

Down to Earth

Michigan State University Extension Master
Gardener Program—Genesee County

July 2019
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Letter from the Program Coordinator

Barslund Judd

It's now summer and I'm happy to say that while some of our state's crops are behind schedule, many of our ornamental plants look fantastic! Over the last couple weeks I have been receiving pictures of Monarch butterfly caterpillars from several of our Extension Master Gardener projects. I've even had the chance to take pictures of them at the GCCARD building. As many of you know, Monarch butterflies need milkweed to survive. I'm happy to see so many of our volunteers working hard to provide these amazing pollinators with habitats around the county.

As you'll hear in LaDonna Gamble's column, "The Buzz", the MSU Extension Lawn and Garden Hotline has been busy. Hotline volunteers have been hard at work answering questions from around the state. This spring, we switched to a different schedule and it has allowed us to ensure adequate hotline coverage. The hotline now operates on Monday 9 a.m. - 12 p.m. and the same hours on Friday. Both days are now local and state days. Previously Monday and Wednesday were local hotline days only. This has helped to make our call volume more consistent while reaching a similar number of people across the state. You may also know that we have not had a diagnostician in the office for the last few months. We are currently training new diagnosticians for the hotline so that we can once again offer these services to the community.

This last month, I had the chance to speak about Smart Native Trees and Shrubs for the garden, on WNZK 690AM. The Smart Gardening segment happens weekly and gives MSU Extension educators the chance to speak on home gardening topics and answer questions from the public. I was excited that my first question was about two of my favorite plants, *Liriodendron tulipifera* (Tulip Poplar) and *Rhus typhina* 'Bailtiger' Tiger Eyes® (Staghorn Sumac). If you really enjoy the look, but don't want a giant Tulip Poplar, check out the cultivar 'Little Volunteer'. It stays a much more manageable size for small yards.

I was recently invited to join the MGAGCM (Master Gardener Association of Genesee County Michigan) monthly membership meeting at Wojo's. I had a chance to meet a few Extension Master Gardeners that I hadn't previously met, and go plant shopping with some of the ones I already knew. I hope to attend more MGAGCM membership meetings as time allows. Alan Grove gave me the chance to speak and introduce myself to the members. During that introduction, I swore that I wouldn't purchase any plants as my fiancé and I are currently living in an apartment. Those of you that were there also likely remember that I purchased a blueberry bush less than an hour later. My fiancé wasn't as excited as I was!

I hope you are all enjoying some of this nice warm weather that has finally made an appearance. If you ever have a question about the program or need my help, feel free to reach out. I do my best to make time for anyone that requests it.

Inside this issue

Letter from the Coordinator	1
North I-75 Rest Area.....	2
Edible Flint Farm	3
Outreach Report	4
Gardening with Kids	5
Gardening Apps.....	5
The Buzz!	6
Recipe	7
VMS Corner	8
Association News	9
Association Info.....	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.

Featured MSUE Project

North I-75 Rest Area

Ruth Sutton - Project Lead

Susan Crisp

Many of us have zipped on by the Northbound I 75 Project located between Mt Morris exit 126 and Clio exit 131. This is a hidden gem encompassing the car side parking with a large garden and a huge garden on the truck side parking. Take some time to stop and enjoy this gorgeous display of zinnia's, coneflowers, lilies, bee balm, lantana, butterfly weed, milkweed, baptisia, *Verbena bonariensis* and many more varieties. Walking from one side of the travel pavilion to the other gives you a new garden look of blending woody plants, and perennials with annual flowers for that pop of color. This display gives you the garden height in the center with lower growing plants along the perimeters providing many ideas for home gardening. The plantings incorporated into the project will help sustain the butterfly, bird and bee population that we cherish as master gardeners. Take your time and find the caterpillars and camouflaged chrysalis now present in the garden.

Sherrel Curtis passed this project into the hands of Ruth Sutton in 2015. The rest area became a certified Monarch Waystation in October 2016. There is a great group of master gardeners who help on this project, along with Ruth's husband Dave the backbone of the group. The gardens draw people in with their impressive display. During their rest stop, visitors give many compliments and ask gardening questions while the gardens provide enjoyment and relaxation for their journey north. MDOT's Ponce Esparsa has been a great supporter of this project, reporting 2600 visitors a day at the rest area in 2016. This site is a great asset to the community. Master Gardner's outreach table is set up here for various holidays to answer questions which traveler's might have.

This site is located between North I-75 Mt Morris and Clio exits.



Ruth and Dave Sutton



The New Educational Edible Flint Farm

LaDonna Gamble

Edible Flint has, for six years, operated a Demonstration Garden on the corner of Fifth Avenue and Begole, right across from Hurley Medical Center. The garden is operated by a small dedicated core of volunteers and serves to showcase accessible and innovative gardening techniques. The harvested produce is shared with volunteers and neighborhood residents. The 2019 season will be the last year with the Demo Garden, and for good reason! In the fall of 2018, Edible Flint acquired a donated urban farm adjacent to downtown Flint. The farm is comprised of 16 contiguous vacant lots and is nearly 3 acres with 2 standing hoop houses, two storage sheds, raised beds, a well and electricity! The farm was previously operated by a for-profit business, which is why these amenities and structures were there. The volunteers spent the fall of 2018 and much of the spring of 2019 prepping the land (weeds!), doing repairs, and doing some planting. Both the Demo Garden and the Educational Garden are being operated this season with the same core of volunteers, so the farm will begin at full capacity next season. As with the Demo Garden, the Farm will serve as a learning lab for residents, groups and volunteers, with the harvest being available free for volunteers and residents. Plans are underway to clear additional land on the farm, build an outdoor classroom, and build a strong relationship with neighbors surrounding the property in hopes that they will view the farm as part of their own and a point of pride in their neighborhood.

As both sites serve as learning labs for gardening techniques, I want share information about various methods that have been used to prep the land for planting, much of it involving removal of and suppression of WEEDS! Because the crops are always operated pesticide-free, spraying of many commercial herbicides and insecticides are not an option here. The initial clearing was the worst, especially since the land was left untended. The Farm was initially roto-tilled because of the volume of weeds. The hope is that it will become a no-till farm as the Demo Garden is. Volunteers also laid black plastic and dark colored tarps over the beds inside and outside of the hoop houses. Cardboard (thank you Amazon boxes!) was used in the rows between the crops. Pine mulch was donated and will be used on the ground where the raised beds will be and cover crops are planted in late summer/fall.

All of these methods have been tested with varying degrees of success. For instance, the black plastic seemed to work better outdoors in the raised beds better than inside the hoop house. This could have been due to the intense heat in the hoop house making it just too tempting for the thistles in there. The mulch spreading can be labor intensive and cardboard may have some aesthetic issues. It should be emphasized, however, that especially when gardening organically, good old-fashioned weed pulling by hand is a must every time the volunteers gather!

Lastly, as the Edible Flint Educational Farm grows, volunteers are always welcome and appreciated! For more information on this rich and fulfilling experience, call (810)244-8530.

Sources:

No-till gardening

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

Cover crops and green manure

<https://hort.extension.wisc.edu/articles/using-cover-crops-and-green-manures-home-vegetable-garden/>

Weed removal and suppression

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

MSU EMG Outreach Report

Ask A Master Gardener 2019 is COMPLETED!

We had a successful season this year with the annual Ask A Master Gardener Fundraiser which raises funds for the Master Gardener Association of Genesee County Michigan (MGAGCM). Bordine's sponsored 4 Saturdays and Walker Farms sponsored 3 Saturdays for a total of 112 hours. Our Gardeners helped customers with questions. There were 1,496 customer contacts and volunteers contributed a total of 136 hours. These are the Extension Master Gardeners who volunteered to make this fundraiser a success!

Thank you to everyone who gave up time in the spring to help the MGAGCM with this annual fundraiser!

Mary Bedford	Volunteered 4 shifts
Joyce Dowd	Volunteered 4 shifts
Loretta Ellwood	Volunteered 4 shifts
Michelle Wareham	Volunteered 4 shifts
Devera Brower	Volunteered 3 shifts
Phyllis July	Volunteered 3 shifts
Theresa Henderson	Volunteered 2 shifts
Barb Pethers	Volunteered 2 shifts
Charlene DeLoge	Volunteered 1 shift

RuthAnn Donaldson	Volunteered 1 shift
Susan Fischer	Volunteered 1 shift
Joanne Gensel	Volunteered 1 shift
Carol Groat	Volunteered 1 shift
Tina Imeson	Volunteered 1 shift
Linda Jaworski	Volunteered 1 shift
Sue Matlock	Volunteered 1 shift
Diane Strang	Volunteered 1 shift
Sabrina VanDyke	Volunteered 1 shift



Joanne Gensel

Gardening With the Kids

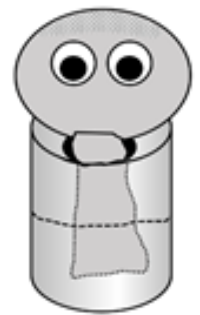
Make plant people!

Mary Yelland

For each plant person you will need:

One nylon “knee high” stocking, grass seed, potting soil, a clean and empty container (such as a pop can, yogurt dish, or olive jar), plastic eyes, and miscellaneous art supplies for decorating.

1. Scoop 1-2 tablespoons of grass seed into the toe of the knee-high stocking.
2. Place enough soil on top of the seeds in the knee-high to form a baseball-sized shape. Tie a knot in the stocking to hold the soil in place.
3. Turn the stocking so the grass seed is up and the knot down. Decorate a face on the ball. Glue on the plastic eyes. White out can be used to make a mouth. Set aside the head until it is dry.
4. Use art supplies to decorate your container as the plant person’s body. You may want to cover the can with construction paper or add pipe cleaner arms and legs – be creative.
5. After the glue is dry on the plant person head, submerge the head in water and allow water to penetrate the soil. Carefully put some water in your decorated container and set the head on top. Push the tail of the nylon of the knee-high into the can opening to help wick water to the soil of the head. Place your person a well-lit location.
6. In a few days your plant people’s hair should sprout. Make sure the head stays moist. Before long, you will be able to clip the grass to give you plant person a haircut.



Is there an App for that?

Michelle Chockley

We are all keeping up with technology and many of us have tried the different apps on plant id, tree id, pest id, bees, vegetables etc. Best practice is to use university based apps, such as Purdue garden apps, Virginia Tech and more. On the upside, apps give us great information at our finger tips as long as there is an internet connection. On the downside, apps do take up space on our phones and not all apps are free.

Here is a free app you can try: **Virginia Tech Tree ID (vTree)**, which I downloaded on my iPhone. It is available on iOS and Android. There were three install choices to choose, each one would take up a different amount of space on my phone for offline usage. Option one downloads all North America species. Option two only downloads species for your region. Option three is the smallest and only downloads woody plants when they are searched for. I selected the third option as it used the least amount of space on my phone. I now have a menu of Woody Plants of Flushing, which brings up photos and fact sheets for all trees in my area. Another option is “ask Dr. Dendro” which you can provide your name, email, comments and attach a photo of the tree you need ID for. Make sure to take close-up images of the bark, front and back of leaves, any flowers, and provide the location. This is essential information for accurate plant identification. For size reference, a coin or dollar bill can be placed beside the leaves.

Do you have a favorite plant app you use and find to be accurate? Please contact Barslund Judd with the information and we can share it in a future DTE. Feel free to write up a short article on the app along with your experiences, good and bad and send to Barslund.

The Buzz!

LaDonna Gamble



The MSU Extension Lawn and Garden is now in operation on Mondays and Fridays 9-12 and we are taking state calls both days. We're busy as ever and I have a sneaking suspicion that some of our callers are calling us while at their desks at work! Just saying...

Below are some of their inquiries:

This caller described a proliferation of webbing covering the shrubs and trees along the road on his way home. He suspected they were caterpillars and wanted the Hotline volunteer to arrange for extermination. We let him know that MSU and its volunteers do not exterminate pests. Our interests were piqued. Based on the caller's description, it appears these may be tent caterpillars (possibly forest tent caterpillars, since he described them as covering trees). They're nasty and can cause quite a bit of damage with their appetites. **Here's more:** https://www.canr.msu.edu/news/forest_tent_caterpillars_can_cause_significant_defoliation_on_landscape_trees

Caller asked how to get rid of poison hemlock (not to be mistaken with hemlock trees, which are NOT toxic). As a student, I paid attention in Greek Mythology class. This question reminded me of the Greek philosopher Socrates who was forced to ingest hemlock. It did not end well. Get rid of that invasive plant by cutting it down without touching it, put the waste in plastic bags. Put out with yard waste and do not compost. Glyphosate can be applied to the stump, following label directions. **Here is a description of the invasive species:** <http://www.misin.msu.edu/facts/detail/?project=misin&id=331&cname=Poison+hemlock>

Caller has raised red bumps on the leaves of his river birch. Based on the description it sounded like the work of the witchhazel leaf gall aphid (yes, a pretty name). They're about the size of a grain of rice and feed on plant sap with their straw-like mouth parts. **Here's more:** <https://ask.extension.org/questions/326453>



This lady's lawn guy weed-whacked a branch off of her recently planted hydrangea bush. Can she get the cut off piece re-established and growing again? Well it depends on the growing conditions and how long this amputation took place. If the cutting hasn't begun to wilt, it's worth a try. She was advised to cut off the end to open it up fresh, then plant it and keep it moist. Some type of rooting hormone will help also. Good Luck! **Read more about propagating hydrangea cuttings here:** <https://web.extension.illinois.edu/ccdms/yg/170913.html>

We sometimes are asked for certain information that we are not at liberty to discuss. We do not...

- Answer questions or advise on topics relating to marijuana due to federal law and MSU policy
- Answer anything involving mushroom identification or edibility
- Give advice on which businesses or services a caller should use.
- Identify or provide information on human pathogens. Such calls are referred to the local health department.

Time to Harvest!

Mary Yelland

Sweet and tart cherries abound during July in Michigan. 77% of the nation's tart cherries are grown here, with Leelanau County alone having over 1.3 million cherry trees. While most sweet cherries require a pollinizer tree to produce fruit, tart cherries do not require cross-pollination. Sweet cherries are most often eaten fresh as they don't stand up well to cooking. However, Maraschino cherries are made from sweet cherries. Montmorency is the most popular variety of tart cherries. Most studies of the health benefits you may have heard of with cherries or cherry juice refer to the Montmorency tart cherry. Fresh tart cherries may be hard to find unless you have your own tree or visit an orchard. They do not keep as well as sweet cherries and are quickly processed to canned, frozen, dried or juiced cherries. If you have fresh sweet or tart cherries you may want to use them in the following recipes.

Sweet Cherry Barbecue Sauce

1 medium onion, chopped
2 tablespoons butter
2 garlic cloves, minced
2 cups pitted sweet cherries, coarsely chopped
1 cup ketchup
2/3 cup packed brown sugar
1/4 cup cider vinegar
1 tablespoon Worcestershire sauce
2 teaspoons ground mustard
1/2 teaspoon pepper
1/8 teaspoon Liquid Smoke, optional
Directions: In a large saucepan, saute onion in butter until tender. Add garlic; cook 1 minute longer. Stir in the remaining ingredients. Cook, uncovered, over medium-low heat for 20 minutes or until cherries are tender and sauce is thickened, stirring occasionally. If smoother sauce is desired blend with hand blender.

Tart Cherry Waldorf Salad

1/2 cup plain Greek yogurt
2 tablespoons honey
1/8 teaspoon salt
2 large apples (about 1 pound), cubed
1 tablespoon lemon juice
2 celery ribs, chopped
1/2 cup dried cherries
1/2 cup nuts (almonds, pecans or walnuts) if desired
1 cup fresh or frozen pitted tart cherries, thawed
Directions: For dressing, whisk together first 3 ingredients. In a large bowl, toss apples with lemon juice. Add celery, dried cherries and almonds; toss with dressing. Gently stir in cherries. Refrigerate, covered, 1 hour before serving.



More Facts!

- Cherries were first brought to the United States in 1629 by English colonists. They were later introduced to California by Spanish Missionaries.
- Sweet cherries (*Prunus avium*) and sour cherries (*Prunus cerasus*) are different species.
- The primary sweet cherry cultivar in California, is 'Bing'
- Cherries, like apples, belong to the Roseaceae (rose) family

<http://fruitandnuteducation.ucdavis.edu/fruitnutproduction/Cherry/>

VMS Corner

How to Enter Education/Volunteer Hours in VMS

Michelle Chockley

Follow these instructions to successfully enter your hours into VMS (Volunteer Management System)

The screenshot shows a web browser window with the URL <https://michigan.volunteersystem.org/users/hoursedit.cfm?hournum=0>. The page title is "Add Volunteer Hours For Michelle Chockley". The form has the following fields:

- #1 Event Description**: A text input field.
- Event Date**: A date picker field.
- #2 Apply to Project**: A dropdown menu with "Select a Project" and a "REQUIRED" label.
- Miles Driven**: A text input field with "0".
- Volunteer Hours**: A text input field with "0".
- Continuing Education**: A text input field with "0".

The Windows taskbar at the bottom shows the date as 6/7/2019 and the time as 5:01 PM.

#1 Event Description:

For Education: Enter where you heard the speaker, the speaker's name and the topic

For Volunteer Hours: Enter the name of the approved MSU project first – then you can enter details about what you did on that date. Only the name of the approved MSU project is required.

#2 Apply to Project:

For Education: Use the State Project Selection from the List on VMS under State Links. Choose the one that best fits the speakers topic.

For Volunteer Hours: Refer to the list of approved projects on VMS under Links.

Note: Ambassadors do not change the "Volunteer Hours" cell. Corrections are only made to "Event Description" and "Apply to Project" to ensure that Genesee County data is accurate and matches existing projects.

Check with Barslund Judd, Master Gardener Coordinator or one of the VMS Ambassadors if you have questions about whether an activity is approved. Contact info is listed on the VMS home page.

Genesee Co Hours & Miles beginning 1/1/19 thru			
	<u>4/30/19</u>	<u>5/30/19</u>	<u>6/30/19</u>
Volunteer	1,850.65	2,901.90	3,508.90
Education	744.73	911.43	1,046.93
Miles	15,320	21,367	26,298
(Per VMS report ran 7/1/19)			

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.

There will not be a monthly membership meeting this July, as the annual MGAGCM summer picnic will be held on Sunday July 14th at 12:30 p.m. The next monthly membership meeting will occur on August 8th, which starts at 5:30 p.m.

Greetings from Alan Grove, MGAGCM Interim Board President

As most of you know there have been some unexpected changes on the MGAGCM Board. The sitting President and Vice President have resigned for personal reasons. The remaining board members are busy making the restructuring decisions to keep the membership running smoothly. I will be assuming the President's responsibilities as well as my 2nd Vice Presidents responsibilities. Joanne Gensel will be assuming the 1st Vice President's responsibilities and any outreach director duties. **The President's and Vice President's positions will be up for election in November 2019 for a one (1) year term.** This will allow the elections to return to the election cycle of approximately ½ of the board positions being up for election each year.

The MGAGCM board meets the first Monday of the month at the **GCCARD Bldg (MSUE office) at 1:00 p.m.** This has been changed to make it more convenient to attend as well more convenient for the MSUE coordinators to attend. MGAGCM members are always invited and welcome to sit in and listen. If you have a topic to discuss, contact Alan Grove, President of MGAGCM, in advance to get on the agenda. We try to keep discussions timely and on topic. The minutes will be posted on the association web page on the password protected page. If you want your voice heard, this is your opportunity to speak up.

November will be an exciting month for the membership!

We will be electing 5 board positions: President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer, and Director. This can be an exciting opportunity for the membership: New Team = New Ideas! Think about how you would like the Master Gardener Association of Genesee County Michigan (MGAGCM) to grow, talk to your friends and fellow gardeners, consider a leadership position! The Association belongs to you! By working together and being part of a team, we can achieve our goals. Genesee County MSU Extension Master Gardeners are an outstanding group, serving and providing our community with education, support and beautifully cared for garden sites. If you have any comments or suggestions for the association, you can contact any MGAGCM board member. Project related or questions regarding educational or volunteer hours, should go to Barslund Judd, Master Gardener Coordinator, juddbars@msu.edu or 810-244-8531.

Thank you and have a wonderful gardening season. We look forward to see and hear about your MSUE projects.

Alan Grove

Master Gardener Association Genesee County

MGAGCM OFFICERS (2019)

President (Acting) Alan Grove

1st Vice President (Acting) Joanne Gensel

2nd Vice President Alan Grove

810-922-8776 plantdoc049@outlook.com

Secretary Dick Moldenhauer

810-695-2649 rnmold1050@aol.com

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630-408-1710 bpark141@gmail.com

Outreach Director Joanne Gensel

810-339-0764 jhgensel@gmail.com

Communication Director Kit Puroll

248-789-2221 all_4_adventure@hotmail.com

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 Summer Picnic—July 14

12:30 p.m.

Potluck at Crossroads Village

Social Tour of Projects—July 20

12:00 p.m., meet at Big Boy (Clio) for lunch

Contact Kay McCullough for further info

Fall into Spring Educational Conference—Oct 5

8 a.m.-3:10 p.m

Mott Community College Event Center, Flint MI



Hold the Date!

For the
16th Annual
Fall into Spring
Gardening Conference
Saturday,
October 5, 2019
8 am – 3:10 pm
Mott Community College Events Center
1401 E. Court St. Flint MI 48503
Presented by:
The Master Gardener Association
of Genesee County Michigan

Mark your calendars for another great line-up of speakers who will present their gardening expertise on a number of interesting topics.

- Angela Nelson - "Native Plants in the Landscape"
- Cheryl English - "Gardening for our Native Birds"
- Bob Tritten - "Growing Fruit Trees in Your Yard"
- George Papadelis - "New and Fabulous Plants for Spring 2020"

- Cost: \$70.00 by Sept. 27th, after Sept. 27th-\$75
- Continental breakfast and lunch by Creative Catering (snacks and beverages included)
- Garden market vendors
- Door prizes
- 5 hours of Educational Credits for Master Gardeners

You don't want to miss out on this great event. Register now by going to this link:
<https://fallintospring.weebly.com>

Questions? Call Marie Luck-Allard at 810-410-4487