

Down to Earth

Michigan State University Extension Master Gardener Program—Genesee County

September 2019
Volume 17, Issue 9



Letter from the Program Coordinator

Barslund Judd

I'd love to announce that we have two new diagnosticians in our Extension Master Gardener ranks! Dick Moldenhauer and Alan Grove have both completed diagnostics training. I'm glad to have them both on the hotline and I'm looking forward to learning about all of the new problems they help us diagnose.

Last week I was able to work with Vicki Perkins at the Genesee County Fair. I had a great time, thank you all for making me feel welcome. I'd like to thank the other volunteers that also assisted with the County Fair, you can hear about the County Fair in the outreach report.

I was also able to visit the outreach booth at the Heavenly Scent Summer Faire. It was a great opportunity to visit beautiful gardens and snag some new plants from the greenhouse. While there, I picked up some *Hakonechloa macra* Sunflare™ 'HABsf1007'. I just wish I could remember that cultivar name!

Somewhere in this issue of the DTE you'll find a small butterfly that looks like this:  When you find it, click on it and fill out the form that opens. Each person completing the form will have his/her name entered into a drawing for a prize. The winner will be announced at the September 19th membership meeting. You are not required to attend the meeting or even be a member of the MGAGCM to be eligible! Just fill out the form! If you're not at the meeting, you'll be contacted.

Barslund Judd—Extension Master Gardener Program Coordinator
juddbars@msu.edu—810-244-8531

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.

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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

Park Place Community Garden

Susan Biron - Project Lead

Sue Crisp

As you travel three blocks south from the intersection of Clio and Vienna Roads (AKA Mill Street and M-57), you'll come to a hidden treasure beyond the gates of Park Place Home & Sales. Driving back through the winding streets, you'll find mobile homes and the half-acre community garden that began four years ago with a few tomatoes and peppers. The impetus for this project came from Susan Biron after her daughters surprised her with enrollment in the Genesee County Extension Master Gardener class. She had assistance from two residents—Art, an 84 year old former Master Gardener and Hugh, a military gentleman who farmed with his father. Susan started the Park Place Community Garden after taking the Extension Master Gardener training in 2016. Wooden produce boxes line the building at the entrance of the Park Place Community. The boxes are filled daily with a selection of fresh vegetables from the community garden which residents are free to take. Some residents have no car or are unable to access the boxes at the front of the park. Susan delivers produce and matched recipes to these residents. About 15 people benefit from these garden to door deliveries. This garden is a very important part of their lives, providing fresh healthy vegetables to supplement their diets and

limited income. Some of the vegetables grown are: corn, squash, eggplant, kohlrabi (German turnip), tomatoes, peppers, onions, potatoes, and spinach. These are just a few of the vegetables grown in long rows that the residents enjoy. Soil testing is done every year with crop rotation. Multiple plantings of vegetables during the early season provide continuous product through the summer. The plantings are begun early in the spring inside Susan's own 8 x 8 ft greenhouse which her children erected for her. Some residents even have a pot or two of tomatoes or peppers, provided by Susan, on their own porch.

Today, Susan is supported in this effort by Extension Master Gardeners Joy Hunter, Janet Horvath, and resident Hugh. Art is now retired from the garden. They distribute water from two rain barrels and tote it with gallon jugs to the needed plants. Come out and see this functioning community garden that serves its community well.



Park Place Community Garden

419 S. Mill Street, Clio, MI 48420

Three blocks south from the intersection of Clio and Vienna Roads (AKA Mill Street and M-57) . This community garden is for residents of the Park Place community. If you are interested in volunteering, please contact Susan Biron (yarngal@yahoo.com).

Controlling Aphids on Milkweed

Michelle Chockley

I think we have all been noticing an abundance of insects in our home and project gardens this year – particularly those little sap-sucking ones called aphids, who are part of the superfamily Aphidoidea, of the order Hemiptera. With the enthusiasm we all have to support our pollinators, the focus has been on planting native plants to attract the pollinators – increasing insects, both bad and good, to our gardens.



I have seen folks misidentify clusters of aphids as monarch eggs, so make sure you know the difference between milkweed aphids and the monarch eggs. The monarch egg is very tiny and white – about the size of a pencil point. Aphids tend to cluster along the stems, while you usually find a single monarch egg on its own under a leaf, or stem.

So what do we do and how do we control the milkweed aphid problem? Make sure you check for monarch eggs and caterpillars first! Then you can get your favorite grandchild and teach them how to pick them off and squish them! There is nothing like manual labor and it is the safest way to remove them. After you are done with the squishing, just rinse the plants with water to dislodge and knock them off. While a high concentration of aphids on your milkweed may look "bad," these insects are not necessarily causing harm to monarchs; unless they are in extremely high density, there are usually not enough aphids to kill the plant. A mild solution of dish soap and water can also be used to kill aphids on milkweed plants (again, after monarchs have been removed). Spraying this solution directly onto the aphids effectively kills the insects. Rinse the plants about a day after they've been treated with this insecticidal soap to remove any residue or dead aphids. This method is only effective when the solution directly hits the target insects; it acts by blocking the spiracles (an external respiratory opening), so the residue will not kill insects.



When thinking about whether or not you want to use an insecticide, it is important to remember that almost all insecticides will kill more than just the target species. If you spray an area with insecticide to kill aphids, other insects (including monarchs) that are in the area will be affected.

So don't be discouraged and continue creating a good quality habitat that comes with a higher diversity of insects. This diversity is providing resources for a wide variety of wildlife using the habitat and overall contributes to the health of the ecosystem. Some of these insects may compete with monarchs for milkweed, or even kill monarchs, but we can trust that in a healthy and diverse habitat, some monarchs will evade predators and contribute to the population.

Source: <https://monarchjointventure.org/resources/faq/aphids-on-milkweed>

MSU EMG Outreach Report

Outreach News

Summertime is coming to a close and so are the outreach events. August events included the Fairy Tale Trail in Clio, the Genesee County Fair and Heavenly Scent Fairie in Fenton. The last outreach will be the **Fall Harvest Festival at Applewood Estate on Saturday, September 28th from 11 a.m. - 5 p.m.** You can contact me anytime if you want to sign up for this event [call or text (810) 339-0764].

I will be sending out an email through VMS as we get closer to the event date.

— Joanne Gensel

Genesee County Fair

The Genesee County fair was held from August 19-25th. Hopefully you were able to visit! This is one of the best opportunities to reach a large number of people in Genesee County. People are drawn here for various reasons: rides, food, horticultural exhibits, animals and shows of all kinds.

The Genesee County Extension Master Gardeners have had large presence here for over 20 years. We were in a large tent with Edible flint, 4H and The Genesee County Conservation District. Vicki Perkins has been the project lead for more than 20 years. Every year Vicki picks an educational topic to feature. This year the topic was edible plants. What an interesting and enlightening topic for so many including myself. We put together a large display with live edible plants, recipes showing how to use them, and nutritional information. A few of the plant recipes were featured including Sumac-ade, Hibiscus tea, Purslane rice and Lambs quarter quiche. People were able to sample the various drinks and food.

This project takes many, many hours to prepare for the week long outreach. The outreach requires a lot of volunteers as well, with 4 volunteers per shift, 4 shifts a day for 7 days. The junior Master Gardeners are also encouraged to volunteer. On Mondays and Saturday a children's activity was held. The activity for the last few years has been stepping stones as this draws a great deal of people. Each child was able to make a garden stone using concrete, forms, stamps, and glass decorations. This activity was wildly popular! Several examples of these garden stones can be seen in the GCCARD building garden at 605 N Saginaw St in Flint. About 200lbs of concrete was used for the stepping stones. This is a great opportunity to interact with a lot of people in the community and we highly encourage our fellow EMGs to visit and possibly volunteer at this outreach.

— Sabrina VanDyke

I'd like to thank all of the volunteers that were able to help at the recent outreaches. I try to visit as many project and outreach sites as I can. It is always great to hear your success stories and to see volunteers interacting with people in the community. When you volunteer, you help to reach those in the community that we are dedicated to serve. You help spread the knowledge and research of MSU Extension into the community. It is this research backed information that helps us strengthen communities and dispel misinformation that is commonly found on the internet. Thank you all for your service and dedication.

— Barslund Judd



Gardening With the Kids

Pressed Flowers

Mary Yelland

You will need:

- Flowers
- Heavy books
- Absorbent paper (parchment paper, coffee filters, blank newsprint)
- Weight (can just be more books)

What to do:

1. Go and pick some flowers. Wildflowers (weeds) work great. Thin flowers (goldenrod, violets, Queen Anne's lace) are better than thick flowers (coneflower, sunflowers). You can also collect leaves; ferns are pretty. Make sure your flowers are dry; don't pick the flowers after rain or dew. Pull off any dead parts, or unwanted leaves or stems.
2. Using an old book you don't mind getting damaged is best as the moisture from flowers may wrinkle the pages. Open the book and put a piece of your paper inside. Place flowers upside down on the paper. Make sure the petals are laid out how you want. Cover the flowers with another piece of paper and carefully close the book. You can do more than one flower in the book, just separate the flowers by several pages.
3. Put the book with the flowers out of the way and place another book or heavy object on top to weigh it down. The flowers will need to sit for a few weeks to dry.
4. After a few weeks, check on the flowers. They should feel dry and papery. Use care, however, as they may be fragile. If they still do not feel dry, you can replace the paper with fresh paper and let the flowers press longer.
5. Once your flowers are done, you can use them to decorate things. Why not make a pretty card for someone? Just glue on the dried flowers with white glue.



Flowers can be preserved in many different ways

Air Drying

- Roses, marigolds, and goldenrod, are best preserved by this method
- This is an easy method
- Flowers are tied together by their stems and hung upside down for 1-3 weeks

Chemical Drying

- Usually preserved with borax
- Allows flowers to better hold shape and color

Sand

- Allows flowers to hold shape, can be used to quickly oven dry flowers

Glycerin

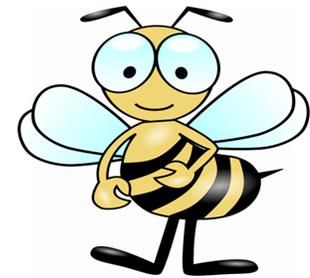
- Good preservation method for foliage
- Keeps flowers somewhat flexible and pliable
- Plant colors may fade to brown, dye may be required to keep plants green

Source: https://www.extension.umd.edu/sites/extension.umd.edu/files/_images/programs/hgic/Publications/non_HGIC_FS/FS556.pdf

Hotline

The Buzzz!

LaDonna Gamble



The Genesee County MSU Extension Master Gardeners recently held a memorial stone dedication ceremony in honor of our beloved Jim Harrow (former Hotline supervisor). The stone is prominently displayed in the border garden on the east side of the parking lot near the North Saginaw entrance. Well, as usual, the Hotline is HOT! And on another totally unrelated note—I've been eating so many garden tomatoes, I'm feeling as full as a tick (as my uncle used to say EVERY Thanksgiving). Anyhow, here are some interesting hot topics from the Hotline logs:

A fair number of calls have come in about magnolia scale

Don't be fooled—"scale" might sound like a condition on the human skin (or the tree bark), but it is actually an insect that can be very destructive if not controlled. Recognition of symptoms and the developmental stages of the scale are important because each stage of development may require a different type of treatment. The link below provides valuable information from the MSU Extension's "Ask an Expert" division. And if you are considering treating a tree—safety first! It may very well make more sense to let a professional go up the ladder.

<https://ask.extension.org/questions/390749>

If considering organic treatment, read here: <https://www.mortonarb.org/trees-plants/tree-and-plant-advice/help-pests/magnolia-scale-neolecanium-cornuparvum>

Caller says she has tree of heaven growing between her condo and patio. It was cut but now it's coming back.

Honestly, I picked this issue from the logs because I saw "tree of heaven" was curious. It turns out that tree of heaven is just a cute name for an invasive weed (that's actually a tree) and it's not heavenly at all! Your best bet is going to be to pull out the young sapling while the ground is wet. Once the roots are established, however, treatment will involve an herbicide. The caller was advised to cut the plant down to about one inch, then apply glyphosate (follow package instructions). Once you read the attached link, you will recognize tree of heaven.

<https://extension.psu.edu/tree-of-heaven>

How do I get rid of wasps coming out of my lawn?

Wasps are generally considered to be beneficial insects. They are under your lawn's surface either because they are feeding on grubs/larvae, they are seeking sugar through fallen fruit or they are nesting or burrowing (all depending on the species. They will typically will only sting if they feel threatened (like when my son, as a teen, parked the running lawn mower over their nest thinking that would smoke them out—the whole family got stung that fateful day!). Here is information on getting rid of them IF they are posing a problem:

<https://entomology.ca.uky.edu/ef411>

What is the difference between moles and voles and how does one get rid of them?

Voles and moles are not the same critter. Voles are actually field mice that chew on your lawn during winter. Their damage is on the surface and can be repaired by raking. Moles on the other hand, actually burrow and cause more damage by either forming mounds or tunnels, both visible above the surface. Read on:

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

Corn!

Mary Yelland

Of all cropland in Michigan, more is covered in corn than any other crop. 2.4 million acres of Michigan is used to grow corn. Most of the production is in Saginaw and Sanilac counties. While the majority of the crop is exported, much of it is used for animal feed and to make ethanol. This corn is generally field corn, but 9,800 acres produce varieties of sweet corn.

There are several types of corn in the family. Field corn is the most abundant. We eat it in the form of cornmeal. Indian corn, while usually used for decorating, can be ground into cornmeal or corn flour. Popcorn is dried and popped. However, sweet corn is the type typically found on the dinner table. In fact, sweet corn is one of the most consumed vegetables in the U.S. beaten by only potatoes and tomatoes in popularity.

Each corn plant only produces one or two ears of corn, so compared to other vegetables, corn takes up a lot of space in the garden. Corn requires warm soil, an abundance of sun, high nitrogen, and lots of water. It is wind pollinated so bees are not needed to produce a crop. Because of this type of pollination, corn is better planted in blocks of several rows in the garden instead of one or two long rows. When the silk on the corn ear turns brown and dry, the corn is ready to harvest. The kernels should be round and filled out, but if they are so filled in as to become square the corn is past its prime. The sugar in sweet corn quickly turns to starch after it is picked so fresh corn is best eaten quickly or stored in the refrigerator. It can also be frozen or canned in a pressure canner. You can also use some to make chicken corn chowder!



Chicken Corn Chowder

3 strips bacon, roughly chopped
1 medium onion, diced
1 small sweet red pepper diced (optional)
3 tablespoons flour
One 15-ounce can chicken broth
3 cups milk
3 ears corn, kernels removed and cobs reserved. If fresh corn is not available substitute a 16 oz. bag of frozen corn.
2 sprigs fresh thyme or ¼ tsp of dried thyme
2 1/2 cups shredded chicken from a rotisserie chicken or instant-pot chicken breast
Salt and freshly ground black pepper

Instructions:

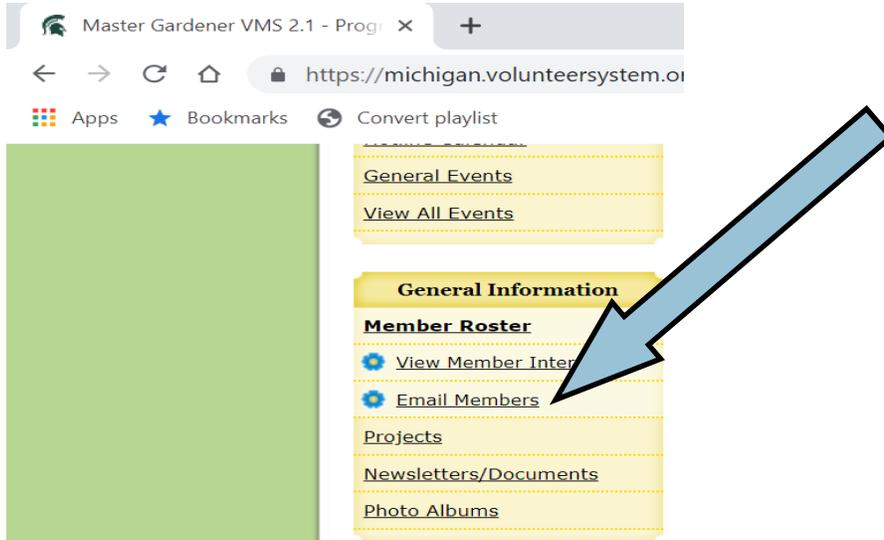
1. In a large pot over medium heat, cook bacon until browned, about 5 minutes.
2. Add the onions and optional sweet pepper and cook until softened, about 5 minutes. If you used turkey bacon you may need to add a little olive oil.
3. Stir in the flour until slightly golden, about 1 minute.
4. Slowly add the chicken stock, whisking constantly to avoid lumps.
5. Whisk in the milk and add the corn cobs and thyme to the pot. Bring to a simmer and cook about 15 minutes, stirring occasionally to infuse the corn flavor into the soup. If using frozen corn obviously you cannot add the cobs, so just omit that part.
6. Remove the cobs (and thyme stems if using fresh thyme) from the pot.
7. Stir in the corn kernels and shredded chicken. Bring back to a simmer for about 5 minutes. Salt and pepper as desired, ladle into bowls and serve hot.

VMS Corner

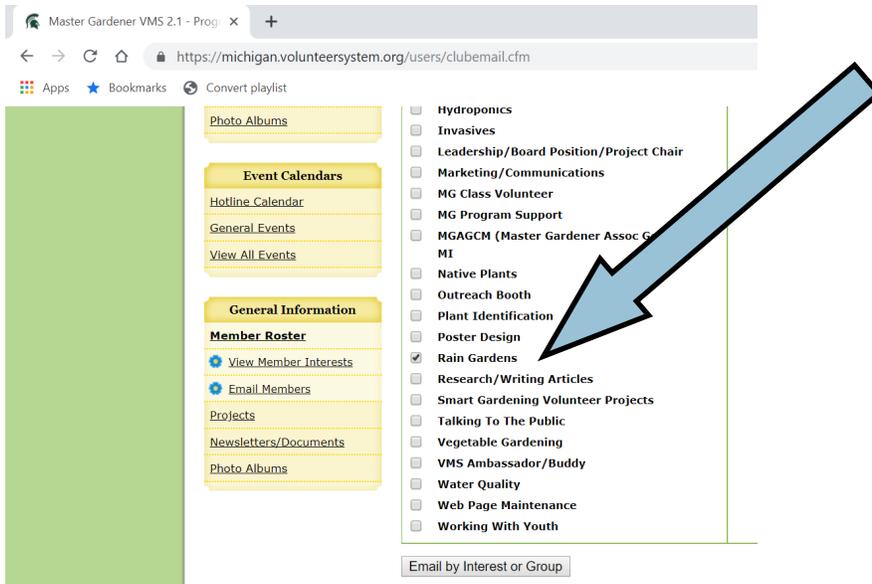
Do you know how to email a group by interest through the VMS?

Michelle Chockley—Lead VMS Ambassador

Under “General Information,” click on “Member Roster” – it shows two choices. Click on “Email Members.”



Choose the group you want to email. This screen shot does not show all the options, but say you had a question about Rain Gardens. You would check that box, then click on “Email by Interest or Group.”



This opens a page showing all EMG’s that have marked that box as an interest in their profile. On the lower part of the page, you can send an email, just like you normally do. Add a subject line, type the message and click “Send Email.” If you want to get a copy of your email, check the “Copy Me” box. There are a lot of groups to choose from. Look around under “View Member Interest,” too. I created an interest for 2019 Project Chairs & Co-Chairs. If you had plants to share, you could email all the project chairs to let them know. This is a good reason to keep your interests updated. How to “update interests “will be next month!

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 meeting will be held on Thursday, Sept. 19th at 6 p.m. Social time starts at 5:30 p.m. Please attend and join the fun! Our speaker will be Karen Golden who is very knowledgeable and exciting. Her topic is "How to Improve the Bounties of Your Garden." You will receive one hour of education. Also we will be having our 3rd annual plant swap. Bring a plant to give or find one to take home. Please identify all plants you bring. At the end of our meeting we will have our 50/50 raffle again. Also we will have a drawing for two donated Farmers Market gift cards.

Note from Vice President:

Our upcoming nominations and elections will be for every board position! This is a great time to try something new with the Master Gardeners. If you have some ideas about how to guide the group to a more effective and fun organization now is your opportunity. About half the positions will be a 1 year term and the other a 2 year term. This allows the elections to get back on track while providing a mini commitment of one year for some of the positions.

Please be AWARE some of the job descriptions have changed - we believe these changes reflect the real work that we do as Master Gardeners as well as distribute the work more evenly over all the positions.

In Summary here are the main responsibilities of each position that has changed:

1st Vice President:

Oversee and assist the following fundraising and marketing committees as needed:

- Ask A Master Gardener
- Garden Tour
- Fall into Spring
- MG Stones and plant signs
- Soliciting donations and gifts
- Branding and Branded items - Clothing, water bottles , misc etc

2nd Vice President:

- Creates the MGAGCM monthly meeting speaker schedule according to the Speaker SOP
- Solicit membership and maintain a schedule of monthly MGAGCM meeting snack providers
- Ensure that the MGAGCM meeting venue is available, setup and restored to as found condition for each meeting
- Manage building security for MGAGCM meetings
- Lead the Hospitality team chairpersons:
- Cards, flowers, etc.
- Awards Banquet
- Summer Picnic
- Christmas Banquet

Director A

- Lead the Communications team per Communications SOP
- Up-to-date MGAGCM Calendar
- Facebook and other social media posts
- MGAGCM website
- Blog(s)
- Newspapers & Radio



Director B

- Outreach tools and supplies
- Lead team to make tools that increase educational interaction at outreach events
- Develop outreach event training material to train EMGs to work at outreach events
- Lead training of MGAGCM EMGs who volunteer at outreach events
- Develop and maintain signage for outreach events, working with MG Coordinator
- Develop and maintain outreach packets
- Workshops for developing educational material

For more information or details on a position, or to nominate someone for a position, contact **Dick Moldenhauer 810-695-2649 rmold1050@aol.com**.

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:

MGAGCM Membership Meeting (September 19, 2019)

(How to Improve the Bounties of Your Garden—with Karen Golden, owner of Variations Horticultural Services)
As usual we will be having our 50-50 raffle at the end of the meeting. Two donated tickets to the Farmers Market will be raffled off.

Fall Harvest Festival at Applewood Estate (September 28, 2019)

<https://www.ruthmottfoundation.org/events/fall-harvest-festival-3/>

<https://www.facebook.com/events/applewood/fall-harvest-festival/287584565376443/>

MGAGCM Membership Meeting (October 17, 2019)

(Flower Gardens of New Aeeland and Australia, with Loretta Ellwood, MGAGCM Master Gardener)

New Master Gardener Class (January 25-May 9, 2020) (deadline: Jan. 17, 2020)

<https://events.anr.msu.edu/event.cfm?>

[eventID=E23F55A21508355D90B34D893B028F7F1ECBAFE80C0FB85E891CF05BA7C8804B](https://events.anr.msu.edu/event.cfm?eventID=E23F55A21508355D90B34D893B028F7F1ECBAFE80C0FB85E891CF05BA7C8804B)

2020 Master Gardener College (June 12th & 13th, 2020)

Check for updates under STATE links on the VMS homepage

Fall into Spring Educational Garden Conference

2019 MGAGCM Conference Information

Sat. Oct. 5th, 2019

Mott Community College
1401 E. Court Street
Flint, MI 48503

Schedule, Speakers, Topics, etc.:

8:00 a.m. Registration opens; Continental Breakfast, visit vendors

8:30 a.m. Angela Nelson (Native Plants in the Landscape)

10:05 a.m. Cheryl English (Gardening for Native Birds)

11:20 a.m. Lunch (with ham, turkey and veggie wraps, potato soup, garden salad, and beverages & desserts)

12:20 p.m. Bob Tritten (Growing and Caring for Fruit Trees in the Landscape)

1:55 p.m. George Papadelis (New Plants for 2020)

Creative Catering will be our caterer and there will be various vendors available during lunch and breaks. Extension Master Gardeners, friends, and the general public are invited to attend. Extension Master Gardeners attending have been approved to receive 5 education credit hours. Early Registration closes on September 27th. More information regarding registration can be found on our website <http://fallintospring.weebly.com>. Registration is available by check, in person, and also online via PayPal.

Our speakers will provide tremendous educational value. Get a head start to promote more pollinators, birds, and insects as you diversify your garden landscape. Looking forward to seeing you October 5!