dinner again, but this year we are asking you to sign up for the dish you will be bringing. We are hoping to have more balance on the offerings. Donations in lieu of a dish are being accepted this year as well because we always have SOOOO much food. Please follow the link to:

RSVP by November 13, 2019

<https://www.geneseecountymg.org/holiday-party.html>

Hope to see you there!
Alan Grove
President

Note from Vice President and Outreach Director

I want to thank everyone again for all the support and help on outreaches and projects.

We have a nominee for every position to date (YIPPEE) for the 2020 board positions. Please take a few minutes to cast your vote electronically or manually at the party.

Looking forward to another excellent party supplied by Peggy, Sharon and team and all the good nibbles supplied by YOU!

See you soon,
Joanne Gensel
VP and Outreach Director

Design Contest! Judith and George Mynsberge Extension Master Gardener Idea Bed

Michigan Extension Master Gardeners are invited to submit a garden design for the Extension Master Gardener Idea Bed located in the Michigan State University Horticulture Gardens. Extension Master Gardeners can work individually or in teams. If selected, your design will be planted spring of 2020 and grown for four years. Our last winning design was submitted by Sandra J. Lombard and is shown below in the summer of 2018.

All forms and designs must be submitted by postal mail or by email no later than December 1, 2019. The winner's design will be planted for the 2020 growing season and remain until 2024. Download forms from our web site: https://www.canr.msu.edu/hrt/our_gardens/master_gardener_idea_bed

Submit your design along with the Design Contest Registration Form to:

Bethany Troy
Extension Master Gardener Idea Bed Design Contest
1066 Bogue Street
East Lansing, MI 48824

For further information, please contact Bethany Troy at troybeth@msu.edu or 517-355-0330.

Master Gardener Association Genesee County

Websites:

MGAGCM Website—www.geneseecountymg.org

MGAGCM Facebook Page —www.facebook.com/groups/216904628327310/

MMGA Inc Website—www.michiganmastergardener.org

MMGA Inc. Facebook Page—www.facebook.com/MichiganMG/

Upcoming Events:

Master Gardener Idea Bed Design Contest Deadline (Dec. 1, 2019)

https://www.canr.msu.edu/hrt/our_gardens/master_gardener_idea_bed/design-contest

MGAGCM Holiday Party (Nov. 21, 2019) This will be the usual potluck and will be the last chance to vote!

Extension Master Gardener Hour-Entry Deadline (Dec. 31, 2019)

Capital Area MG Symposium, It's All About...The Ins and Outs of Gardening (Sat., Jan. 25, 2020)

The location will be Lansing Community College—West. See the [Save the date flyer](#).

Master Gardener College, Gardening Visions for 2020 and Beyond, on the campus of Michigan State University (June 12 & 13, 2020)

https://www.canr.msu.edu/master_gardener_volunteer_program/master_gardener_college/

Interested in participating in a native plant sale fundraiser?

The Master Gardener Association of Genesee County Michigan (MGAGCM) is forming a committee of MGAGCM members to explore the creation of a native plant sale. If you are interested in helping out with the planning, please contact Alan Grove (plantdoc049@outlook.com) or Dick Moldenhauer (rnmold1050@aol.com).

MGAGCM—Holiday Party

When: Thursday, November 21, 2019, at 5:30 p.m.

GCCARD Building 601 N. Saginaw Street

Flint, MI 48502

Join fellow Extension Master Gardeners for our annual potluck holiday Party. We will provide chicken, beverages, entertainment and amazing raffle items.



We always have so much wonderful food at our potlucks with always a lot left over. We still want lots of wonderful food, but we thought some people might like to make a donation instead which could be used for some future MGAGCM fun. We start setting up at 2 p.m., so if you are available, we could use your help. Thanks!

Please RSVP by November 13, 2019

<https://www.geneseecountymg.org/holiday-party.htm>