

MASTER GARDENER HOTLINES

Lenawee County Master Gardener Association Newsletter

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Lenawee County Master Gardener Association 2007 Officers

President - Roger Gaede (517) 592-2249
Vice President - Debra Oliver (517) 456-7778
Secretary - Robin Sloan
Treasurer - Donna Murphy (517) 431-2858

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Lenawee County Master Gardeners cordially welcome all Master Gardeners to join our monthly meetings. It's a great way to get gardening tips and get involved in your community. Meetings are held the second Thursday of the month at 7 p.m. in the Visitor Center at Hidden Lake Gardens (unless otherwise noted).

NEXT MEETING - Thursday, January 11, 2007 will be our annual agenda-planning meeting, so bring your ideas and join in.

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

Volunteers are needed for Tour Guides, Gate House Attendants, Gardeners & Grounds Helpers, and for Special Events. Please phone Karen Gentry at 517-431-2060 or e-mail her at gentry@hlg.msu.edu to register for any of these classes or to become a volunteer.



FROM THE GARDEN CORNER

Happy 2007 Master Gardeners! I hope you all had a good holiday. The following information is researched for a friend who was having a problem growing cilantro. Since I've had the same problem in the past, I thought it might be of interest to others. I wish I was a Master Gardener who knew all the answers automatically, but unfortunately that's not the case. I still have a lot to learn, and I'm working on it!

Cilantro or coriander. Coriander or cilantro. If it seems like they are used interchangeably...they are! Why? Because they are the same. So what's the history of this popular spice? Cilantro has a long culinary history; it has been used in baking and cooking as far back as the Egyptians. Coriander seeds have even been found in Egyptian tombs, and writings about coriander appear in Sanskrit dating from around 1500 BC.

Aromatic and full of citrus flavor, cilantro is a versatile herb that is a member of the carrot family and can be used dried or fresh. When the seeds from the coriander plant are harvested and dried they become the dried spice coriander. The stems and leaves are then left and become the bright green fresh herb known as cilantro. Cilantro, also known as Chinese or Mexican parsley, is a staple

herb of both Asian and Mexican cuisine. Coriander seed has no similarity in taste to cilantro leaf. Ground coriander is used in desserts as well as in curries, meat, and seafood dishes. Add it to stews and marinades for a distinctive Mediterranean flavor. I happen to love the flavor and fragrance of cilantro. Others in the family simply hate the taste.

Cilantro can be found in the produce section of your local supermarket. It is sold bunched and tied the same as parsley. You can easily tell the difference between cilantro and parsley by looking at the leaves and smelling the herb. The leaves of cilantro are wider than parsley and the scent is very aromatic. Cilantro is historically used in salsas, dips, dressings and sauces. You can even find Chinese recipes calling for Chinese parsley which is the same as cilantro.

When you bring cilantro home from the supermarket, place the bouquet in a glass of water with only the stems submerged. Loosely cover the green leaves with a plastic bag. This will keep the fresh flavor longer than storing the cilantro dry. Be sure to prepare your cilantro/coriander by crushing the leaves by hand or other tool you may have at your disposal. This serves to release the full bodied flavor and aroma. For the best result, add it to your dish near the end of the cooking cycle since cilantro does not hold up well to heat.

Cultivation of Cilantro / Coriander

Site: This herb thrives in damp, cool springs and hot, dry summers. It requires mostly sunshine but can be grown in morning sun and shade in the hot afternoon. Choose a site where soil is well-drained and amended with plenty of compost.

Propagation: Plant cilantro where you want it to grow. It quickly develops a deep taproot that doesn't respond well to transplanting. Sow seeds 1/2 inch deep after all danger of frost has passed. Cilantro is very short lived and will take a little bit of work in your herb garden. To ensure a steady supply of leaves, sow successive crops every three weeks until late summer. In containers, as in the ground, direct seeding is best. If you must have pot started plants from the nursery, be sure they're growing in peat pots that can go into the soil, leaving the roots undisturbed.

Growing: When plants emerge, thin them to 4 inches apart and mulch to conserve moisture and deter weeds. Keep a close eye on young plants to make sure they don't dry out. Once established, it needs just a little water. Like most herbs, cilantro performs well in containers, but choose pots that are at least 12 inches deep to accommodate the plant's taproot. Use potting soil enriched with compost and water regularly.

Harvesting: You can grow this Mediterranean native for its leaves, which are known as cilantro, or for its dried seeds, called coriander. To harvest Cilantro, you can begin cutting as soon as the plant is about 6" tall by removing the outer leaves and leaving the growing point intact for the new leaves to grow from. Or you can harvest entire plants when they're about 6 inches high if you want only the leaves. If the target you want is the seeds; wait until the seeds start to ripen (in late summer or early autumn). Then cut the plants off at the base and hang them upside down in paper bags to finish drying.

(Cited from Azhistory.com and culinaryherbguide.com.)

RAIN GARDENS

What is a rain garden?

A rain garden is a shallow depression, planted with native plants, designed to slow, capture, and infiltrate rain. Designed to drain water within a day, rain gardens serve as mosquito death traps, since mosquito eggs need more than 48 hours to grow into larvae. Native plants are drought-resistant, accustomed to our area's soils, and attract butterflies and birds.



Why do rain gardens matter?

The biggest cause of pollution in rivers (the source of our drinking water) is non-point source pollution. That's runoff from streets and lawns that carry pesticides, fertilizers, and oil from the storm drains to the streams. **Every drop of rain** that you keep on your property helps to keep our drinking water less polluted. Every drop matters. Every drop counts.

Rain gardens help reduce the amount of water that runs off your yard and into the sewer system, cutting down on the risk of sewer overflows and basement backups.

- Rain gardens prevent storm water from picking up pollution as it washes across yards, driveways and parking lots on the way to the nearest river or lake.
- Plants, roots, soils and sand from your garden cleanse and purify storm water as it soaks into the ground.
- Rain gardens can help recharge drinking water supplies and aquifers.
- They add beauty to your yard and neighborhood while providing valuable wildlife habitat.

Rain gardens can also be needed habitat for butterflies and birds. Monarch butterflies, for example, need specific plants for food as they migrate. See [Monarch Watch](#) for more ways to help. Since we have had so much rain, our lawn is simply soggy! Though it is not time for actual plantings, it's an opportune time for planning. Be wise and conserve our most valuable resource, water. (Cited from Milwaukee Metropolitan Sewerage District, www.mmsd.com/raingardens and 1000 Rain Gardens www.rainkc.com)

WINTER HONEY BEE ACTIVITY

My husband and son have been two years restoring a 1943 MB military Jeep from the junkyard. The old body is laying out in the edge of the field. The toolbox lid is stuck shut with honey. It has a hive of bees and lots of honeycomb. They sure like this warm December.



MEETING REVIEW

October

Members gathered at the Gardens for a fall leaf walk, collected leaves, and made imprints of the leaves on fabric.

November

Growing Plants Under Lights was presented to members and visitors by Jack Wikle. Jack uses standard 40-watt cool white fluorescent lights with plants nearly touching the tubes. Plants need 14-18 hours of light a day. It was suggested to purchase a grounded timer. Plants are potted in half sphagnum moss and half vermiculite. A gallon container cut down with holes punched in the bottom works well. Once the soil and plant are in the container, moisten the mix and water it well once until water runs out the bottom. Then place the whole thing in a sealed zip lock bag. Use rain water or water collected from the dehumidifier or air conditioner. It was suggested to not use hard water. Don't overuse fertilizer. It is better to use half as much twice as often. Jack advised to use one teaspoon in five gallons of water. Tall narrow containers work well since the shallower the container, the wetter it will be. For example, try using 3 ounce Dixie cups. Light bulbs need to be changed once a year. Change one light tube every two days. When going on vacation, you could put impatiens in this environment to keep them from drying out. Growing plants under lights is a controlled situation with no wind, hot sun, or freezing conditions.



Everyone enjoyed the presentation and the refreshments. Two cookie recipes were requested and are as printed.

Raspberry Almond Bars

1/2 cup Butter	1 cup flour
1 12 oz pkg vanilla or white chips divided	1/2 tsp. salt
2 eggs	1/2 cup seedless raspberry jam
1/2 cup Sugar	1/4 cup sliced almonds
1 tsp almond extract	

In a Saucepan, melt butter. Remove from heat and add 1 cup of chips(do not stir).

In small mixing bowl, beat eggs until foamy. Gradually add sugar. Stir in chip mixture and almond extract. Combine flour and salt ,add to egg mixture, until combined. Spread half of batter into a greased 9-inch square baking pan. Bake at 325 for 15-20 minutes until golden brown.

In small saucepan over low heat, melt jam. Spread jam over warm crust. Stir remaining chips into the remaining batter. Drop by teaspoonfuls over the jam layer. Sprinkle with almonds. Bake 30-35 minutes longer or until a toothpick inserted near center comes out clean. Cool on a wire rack. Cut into bars. Makes about two dozen.

Glazed Fruit & Nut Cookies

2 c. sifted flour	1 tsp. cinnamon
1 tsp. baking soda	1 egg beaten
½ c. soft shortening or butter	2 c. chopped nuts
1 1/3 c. brown sugar packed	1 c. finely chopped unpared apple
½ tsp. salt	1 c. raisins
1 tsp. cloves	¼ c. apple juice or milk
½ tsp. nutmeg	

Sift flour & baking soda; set aside. Mix shortening, brown sugar, salt, spices and egg until well blended. Stir in half of flour mixture, then nuts, apples, and raisins. Blend in apple juice, then remaining flour. Drop by rounded tablespoon onto greased cookie sheet. Bake at 350° for 10 minutes. While still hot, spread thinly with vanilla glaze (optional). Yield: 3 ½ dozen.

Vanilla Glaze

In small bowl, blend 1 ½ c. sifted 4x sugar, 1 tbsp butter, ¼ tsp vanilla, pinch of salt and 2 ½ tbsp. of milk.

There was no December meeting.

CONTRIBUTIONS WELCOMED

Anyone with information on a subject relating to gardening which they would like to share or wish to request information for research, please e-mail Judy Stetten at lstetten@yahoo.com or send mail to 10520 Burton Road, Adrian, MI, 49221.

INFORMATION EXCHANGE

Do you have growing tips or gardening problems? If so, please send them to Judy, and they can be posted in the Master Gardener Hotlines Newsletter.

REMINDER

Volunteer hours can be posted anytime on the Master Gardener website at <http://web1.msue.msu.edu/mastergardener/lenawee/index.htm> .



Thought for Today

Pursue your passion and live your dream.

Katherine Logan

Jon Genereaux let us know he wouldn't be with us this year due to a new business venture. We'll sure miss his fun spirit! We all want to wish you much success and the very best, Jon!

Lenawee County Master Gardener Association Meetings

January– Annual Agenda Planning Meeting

(Non-members may attend any meeting for a \$3 fee. No charge for spouse of a member.)

*Become a MEMBER of the MASTER GARDENER ASSOCIATION
Dues are \$10/year - Refreshments provided at all meetings.*

JOIN THE LENAWEE COUNTY MASTER GARDENER ASSOCIATION

Complete the following, and send to Donna Murphy, 1201 Taylor Road, Tecumseh, MI 49286 with your check made out to MSU Extension. Dues are \$10 per year.

Master Gardener Trainees can join as a provisional member.

Name _____

Street _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone Number () _____

Master Gardener Class Year _____

Please check one: Regular Membership

Provisional Membership