

# Down to Earth

Michigan State University Extension Master Gardener Program—Genesee County

March-April Early Spring 2021  
Volume 18, Issue 12



## Letter from the Program Coordinator

Barslund Judd ([juddbars@msu.edu](mailto:juddbars@msu.edu))

Happy false Spring! I've been taking advantage of the recent warm (ish) days by surveying my plants for winter damage. I'm still waiting to see if my heavily mulched Hardy Banana (*Musa basjoo*) survived the winter. It usually doesn't like overwintering below zone 7, but I'm hopeful! Right next to it is a concrete planter filled with *Narcissus* three layers deep. They spent a good portion of the winter frozen solid after being forgotten in a bathroom closet. I honestly didn't think the poor little dried husks would survive when I planted them last March but here we are! I can truly attest to the hardy nature of *Narcissus*.

If you know someone interested in gardening but is just starting out, let them know about our upcoming class called Gardening Basics. It's a great introduction to gardening. <https://events.anr.msu.edu/gardenbasics21s/>

If you are interested in invasive plants and how they can affect home gardening, we have a fantastic class coming up that is being taught by our local Cooperative Invasive Species Management Area (CISMA) coordinator, Patrick Scanlon! Feel free to share this link with your friends in Genesee and the surrounding counties! <https://events.anr.msu.edu/InvasivePlantsWithCISMAScanlon/>



**A little green hope breaking through the dull winter colors. My strawberries are ready to go!**

Barslund

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## Newsletter Committee

- Loretta Ellwood (**Project Report**)
- Amy Lazar (**Article Liaison**)
- Mary Yelland (**Article Liaison**)
- Mel Kennedy (**Ask Extension**)
- Joanne Gensel (**Association Page**)
- Michelle Chockley (**Vol Central Coordinator**)
- Carol Pittard (**Editor**)
- Cheryl Borkowski (**Format Editor**)

We are currently looking for volunteers to write articles for the DTE. Writing articles counts for volunteer hours. If you are interested, please contact Carol Pittard. ([cpittard@mac.com](mailto:cpittard@mac.com))

## Feature Article

### Michigan Conservation Districts' Resources (*Time Sensitive*)

by Carol Pittard

Are you looking for some small seedlings, transplants, etc. at a reasonable price? Then look no further than your local or nearby [Conservation District](#). You can find both native and non-native trees and shrubs that could be good for wildlife. There are conifers, large trees, understory trees, shrubs, fruit trees, fruits and vegetables available depending upon which district you visit.



Michigan has seventy-five Conservation Districts that provide natural resource management services to their communities. Most are aligned with individual counties, but in several cases (Michigan has 83 counties), counties have combined as is the case for the Bluewater Conservation District. That district started as the Sanilac District and St. Clair District, which combined and now it includes Macomb, too. These districts are “dedicated to helping our fellow Michiganders conserve their lands and waterways so our environment can be as clean, healthy and economically robust as possible.” [The impetus for the districts originated in the 1930's in reaction to soil erosion issues](#). These districts were “originally chartered as ‘Soil Conservation Districts,’ but as Natural Resource Management continued to grow and include water, air, and other environmental areas, the Conservation Districts’ Mission grew.” This time of year many CDs sponsor sales, which provide part of their operating budget. Each CD’s products vary, but most include tree and shrub sales of seedlings and transplants. Although Genesee CD is close by with a pick-up location in Flint, Corunna, Lapeer and Saginaw locations aren’t too far away and may have plant material that you want. You might have a vacation home in another district and find that you want to purchase through them because they have the plants you want. At some districts they have concolor fir that according to Dr. Bert Cregg from MSU, is “[worthy of consideration as an alternative to blue spruce](#).”

To our south in Washtenaw County their regular sale is underway, but they are sponsoring a native plant sale in June. As a prelude to that sale, they have made a concerted effort to educate the public. They sponsored a free informational webinar about “[Natives in the Landscape](#).” Vern Stephens, owner of Designs By Nature in Laingsburg, said native grasses sequester carbon and have extensive root systems that help to control erosion, and once established, can withstand periods of drought. He also spent time talking about site preparation and working backward from your expected planting date to start that prep. If you attended the MGAGCM Fall Into Spring Conference in October 2019, you saw Angela Nelson’s presentation called “Native Plants in the Landscape.” Angela brought her own background to the presentation, but many of her slides came from Vern’s presentation.

They had a second webinar with Brenda Dziedzic entitled “[Growing Native Plants for Butterflies and Moths](#).” Brenda, author of *Raising Butterflies in the Garden* (the new version of her original *Learn About Butterflies in the Garden*) talks about nectar and larval host plants for particular butterflies and moths. She has a small city lot and grows some host trees in pots in order to provide food for some butterflies and moths. She also uses stump cutting to control the size of large trees that she has planted on her small lot and has several photos to illustrate what she does.

Although her book is a great source for learning about butterflies and moths for our area and identifying them, too, she also talked about an alternative. It’s the website for *Butterflies and Moths of North America*, sometimes referred to as BMONA at: <https://www.butterfliesandmoths.org>. At the site, click on Species Profiles in the upper right to reveal Regional Checklists. Click on it and then on the left side of the page, drill down under the Region section from United States → Michigan → Genesee County then click Apply. You’ll get a list of 128 species divided by family! Additionally, if you scroll down past the information about the insect’s identification, hosts, food, habitat, etc., you can find verified sightings that can be filtered by region, too.

I highly suggest both of the webinars to Extension Master Gardeners especially if you’re going to try to bring more wildlife into your yard.

## A Talk About Grow Labs with Carol Groat

By Michelle Chockley

Carol Groat has been involved with the Grow Labs in Genesee County for over 20 years! Carol is an AEMG (Advanced Extension Master Gardener) who took the class in 1998. Carol would like to mentor someone to take over some of the Grow Labs in the future. Or if you are interested in volunteering at a Grow Lab, please contact Carol at [groatc@aol.com](mailto:groatc@aol.com) or 810-695-0881 (home) or 810-964-2111 (cell).



Since I had never been to a Grow Lab, my question was what does a Grow Lab look like? Carol explained that it is a portable growing table with everything a plant needs to grow! There are two shelves with 35 pots each, tanks with water, matting, and lights. Carol says it takes about 2 to 3 hours to set up a Grow Lab, it's a great way to get volunteer hours, and usually they are all done in the winter. Volunteer duties include checking on labs every other week to water plants and to look for bugs.

**Before COVID**, this is how many schools were involved and how activities flowed:

Grow Labs were in 9 schools in Grand Blanc and Flint Community Schools for a total of 23 labs for grades K-6, involving approximately 550 students.

Schools included: Brendel (4 labs/4 classes), Woodland Park Academy (1 lab/2 classes), Grand Blanc Academy (5 labs/5 classes), Greater Heights Academy (3 labs/6 classes), Durant Tuuri Mott (3 labs/3 classes), Genesee Christian (1 lab), PSR Rainbow (1 lab), Freeman (3 labs/3 classes), and Dye Elementary (1 lab/1 class).

The purpose of the grow lab project is to teach students of Genesee County the value of growing plants.

Activities include planting, monitoring and harvesting during the school year, and working with classes of children. Instructions are given to the children by Extension Master Gardeners. Educational lessons are also given on plant parts and plant nutrition, soils, seeds, potpourri, and ecosystems: mountains, desert, rainforest, etc. Students plant lettuce and greens in October and harvest them in November when they make salad and have a curriculum lesson. Older grades plant herbs in October and make tea and herb butter in November and have an herb lesson. Coleus are planted for Christmas presents. All students plant peppers in Jan-Feb with a vegetable lesson.

**During the 2020 COVID year**, there were limited opportunities due to schools being closed. There were two private schools, Genesee Christian and Waterbrook that reached out to Carol to have Grow Labs. Following COVID guidelines, She set up the Grow Labs and planted peppers at both. Carol also planted Mother of Thousands for kids to take home for Christmas. There was no interaction with children due to COVID. she provided educational lessons for the teachers to use with the children. Unless a school contacts Carol, there is not a plan to go back to the schools this year. Time will tell.

Carol also has a Grow Lab at **Easter Seals** and could use some help with labeling pots for her tomatoes and peppers. There is a plan to start petunias and marigolds to be planted in the outside garden at Easter Seals. This is a beautiful garden that can only be appreciated by a visit.

If you have any interest in or questions about the school Grow Labs or Easter Seals, please contact Carol Groat.



# Outreach News, Birth Month Flowers

## Outreach News

By Kay McCullough

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

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### Birth Month Flowers by Michelle Chockley

#### **March Birth Month Flower – Daffodil**



**The Daffodil** (*Narcissus*) is a great addition to any garden. Plant a ring or clumps of daffodils around a tree, line a flower path or fill a flower pot! With over 13,000 varieties to choose from, they are a beauty to behold, each one having its own pretty face created by the petals and the protruding corona which resembles a cup. If you are looking for an early pollinator, do your research and look for unhybridized bulbs. For more information on planting and care, check out these links!

<https://www.missouribotanicalgarden.org/PlantFinder/PlantFinderDetails.aspx?taxonid=264603&isprofile=0&>  
<https://ag.purdue.edu/hla/pubs/HO/HO-11.pdf>  
<https://dyckarboretum.org/are-bulbs-good-for-pollinators/>

#### **April Birth Month Flower – Daisy & Sweet Pea**

**Daisies** are in the Asteraceae family. Many of the plants that are sometimes called daisies belong to different genera. The English or common daisy (*Bellis perennis*) is often considered the typical daisy. Some of my favorites are the Black Eyed Susan (*Rudbeckia*), Oxeye (*Leucanthemum vulgare*), Gerbera (*Gerbera*), and Coneflower (*Echinacea*). It is amazing how many daisy-like flowers are in this family. To see examples, check out this link:

<https://garden.org/ideas/view/dave/2019/The-Top-25-Daisies/>

For general information on the common daisy, go to:

<https://www.missouribotanicalgarden.org/PlantFinder/PlantFinderDetails.aspx?kempercode=b749>

The Asteraceae family is good for pollinators because of their flat surface. The pollination is happening in the center part, which is made of an abundance of tiny flowers. For more information:

<https://homeguides.sfgate.com/bees-pollinate-daisies-66137.html>



**The Sweet Pea** (*Lathyrus odoratus*) is a favorite for cottage gardens due to the plant's loose nature of growing casually along a fence line, vining up a post or mounding in a clump when left nothing to climb on. The flowers are fragrant and they self-pollinate. These are not to be confused with the sweet peas in your vegetable garden as they are inedible and can be toxic. For more information:

<https://extension.oregonstate.edu/news/fragrant-sweet-peas-please-gardener-more-bee>

<http://www.missouribotanicalgarden.org/PlantFinder/PlantFinderDetails.aspx?taxonid=280383>

Sweet Pea is a good nickname for a grandchild and I once met a dog named Sweet Pea!

## Gardening with Kids... Painting with Vegetables

By Amy Lazar

As you launch into starting your vegetable seeds indoors and maybe even sowing some cool weather crops outside, it is a great time to involve your child in the process and share your love of gardening. Children learn best whenever they use as many of their five senses as possible. Here is a fun activity to get them interested in starting a garden with you that uses sight, touch and smell. If you provide extra vegetables for tasting and recite some of the rhymes from the attached link, you will involve taste and hearing as well. If your child wants to taste any of the vegetables before you start painting, encourage them to do so but don't pressure them. Our gustatory and olfactory senses (taste and smell) are connected, so even if your picky eater only wants to smell the items, he or she will be one step closer to a willingness to taste them at a later date.



You will need:

- One or more colors of non-toxic paint on foam trays, paper plates or an old cookie sheet
- Paper (finger paint paper or butcher paper work great)
- Various fresh vegetables, cut in half (have extra in case your child wants to try a bite)

### Activity:

1. Before you begin painting, encourage your child to look over the different vegetables. Talk about how each one feels. Ask questions like:
  - What color is it?
  - Does it feel wet or dry?
  - Is it rough or smooth?
  - Which do you think is the prettiest?
  - Which smells the best to you?
  - How could you sort them?

Allow your child to taste them if they'd like but remember, the goal is to have fun with vegetables and art. Perhaps he/she might like to only lick it or hold it in their teeth but not bite it? Be silly! Have fun! **Make sure to talk with your child about how you can use seeds to grow these vegetables in your garden and ask if there are any on the table that he or she might like to plant and care for with you.**

2. Next, allow your child to dip the fresh cut vegetables into the paint and then use them to brush, stamp or roll the paint onto the paper to create pictures or designs.
3. When finished, let your child's artwork dry thoroughly and then display it with pride!

Here is a link to some fun rhymes about vegetables: <https://iraparenting.com/rhymes/vegetable-rhymes-for-kids/>

# Time to Harvest... Chocolate!

By Mary Yelland

To some people a balanced diet is chocolate in both hands! While chocolate is not harvested in Michigan, it is definitely eaten here. (Although, a cacao tree can be grown indoors in a pot.) Cacao beans are harvested year-round as they ripen. However, their heaviest harvest time is during Michigan's winter and occurs in countries that are within 20 degrees latitude of the Equator. Most cacao beans are produced in African countries with Ivory Coast being the world's largest exporter. In the United States, Hawaii is the only state where a reliable cacao harvest can occur although some may try to grow a cacao tree in extreme southern Florida.



The cacao tree (*Theobroma cacao*) is an evergreen with broad unlobed leaves requiring warm temperatures and high humidity. The fruit of the tree grows directly out of the trunk or large lower branches. These cacao pods are harvested by hand. At 6 to 12 inches long with a hard outer shell containing 20-60 cacao beans, the fruit is somewhat reminiscent of a winter squash. When fresh, the beans are covered in a white mucilage type covering that breaks down as the beans are fermented for around 5-7 days. After the beans are fermented, they are washed and dried, usually in the sun, and are then ready for export.

These raw beans are imported and then processed. Usually they are roasted, and the thin outer shell is removed. Some people differentiate between the raw product calling it cacao and once it's roasted, call it cocoa. Others use the two terms interchangeably. The shelled beans are chopped into pieces called nibs. You may have seen these minimally processed nibs for sale. These bean pieces are then ground into a paste containing cocoa butter and cocoa solids. Further processing depends on what product is being made. After sugar and milk are added, one cacao pod produces enough chocolate to make about 7 chocolate bars. The following recipes use powdered unsweetened cocoa which comes from the ground nibs with the cocoa butter removed.

## 2-Minute Brownie for 2 (or one )

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| ¼ cup (4 tablespoons) flour              | Pinch salt   |
| ¼ cup (4 tablespoons) packed brown sugar | 2 tablespoons vegetable oil                        |
| 2 tablespoons unsweetened cocoa powder   | 2 tablespoons of liquid; try milk, coffee or water |



In a microwave safe cereal bowl or large mug, stir together the dry ingredients until no lumps remain. Stir in the oil and liquid until you have a thick paste. Microwave on high for about 1 minute, (adjust as needed since microwaves vary). Eat warm; maybe with ice cream!

## Bunny's Garden Double Chocolate Muffins



- |                           |                        |                                       |
|---------------------------|------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| 1 ½ cups flour            | ½ teaspoon salt        | <u>"Carrot" filling:</u>              |
| ½ cup white sugar         | 1 cup chocolate chips* | 3 ounces of cream cheese              |
| ¼ cup brown sugar         | 1 egg                  | 2 tablespoons orange marmalade        |
| 3 teaspoons baking powder | ½ cup vegetable oil    | Orange food color                     |
| 6 tablespoons cocoa       | 1 cup milk             | Edible Easter grass or green licorice |

Mix the dry ingredients and chocolate chips. Combine the egg, oil, and milk then stir into the flour mixture. Fill paper lined muffin cups 2/3 full. Bake at 350°F for about 20 minutes or until done. Cool completely. For "carrots," place cream cheese in a mixer bowl and whip for 30 seconds. Add orange marmalade and orange food coloring then whip until smooth. Place mixture in a plastic food bag and clip off the corner to make a small hole. Using a vegetable peeler cut a small carrot shaped hole in the center of each muffin. Fill the hole with the cream cheese mix by squeezing it through the hole in the bag. Mound the mix a bit on top to look like a carrot. Use the edible Easter grass or licorice to make the green part of the "carrot."

\*For a variation, omit "carrots" and try using peanut butter chips.

\*\* The muffin recipe will work as a gift mix. Layer dry ingredients in a one quart jar and top with chocolate chips. Cover the jar and label it with instructions to complete the recipe.

Continued on page 7

## VC – Volunteer Central Corner (Formerly VMS)

Michelle Chockley—Ambassador (Cell: 810-210-6685) – [chockleym@gmail.com](mailto:chockleym@gmail.com)

VC Log in: [https://msu.samaritan.com/custom/502/volunteer\\_login](https://msu.samaritan.com/custom/502/volunteer_login)



MSU Extension | Volunteer Central

### Recertification is done!

Thank you to everyone for completing the recertification process. We are starting off 2021 with: 80 AEMGs (Advanced Extension Master Gardeners); 16 EMGs (Extension Master Gardeners); 11 Emeritus; and 34 EMGVITs (Extension Master Gardener Volunteers in Training) for a **total of 141!**

### 2021 Hours Requirements

We have all received the information regarding 2021 volunteer hours being waived for 2021. The only requirement for 2021 will be 10 education hours. Those who plan on volunteering for 2021 will have to obtain permission from the gardening site for 2021 and complete the COVID 2021 Guidelines for Volunteers. More details will be coming. **Trainees have until December 2022 to complete their 40 hours.**

### How do I log my hours?

Hopefully everyone is aware that the VMS is going away and we will all be using Volunteer Central (VC). As a result, the VMS has not been reopened for data entry. **Everyone should be manually tracking any completed 2021 hours in order to enter them into Volunteer Central (VC) at a later date.** You will be receiving further details regarding logging your hours.

### Volunteer Central (VC)

You will notice when you log into Volunteer Central that it says **EMG Roster: Saginaw Valley Region**. The state has been divided into regions and Genesee is now part of the Saginaw Valley region which includes Bay, Midland, Saginaw, Tuscola and Shiawassee counties, overseen by Barslund Judd, our coordinator.

**Hours migration from the VMS to VC:** If you used a different email in VC than you did in the VMS, please notify Diane Brady immediately at [bradydi1@msu.edu](mailto:bradydi1@msu.edu). The email must be the same for your hour's history to successfully migrate from the VMS to VC.

Volunteer Central training will be coming for Ambassadors and Volunteers. Current focus areas for VC are projects, volunteer profiles and migration of hours. Please read your emails and try to attend monthly meetings and garden chats for updates. There will be a learning curve, but this time next year, we probably won't remember what VMS means. Thank you for your patience and see you all on Zoom!

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### Time to Harvest, Continued

- A cacao tree can live over 200 years, but only produces quality cocoa beans for about 25 years. During that time the tree produces approximately 40 pods yearly.
- The cacao tree blossoms are white and pink flowers and are [only pollinated by tiny flies called midges](#).
- Up to 30% of the world's cacao production is lost because of fungal diseases.
- Having no cocoa solids, white chocolate must have 20% cocoa butter (from the cacao bean) to be labeled as "white chocolate."

## Ask Extension

**A reminder from the last issue:** Ask Extension is the new name for Ask the Expert; it has a new URL, too: <http://ask2.extension.org>. If you go to various gardening websites, including the Smart Gardening site at <http://migarden.msu.edu>, you won't find it, yet! You can still use the old links, but if you want to be on the cutting edge, use this one: <http://ask2.extension.org>! Once you're at the new site, you can search the database of previous questions and 'Ask a New Question.' That means you'll have to pick your location (your state) then select a group: MSU - ANR - Gardening in Michigan. The older Ask the Expert links are still working, but in time a complete switch will be made. This may be helpful to you since the Genesee County hotline is still not open due to COVID-19 restrictions. This issue's question and response was submitted by one of our Genesee County experts, Mel Kennedy.

### Question:

If I buy garden soil to start my seeds it was mentioned to sterilize it. How would one sterilize?

### Answer:

For Homemade Sterile Soil -You can buy potting soil that is labeled sterile. Most of these products have gone through a treatment to kill pathogens and seeds. In some cases, they have been treated with high-temperature steam. According to Colorado State University "temperatures routinely used to heat soil will not result in completely sterile soil/potting media. The goal is to heat the potting mix to a point that kills the plant pathogens of concern." It seems as if the sterilization treatments are not likely to be 100% effective.

You can't buy the stuff, but you can sterilize it yourself.

If it is heated to 212°F at 15 PSI for 45 minutes, it kills everything. Then I use a hydrogen peroxide spray on the inside of the containers after washing them with soap and water. The soil goes straight from the pressure cooker into the container.

Keep in mind - "Excessive soil heating may also increase the chance of phytotoxicity due to soluble salts, manganese toxicity, and toxic organic compounds. Soil mixtures high in readily de-compostable organic matter (manure, leaf mold, compost) are most likely to give injury when exposed to excessively high temperatures."

Reference: <http://phytosphere.com/soilphytophthora/soilsterilization.htm>

Once your soil is sterile you will need to keep it sterile until you use it. This means storing it in sterile containers, and filling pots in sterile conditions. If you are not going to store it in sterile conditions – what is the point of sterilization?

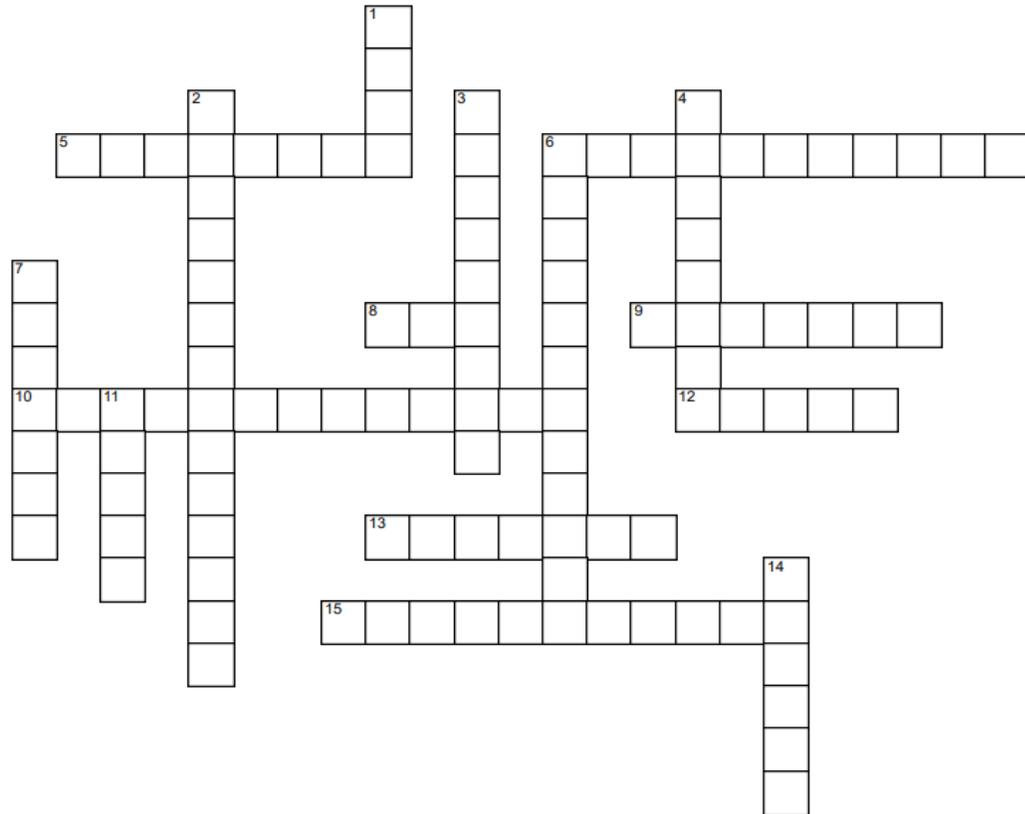
I think pasteurization might be a better option for the home gardener than sterilization.

Here is some information on Pasteurizing Medium:

Potting media mixed by home gardeners should be pasteurized to kill weed seeds, soil-borne insects, and pathogens. Pasteurization destroys most organisms and is done by applying heat until the soil reaches 180°F (82C) for 30 minutes. When temperatures are raised above 212°F (100°C), most of the soil-borne organisms are killed and the soil is considered sterile. Gardeners can pasteurize homemade potting soils using a kitchen oven; however, a long-lasting earthy odor can develop in the oven. To pasteurize soil, preheat the oven to 180°F. Then fill a pan with about 4 inches of moist soil and cover it with aluminum foil. Insert a candy or meat thermometer to monitor temperature and place the pan in the oven. When the thermometer reads 180°F, leave the pan in the oven for 30 minutes longer, then remove it and allow the soil to cool. Seeds can then be sown in the soil, or it can be used as a transplant medium for seedlings.

Check out this article (Penn State): How to Pasteurize Medium and Sterilize Containers and Tools: <https://extension.psu.edu/how-to-pasteurize-medium-and-sterilize-containers-and-tools> and this article (Washington State): Soil Treatment Procedure for the Home Gardener: <https://research.libraries.wsu.edu/xmlui/bitstream/handle/2376/6690/eb1158.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y>

# Gardeners Puzzle



## ACROSS

5. A soil for which the pH reading is above 7.0.
6. The larva of a butterfly, moth, sawfly, or scorpionfly.
8. genetically modified organism.
9. Flowering prematurely, usually due to unsuitable climatic conditions at certain stages of growth. Spinach, lettuce, celery, broccoli, and endive are plants that are prone to this.
10. A nutrient needed in small amounts by plants; also called a trace or minor element.
12. A material applied to the surface of a soil to conserve moisture, stabilize soil temperature, suppress weed growth, protect plant roots from heat or cold, or to keep fruit clean.
13. The gravitational loss of soil by the action of wind, water, and ice.
15. The transfer of pollen from the anther to the stigma.

## DOWN

1. The flexible stem of a plant such as raspberry, blackberry, or grape.
2. Species or cultivar that produces fruits without pollination and fertilization.
3. Microscopic, unsegmented, parasitic round- worms that live in water, soil, and plants; usually not visible to the naked eye.
4. Cultivar of flowers, fruits, and vegetables that is open-pollinated, in use prior to 1945, and preserved by farmers and gardeners.
6. Growing crops of a specific family in different areas of the garden each year to avoid soil-borne diseases and nutrient depletion. (two words)
7. Any shrub with thorns in the rose family; usually refers to blackberries and raspberries.
11. The part of a plant where the roots and stem meet, usually at soil level.

# 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.

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## Note from MGAGCM President—Joanne Gensel

Hello, Extension Master Gardeners-

Spring is just around the corner. Look for crocus, snowdrops and weeds... I've got some greening up!

This month we have some minor news to share:

I have completed the MGAGCM membership list which will be sent off to MMGA, Inc. with the \$5.00 per member payment. Our \$100.00 affiliation fee has been waived for 2021 since we paid ours in 2020. We have 126 members plus 4 additional folks who also belong as secondary members as they have a primary affiliation with another group.

Kay and I will be working on the web site this month. The membership directory will be posted there for you to use. Please be respectful of each other's contact information. This is to be used for Extension Master Gardening issues. When we get the website better constructed we will send out emails with links for your use.

MSUE is in the process of changing the software from the VMS system to VC (Volunteer Central). That is the website that was used to manage us going through the Volunteer Selection Process (VSP) last year. It is possible to go into that site and see your personal information –name, email, etc....It might be a good idea to be sure your email is correct. (See what Michelle wrote about in the VC article.) Until we are notified of the completion, which will include training on the new software, keep a written record of any webinars or volunteer hours that you accrue. It will make your life so much easier when you start to log the information (you know you can't remember!). 2021 requirements are the same as last year: 10 hours of Education / 0 hours Volunteer.

You CAN VOLUNTEER if you have "Covid Approved Permission" from the site where you volunteer. That is the same policy as last year. Contact Barslund Judd for details.

Loretta has speakers lined up through June and continues to work on getting more. Great job Loretta—many thanks! Watch your emails for notices from Barslund with the Zoom link and password. This is the easiest way to get 10 hours of education and you get to reconnect with the group.

We had a great "Coffee Chat" with our Genesee County Extension Master Gardeners hosted by Barslund on March 8 at 9:30 a.m. It seems we are all VERY READY to start seeds and planting. We are ready to get outside and into the garden!! (These are just visits and they don't count for any hours.) Please join if you can for the next one... watch for Barslund's emails.

"Soon, my pretties soon" ...we will be back in the garden!

Joanne

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# Master Gardener Association Genesee County

## Websites

MGAGCM website—[www.geneseecountymg.org](http://www.geneseecountymg.org)

MGAGCM Facebook—[www.facebook.com/groups/216904628327310/](https://www.facebook.com/groups/216904628327310/)

MMGA, Inc. website—[www.michiganmastergardener.org](http://www.michiganmastergardener.org)

MMGA, Inc. Facebook— [www.facebook.com/MichiganMG/](https://www.facebook.com/MichiganMG/)

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## MGAGCM Events:

Jan. 21: **Galls** – Lori Imboden, Consumer Hort Educator from Oakland County  
*Project ID: Environmental Stewardship - Integrated Pest Mgmt (IPM)*

Feb. 18: **Gardening for Pollinators** – Jay Blair  
*Project ID: Environmental Stewardship: IPM - Pollinators*

Mar. 18: **Comfort, Ease & Simplicity** – Jan Bills  
*Project ID: Community: Beautification - Public Areas*

Apr. 15: **What's New for 2021** – George Papadelis  
*Project ID: Community: Beautification - Public Areas*

May 20: **Growing a Mostly Perennial Cutting Garden** – Jane Giblin  
*Project ID:*

June 17: **Eating the Weeds in Your Garden** – Darren Bagley  
*Project ID:*

June ? : Maybe—if restrictions are lifted **Genesee County Extension Master Gardener Tour 2021**  
*Project ID: Community: Beautification – Public Areas (If you visit all the sites, you'll get 3.5 Ed. Hrs.)*

July **TBA**: Maybe—if restrictions are lifted... **MGAGCM July Picnic**

Aug. 19-21: **Master Gardener College**—Hold the dates!

Sept. 16: **TBA**  
*Project ID:*

Oct. 2: Probably not? **Fall Into Spring**

Oct. 21: **TBA**  
*Project ID:*

Nov. 18: **Holiday Party or speaker depending upon restrictions**

2021 MGAGCM meetings and or presentations are held on the third Thursday of each month via Zoom until MSUE gives permission for in-person meetings at which point, they will be held at the GCCARD Building, 601 N. Saginaw Street, Flint, MI 48502-2009 (*except December & unless otherwise noted*).