

Michigan State University Extension
Genesee County Master Gardener Newsletter



DOWN TO EARTH

Volume V, Issue II

2/1/05

Inside this issue:

Dates to Remember	1
Educational Opportunities	1
Volunteer Opportunities	3
Feature Article	4
Gardener to Gardener	5
Thymely Tips	6
Master Gardener Tidbits	6
Questions & Answer	7
Minutes	8

*MSU Extension—
Genesee County is an
education agency funded
jointly by Genesee
County through the
Board of Commissioners,
by the state through
Michigan State Univer-
sity, and federally
through the United
States Department of Ag-
riculture.*

**MICHIGAN STATE
UNIVERSITY
EXTENSION**
**GENESEE
COUNTY**

Dates to Remember



February 17, Master Gardener Association meeting, 6:30 pm. Our speaker will be Anita Erskine and her topic will be Prairie Plants in Your Perennial Garden.

February 19, Master Gardener Volunteer Tool Order deadline.

March 4-12, Agriculture and Natural Resources Week, MSU. For more information, contact (517) 353-3175 x 217 or www.canr.msu.edu/anrweek. See horticultural programs under Educational Opportunities.

March 5, Stuck on Gardening Conference, Kent County MSUE. See information under Educational Opportunities.

March 10, Master Gardener Volunteer Spring Bulb Fundraiser order deadline.

March 10, Plants of Distinction 2005, by MSUE Genesee, Holiday Inn, Gateway Centre. Any questions, call (810) 244-8510.

March 19, Isabella Master Gardener Conference, Spring into Gardening, Mt. Pleasant. See information under Educational Opportunities.

June 20-22, Master Gardener Summer Conference, MSU, East Lansing. Plan ahead!

July 24-27, International Master Gardener Conference, Saskatoon, Canada. Visit www.Master-Gardener2005.usask.ca

August 5, MSU Garden Day, MSU, East Lansing. For more information, contact (517) 355-5191 x 1139.

October 1, Fall into Spring Conference, Genesee Master Gardener Volunteer Program. Hold the date!

Educational Opportunities

Genesee Master Gardener Association meetings in 2005. All meetings start at 6:30 pm and will be held at the MSUE-Genesee office. For more information, contact Terry McLean at (810) 244-8530.***

- **Daylilies,** March 17, Ric Adams
- **Those Darn Bugs,** April 21, Howard Russell
- **Why Not a Pond Without a Liner?,** May 19, Darren Bagley

Master Gardener Winter 2005 classes will begin on January 12, 2005 and end April 6. The following is the current schedule:

- 2/2) Turf – Frank
- 2/9) Woody Orn. – Wilson
- 2/16) Flowers – Burrows

(Continued on page 2)

Educational Opportunities cont.

(Continued from page 1)

- 2/23) IPM/Diagnostics - McLean
- 3/2) Small Fruit - Burrows
- 3/9) Tree Fruit - Tritten
- 3/16) Indoor Plants - Richards
- 3/23) Vegetables - Heilig
- 3/30) Household Pests - Voyle
- 4/06) Vol. Orient. - McLean/Wilson

Current Master Gardeners or trainees wishing to audit the Winter 2005 Master Gardener classes, please note:

- Check with Terry at (810) 244-8530 to see if space is available.
- Educational credit may be granted for recertification purposes only. They can not be used towards advanced certification.***

MSUE Genesee MG Volunteer

Program is sponsoring an Advanced Design Workshop, a day long immersion course. This course requires the Intro to Garden Design course as a prerequisite, and will take place on Saturday, February 26, 9 am to 5 pm, Genesee MSUE Office. Cost for the workshop is \$75, and includes lunch. The snow date is March 12. For more information, contact Terry at 810-244-8530.***

Saturday AM Gardener, B109 Plant & Soil Sciences Bldg, MSU, East Lansing. All classes will be from 9 am - 11 am unless otherwise noted. For more information, contact Ann Hancock at (517) 355-5191, ext 348 or go to www.hrt.msu.edu/outreach/sm120.htm.*** (craft classes 1/2 credit)

- **Special Design Series by Dr. Bob Schutzki**, Tuesdays, Feb. 1, 8 and 15, 2005, 6:30 - 8:30 pm. Cost: \$90
- **Pruning Wisteria**, March 26, 2005, Session 1 9-10:30 am; Session 2 10:45 am-noon. Cost: \$25
- **Let's Start Our Garden**, April 16, 9-11 am. Cost: \$40.

Hidden Lakes Garden Center, 6280 W. Munger Rd., Tipton. For more information, call (517) 431-2060.*** (craft classes 1/2 credit)

- **Orchids**, February 5, 2-4 pm. Cost: \$16
- **Valentine Flower Arrangement**, February 12, 10 am-12 noon. Cost: \$24.
- **Earth Pond-Construction and Maintenance**, February 19, 2-4 pm. Cost: \$18.

Michigan Master Gardener Association, St. Clair County Winter Lecture Series, Port Huron Municipal Office Center Auditorium, 100 McMorrin Blvd., Port Huron 7 - 9 pm. Ticket series is \$45.00 or single tickets \$12.50 each. For more information call (810) 385-3289.***

- **Tough Plants for Northern Gardens**, February 8, Felder Rushing.
- **Woody Plants**, March 8, Steven Nikkila.
- **Perennial Ground Covers**, April 12, Pam Palecheck.

Weed Management Strategies in Lakes and Ponds, presented by Shiawassee County Extension on February 16, in Owosso. Pre-registration fee is \$5 per person by the deadline of February 9th. After February 9th or at the door, the fee is \$10 per person. For more information, call (989) 743-2251.***

Agriculture and Natural Resources Week at Michigan State University, March 4-12, 2005. Many workshops, seminars, and conferences, including these workshops sponsored by the Master Gardener Volunteer Program:

- **Introduction to Garden Design**, March 8.
- **Advanced Garden Design I**, March 9

- **A Garden Variety**, March 10
The conference held on March 8 is the same that was held here in Genesee County in January. Other conferences of interest to gardeners include the Michigan Wildflower Conference, Michigan Herb Associates Conference, Michigan Horticulture Therapy Conference, and Michigan Gladiolus Society, and many, many more! For complete ANR week information go to the website: www.canr.msu.edu/anrweek or pick up the free ANR week guidebook available now at the MSU Extension office.***

Stuck on Gardening, Kent County MSUE, March 5th. Conference flyer is available online at: web4.msue.msu.edu/msuewc/kent/document.cfm?documentID=1264. Registration deadline is March 1st. Cost: \$60. For more information, call (616) 336-3265.***

Spring into Gardening Conference, Isabella County, March 19th. Cost: \$45. Conference flyer is available online at www.isabellacounty.org/dept/msue/flyers/sigregister05.pdf. For more information, contact Tracey Knack at knackt@msue.msu.edu or (989) 772-0911 x 215.***

ForMar Arboretum Classes, 2142 N. Genesee Rd., Burton. For more information, contact (810) 789-8568.*** (craft classes count 1/2 credit)

- **Bird & Butterfly Gardening**, February 9, 7:00 p.m. Roxanne Gabriel, from WOJO's Garden Splendors. \$7.00 per person.
- **Tree Pruning**, March 5 10:00 am. Brian VanPatten. \$7.00 per person.

(Continued on page 3)

Volunteer Opportunities

Our Genesee Master Gardener Association is looking for a new MSUE Landscape Demonstration Gardens chairperson for 2005. Primary responsibilities include coordinating several work dates a year (spring, before the garden tour, and fall) to maintain the educational gardens surrounding the Genesee MSUE office, as well as the turf plots along the west side of the building. For more information, contact current landscape demonstration co-chair, Roxanne Brunger at (810) 732-5573, or Terry McLean at (810) 244-8530.

Our Grow Lab program is thriving, with 19 labs out in Genesee County schools, shepherded by Master Gardener Volunteers. Currently, Pierce school in Flint needs a shepherd. Grow Lab chairperson Carol Groat has requested donations of small pots (3", 4" sizes) for repotting projects. She is also looking for donations of pond plants for one of the labs. You can drop them off at the MSU Extension office, or contact Carol or Dave Groat directly at (810) 695-0881 or davidwgroat@aol.com

Master Gardener Volunteers are needed to volunteer at educational outreach booths through the spring.

The events, and dates, are as follows:

- **Community Beautification Leadership Conference**, At U of M Flint, Saturday, March 5, 9 am-2 pm. One 5 hour shift, or two 2.5 hour shifts, minimum of 2 per shift. Seed distribution to community gardeners.
- **Children's Services Fair** at Courtland Center in Burton Wednesday, March 23rd, 10 am to 6 pm. Two four hour shifts, 10 am-2 pm, 2-6 pm, minimum of 2 per shift. Gardening crafts with kids
- **Earth Day Celebration** at Mott Community College, Saturday, April 23, 9am-2pm. One 5 hour shift, or two 2.5 hour shifts, with a minimum of two per shift. Environmentally sound gardening practices.

For more information, contact Terry at (810) 244-8530.

Educational Opportunities cont.

(Continued from page 2)

- **Nature's Watercolors**, April 6 7:00 p.m. Presented by artist Patt Heinz. Pre-registration required. \$25.00 per person.
- **Emerald Ash Borer**, April 9 10:00 a.m. Pre-registration **NOT** required. \$7.00 per person.
- **Stepped Trellis Workshop**, April 13 7:00 p.m. Pre-registration required. \$42.00 per person.
- **Bonsai Workshop**, April 16, 10:00 a.m. Class limited to the first 20 participants. Presented by Mark and Becky Hanner of Stone Garden Nursery. Pre-registration required. \$27.00 per person.
- **Daylily Presentation**, April 27 7:00 p.m. Presenter, Rick Adams, Pre-registration **NOT** required. \$7.00 per person.

Flint Public Library, 1026 E.

Kearsley St., Flint. Admission is free. For more information, contact (810) 232-7111.***

- **Beginning Flower Gardening**, Angela Strong, MG, February 12, 10:00 am.
- **Container Gardening**, Nancy Dillingham, MG, March 12, 10:00 am.

Heavenly Scent Herb Farm classes, 13730 White Lake Rd., Fenton. For more information, call (810) 629-9208.***

- **Fantastic Foliages**, April 9, 10:30 - 12:00
- **Great Perennials of Heavenly Scent**, April 16, 10:30-12:00

Macomb Bloomin' Sunflowers/MSUE is sponsoring a 6 day/5 night Garden Travel Tour to the Garden Gems of Pennsylvania and Delaware June 5-10, 2005. Cost of the tour is \$819. For more information, call Pat Cencek, at (586) 795-4601.***

***Classes count for full educational credit.

*Classes count for half educational credit.

EDITOR'S NOTE: Certified Master Gardener Volunteers are required to have 5 educational credit hours annually (along with 15 volunteer hours) to recertify and remain active in the program. Any 5-hour combination of these credits is acceptable!

Feature Article

FEED THE BIRDS

My gardens are more than just a place for plants. They are a refuge for me, for butterflies, for bees, for bugs and for the birds that eat the bugs. And if you are like me, you may grow native plants in your gardens that attract the butterflies, the bees, the bugs and the birds. Since we have invited these guests into our yards and hearts, it is our job as good hosts to see that they have enough to eat.

February is “**Feed the Birds**” month in much of North America. And what great timing! As you go through a cold winter, you can help the wintering birds that are going through it with you.

There are three main factors to consider when you choose where to place a feeder:

1. There must be easy year-round access. You’ll have to clean and fill the feeder in all types of weather.
2. There will always be debris under a bird feeding station, such as discarded shells, bird droppings, and so on. Choose a location where this can be easily cleaned up.
3. If there are squirrels in your neighborhood, you’ll want to place the feeder where they can’t reach it. Sure, they’re cute but they won’t share their food with the birds. The best solution for this problem is a pole-mounted feeder (the pole should be at least 10 feet from the nearest tree limb or trunk) that is either “squirrel-proof” or protected by a baffle.

The first priority for the seed is to keep it dry. Seed will spoil quickly when it gets damp or wet and can breed diseases like salmonella. Look for feeders with some type of roof or dome to keep out direct rain water. Be sure there are drainage holes in the bottom of both the seed hopper and any seed tray. Clean the bird feeder regularly. How often will depend on the weather and type of feeder you’ve chosen.

Birds are notoriously picky eaters and they will methodically discard most of the seeds in a seed mix to get to their favorite. To prevent a great deal of waste, choose only types of food that will attract the birds you want. The US Fish and Wildlife Service recommends putting out separate feeders for each food. Why not give these a try? With most birds that visit tube and house-type feeders, the hands-down favorite is black oil sunflower seeds. A tube feeder with sunflower seeds will attract goldfinches, woodpeckers, chickadees, and nuthatches. If you add a tray, you’re likely to also see cardinals, jays and finches.

A bonus: sunflowers seeds are NOT the first pick of crows and starlings. Doves and several types of sparrows enjoy millet served in a house or platform feeder.

A hanging suet feeder will be a treat for woodpeckers, as well a chickadees, wrens, nuthatches, and cardinals. Starlings also like suet but you can discourage them by using a suet feeder with access only at the bottom. Starlings are reluctant to perch upside down but chickadees and

woodpeckers don’t mind at all. There is no research to indicate that backyard bird feeding has a negative effect on wild bird populations. In fact, it may help in many situations, such as when natural food sources are scarce or birds are migrating. Once you start feeding through, you should keep it up throughout the year.

What specific birds you attract and feed will vary depending on your location and the treats you offer. You can look in a bird field guide to determine which species are likely to be in your area and then look up what foods are their favorites.

So get out there and
feed the birds!

*Debi Goulet
MG '04*

Gardener to Gardener

Gardening is good for your Health

We have made it through another holiday season of family, fun and food. Which leads us into the new year feeling a little stressed, sad (lack of sun) and heavier than we were the season before.

Turn on the television at any time of day and you'll be bombarded with ads for pills, powders, drinks, and exercise gizmos that promise to help you shed excess pounds and feel happier or be healthier. But before you shell out \$50 for the "Chub-Buster 5000", get out your gardening gloves. Better health can be as close as your backyard.

Weed Away Your Weight

Spring and summer gardening can be a great whole-body workout to shed extra winter weight. Weight-bearing activities such as digging and lifting can help build muscle and bone, and aerobic activities such as raking, mowing and hoeing can burn calories. A 180-pound person will use 202 calories during 30 minutes of digging, spading and tilling. *Even 30 minutes of cutting the grass on a riding mower burns 101 calories.

*Other calorie burners:

Raking (30 minutes) 162
Planting trees (30 minutes) 182
Trimming shrubs manually (30 minutes) 182
Laying sod (30 minutes) 202
Weeding (30 minutes) 182
Turning compost (30 minutes) 250

As with any exercise, it's important to warm up and stretch before you begin. Vary your activities to avoid overusing specific muscles. To prevent back injuries, bend from the knees when you rake, hoe or lift heavy objects such as bags of potting soil.

You'll also want to protect yourself from excess sun exposure. Wear a hat and use a sunscreen with an SPF of at least 15. Drink adequate fluids to avoid becoming dehydrated, and retreat to someplace cooler if you feel yourself getting overheated.

Dig for Your Bones

There's even more good news for green thumbs. According to a 2000 University of Arkansas study that compared many forms of exercise, yard work is most significant for preventing osteoporosis in women age 50 and older. Researchers compared yard work to bicycling, aerobics, dancing and weight training.

Yard work and weight training were the only two activities shown to be significant for maintaining healthy bone mass.

For some, the fruits of your labor, the edible rewards, may be the best part of gardening. A summer's bounty of fruits and vegetables contains fiber that may reduce your risk for colon cancer, as well as antioxidants and phytochemicals that may reduce your risk for heart disease and some cancers.

Fruits and vegetables are also low in fat, which can help with weight

loss. The American Dietetic Association recommends that adults get at least three to five servings of vegetables, and two to four servings of fruits, each day.

Respite for the Stressed

For me, however, the best part is the time away from all the everyday demands. Gardening is time that allows me to tune into nature and zone out of the hectic happenings that surround me, which helps me to maintain my mental, physical and spiritual health.

*Deb Goulet
MG '04*

Master Gardener Tidbits

Master Gardeners and trainees will be able to enjoy AM Leonard professional tool catalog savings by joining in our MSUE group order. We pay only the actual UPS/Freight shipping rates. Check out their catalogs in the MG Hotline office or visit www.amlgardener.com. All orders will be charged the 6% Michigan sales tax on the discounted prices. **Orders need to be received by February 19, 2005 at one of the following:** MSU Extension Office or Debbie Collins, 1525 W. Rolston Rd, Linden, MI, 48451 or thegardenmaster@yahoo.com [subject "tools"] Any questions, call Debbie at (810) 735-7795. No phone orders please. Orders need to be picked up from the Collins' home within one week of confirmation unless other arrangements have been agreed upon. Please note the map on the back of the MSUE order forms in the Hotline.

Post Gardens is looking for people with garden experience to merchandise plants at area stores, April 1 - July 1. Must be available to work weekends. Contact information for the above positions: Email resumes: Gerbera962384215@cs.com Mail To: 6025 Beecher Rd, Flint MI 48532. FAX To: (810) 230-1361 ATTN: Jill Allen

Genesee MGA website is currently under development by MG Phil Downs. Phil would like information from project chairpersons about your projects. Contact Phil at pdowns@aol.com, or (810) 687-3485.

Global Releaf of MI 15th Annual Tree Sale is offering bare-root trees specially selected for their ability to prosper in rural and urban settings.

All trees are bare-root, single or multi-stemmed, three to six feet in

height, depending on species. The tree list for 2005 includes: Sugar maple, Red maple, Swamp white oak, Greenspire linden, Whitespire birch, Allegheny serviceberry, Japanese tree lilac, Redbud, Aristocrat pear, Pagoda dogwood, Red flowering crabapple, White flowering crabapple, Honeycrisp apple and Stella cherry. Also new for 2005, a flowering shrub: Blue Muffin Viburnum, as well as Endless Summer Hydrangea (Cost is \$18 each for the shrubs, five or more, \$15 each). Cost for all trees is \$28 each, six or more, \$23 each. Prices include MI 6% sales tax. Pre-payment is necessary, by check, money order or credit card (payable to Global ReLeaf of Michigan). Orders will be taken through April 9th. Order pick up is April 23, at ForMar Nature Preserve in Burton. For more information, call 1-800-642-7353, or online at <http://www.globalreleaf.org/> Order forms are available online, or at the MSUE-Genesee office.

Our sincere condolences to the families of Floyd and Betty Butcher on the death of Floyd's mother; Trudy Brewer on the death of her father; and Dean and Pat Bemis on the death of Pat's father. Our thoughts and prayers go out to all of you.

Thymely Tips

PLAN AHEAD

Extension bulletin E-824(1)

Start early by buying seed. Experienced gardeners buy most of their seed through seed catalogs. They offer more varieties and tell you which varieties are best for canning, freezing or eating raw.

- Jan-Feb: seed catalogs arrive
- Feb-Mar: order seeds
- Mar-Apr: prepare soil as soon as it is dry enough
- Apr: plant cool season crops. Check local planting dates.
- May: plant warm season crops after danger of frost has passed.

Plan your garden on paper first.

Your plan should include:

1. Arrangement of crops and length of rows
2. Spacing between rows and between plants in rows
3. Varieties to be planted
4. Planting dates

Where to Put Your Garden

Locate the garden near your home so you can work in it when you have a few minutes. It is exciting when you are close enough to watch it grow.

Locate near a good supply of water. Plant tall crops on the north side of the garden so they won't shade the shorter vegetables.

Sunny, level land is best. But gentle

slopes will do. South facing slopes are the sunniest. Don't worry if you don't have much space. An area as small as a compact car can be more fun and fruitful than a large garden. If you don't have a yard, use your imagination...try lettuce and greens in a flower box or tomatoes and peppers in pots on the porch.

Questions and Answers

Q.) *What are some of my plant choices for attracting birds to my yard?*

A.) Those that produce seeds, berries or fruit, and those that provide shelter. Sheltering evergreens and shrubby thickets will provide cover as well as food for birds. The following are fruit-bearing trees, shrubs and vines that are attractive to birds: Virginia creeper, Boston ivy, Chokecherry, Spicebush, Barberry, Black or Yellow Birch, Hackberry, Dogwoods (shrub type), White-flowering dogwood, Cornelian cherry, American hawthorn, English hawthorn.

For a more complete list, see pages 70, 71 in the 2002 Master Gardener Core Manual Supplement.

Poetry Corner

Nature is not a place to visit, it is home. - *Gary Snyder*

To dig in one's own earth, with one's own spade, does life hold anything better? -*Beverly Nichols*

Give me strength to walk the soft earth, a relative to all that is. -*Black Elk*

Forget not that the earth delights to feel your bare feet and the winds long to play with your hair. -*Kahlil Gibran*

It is only when we are aware of the earth and of the earth as poetry that we truly live. - *Henry Beston, 1935, Herbs and the Earth*

Sincerely,

Terry McLean
Extension Horticulture Agent

Michigan State University Extension programs and materials are open to all without regard to race, color, national origin, gender, religion, age, disability, political beliefs, sexual orientation, marital status, or family status. Michigan State University, U.S. Department of Agriculture and counties cooperating, Michigan State University is an affirmative-action equal opportunity institution. Accommodations for persons with disabilities may be requested by calling Terry McLean at 810-244-8530 to ensure sufficient time to make arrangements. Requests received will be met when possible.

MSU Extension—Genesee County
G-4215 W. Pasadena
Flint, MI 48504-2376
(810) 244-8500
Office Hours: 8:00 am—5:00 pm
Monday through Friday

Check our website:

[Http://www.msue.msu.edu/genesee](http://www.msue.msu.edu/genesee)

State Master Gardener web page:
www.msue.msu.edu/mastergardener

This newsletter prepared by: Debi Goulet,
Terry McLean and Janet Crockett.