Down to Earth

Michigan State University Extension Master Gardener Program—Genesee County Spring 2022 Volume 20, Issue 2

MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY EXTENSION MASTER GARDENER VOLUNTEER PROGRAM

Hello gardeners,

I hope you are enjoying the fantastic weather we've been having. It's great to see so many bulbs in bloom. Over the last couple of months, I have been teaching classes about native plants and seed starting. It has been a fantastic opportunity to meet more community members. In the future, I plan to train several local Extension Master Gardeners to go out and teach these classes in the community. If that's something that interests you, let me know. I will also teach houseplant propagation classes at local libraries and community centers. This is an excellent way for people that may not have access to a garden to learn more about plants.

Edible Flint has been kind enough to grant us space to install a new pollinator garden at their demonstration farm. Currently, we are planning to install this garden on May 28th. It will have educational signage for the public to learn more about using native and pollinator-friendly plants. Some of the selections include native grasses to provide food for birds and homes for pollinators. It will also include two types of Rudbeckia and two types of Goldenrod. If you are interested in assisting with the installation, email Barslund Judd juddbars@msu.edu.

Currently, our Extension Master Gardener training is on hold while the MSUE Consumer Horticulture team makes updates to the curriculum. If you know someone interested in taking the class, they can signup to receive informational emails at <u>https://</u><u>www.canr.msu.edu/master gardener volunteer program/</u>. This is not a waitlist and will not hold a place in future training. The first classes will be held in the spring of 2023.

Happy gardening!

Barslund Judd



Michigan Native: Jacob's Ladder Polemonium reptans

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Newsletter Committee

- Amy Lazar (Article Liasion)
- Mary Yelland (Article Liaison)
- Mel Kennedy (Ask Extension)
- Kay McCullough (Association Page)
- Michelle Chockley (Volunteer Central Corner)
- Carol Pittard (Editor)
- Cheryl Borkowski (Format Editor)

Feature Article

Trees: the gifts that keep on giving right to the very end by Dale Daron, class of 2017

We all have or know of trees that are just great to admire for their appearance and/or usefulness. There are food producing trees as well as ornamental trees; not to forget the trees that are used for lumber in the building industry or for furniture. One of the purposes in the past was as structural supports used in mine shafts and one today as crossties or railroad ties to anchor rails. Don't forget the utility company poles that carry our electrical, phone and cable wires.

Trees provide the firewood used in our campfires and home heating wood burners. Also consider the large volume of trees used to provide all of our paper products and the wood necessary to keep us in matches, toothpicks and good old #2 wooden lead (graphite) pencils.

On the negative side, young trees require the homeowner to take efforts to avoid tree damage by insects, animals, lawn equipment and perhaps younger children with an axe (think George Washington here). As a tree ages there is always spring and fall cleanup and shaping /trimming at the proper time for the tree in question.

MOST IMPORTANTLY, plant the RIGHT tree in the RIGHT location. Being aware of what works well with the soil, the potential use, height and spread are of equal importance to what a homeowner desires in a tree.

The following relates to approximately 20 acres in the area of our home in Flushing Twp.



One fairly uncommon tree in our area is the American beech (*Fagus grandifolia*). It has reasonably smooth gray bark and the leaves have an elliptical shape with parallel side veins and saw-toothed edges. They may stay attached through the winter. My neighbor has one that is 9 feet in circumference measured at waist height and is roughly 40 feet tall. The lifespan of a beech is in the area of 300 to 400 years and my guess would put this tree at well over 100 years as we have lived in the area for 50 years and I am certain that the tree's owner has never done any planting. He related to me that this tree is very hard based on the effort required to cut a branch that was causing a problem!

Also, on or near the property line are a couple species of oaks and other trees including wild cherry, maple,

birch, and pines growing in our sandy loam soil with some clay in spots. There are two white oaks (Quercus alba) that are very large, but are nearly the same size they were when we moved here. One of these oaks measures 16 feet in circumference.

Prior to building homes on these properties, the land was used for farming potatoes. In order to raise crops, the farmer had to clear the land by removing the trees and pulling the stumps that were left behind. My guess would put this around 1920 but may have been earlier. The trees not removed then formed the property lines from front to back, a distance of about 1325 feet from the road centerline. The pulled tree stumps, several of which must have had a root system exceeding 6 to 8 feet in diameter, were then used as cattle guards across all 3 properties with a total width of about 600 feet. These stump/root lines cross each property 3 times. At the current time only about 15% of the root line barrier remains as some have rotted away and some were used for firewood before we were able



Trees: the gifts that keep on giving right to the very end! Continued from pg. 2

to stop the burning. No evidence remains as to how the trees were taken down, be it cut or chopped, as the roots show no evidence of either. I expect that the roots were dug out and pulled from the ground; the most likely way was by means of a tracked tractor, or possibly a team of horses or mules were used. It would require someone with more knowledge of root systems than I have in order to determine what sort of trees these were.

Trees: they can be one form of a love/hate relationship. A tree can be a source of pride, concern, consternation, work, irritation, or something else.

Resources: Dirr, Michael A. Dirr's Hardy Trees and Shrubs: An Illustrated Encyclopedia. Timber Press, 1997. Identifying Trees of Michigan

Site selection is important when planting tree seedlings



Volunteers: Cindy, Kathy, Suzan and Marilyn at the Longway Planetarium EMG Project. New garden beds were constructed by the Flint Cultural Center Corporation ground Crew. Thanks!!



Watercolor by Cheryl Borkowski

Feature Project

What is Ask Extension? How I got information about my project's problem; you can too!

by Michelle Chockley, Advanced EMG

https://www.canr.msu.edu/outreach/ask-an-expert

This is an awesome resource for you, your family, and friends! I don't know about you, but I am always getting asked about gardening issues and I certainly don't know all the answers. After asking those probing questions about soil, sun, environmental issues, etc. and everyone saying, "Hmm," refer people to Ask Extension! It is easy to use and you get a response from the horticultural team and other trained diagnosticians.

Last year when I was working on the perennial bed at the *Edible Flint* farm, I noticed some unusual things happening to one of the coneflowers. At first all of us thought it was cool, then the more we looked at it, we knew there was something wrong.

I went online to Ask Extension and posted the question with a couple of pictures. The title was:

What is wrong with this cone flower? This was the response:

Dear chockleym, here's the response to your question: Hi! Thanks for your patience receiving this response Michelle! :) This is likely a condition called Aster Yellow: https://apps.extension.umn.edu/garden/diagnose/plant/annualperennial/echinacea/leavesdistorted.html

It is carried by leafhoppers to the plant and it usually cannot be fixed (you have to discard the plant). Because it can infect other types of plants (including vegetables), I would remove and destroy all of these plants. Need to reply to the expert? Click the link below, or simply reply to this email. Click here to view #0040748.

Dr. Sarah Rautio



Since this is a shared vegetable and flower garden, we have common garden problems. I am glad I asked and I shared this information with the *Edible Flint* team. Next time you are asked, refer a friend to Ask Extension. It is easy to search. Good photos are a must!

Editor's Note: If you don't have the link, just remember **migarden.msu.edu** (pronounced my garden dot msu dot edu). If you type that into your browser, it will take you to MSU's Gardening in Michigan website. Then click on the Ask Extension link. While you're there, you can find lots of other information related to gardening!

Gardening With Kids...

Planting a Butterfly Garden by Amy Lazar



Do you remember what Eric Carle's Very Hungry Caterpillar ate on Saturday? As cute as the story was, if you really want to attract butterflies and caterpillars to your garden, chocolate cake and pickles will not do the trick! You need special kinds of plants for each stage of a butterfly's life cycle (egg, larva, pupa and adult). Below is a list of what every butterfly garden needs.

1. A sunny location: Choose a spot that gets sunshine for at least half of the day.

2. Host plants where butterflies can lay their eggs: Host plants can also serve as a structure for butterfly chrysalises and as a food source for the caterpillars once the larvae hatch. Many species of butterflies are very particular about their host plants. For example, Baltimore checkerspot butterflies will only lay their eggs on a turtlehead plant, but monarchs will use any native milkweed. You can use some of the links below to help decide what you might like to plant

3. Nectar plants that butterflies can feed on: Butterflies get their food from the nectar in many different species of flowers. They are attracted to red, orange, yellow and purple flowers. Some examples are Joe-Pye weed, asters, sunflowers, purple coneflowers and black-eyed Susans. The important thing is to choose 3 or 4 different flowers so that something is blooming from May to October. Marigolds are also a great choice because they bloom for many weeks.

4. Places to rest and take shelter: Butterflies like to warm themselves in the sun on a nice flat rock. They also need shelter from the wind or harsh weather. This protection can come from a sturdy shrub or even a wooden box with a small opening.

5. A "puddling" station: Butterflies need a source of water. A shallow container filled with water and a little soil or some pebbles makes a perfect place for them to "puddle".



A butterfly garden can be as small as a window box or as big as your whole yard. It is a good idea to ask your parents to never use pesticides on your butterfly garden (even organic ones) because they can be harmful to butterflies. Once you have started your plants and have added your shelter and water source, you can start a journal to keep track of what plants you

used, when they bloomed, when and what types of butterflies appeared, and anything else you would like to write down. You can also use a camera or smartphone to take pictures, or you can make drawings of what you see. If you are patient and visit often, you will make wonderful discoveries in your butterfly garden!

Here are resources you and/or the adult helping you can visit to learn more: Butterfly Habitat Gardens in Pots or Hanging baskets

<u>Creating a butterfly garden</u> <u>Gardening for Butterflies</u> Southeast Michigan Butterfly Association Resources

Time to Harvest...

Pineapple by Mary Yelland

Peak harvest time for pineapple is between March and July. Pineapple fruit is grown on a short-lived perennial plant in tropical climates. The plant is typically 2-4 feet tall with thick spiky leaves that grow in a rosette. It is believed to be native to South America. Commercial plants grow 2-3 fruits before being replaced. Usually in pineapple production, crowns are planted individually by hand and given a year to mature. Calcium carbide placed in the center of the plant can force blossoming. This allows a field of pineapple plants to produce fruit at close to the same time. The blossom does not need to be pollinated to produce fruit and the subsequent pineapple will ripen about 6 months later. A sucker of the plant then develops for 6 to 8 months before being forced to blossom and produce fruit. Possibly another sucker will produce a 3^{ed} fruit before the plant is replaced. Pineapple plants like slightly acidic soil. They require good drainage and can be drought tolerant. They prefer consistent warm temperatures and cannot handle a frost.

A hundred years ago southern Florida was a top producer of pineapples, but even though the fruit can grow there, it is typically only found in home gardens as the country's commercial pineapple production has moved to Hawaii. Hawaii produces about a third of the world's crop and about 60% of the canned pineapple. Most pineapples we see in the store are of the same variety, MD-2, but there are several other varieties of pineapples. They come in varying shades from red, orange, yellow and white. We usually don't see these other varieties as often because they do not store well.

Pineapple plants can be grown indoors in Michigan in a pot and may even produce fruit. To start a plant, cut the top inch or so from the top of a pineapple. Remove any pulp and allow the stump to dry for about a week. This helps to deter fungus from rotting the crown before it can grow. After drying, place the pineapple top in well drained potting mix up to the bottom leaves. Place in a warm, humid area with bright, indirect light. It will take at least 25 full sized leaves on the plant for it to be able to produce a pineapple. While you are waiting, you can get pineapple already canned and use it in the following recipes.



Frog Eye Salad

Ingredients: ½ cup sugar 1 tablespoon flour 1 teaspoons salt 1 egg yolk, beaten 1 ½ teaspoons lemon juice

8 oz. (1¹/₃ cup) acini di pepe pasta* 1-15 oz can mandarin oranges drained 1-20 oz. can pineapple chunks or tidbits, drained, reserve juice 1-20 oz. can crushed pineapple, drained, reserve juice 1 cup minus 2 tablespoons pineapple juice $1\frac{1}{2}$ cups whipped topping ($\frac{1}{2}$ of an 8 oz. container) ¹/₂ cup miniature marshmallows ¹/₄ cup quartered maraschino cherries

Combine sugar, flour and salt in a saucepan. Gradually stir in 1 cup minus 2 tablespoons (7/8 cup) of reserved

pineapple juice and egg yolk. Cook over moderate heat, stirring until thickened. Remove from heat and add lemon juice. (If you get any white flecks from the egg you can pick them out.) Cook pasta according to package directions. Drain & rinse with cold water. In a large bowl, combine pasta and cooled, cooked sauce. Cover and refrigerate several hours or overnight. Add remaining ingredients. Stir until combined. Store in the refrigerator.



* Acini di pepe is a shape of pasta. It is the shape of small balls (frog eyes). It can be found at the grocery store with the pasta and it is available at Meijer and Kroger among others.

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Pineapple Continued from page 6

Pineapple Pie

- 1 cup sugar
- 2 tablespoons cornstarch

¹/₈ teaspoon salt

- 1 can (20 oz.) crushed pineapple, undrained
- 3 egg yolks
- 1 tablespoon lemon juice
- 1 pastry shell (9 inches), baked



In a large saucepan, combine sugar, cornstarch and salt. Stir in pineapple. Bring to a boil and cook for 2 minutes or until thickened. Remove from heat and gradually stir 1 cup of the hot mixture into egg yolks. Return all to the pan and return to a boil for 2 minutes. Remove from heat and stir in lemon juice. Pour hot filling into the baked pastry shell. For meringue, place egg white and cream of tartar in a glass or metal mixing bowl. Beat until soft peaks form. Gradually beat in the 6 tablespoons of sugar. Beat until stiff peaks form. Spread meringue over hot filling spreading so it seals to the crust. Bake at 350°F for 15 minutes or until meringue is golden brown. Cool for 1 hour and refrigerate for at least 3 hours before cutting.

3 egg whites

Meringue

1/4 teaspoon cream of tartar

6 tablespoons sugar

The two recipes below were forwarded to us by Stephanie Stoneburg who spoke about herbs at the March meeting.

Today's Recipes

Lemon Lavender

- Shortbread Cookies
 Prep Time 30 mins
- · Cook Time 14 mins
- Servings: 24 cookies
- Ingredients
- I cup all-purpose flour
- 1/4 tsp. salt
- 1/3 cup powered sugar
- 1 tsp. culinary lavender
- 1 tsp. finely grated lemon zest
 1 tbsp. course sugar
- 1/2 cup unsalted butter softened
- 1 tbsp. lemon juice
- 1/2 tsp. vanilla extract
- Sprinkling sugar (optional)
- Instructions
- In a small bowl, sift together flour and salt. Set aside.
- Place 1 thsp. of the granulated sugar, lavender, and lemon zest in a mortar and grind lightly with the pestle.
- Place lavender mixture in large bowl with remaining sugar and butter. Cream together until smooth. Add vanilla and lemon juice.

- Add dry ingredients to butter mixture until it forms a dough. Shape into a log and wrap tightly in plastic wrap. Refrigerate for 2+ hours.
- Line a large baking sheet with parchment paper. Set aside. Roll the dough out to v/a inch thickness. Cut into shapes (I used a 1 3/4 inch cutter) and place on peepaed sheet. Sprinkle with some pure care sugar, then place in the freezer for is minutes.

Preheat oven to 325 degrees.

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Bake cookies for 12-14 minutes until lightly browned around the edges. Cool on sheet for 5 minutes, then transfer to wire rack. Can be store in an airtight container for 5 days.



Lemon & Bee Balm Tea We are using the Simpler's, or "parts", Method to measure our tea blend. 1 serving = 1 thsp

3 thep Red Bee Balm Leaf 3 thep Lemon Balm Leaf a thep Lemon Verbena Leaf a thep Lemon Grass Bits 1 thep Lemon Peel Bits, Dried 1 thep Hibiscus Flower 1 thep Red Bee Balm Flower Petals

Start with completely dry, good quality herb material. Lightly crush larger leaves and material with your hands or with a pestle and mortar into small pieces. The smaller pieces brew better. Combine all ingredients into an air tight container and label. Let your tea blend sit in the container for a week before use. This allows the flavors to blend. Store away from direct light and heat.



Volunteer Central Corner

MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY

by Michelle Chockley, Consumer Horticultural Assistant, chockle4@msu.edu, 810-210-6685

Volunteer Central Login: https://msu.samaritan.com/custom/502/volunteer login

Updates for Volunteer Central

•Forgot your password? I can now reset it for you! Give me a call or email me.

•All projects have had the description/contacts updated. If you see anything that needs correcting, let me know.

•In Volunteer Central, you can "sign up" for a project, but you still need to email/call the Project Lead. The Project Lead does not receive a notice that you have signed up.

If you do not understand how to sign up for a project, let me know and I will do it for you or walk you through doing it yourself. Your project will then show up on your Activity List so that when you click on "Report Hours," your project will appear on the "Select an Activity" drop-down choice along with the option to add your education hours (2022 EMG Continuing Education Hours: Extension Master Gardener Program).
Keep a log of your hours and enter them monthly, every other month – whatever works for you. You can lump your hours. Example: Total hours for May and June at Crossroads, etc.

•Travel time does not count toward your volunteer hours.

•Trainees should be working on their 40 hour goal. Education is not a requirement, however, you can and should log education hours you complete. Those will go toward achieving Advanced EMG status.

What is an Advanced Extension Master Gardener (AEMG)?

Extension Master Gardeners who participate in 25 additional hours of training in horticulture subjects and volunteer an additional 50 hours within five years of your original certification will achieve the status of Advanced Extension Master Gardener.

Where do I find projects for my County?

From the Dashboard on Volunteer Central, click on "Search Activities" on the left side of the screen. In the "keyword" box, type in a county such as Genesee, then click the magnifying glass, and it will bring up all approved projects in Genesee County. This is the only box you need to enter information. There is also a sort feature you can use after bringing up projects. I hope to be adding approved project pictures in Volunteer Central soon. Be sure to let me know if you have any questions.

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\Rightarrow	genesee Q	Keyword: genesee S Reset Filters	
	Location City or Zip Distance	Displaying 42 of 591 Boys and Girls Club Hoop House and Garden - Flint, Genesee County	
	Program Area	Extension Master Gardener Program Published: 08/30/2021	
	County	Click "more details" for description.	

Ask Extension

Gardening in Michigan Tidbits by Mel Kennedy

Spongy Moth (Gypsy Moth)

Destroying egg masses prior to hatching can make an outbreak of spongy moth (formerly known as gypsy moth) more tolerable in your yard. Inspect trees, structures, and outdoor furniture. Scrape egg masses into a bucket of soapy water or burn or bury them. More information about spongy moth management in the landscape: <u>Link to</u> <u>Deborah McCullough's article</u>. Plus on May 11th another article was released informing readers about MSU's Spongy Moth website and what kind of outbreak there might be this year. Get to that article <u>here</u>. The MSU Integrated Pest Management Spongy Moth website is <u>here</u>.

Winter Annual Weeds...Blooming Now!

"Many of the early-blooming spring weeds are categorized as winter annuals, meaning they germinate in the fall, over-winter in a vegetative state, flower in the spring and produce seeds by late-spring to early-summer before ultimately dying." <u>Link to Dr. Erin Hill and Angela Tenney's article about the ID and management of winter annuals</u>. (As an aside, Dr. Hill will be a speaker for Fall into Spring in October.)

Trees and Shrubs for Pollinator Support

"Trees that produce pollen, nectar or both can be excellent sources of nutrition to bees and other beneficial insects." <u>Link to the article about pollinator supportive trees and shrubs for farm and orchard windbreaks.</u>

Apps for Plant Identification

"There are now several smartphone apps available to assist with plant identification." Which of these apps performed best? Link to Erin Hill's update of her earlier testing of plant ID apps.

Crabgrass Preemergence Applications

"Spring is off to a slow start this year but there are always questions regarding the optimum timing for applying crabgrass preemergence herbicides.... One system used by both professional turfgrass managers and do-it-yourselfers to determine application timing is to track growing degree days using the website GDDTracker." <u>Link</u> here to find out more about the timing of crabgrass preemergence applications.

Lead Concerns

"Gardeners concerned with lead contamination in their soil can minimize the risk of exposure." Link to Barlund Judd's update about mitigating lead risk.



At the last MGAGCM meeting we learned some facts about Mel Kennedy who has recently been providing us with our Ask Extension and Gardening in Michigan Tidbits column. Mel is one of 189 Ask Extension Responders from across the state including MSUE staff and volunteers. He was the #4 responder and #3 out of the EMGs for the most Ask Extension questions answered. Congratulations on a job well done, Mel!

Mel doesn't only answer Ask Extension questions. To the left he is working hard at his part time job

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.

Good To Know – MGAGCM Membership News & Updates – News from the Board

Our MGAGCM group has been working on many fun activities and projects for members.

Garden Tour

The garden tour will be Sunday, August 7th, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Maggie Gregg will be looking for volunteers to sit at the gardens. Email her <u>maggiekg424@comcast.net</u> if you are interested in helping out on the garden tour day.

Fall into Spring Educational Conference

Date & Location: October 8, 2022, at Mott Community College Event Center Speakers:

2022 Garden Tour

Jan Bills – Owner Two Women and a Hoe Sandra Wilkins – Talented landscaper Erin Hill, Ph.D. – Authority on weeds Gene Hopp – Owner of Frankenmuth Florist

Crossroads Picnic – Joanie Snyder secured Crossroads Village for our Picnic on Sunday, July 24th at Noon. She announced that all Master Gardeners from Genesee County can visit Crossroads Village on June 4 at no charge.

QR codes – We are working on developing QR codes to use around the county. If anyone would like to work on developing the QR codes, contact Joanne Gensel: jhgensel@gmail.com.

"Crafternoons" – We are planning on having times to work together to make garden crafts. Some of those crafts will be used to sell at our Fall into Spring Conference.

Native plant sale – Thanks to Dick Moldenhauer for all of your work on the native plant sale.



MGAGCM Board of Directors

President	Joanne Gensel (1 Yr)	jhgensel@gmail.com	(810) 339-0764
1st Vice President	Kay McCullough (2 Yr)	birdieball@aol.com	(810) 635-9341
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Master Gardener Association Genesee County

Websites

MGAGCM website-<u>www.geneseecountymg.org</u> MGAGCM Facebook-<u>www.facebook.com/groups/216904628327310/</u> MMGA, Inc. website-<u>www.michiganmastergardener.org</u> MMGA, Inc. Facebook- www.facebook.com/MichiganMG/

Events for MGAGCM Members:

Jan. 20: Garden Risk Management – Micah Hutchison and Anna Williams [via Zoom only] (1 hr. Cont. education credit)

Feb. 17: Functional Gardening: Common Plants and Herbs for Tea – with Stephanie Stoneburg (in person AND via Zoom) cancelled because of weather and substituted with the following: Urban Gardening 101: Soils and Water w/ Barslund Judd & Micah Hutchison thru Edible Flint (via Zoom)

Mar. 17: Functional Gardening: Common Plants and Herbs for Tea – Stephanie Stoneburg (Her slides were shared.)

Ap. 21: The Impact of Global Climate Change on Pollinators – with Terry Ryan Kane

May 19: Color and Texture in the Spring Garden – Glen Pace

June 13 & 16-17 Master Gardener College – Mon. June 13 is virtual & Thurs./Fri. (June 16-17) is in person at MSU

June 16: Composting – Amy Freeman

July 24: Picnic at Crossroad Village – It starts at noon.

Aug. 7: Garden Tour of the Swartz Creek area

Aug. 18: Every Native Plant Has A Story – Angela Nelson

Sept. 15: Teaching Science to Kids in the Garden Even When You Don't Think You Can - Darren Bagley

Oct. 8: Fall into Spring Conference - Mott Community College Events Center

Oct. 20: Gardens Rich With Color Are Full of Bulbs - Rebecca Finneran

Nov. 17: Holiday Party at Burton Senior Center if circumstances allow

2022 MGAGCM meetings and or presentations are held on the third Thursday of each month at: Burton Senior Center 3410 S Grand Traverse Street Burton, MI 48529 (except December & unless otherwise noted)

Project ID/Focus Areas are no longer available nor required when entering your education hours in Volunteer Central so be complete in your description when entering the hours in the system. Include the name of the speaker and his/her topic. Also, include where it took place.

Open Gate Garden Club Garden Tour

One of our MGAGCM members informed us that the Open Gate Garden Club in Fenton is having their Garden Tour on Sunday, July 24, 2022, from 10 a.m. - 4 p.m. <u>This link goes to their Facebook page with additional information.</u>