

Down to Earth

Michigan State University Extension Master
Gardener Program—Genesee County

Jan 2020
Volume 18, Issue 1



Letter from the Program Coordinator

Barslund Judd

I'd like to take the time to thank the Down to Earth committee for all of their hard work putting this newsletter out every month. Due to the amount of work required and the limited time that each of our volunteers have to contribute, we will be reducing the length and content of the DTE. Additional volunteers will help us to minimize the reduction in content. We are currently looking for a volunteer that is willing to be a layout editor. This requires some experience with Microsoft Publisher, or a willingness to learn. The software is not needed on your home computer as we have it installed on the hotline computers. If you are interested, please reach out to me.

This year I am working hard to team up with some local organizations to increase our programming. These classes will allow us to provide low or no cost education to Michigan residents and Extension Master Gardeners alike. These will be announced shortly, so keep checking your emails!

Our January training class still has a few openings. If you know someone that is interested in becoming an Extension Master Gardener, please send them to the application link below.

Barslund Judd (juddbars@msu.edu)

Extension Master Gardener Class Genesee County – Jan. 25, 2020

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 Application](#)

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: January 17th, 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.

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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.

Featured MSUE Project

Longway Planetarium Garden

Kathy O'Neil - Project Lead

To understand the Longway Planetarium garden, you first have to know about the Sloan/Longway Education Department. They present school field trips, scout and public programs during the school year. The summer days are packed with Science/Social Studies camps and class sessions for preschool children and up. The garden, the inspiration of Sloan/Longway Sr. Curator of Programs Laurie Bone, was created to provide a setting for Natural Science Exploration. In the garden, kids can hunt for real bugs instead of plastic ones in a classroom. They can pick flowers to add to pioneer soap making and figure out why that one calendula plant is growing on the other side of the garden from the others. One of my favorite memories is of a 4 year old boy who pulled up a vegetable and asked, "Is it a real carrot?"

The vegetable section is small but a kids' favorite. It is planned and planted in our Square Foot Gardening boxes each year by Junior Girl Scouts who participate in a Gardener's Badge Workshop. The produce itself is motivational. Nutrition is easy to promote when it involves finding and picking that cucumber first. We have an herb circle garden, perfect for smells and tastes. Native plants chosen for the particular pollinators they attract take up another part of the area. The common milkweed in our front border is labor intensive to control but worth it when a child spots a monarch butterfly caterpillar!



The garden, with many changes, has been in existence for 11 years. We have help with mulching and the heavy work from the Flint Cultural Center Ground Crew led by Josh Gallagher. I was a one-person maintenance crew until this past summer when I very much welcomed the help of Extension Master Gardener Cheryl Borkowski and Longway volunteer Cindy Goodall.

Longway Planetarium Garden

1310 E. Kearsley St. Flint, MI 48503
Use the driveway on the east side of Longway Planetarium/Flint Repertory Theater. Drive around to the back side (south side) of the teal dome that houses the Planetarium.

Kathy O'Neil—Project Lead
(koneill0444@charter.net)

Lemon Balm—*Melissa officinalis* L.

Tammy Johns

Lemon balm is a wonderful herb and a great addition to your garden. It belongs to the family Lamiaceae, formerly Labiatae, or the mint family. It is a fairly hardy and aromatic perennial subshrub. It is a cross-pollinating species and has complete perfect flowers with short-stalked epidermal glands. It is a bushy plant that can reach about 24 to 36 inches in the right conditions. The soft, hairy leaves are 2 inches long and heart-shaped. The leaves are coarse and veined and the leaf edge is scalloped or toothed. Lemon balm is also known as English balm, garden balm, balm mint, common balm, Melissa, sweet balm and heart's delight. There are two subspecies, *Melissa officinalis*, the common cultivated lemon balm, and *M. officinalis* ssp. *altissima* naturalized in New Zealand, known as bush balm.



Lemon balm is cultivated in Europe and the United States. It is a valuable medicinal plant in herbal medicine and is native to the eastern Mediterranean Region and central and western Asia. Lemon balm has a long history dating back to ancient Turkey where it was planted to encourage bees to return home to the hive. Sources date its use over 2000 years ago by the Greeks and Romans. Lemon Balm was carried into Europe through the Spanish trade routes in the 7th century.

Lemon balm can be propagated from seeds, stem cuttings and root division. It spreads vigorously if grown in an open garden bed so if you are limited in space, grow it in a confined space, a container, or surround it with a 1 to 2-inch strip of edging buried in the soil allowing an inch of edging above the ground. This prevents the spread of roots over and under. You may also grow the herb on a sunny windowsill during the wintertime. Lemon balm makes a wonderful tea either by using the fresh herbs or dried for over the winter. Lemon balm is used in food processing as a flavorant or culinary use. The lemony flavor is due largely to citral and citronellal and other phytochemicals including geraniol which has a rose scent, and linalool that has a lavender scent. Add fresh lemon balm leaves to salads, poultry stuffing and meat marinades. It also is beautiful as a garnish in your beverage or on your plate. Harvest it before the plant flowers for optimal taste. Lemon balm thrives in both partial sun and shade and soils of a wide pH, dry and damp conditions, although it may not have the full lemony flavor in a shady area. Lemon balm does not need to be fertilized and does well with compost. Do not use pesticides on your lemon balm as you will want to use this in your cooking and teas, and it is relatively disease and insect free.

Lemon balm attracts honeybees to your garden and encourages them to remain in their hives. There is some evidence that it is also a natural mosquito repellent. The leaves must be crushed to release their essential oils as plants alone will not repel them. You can also use it in your bath after a long, stressful day. Brew it as if making a tea and pour it into your bath. It is a wonderful calming herb. Better yet, make a tea out of it as well and sip it while you are in your lemon balm bath!

<https://www.canr.msu.edu/news/better-habitat-for-bees>

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

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4245564>

<https://extension.msstate.edu/blog/can-fragrant-plants-help-repel-insects>

MSU EMG Outreach Report

Outreach News

Kay McCullough

Thing 1:

We often have children's drawings on the covers of the garden tour ticket. We thought this year Extension Master Gardeners might like their child or grandchild's drawing on the cover. EMGs will vote for their favorite submission during our April meeting. Children 12 and under are qualified to enter. Make sure his/her name is on the back (not front) in pencil. All children 12 and under may enter. Take a picture of the drawing and send it to my cell phone (810) 610-0545, send it as an email attachment (to birdieball@aol.com), or mail it to me: Kay McCullough 4069 Jennie Lane Swartz Creek, MI 48473. Children must do all of their own drawing, but adults may give them ideas.

Thing 2:

We are going to work on developing outreach material this year. We may have workshops to work together or you could work at home on this if you would like. Email me if you are interested in helping with this. There are many different tasks that can be done. You could come up with questions, laminate, put Velcro on the backs, etc. See this link for different outreach materials: <https://www.geneseecountymg.org/outreach.html>

Gardening With Kids

Mary Yelland

Supplies needed:

Printed seed or garden catalogs

Scissors, glue and other craft supplies

Construction paper or cardstock



Even though winter is upon us, you can still make a paper garden. Seed and garden companies send an abundance of printed catalogs in January. This is a project that you can do on your own or with kids. Use the seed catalog to find and plan out a virtual garden. Cut out the pictures and glue them onto a sheet of construction paper or card stock. Plan what plants you might want to plant in a garden. You can decide on the layout. Do you want to design a vegetable garden? What food would you want to grow? Maybe you would rather do a flower garden. Pick out flowers that would coordinate together. Would the plants grow in our area? Would your virtual garden grow best in sun or shade? You may want to use markers or even some string or toothpicks to make some fencing or trellis. Be creative and have fun planning. If you have a laminator you may want to laminate your garden and use it for a placemat or poster.

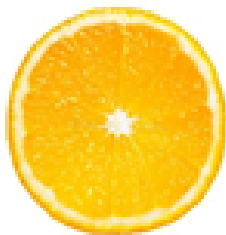
Time to Harvest!

Mary Yelland

Brrr! It is January and in Michigan gardeners are looking through seed catalogs and thinking toward spring. However, in other parts of our country citrus production is in full swing. Oranges are the world's most commonly grown tree fruit. The United States is second in worldwide production of oranges (behind Brazil) with most of the oranges being grown in Florida and California. There are only about 10 types of commercially grown oranges including Mandarin, Blood, Clementine, and Pineapple oranges. However, the two most common types of oranges grown in the United States are Valencia and navel varieties. Valencia oranges are mostly grown in Florida and turned into juice. Navel oranges, mostly grown in California, are easier to peel and are the most common oranges found in grocery stores. There are several varieties or mutations of the navel orange. The first navel oranges came from a mutation of an orange in Brazil. Navel oranges are seedless (though an occasional seed may show up) and sterile and grafting is the only way to reproduce them. The starting of the orange growing industry in the United States has an [interesting history](#) that involves 3 trees, one of which is still alive today.

Grown in zones 9 and higher, an orange tree takes about 10 years to grow from seed to production. The tree can then live 50-80 years and produce about 1,500 oranges a year. Orange trees are evergreens. They usually blossom in the spring and the fruit takes between 8 and 18 months to ripen. Thus, a tree can have all stages of production, leaves, blossoms and fruit, on the tree at the same time. A tree can also have two seasons of fruit on the tree simultaneously. Fruit must ripen on the tree as ripening stops once it is picked. Thus, the fruit will not get sweeter as it sets. Unlike most other fruits, orange trees do not require regular pruning.

Oranges are high in fiber, vitamin C, B1, Folate and potassium. One medium orange has about 60 calories. Oranges are great just eaten plain or you could use some in the following recipe.



Turkey, Avocado, Orange Sandwich

2 ounces turkey, sliced

½ large ripe avocado, sliced

¼ orange, peeled and sliced crosswise

2 rings red onion, thinly sliced

½ tablespoon balsamic vinegar

2 slices whole wheat bread

Place turkey, avocado, orange slices, and red onion on one slice of bread. Drizzle balsamic vinegar over toppings and top with the second slice of bread.

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- After chocolate and vanilla, orange is the world's favorite flavor.
 - To tell if citrus fruit is ripe compare weight. A ripe fruit will feel heavy for its size.
 - Almost 40 percent of the orange crop in the United States is used for making frozen concentrate.
 - When the weather becomes warm, ripe oranges regain a little green tinge at the stem end as some chlorophyll returns to the peel. This is called "re-greening" and it does not mean the fruit is not ripe.
 - The Cara Cara orange is a natural mutation of a navel orange discovered in Venezuela in 1976. It is pink inside and very sweet. They are delicious used in the marmalade recipe.

<https://citrusvariety.ucr.edu/citrus/washington.html>

MSU Extension Link for Genesee County

Michelle Chockley—Lead VMS Ambassador

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

Recertification Reminders – Certification opens January 8, 2020:

Recertification should be completed by January 25th, which involves logging into the VMS on or after January 8th and (1) Reading and accepting the Code of Conduct Agreements; (2) Select a recertification status; (3) Registering at the secure MSU website and submitting \$20.00 re-certification fee. (Emeritus do not pay a \$20.00 fee.)

Your status is one of these:

Completed hours and seeking recertification

Not completed hours and seeking recertification (Only allowed one year)

Limited active (Emeritus choose)

Not Seeking Recertification

After January 25th you can recertify, but fee goes up to \$30.00 – Late certification closes February 8. It is preferred you pay by credit card (this is a secured site), but you can pay by check which must be postmarked by 1/18/2020. Once you have started the recertification process, please complete all 3 steps until you get to the end, otherwise you will have a problem finding where you left off and how to enter payment. If this happens, contact one of the ambassadors to assist you.

When can I enter hours?

You will not be able to enter any hours until after February 8. If you discover you have hours from 2019 that you forgot to enter, you may enter in 2020. Reports are run based on what is in the system on December 31, 2019. If you add hours in 2020 with a 2019 date, they will be lost and not counted. If you need to enter 2019 hours you should put in the event description, for example, “2019 hours not logged for Carriage Town Project.” You would use a 2020 date (the date you are entering), when logging. Still confused? Please contact me with questions.

Tips for Entering hours:

Please enter your hours as the year goes along – at least monthly. You can “lump” hours to save time for multiple entries. Do not use abbreviations for project names. Anyone viewing your information should know what project site you are attending or what educational event you are attending.

Refer to the 2020 Approved Project List on the VMS under LINKS for the correct Project Selection. If at any time you have questions about how to enter information, please contact one of the ambassadors listed on the home screen of the VMS.

For education hours, always list where you are at, who the speaker is and the topic. Not sure what project selection? Please ask an ambassador. Garden club speakers, speakers at nurseries or outside events, should be approved by our coordinator, Barslund Judd.

Please read Diane Brady’s emails on recertification as they are detailed and very informative.

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.

Note from MGAGCM President—Joanne Gensel

Happy 2020 - Another year of gardening and volunteering awaits.

As you know, we must recertify annually to maintain our status as MSU Extension Master Gardeners. Once we complete MSUE recertification, we are able to renew our membership with our local association—Master Gardeners Association Genesee County Michigan (MGAGCM).

MICHIGAN MASTER GARDENER ASSOCIATION (MMGA) membership will be a separate process from recertification. Once recertified, you will receive an email with further details about becoming an MMGA member. Follow the directions to complete the process. For those of you that do not feel comfortable on the computer, we will fill out forms and collect money at the next two (2) membership meetings. MMGA's \$5.00 fee purchases insurance to cover unforeseen accidents that may occur while working as an Extension Master Gardener. It's really a very good value in today's market.

I want to reach out to all Master Gardeners reading this and ask that you consider volunteering on a new project - something new or something you haven't done in a while. Consider just committing to one event or activity or working in a new garden one time. It's a great way to reconnect with the program and become acquainted with other folks.

I am hoping to form various new committees of work activities. There should be something for everybody's interest. If we all participate a little we can get a lot accomplished without having to do all the work alone. Updates to follow soon.

Joanne Gensel

ANNUAL
COTYLEDON
CULTIVAR
FENCE
FLOWER
FRUIT
GREENHOUSE
HERBS
LEAF
MULCH
PERENNIAL
POLLINATOR
PRUNE
ROOT
SEED
STEM
TROWEL
VEGETABLE
WEED
WHEELBARROW

W	A	F	T	W	E	V	C	S	E	L	A	U	N	N	A	L	M	O	V
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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:

Extension Master Gardener Regular Re-certification (Jan. 8-Jan. 25, 2020)—\$20.00 fee

Extension Master Gardener **Late** Re-certification (Jan. 26-Feb.8, 2020)—If you're late, it costs \$30.00!

MGAGCM January Meeting at the GCCARD Bldg. (Thurs., Jan. 16, 2020) - Seed Starting with Deirdre Hope who is the Extension Master Gardener Coordinator from Wayne County

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 brochure here.](#) This is the link to the [Capital Area Master Gardener Website.](#)

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/

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

Early Registration Deadline—January 8th

The four topics with the speakers are:

- The Foodscape Revolution in Michigan – Brie Arthur, Horticulturist, Home Gardening Promoter, and Author
- Saving and Sharing Seeds – Ben Cohen, Owner of Small House Farm & Author
- Gardening with Grains – Brie Arthur, Horticulturist, Home Gardening Promoter, and Author
- Defining Your Canvas: Landscape Design – Jean Persely, Advanced Extension Master Gardener & Certified Landscape Designer

Where: Lansing Community College West Campus (5708 Cornerstone Drive / Lansing, MI 48917)

When: Saturday, January 25, 2020

Earn: 5 Master Gardener education hours

Cost: \$60.00 early registration prior to Jan. 8th / \$70.00 after Jan. 8th (deadline Jan. 17th)



A link to the association web site can be found at: <http://mgacac.wordpress.com>

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