

Down to Earth

Michigan State University Extension Master
Gardener Program—Genesee County

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Letter from the Program Coordinator

Barslund Judd (juddbars@msu.edu)

The last few weeks have been challenging for all of us. I hope that each and every one of you are staying safe. As the weather has warmed, I have the opportunity to build some new raised beds! Hopefully, everyone has had a chance to enjoy our recent sunny days. Don't forget to take care of yourselves. Feel free to reach out if you need anything from myself or the VMS ambassadors.

I know that many of us are unaccustomed to spending this much time indoors, but this is a great time to educate ourselves! If you haven't already added the Gardening in Michigan Facebook group, I highly encourage you to do so. Each week we are hosting educational events such as Cabin Fever Conversations. These occur every Friday at 10am. Make sure to like the Gardening in Michigan Facebook group to see these events as they are posted!

Please check your emails regularly. We are sending out information and educational activities regularly. This includes updates on programming changes and the rollout of the VSP (Volunteer Selection Process). Over the last several months, Diane Brady and Mary Wilson have been sending out update emails about this process. Each MSU Extension volunteer must go through this process, which is being rolled out in stages. You will be contacted by an MSUE staff member or myself when we are ready to do interviews.

Stay safe, I miss you all.

Barslund Judd
Consumer Horticulture/Master Gardener Program Coordinator
Genesee County

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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**)
- Cheryl Borkowski (**Format Editor**)

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

McLaren Memorial Garden

By Sue Crisp and Diane Strang

In the fall of 2003, McLaren Homecare Group moved from its hospice location in Lapeer to a newly built residential hospice facility in Davison called Brian's House. The Lapeer facility had a garden that had been maintained by the Lapeer County Extension Master Gardeners. Plants were dug from that garden and moved to the much larger Davison garden. When Brian's House closed in 2012, the Cottage of Davison, an assisted living facility which provides memory care for those with Alzheimer's and dementia, moved into the northeast part of the building. Although the building has gone through a number of name changes, the garden remains.



When we arrived at the garden to start planting, we discovered low-lying clay soil without any drainage system. We actually got stuck in the mud trying to plant! So all the plants that we dug up from the Lapeer garden were healed in our own gardens for that winter.

The next year a newly designed drainage system was installed. We spent the summer removing clay and adding topsoil and compost from various businesses that would donate. When it came time to plant, we really scrounged to find plant material. We sought donations and even went dumpster diving at Bordines and Eastern Market! During that time, it seemed like a daunting task. With the help of the Extension Master Gardeners, Genesee Green Team members, friends, and family this project has been evolving for 17 years.

Over the years, the garden has brought peace and enjoyment to many patients and their families going through difficult times. It is also used by McLaren to hold their yearly hospice memorial service for those who have passed away.

When you visit this garden in the summer, you'll find a brick pathway winding through a myriad of blooming flowers and shrubs against a backdrop of woody greenery. Among the plants there are weeping Norway spruce, crabapple trees, tall grasses, hydrangeas, peonies, silver carpets of lamb's ears and coral bells to name a few. In addition to strolling through the garden, you can sit on a bench under the pagoda or in the patio area to enjoy the restful view.

If you do decide to visit, know that the garden is hidden from the parking area by Arborvitae that forms a barrier. When you pass through the conifers, you'll experience an oasis of peace.

Location:

Located by McLaren Health Management Group (*formerly called McLaren Homecare Group*) and the Cottage of Davison which leases the northeast part of the building



Directions to project and project lead contact information

Location: McLaren Memorial Garden
1515 Cal Drive
Davison, MI 48423

Project Lead: Diane Strang

Featured Article

Sage (*Salvia officinalis*)

By Tammy Johns

Sage originated from the northern Mediterranean coast. It is traditionally used for cooking and medicinal purposes. Sage has a long and interesting history. It was cultivated by the ancient Egyptians, Greeks and Romans. The Greeks and Romans used it as a meat preservative and to aid in digestion. In France it was used as a tea. From 742 to 814 AD Charles the Great used it in his medical school as one of the most used and appreciated plants. It was known as the "Salvation Plant" originating from the word "salvarem" which means "cure" or "save."

Sage is a member of the mint family. The plant is characterized by square stems and opposite leaves. It is a hardy perennial plant with grayish green leaves. It grows spikes of spring flowers in different colors including blue, white, purple and pink. There are over 700 varieties of sage including garden sage and flavored and scented sage such as pineapple sage

Sage can be used to flavor many dishes. It is most commonly used in the United States as a flavoring in stuffing. The French often use it in sausages, stuffing and cured meats. The Italians use it to flavor veal and in pasta dishes. It's a wonderful flavoring for your pasta dishes, meats, and soups. Surprisingly, it makes a wonderful tea. Add one tablespoon of fresh sage leaves or one teaspoon of dried leaves to boiling water, remove from heat and allow to steep for 3 to 5 minutes. Add lemon or honey and you have a nice, healthy, flavorful tea either warm or cold.

Sage plants should be planted in full sun and in well-drained soil. When picking your plant, green sage may be hardier than the flavored or variegated varieties. The easiest way to start sage in your herb garden is from a small plant, however, it can also be started with seeds. Plants should be planted about two feet apart. Water the plants regularly until they are fully grown. Prune the heavier, woody stems in the spring. You can plant sage in your vegetable garden near rosemary, cabbage and carrots. Sage should not be planted near cucumbers, however, as it attracts pests that feed on cucumber leaves.

Fresh herbs are very easy to preserve. They can be frozen, dried, or dehydrated. Prior to flowering, clip off about three inches from the top of the sage plant. Rinse the leaves off with cool water and shake off. To dry herbs at room temperature you may tie them together and hang them upside down in a warm and ventilated area of your home. You can also dry them in paper bags but cut holes in the bag for proper circulation. Check to make sure the leaves aren't molding if you are drying them during humid weather. Freeze whole or chopped leaves individually on a tray and then place in freezer bags or put chopped leaves in an ice cube tray with water or olive oil. After the cubes are frozen, place them in freezer bags.

Sage is a wonderful addition to your herb garden and is also a beautiful addition to your flower garden. Growing your own herbs saves money as they are usually pricey at your local grocery store.



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

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

https://academics.hamilton.edu/foodforthought/Our_Research_files/sage.pdf

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

<http://heritagegarden.uic.edu/sage-salvia-officinalis>

<https://web.extension.illinois.edu/herbs/sage.cfm>

<https://wimastergardener.org/article/sage-salvia-officinalis/>



Outreach News

Kay McCullough

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

Gardener’s Logic Puzzle

Phrase you might use when trying to explain a garden problem.	<div>STA4NCE</div>	How you describe the gardens on the garden tour.	<div>CUT CUT CUT CUT CUT CUT CUT CUT</div>
What the deer think when you put up a short fence.	<div>FUNNY FUNNY WORDS WORDS WORDS WORDS</div>	What you give someone if you tell them to plant their hostas in bright sun.	<div>STICK</div>
Where you go when you’ve planted your annuals and we get a late frost.	<div>I S</div>	An orange/bright yellow cultivar of day lily introduced in 1947.	<div>SHOW</div>
How often everything works out like you want in the garden.	<div>MOONCEON</div>	How you feel when your butterfly bush blossoms.	<div>TICKLED</div>
		What we have time for at a MGAGCM meeting the half hour before the educational speaker starts.	<div>talk</div>

Each box represents a



phrase. Can you figure out what it is?

For instance, Too funny for words, Back to square one, Once in a blue moon, A cut above the rest, The wrong end of the stick, Ticked pink, Small talk.

Gardening with Kids

by Mary Yelland

Gardening with Kids... Make Rock Plant Markers

You will need:

Acrylic paint
Paint brushes
Rocks
Clear Spray Paint
(optional)



1. Decide what plants you want to mark. You may be planning on planting some seeds, or you may want to mark where a perennial is planted. You may want to use pencil and paper to plan a design of what your rock is going to look like.
2. Using acrylic paint (it can be easily found at a craft store, or the craft section of most department stores), paint a design on the rock. Don't forget to paint the name of what you are going to mark.
3. Let the paint dry.
4. The painted rock will last for a while like it is. However, if you want the paint to last longer, spray it with some clear spray paint (or other protective spray). Make sure you have an adult to help with this.
5. Once your rock is completely dry, place it in the garden by the plant you want to mark.

Time to Harvest Chives

By Mary Yelland

IT'S SPRING!!! With the arrival of spring, we find many shoots from bulbs peeking up through the soil. One of these early spring plants is chives. Chives are common perennial herbs that are easy to grow in Michigan. Pollinators love their pretty flowers that add interest and color to the garden. The hollow leaves as well as the flowers are edible. Chives are high in antioxidants as well as folate and vitamins A, K and C. However, they are usually not used in high enough amounts to make a significant difference in nutrition.



Allium schoenoprasum, commonly known as chives, is a perennial plant related to onions. It grows in clumps from small bulbs that come up in early spring. Chives are low maintenance and can be grown in a variety of conditions. Their preference is average, medium, well-drained soils with lots of compost in full sun to part shade. They are tolerant of deer and black walnut. Chives can be started from seed, transplants, or divisions; although, if you start chives from seeds don't harvest any the first year. Dense clumps of grassy leaves will grow 12-18 inches tall and are great for borders or interplanting with vegetables. Chives also grow well indoors in a pot. Research has suggested chives at the base of apple trees or rose bushes may help with apple scab and black spot.

Chives are found wild in North America as well as Europe and Asia. Bees love the purple to pink flowers that appear in spring. While you will want to leave some blossoms for the pollinators, they are also pretty tossed in a spring salad or floating in a soup. Be warned, once the flowers go to seed, they may self-seed prolifically. Another use for the blossoms is to make a pretty pink chive vinegar. Fill a glass container with clean blossoms, cover the blossoms with warmed white vinegar (wine or rice vinegar preferred). Let the container sit for 2 weeks and then drain off the flavored vinegar. It can be used in salads or to tenderize chicken among other things.

To harvest chives, wait until they are about 6 inches or more tall. Then cut the leaves at the base, wash and snip them into pieces. Cut whatever you need to use from the plant. The entire plant can be harvested 3-4 times a year; although if you want blossoms, do not harvest the whole plant all at once, clip only about a third of the leaves at a time. The clean snipped chives are best used fresh but can be dried on a paper towel and stored in a dry place to use later. Chives lose some flavor as they cook so for maximum flavor add them raw or at the end of cooking. They are good in eggs, salads, soups, and potatoes, put them on sandwiches, and add them to cream cheese. They are good straight off the plant for a snack while you are gardening or use them in the following recipe.

Cheese and Chive Crisps

½ cup butter (1 stick), softened
1 ½ cups shredded sharp cheddar cheese
1 cup all-purpose flour
2 tablespoons minced fresh chives
¼ teaspoon salt
Pinch garlic powder
1 cup crisp rice cereal (Rice Krispies)



1. In a large bowl, cream butter and cheese until smooth and light.
2. Beat in the flour, chives, salt, and garlic.
3. Stir in cereal. Dough will be very thick and it may be easier to knead in the cereal with your hands.
4. Shape dough into 2 logs about 6 ½ inches each. Wrap in plastic wrap and refrigerate for at least 1 hour.
5. Unwrap dough and cut into 1/4-in. slices. Place on ungreased baking sheets. Bake at 325°F for 20-25 minutes. Edges will be lightly browned. Cool and store in the refrigerator. Or freeze for later use.

VMS Corner

Michelle Chockley—Lead VMS Ambassador

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

VMS CORNER

Michelle Chockley—Lead VMS Ambassador (Cell: 810-210-6685)

How Did I Enter My Hours Last Year?

The best way is to click on **“View Your Hours”** from the home screen of VMS. I monitor VMS entries monthly to keep everyone on track. I never change the hours, just the information on how data is entered. When I make a change, I will send you an email with two versions. One is a copy of what you put on VMS, the other is a copy of how I corrected the entry on VMS. Remember, anyone who views your entries on VMS should understand the information. The end goal is to improve the accuracy and quality of data collected from Genesee County. The approved project list is on VMS under Links, which has a column for VMS Event Description and Project Selection for your reference. **Everyone is doing an awesome job!!!**

Please check with Barslund Judd to see if a workshop or conference is countable for Extension Master Gardener education credits. There are many interesting workshops out there put on by nurseries or other gardening organizations that don't always qualify for EMG educational credits.

Speaking of good data, Mary Wilson did a 2019 State EMG Program Report which is pretty interesting. The report is posted under State Links on VMS. This is the first time a report like this has been done. There are numerous projects showcased statewide. Genesee was given recognition for Rust Park in Grand Blanc, Park Place Community Garden in Clio, I-69 Rest Area/MDOT and the Jr. Master Gardener program.

We are a great group of volunteers who all deserve a BIG PAT ON THE BACK!

Master Gardener VMS 2.1 - Home

michigan.volunteersystem.org/users/index.cfm

Genesee MSU Extension Master Gardener News

Your Information

- Edit Your Profile
- Add New Hours
- View Your Hours

Administration

- Manage VMS
- Manage Roster
- Add Calendar Event
- Manage Projects
- Newsletters/Documents
- Hour Reports
- Contact Reports
- Photo Albums

Event Calendars

- Hotline Calendar
- General Events
- View All Events

Welcome to the MSU Extension Master Gardener Volunteer Management System (VMS)!

You are a member of the Genesee roster.

If you need assistance or have questions, please contact:

Barslund Judd, Consumer Horticulture Instructor & Master Gardener Coordinator, juddbars@msu.edu

Michelle Chockley, Lead VMS Ambassador, chockleym@gmail.com

Joanne Gensel, VMS Ambassador, jhgensel@gmail.com

Mary Yelland, VMS Ambassador, yelland1@msu.edu

Genesee County Lawn and Garden Hotline
(810) 244-8548, geneseeplantpest@anr.msu.edu

Your Hours / Miles

Volunteer Hours	3,431
Continuing Education Hours	311
Volunteer Miles	11,378

State Links

- * 2020 EMG Re-certification Time Line
- * 2020 Master Gardener College
- ** 2019 State EMG Program Report
- 2020 - Finding Accurate Internet Info
- 2020 - Free Online Education Webinar List
- 2020 - State Project Categories & Definition
- 2020 Ext. Master Gardener Trainings
- Extension Master Gardener Program Web Site
- Frequently Asked Questions - FAQ
- Michigan Master Gardener Association (MMGA)
- MSU Extension Bookstore
- Smart Gardening - MSUE Gardening in Michigan Website
- VMS - User Guide

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

Hello Extension Master Gardeners!

Stay Safe!

That means there will be no working at approved projects until we are given a green light by MSUE.

This spring you are going to have to work in your own garden first. Enjoy that!

Several fundraisers and activities are postponed: No farmers markets, Garden Tour postponed, Native Plant Sale postponed until September 12, no meetings in person - online meetings only.

The May speaker, Jane Giblin—***Flowering Plants for a Cutting Garden***, has been contacted about giving her talk live via Zoom. An email will be sent out closer to the date with an invitation and directions to join if she agrees to do her presentation in this alternate way.

Let's reach out to each other during this difficult time - check on your buddies and acquaintances ... be sure they are doing well ... especially those with no family close by.

Stay home and stay safe,
Joanne Gensel, President

MGAGCM Board of Directors

President	Joanne Gensel	jhgensel@gmail.com	(810) 339-0764
1st Vice President	Sabrina VanDyke	brie0212@gmail.com	(810) 407-0808
2nd Vice President	Loretta Ellwood	ldellwood@aol.com	(810) 344-7383
Secretary	Margaret Sowle	leemar4321@frontier.com	(989) 723-6074
Treasurer	Michelle Wareham	m.wareham@yahoo.com	(810) 919-2945
Outreach Director	Kay McCullough	birdieball@aol.com	(810) 635-9341
Communication Director	Mel Kennedy	mkennedy60@charter.net	(810) 275-8822

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:

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**
(Sept. 12, 2020)

May 21: **Flowering Plants for the Cutting Garden** – Jane Giblin

Project ID: Community: Beautification - Public Areas

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

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)

Aug. 20: **The Year in Blooms: Pollinators and their Relationship with Native Plants** – Vince Ste. Marie

Project ID: Environmental Stewardship: IPM - Pollinators

Sept. 17: **Gardening for Pollinators** – Jay Blair

Project ID: Environmental Stewardship: IPM - Pollinators

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 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).