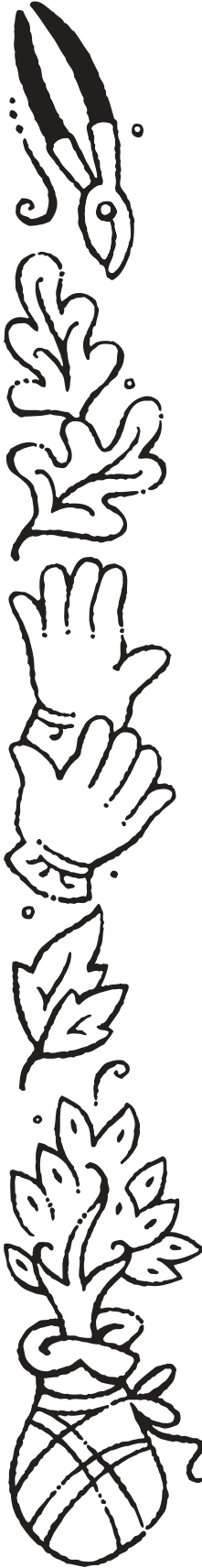


BUDS & BUGS

Volume 5, Issue 3

Huron County Master Gardener Newsletter



FREE RESOURCES AVAILABLE

Each year during the growing season, the MSUE office receives copies of all the editions of the Crop Advisory Team (CAT) Alert newsletters from MSU. Those of you who have volunteered in the office probably have read through several of them to find answers to homeowners' questions. If you would like to have access yourself to the CAT Alert information without having visit the office, sign up for email notification when new issues are posted on the Internet. This means you will get a brief email announcement each time they put a new issue on the web site. To sign up for the email notification, visit:

Vegetable

http://www.ipm.msu.edu/receiving_e_v.htm

Fruit

http://www.ipm.msu.edu/receiving_e_fr.htm

Field Crops

http://www.ipm.msu.edu/receiving_e.htm

Landscape

http://www.ipm.msu.edu/receiving_e_l.htm

Greenhouse

http://www.ipm.msu.edu/receiving_e_grn.htm

New Agriculture Network is a new resource, only available on-line, and is aimed at organic and those interested in transitioning to organic. For information about the Network visit:
<http://www.ipm.msu.edu/new-ag.htm>; for email notification, <http://www.ipm.msu.edu/new-ag/email.htm>

These newsletters will provide you with current information on timely topics, plus the latest insect and disease alerts in the state and what to do about them:

If you have trouble signing up for the emails, please let us know which editions you want. We'll help you get signed up. ANYONE can sign up for the emails.

April 2004

MSU EXTENSION HURON COUNTY



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Plants Slow to Break Dormancy or Is It Alive?

By White Flower Farm

After being confined indoors all winter, gardeners are understandably eager to greet and admire every new shoot and swelling bud, every hint that spring has really arrived. We're thrilled to discover the early bloomers, the Witch Hazels (*Hamamelis*), golden Winter Aconite (*Eranthis*), and gleaming Snowdrops (*Galanthus*) that flower despite late frosts and snow. We've seen Lungworts (*Pulmonaria*) produce tiny flowers when the first stem is scarcely an inch tall, so eager are these perennials to bask in the sun.

An entirely different group contains the plant kingdom's equivalent of adolescents who are still in bed hours after the rest of the world is bustling.

These perennials, bulbs, shrubs, and vines are slow to break dormancy. This isn't necessarily a bad thing, because it's a habit that protects the plants from damage by late frosts. However, it's a habit that does encourage damage by humans, as gardeners begin poking, looking for signs of life.

We know from bitter experience how heart-breaking it is to destroy an unlabeled mature *Platycodon* with a careless thrust of a spade in early spring, because it looked as though there was an empty spot in the border. Perhaps we can help you avoid similar losses. Here are the plants we've found to be late to greet spring.

PERENNIALS:

Unless tucked into a protected spot, perennials at the northern edge of their hardiness zone tend to emerge later than we might otherwise expect.

The last plants to emerge in spring include Leadwort (*Ceratostigma*), Milkweed (*Asclepias*), False Indigo (*Baptisia*), Ferns, Balloon Flower (*Platycodon*), and Hibiscus, including the shrub, Rose of Sharon (*Hibiscus syriacus*). Ferns sometimes don't emerge until July. *Primula viallii* is the last *Primula* to bloom, and also usually the last to sprout, so it can be a bit disconcerting if you have planted a variety of Primroses and one appears to have gone missing.

Bloodroot (*Sanguinaria*) can be tardy the first year after planting. Lady's Slipper Orchids (*Cypripedium*), Solomon's Seal (*Polygonatum*) and False Solomon's Seal (*Smilacina*) sometimes don't appear above ground at all the first year after planting. However, they're establish-

ing an astonishing network of roots and will be all the bigger and more beautiful the following year. That's not always much consolation the first year, though, we admit.

If it's been a very wet winter, or if they're planted in a spot that's too moist, *Astilboides* and *Darmera* can also be painfully slow to awaken.

BULBS:

The first year after planting, spring-blooming bulbs often delay their appearance. Daffodils (*Narcissus*) in particular often bloom weeks later than their brethren who've been in the garden for a couple of years. After the first season, the biological clock recalibrates to North American time.

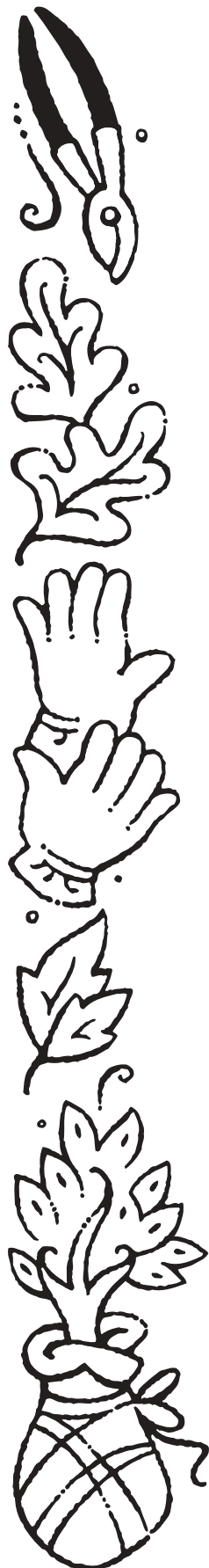
Lilies can also be slow the first year. It's all too easy to behead the bulbs when all the growth is still below ground, so mark the place where they're planted, and exercise caution during spring cleanup. *Lilium martagon* sometimes fail to appear at all the first year, as bulbs devote all their energy to establishing a root system.

Crinodonna and Tuberose (*Polianthes tuberosa*), tender summer bloomers, are often slow.

SHRUBS and VINES:

Sweet Pepperbush (*Clethra alnifolia*) is among the last shrubs to leaf out. Many North American natives, such as *Clethra*, apparently found some evolutionary advantage to being late to awaken. Late frosts often spoil the display of trees such as Magnolias and Apricots, and *Clethra* avoids that fate. It's not a native, but *Clerodendron* (*Harlequin Glory Bower*) can also be slow. Talking about this subject in the office generated some interesting differences of opinion about Butterfly Bush (*Buddleia*). Some of us find it slow in some years, and others find it prompt; which just goes to show that location (how much protection the site affords, and which direction it faces) has a profound impact on emergence and bloom time. At the northern end of their range in Zones 5 or 6, *Buddleia*, *Clerodendron*, *Hydrangea arborescens* 'Annabelle' and *Caryopteris X clandonensis* 'Dark Knight' may die back to the ground—prune off the deadwood, and the plants will break from the stubs that remain.

The first year after planting, *Clematis* may also be slow to emerge in spring.



Perennial Plant Sale

May 15, 2004

Setup will be May 14

Inspection
will be done
Saturday
morning by
the MDA.

Bring lots
of plants!
We had
more
customers
than plants
last year.

*We're having our banner
downtown again. Posters are
available to be displayed. Stop
by to pick up yours for bulletin
boards at grocery stores,
churches, libraries, grain
elevators, nurseries and
greenhouses (when they open),
and anywhere else you can
think of.*

When you know what
you're bringing, call the
MSUE office so we can
have information sheets
printed up.

Educational Opportunities

The Horticulture Gardening Institute (HGI) is an innovative organization that offers event-centered, on-line learning opportunities for Master Gardeners and other gardening enthusiasts. (FYI, I am the co-executive director of HGI). HGI is rapidly growing and we have two exciting volunteer opportunities for Master Gardeners. If you don't know what HGI is all about log onto: <http://www.gardeninginstitute.com/>

Opportunity #1: Member of the HGI Master Gardener Review Team: If you love gardening, especially container gardening, enjoy and are good at using your computer and want to be part of an exciting team of MG volunteers this opportunity is for you.

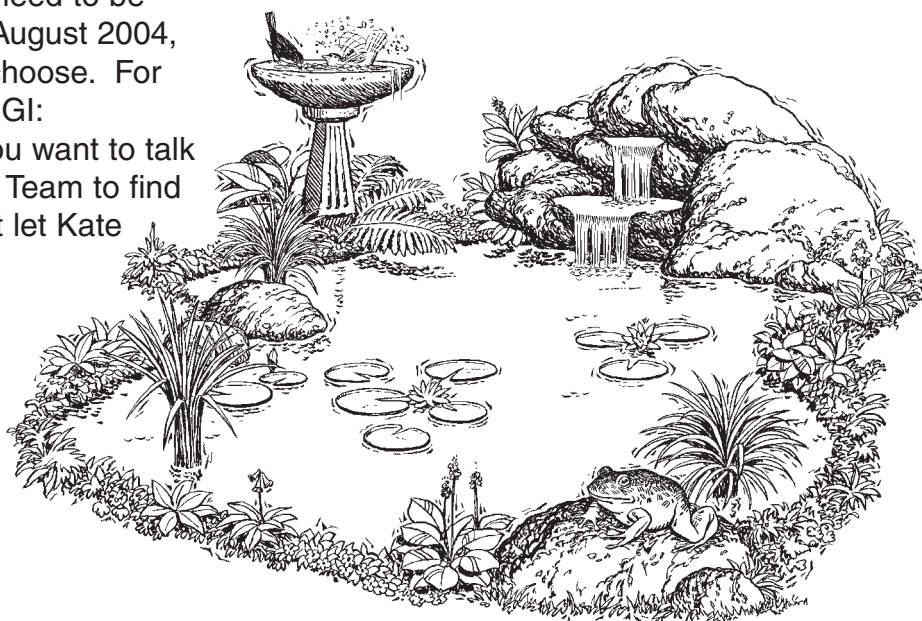
The on-line course currently being offered by HGI is The Art and Science of Container Gardening and it has about 250 participants from around the country. In addition, there are several upcoming events that will add greatly to this number. Each of the course participants is required to submit plans for container gardens, which need to be reviewed by a member of our HGI Review Team. The reviewers must review the plans and give feedback to the participant within 3-5 business days. You will need to be willing to commit to the team until August 2004, though you can stay longer if you choose. For more information contact Kate at HGI: kate@gardeninginstitute.com. If you want to talk to a current member of the Review Team to find out what this is really all about, just let Kate know.

Opportunity #2: Assist in the development of our newest on-line program, Herbaceous Perennials: Identification, Culture and Garden Attributes, by Allan Armitage.

I need MGs who are passionate about perennials, have Allan's book (or are willing to purchase it), "Herbaceous Perennial Plants - A Treatise on their Identification, Culture and Garden Attributes", who like research, making up quiz questions and doing other stuff with perennial plant information. Allan has given me a list of 57 genera (with almost 200 species), from Acanthus to Veronica and we need you to help us trim that list to 40 genera. Then we need to come up with quiz questions about the genera and species that Allan will talk about in the course. For more information about this opportunity please contact me at: mcllella3@msu.edu

Helping People Grow

Mary McLellan
State Master Gardener Coordinator
Michigan State University
422 Plant & Soil Sciences Building
East Lansing, MI 48824-1325



From Jim's Desk

Esteemed Huron Master Gardeners!

We've almost done it again; beat the odds, that is, and made it through til spring. Have ya ever wondered how they garden up in Anchorage? I don't think I could take it! I have a friend who has recently moved back to her family farm in Frankenmuth after having raised her family in Anchorage. I'm thinking that she could add some real color to one of our meetings by sharing with us what it's like to be a gardener in Alaska. ...So I'm throwing this thought out to you as a test!!! If you're reading these newsletters and would like to affirm the efforts of those involved in making them happen (including to a minor extent, yours truly), please call our office and tell Carol what a wonderful job she does and that you think it'd be great to hear about gardening in the Artic!!! We'll see if you pass this test.

Now for business, it is coming to that time of year that we need to get the "spring" back into us. We have some of our perennial (but fun) projects coming up. It's time to be planning for our Perennial Plant Sale -- both in terms of what you can make available for the sale and how you can help promote it! At last count we had 5 candidates signed up for the Master Gardener series, this number needs to be at least 15 for us to justify going ahead with the series.....so, we really need your help to get enough people enrolled to move ahead with the series.

Ok, now for the thanks part, many of you have really jumped in and worked hard on the MG projects; the Spring Into Gardening Conference, for example, couldn't have been possible without your dedicated efforts. Your dedication has had a profound contribution to our communities!!

James E. Mantey

Extension Agricultural Agent

Master Gardener Advisor

WINTERING OVER GERANIUMS

I had success with wintering over geraniums and would like to pass the information on to other Master Gardeners.

Last fall my geraniums were especially healthy with large and numerous blooms when a killer frost was forecast. I took out a cardboard packing box, pulled out the geraniums (with my husband's help because I had a broken wrist), shook off the dirt, stacked them in the box and had my husband put them in the crawl space under our home. Our garage is heated and I knew that space was not an option.

The middle of June my husband went into the crawl space and discovered the forgotten geraniums. I looked them over and decided three of them were dead. The others showed a little leaf of green. I trimmed them right down to the appearing green, planted them in flower beds, watered them and viola' they bloomed profusely in spite of our unusual growing season this year.

Denise Pattison

Note from Carol:

The online recordkeeping program now has a feature where I can automatically email every MG on the system who has an email address. The tricky part is that it needs to be **CORRECT** and **CURRENT!**

I'm requesting each MG to email their email address to huron@msue.msu.edu so your file can be updated. I've been emailing several of you (and that works great and saves postage) but there are several addresses on file that are no longer valid.

Your cooperation is appreciated!

NOTE:

Sally Suttle has waterpond goldfish that are looking for a new home. Anyone interested in them should give her a call (989-871-4763 before 2:30).



Calendar of Events

Call the numbers listed for times, fees and a more detailed description of the event

Thumb Rose Society 989-269-7154

April 5 -- Paul Begick of Begick's Nursery and Garden Center in Bay City will be the featured speaker talking about "Companion Plants for your Yard." Bad Axe Intermediate School Cafeteria, 404 Hatchet Drive, 7:00 p.m. No charge. No reservations needed.

Bloomers Garden Club 989-479-6347

Women's Farm & Garden 989-479-9075

MSU Extension, Bad Axe 989-269-9949
Tuesday, April 6, 2004 at 7 p.m.
Master Gardener Meeting
MSUE Conference Room, 99 W. Soper Rd.
Suite B, Bad Axe

Huron County Master Gardener Garden Walk
July 10, 2004 989-269-9949

Bay County Master Gardeners 989-895-4026
bay@msue.msu.edu

April 17 "**Designing the Mixed Garden**"

8:30 a.m. - 4:00 p.m., Bay County Community Center, Veteran's Memorial Park (800 John F. Kennedy Drive), Bay City. 6 hours of education credit. \$75, includes lunch. April 12 deadline. Call for an application form.

May 15 "**Advanced Garden Design**"

8:30 a.m. - 4:00 p.m., Delta College Planetarium, 100 Center Avenue, downtown Bay City. 6 hours of education credit. (You must have completed one of the following introductory programs: "Designing with Perennials" or "Designing the Mixed Garden") \$75, includes lunch. May 7 deadline. Call for an application form.

Master Gardener Program
MSU Extension - Huron County
99 W. Soper Road, Suite B
Bad Axe, MI 48413-8272