

THE GREEN SCENE

Newsletter of the
MIDLAND COUNTY
MASTER GARDENER ASSOCIATION



Next meeting: Sunday, May 6, 2007 - 1:30 PM.

Location: Meet at the Midland County Building to Carpool to the garden of Mr. Fredrick Case in Freeland

Program: Please note the date change for our May meeting. Rather than our usual second Tuesday in the month, we are going over to see the trillium gardens of Mr. Frederick Case in Saginaw, on Sunday, May 6th.

The plan is to carpool from the county building, leaving at 1:30 PM. If you would rather go on your own, either that day or the following Sunday, please take note of the directions included within this Green Scene issue (page 2).

Due to an article on Mr. Case last year in *Midwest Living*, we will definitely not be the only visitors there. His bog gardens and thousands of trillium promise to be a real treat.

Business: No Business Meeting.

Hi Gardeners,

The weather is starting to warm up a bit. Sure hope it keeps going. I can't wait to get out in the garden and play in the dirt (oops - soil).

Summer is coming and we are starting our field trips so be sure to consult the Green Scene for the location and the directions for each month.

Be sure to keep track of your volunteer hours and any education hours you get.

Have fun in your gardens,

Sue Wilber, President MCMGA

We are looking for someone to coordinate a project at Cleveland Manor.
If you are interested, call Chris Hays at 631-5956

Midland County Master Gardener Association, Executive Committee:

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Cheryl Weeks-Rosten, Vice-President Programs, 631-5126, e-mail: jrosten@sbcglobal.net
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Janelle Steckley, Secretary, 687-2108, e-mail: jannykay@tds.net
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PINECREST GREENHOUSE

Pinecrest Farms, located on Homer Road, is an adult foster care facility owned and operated by Midland County. Residents include men and women between the ages of 18 and 100 years. Some of these folks are indigent; others are physically and/or mentally disabled.

The Pinecrest Greenhouse offers Midland Master Gardeners a great volunteer opportunity. Our mentor, Ann Adam, who has been volunteering there the longest, along with Barb Rothhaar, Ben Franklin and Marian Cimbalik go to Pinecrest on Friday mornings. When we arrive at the back door, we are always met by a small group of very dedicated residents who spend the next couple hours planting seeds, deadheading the flowering plants, taking cuttings, transplanting seedlings and performing a variety of maintenance tasks including watering, fertilizing and cleaning up.

In addition, there are a couple of outdoor gardens that require maintenance in the spring and in the fall. Ann Adam generally coordinates these clean-ups.

For the safety of the residents, the greenhouse is locked unless there is someone available to oversee things. Our goal is to have folks volunteer on days other than Friday to enable the residents to be out there enjoying the greenhouse more than one day a week. I would encourage anyone interested in participating to ask for more information. It's a very rewarding experience! Contact either Ann Adam or Marian Cimbalik for more information.

Marian Cimbalik

DIRECTION TO FRED CASE IN FREELAND

Mapquest directions to the home of Frederick Case, 7275 Thornapple Lane, Saginaw.

Estimated distance of 22 miles, taking approximately a half hour.

Take US-10 east out of Midland and the M-47 exit toward Freeland.

Continue on M-47 through Freeland to West Tittabawassee Road. Turn right and cross over the river.

Turn left on to North River Road and go 4.6 miles.

Turn right onto Geddes Road for one tenth of a mile.

Turn left onto Thornapple. Again drive one tenth of a mile to 7275.

MIDLAND MASTER GARDENER ASSOCIATION BUSINESS MEETING MINUTES - APRIL 10, 2007

Meeting called to order at 6:40 p.m.

The meeting started with a very interesting presentation from the owner of Randi's Greenhouse on flower arranging. She gave us lots of great tips on making our own arrangements.

The door prize, a free soil sample through our extension office, was won by Carol Wells.

President Sue Wilber and Vice President of Programs Chris Hays gave out recognitions for volunteer hours. Both Mary Johnson and Donna Dolinski have reached the 250 hour mark for volunteer hours.

Jean Krause was given a Certificate of Excellence for her work at Kings Daughter's.

Next month's meeting is a visit to "Mr. Trillium's" garden. This is a garden that has been featured in several publications, including Midwest Living. This meeting will not take place on our usual second Tuesday. It will take place on Sunday, May 6th, People should meet at the county building at 1:30 p.m.

In July we will have our progressive dinner. Three master gardeners have volunteered their gardens, Connie Lesh, Nancy Stark and Sherry Kalina.

Jean Krause gave an update on the Mentor Program. She needs members to mentor new members (trainees). Mentors are to make new members feel welcome, help them with projects, sit with them at meetings, etc.

Mary Johnson needs help at the Bradley House Rose Garden. This project is ongoing through the summer.

Ann Adams announced that she will have a work day at Pinecrest on Saturday, April 21st at 9:30 a.m.

Len Szymanski still has some openings for Saturday shifts for Ask the Master Gardener at Lowe's. Volunteers spend time at Lowe's answering customer's gardening questions.

Janelle Steckley
Association Secretary



A tree in a pot.....Bonzai

DAHLIA HILL

The Dahlia Hill Project is very popular with the Master Gardeners. In 2006 it received the benefit of the highest number of volunteer participation and the highest number of volunteer hours reported. In 2007, the Master Gardener Association will again sponsor a row on the Hill. This row will be designated with a plaque and maintained throughout the growing season by Master Gardener volunteers.

Dahlia Hill is a non-profit organization and the Hill is located on the corner of Main and Orchard. This year the Hill is going through a major change with the addition of terraces. If you haven't driven by lately, it's well worth the drive. The Hill is being transformed!!

The work schedule this year is being delayed slightly to accommodate the completion of the terracing project. The tentative schedule is listed below. Please call the Hill directly (631-0100) to verify the schedule and to schedule your volunteer time.

April 30 - Monday starting at 8:00 am SORTING and COUNTING TUBERS.

This activity usually takes about a week. The work involves sorting all the tubers into ones with buds and those without.

May 14 - Monday starting at 8:00 am BAGGING for PLANTING

This activity takes a couple of days. It involves bagging tubers to facilitate the planting of the Hill.

May 19 - Saturday from 8:00 am to 4:00 pm TUBER SALE (Come and buy dahlias for \$2.00/tuber.)

Volunteers will be needed to help buyers select tubers and to provide instruction on the planting and care of the dahlias.

May 21 - Depending on weather and terracing progress, we will PLANT THE HILL

It will probably take a couple of days. If the weather is bad or if the hill is not ready, we will reschedule for May 28th.

May 26 - Saturday from 8:00 am to 4:00 pm TUBER SALE (Come and buy dahlias for \$2.00/tuber.)

This is a great project for trainees. There is always work to be done and there is always someone willing to work with you to learn the process. I'd like to see even more Master Gardeners involved with this project this year. If you have any questions, please call Chris Hays (631-5956).

Chris Hays
President, Dahlia Hill

KING'S DAUGHTER'S NURSING AND ASSISTED LIVING HOME GARDENS

This will be our 3rd year working in the gardens at King's Daughters (KDs). Each year we have expanded our work areas so that presently we are planting, maintaining and cleaning up 3 distinct garden areas (including an herb tomato raised bed garden), 3 terraces, and various borders as well as designing and planting 10 decorative urns with annuals this year. Needless to say we have had to do careful planning to assure that we maximize our effectiveness. Currently we have a crew of 12 women working on the projects, 6 of whom will be setting aside every Wednesday morning from April through October to assist in many different capacities throughout the KD grounds. We are anticipating a great year and have already started planning for and designing the annuals we will be ordering and planting in the courtyard gardens, containers and terraces. The residents have provided us with their color preferences for this year. The consensus is that it should be very bright, warm, and colorful. We are delighted to comply. We are fortunate to have a budget for plants, soil amendments and labels.

Three years ago we entered a neglected garden. The terrace area was particularly overgrown with cotoneaster bushes, vinca, and anemones. At one time it was a well-designed area including two ponds. We dug in and soon found some lovely specimens such as a dogwood that desperately needed pruning and small redbud trees. We uncovered a variety of spring flowers and August hosta lilies that were being choked by weeds. We spent the first year cleaning and pruning. Only the courtyard garden was completely planted with annuals and looked fantastic that first year.

Last year we took on the third perennial garden we maintain. The Cecil Erb garden is only about 6 years old and has a great variety of vigorous plants, shrubs, grasses and vines. There is something of beauty and interest in this garden. We really enjoy every aspect of keeping this garden maintained and healthy. In fact, this is the first garden in which we will be labeling specimens this coming season so that the residents can identify them as they walk or ride through the garden. Last year also we were delighted to plant an area with Dahlias so that the residents could enjoy them from their dining room window. And the residents enjoyed the cherry tomatoes from the vegetable garden on their salads, too.

If you are interested in volunteering with this group, contact Sherry Kalina (631-8467).

Sherry Kalina

BUTTERFLIES IN BLOOM AT DOW GARDENS CONSERVATORY

The Butterfly exhibit in the Conservatory at the Dow Gardens was absolutely wonderful this year. The Conservatory is such a pretty place with all the greens and the added flowers for the butterflies. It is a beautiful place to spend some time.

There were so many butterflies out and about that they were landing on the kids without any effort for the kids. We had class after class coming to see this display and they were having lots of fun. There was only exception with the little boy who fell in the pond and his dad who went in to retrieve him.

We had some new butterflies this year. The Red Postman was one of the favorites. It was black with red and green stripes and was quite glorious when it was flying. Some of the other new ones were the Malacite, the Orange Stripe and the Red Admiral. The old standbys, the Monarch, the Julia and the Zebra Longwing are always fun to watch.

Elly Maxwell, the new Entomologist for the Dow Gardens, told me that the butterflies look for the color first. The reds, the oranges and the bright yellows, attract them and then they search for the pollen once the land on the flower. Elly is always very happy to answer questions. She really seems to like her job at the Gardens.

We are not allowed to let the butterflies or any of the foliage out of the conservatory. It must be held for a specific amount of time before it can be composted. This is a federal law and the Dow Gardens is certified by the government to have this display.

Working with the butterflies and all the people who came to see them was a real treat and I recommend this experience to all. It is truly a fun way to get some volunteer hours.

Sue Wilber

A TOMATO TIP

When transplanting tomato seedlings, add a teaspoon of Epsom Salts below the roots. Epsom salts contain magnesium and it enables the tomato plant to utilize fertilizer. It will also give you a better tasting tomato.

Nancy Stark

**ENJOY
HOME
GROWN
VEGETABLES**

SOW SIMPLE

Seedlings left in the six-pack too long become leggy. One way to prevent this is to transplant the seedling and give it a chance to stretch its roots and grow larger.

Another way is to transplant it and prune it by pinching out the terminal growth. This sounds cruel, however, it will improve the branching and flowering of your plant.

As the weather warms move the plants out for a breath of fresh air. The movement of air causes the plant to grow stronger cells which help it hold up during sun and wind conditions. Just as the wind will dry all plants over the winter, the warm wind of spring will also. Protect your seedlings from the wind by moving them in and out of the garage and or place them under a tree or by a building for added protection.

When can I plant is always the next question. Well..... June 1 is a good day for annuals and home grown perennials. Can you plant earlier? Yes, if you are careful about where you put them. Many of us seem to grow flats in the garage and get very frustrated about when to get going. I try to look at the weather and choose a cloudy day, not too hot, not too cold at night, and with my magic wand, plant them and pray. Good Luck !

Ann Adam

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Again this year *Gardener Supply Company* Catalog had a product for growing bigger tomato plants that produces a more abundant crop. So I'm game and I'm going to try it and see if what they say works.

They quote, "This product that started the "red revolution," this remarkable red mulch, helps tomato plants grow faster and produce more abundant crops. Now it is better than ever because the micro-perforations allow water, air and nutrients to reach the soil surface." It was developed jointly with the USDA and Clemson University and has proven effective in tests. Red tomato mulch helps trigger the release of a natural protein that stimulates growth.

So I bought it. It comes in 3'X3' sheets, 8 to a package, \$9.95/per package and is held down with earth staples. They also have red tomato ladders that hold over 100# of fruit. I didn't buy those. I stayed with the cheaper sheets to test it out. I'm supposed to get a 20% increase in my tomato harvest. Time will tell and I'll give you an update come August!

Nancy Stark

PINECREST GARDENS

On Saturday, April 21, a team gathered at 9:30am to "tidy" up three flower beds at Pinecrest Farm.

We cut down the grasses, rudbeckia, cone flowers, etc. and raked the area clean. We were able to pile the debris for the caretaker, Gary, to remove later. This greatly speeded up our efforts.

After an hour and a half, we took a tour of the green house and left to attend to our own gardens.

Thanks to Eileen Vaillancourt, Jackie Provost and husband Tom, Ginny Jossi and Janell Beach.

Ann Adam

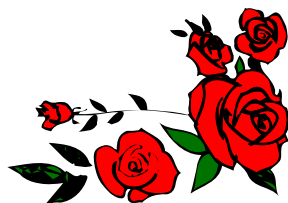
BRADLEY HOUSE ROSES

Bradley House is a Victorian home maintained and open to the public. It is part of the Midland Historical Museum and is located behind the museum off Main St. in Midland. Midland Master Gardener, Nancy Lindley designed and planted the historic rose garden around the Carriage House there several years ago. She maintained it by herself until she moved away from Midland to found Great Lakes Roses in Belleville, Michigan.

Since Nancy left, the garden has been maintained by Master Gardener volunteers. Regina Pederson and Mary Johnson are currently coordinating this effort. The roses are Heirloom varieties and do not need a lot of specialized care. We usually meet there to clean up the beds, trim the plants and fertilize in the spring. Depending on the number of volunteers who are able to come, this can take about four hours. We will have a sign up sheet for maintenance, weeding, pruning and checking for pests every week or so through August, with a final clean up in the fall. The interim visits are usually not as demanding as the initial clean up.

This year, we are planning to replace some of the roses and to plant new roses in an area recently fenced in along the east side of the Carriage House. When this is finalized, there will be a need for more work and more volunteers. Please contact Mary Johnson (687-9493) or Gina Pederson (631-8503) if you are interested in volunteering on this project.

Mary Johnson



DOW HIGH WORK PROJECT

One way for new members to get volunteer hours is to join an existing project. Another way is to apply to the board to begin a project of your own. A work project I sponsor is caring for flower beds around Dow High School. At first it was limited to plantings by the teacher entrance in the back of the school and then it expanded to the perennials by the sign on Saginaw Road. As of two years ago, it now also includes the courtyard area by the new gym and tennis courts (directly behind the old gym), with access from the Saginaw/ Perrine Road side of the school.

At least once a year, we also try to team up with the members of the Dow High Key Club, so that students are giving something back to their school and also learning something about gardening in the process. Master gardeners are invited to join me on our first two work days this season. The first one is **Saturday morning, May 5th from 9-12**. We will be doing some preliminary prep work so as to be ready for the kids helping out after school on **Wednesday, May 9th, 2:30-4:30**.

If you can help out at either of these times, and earn hours for yourself in the process, please let me know.

Cheryl Weeks-Rosten

MASTER GARDENERS' JULY 10TH POTLUCK AND GARDEN WALK

This is just a short note to remind you to put this date on your calendar. Our Master Gardener potluck and garden walk is scheduled for July 10th. Three Master Gardeners have volunteered their homes and gardens for this event. If you haven't already signed-up to bring a dish, please contact Cheryl Weeks-Rosten.

The Salad Course will be at Connie Lesh's home at 6:00 pm - 7:00 pm. The people scheduled to bring salads are: Bethany Goodman, Janelle Beach, Connie Lesh and Chris Hays. We still need one more volunteer.

The Main Course will be grilled chicken at Nancy Stark's home at 7:15 pm - 8:15 pm. The people scheduled to bring vegetables or a casserole are: Judy Page, Jean Krause and Cheryl Weeks-Rosten. We still need two more volunteers.

The Dessert Course will be at Sherry Kalina's home at 8:30 pm - 9:30 pm. The people scheduled to bring desserts are: Len Szymanski, Eileen Vaillancourt, Jackie Prevost, Janelle Steckley and Ann Adam.

More details in the June Green Scene.

Cheryl Weeks-Rosten

SUMMARY OF ASSOCIATION MEETING ON APRIL, 10TH

Our speaker was Randi Pacquet of Randi's Green Thumb on Poseyville Road. The first part of her presentation was on flower arranging and she had brought several pre-assembled arrangements in a variety of containers, including one that was an oasis ring with at least 20 different succulent cuttings. Then she made an arrangement on the spot, using a metal watering can as the container. She made it real clear that all her arrangements get away from the mundane carnation and baby's breath look. The handout she distributed listed both flowers and foliage that hold up well in arrangements. For instance, Japanese Painted Fern, Huechera, Northern Sea Oats and Ninebark were all listed under foliage.

The handout also pictured and described plants that her store will carry that are new for the Spring of 2007. The *Campanula garganica* "Dickson's Gold" caught my eye, as well as the *Heucherella* "Stoplight Foamy Bells." She will also carry several new *Echinacea* in vivid colors and a number of plants that can take moderate shade.

I drove by Randi's in the snowy days that followed her presentation and saw her sign out front luring me in for pansies, primroses and herbs. They are putting up a new hoop greenhouse and by acquiring the property next door. They have also been able to get into the supplies needed for pond construction, so popular these days.

Randi was kind enough to give us all discount coupons at her business. If you are one to support local businesses, drive out Poseyville Road and it's just past Overlook Park on the left. If you haven't been to Randi's Green Thumb recently, you'll be happy to see how it has expanded.

Cheryl Weeks-Rosten

LOOP YOUR LOOPS AROUND YOUR PLANTS!

Those bothersome loops on the inside of women's tops, skirts, and slacks make great ties for staking up plants to a bamboo stake or trellis. If you don't use them to hang up your clothes, cut them out of your clothing and they should last all season.

Nancy Stark

If you would like to contribute an article to the June - Green Scene, the deadline is May 18th. Send your article to Chris Hays. Everyone is invited to contribute to make this a more useful newsletter.

FOUR STAR GREENHOUSE'S 2007 CONSUMER DAY INVITATION (NOTE FROM MICHIGAN STATE)

Four Star Greenhouse is pleased to announce the date and opening of the registration for the 2007 Consumer Day! This year's event will be held on Friday, June 1, 2007. You will have the opportunity to see the new 2008 Proven Winners and Proven Selections varieties, get ideas for hanging baskets and patio pots and much more. As always, there will be a plant sale at the end of the day, that you will have the opportunity to purchase plants. This year in addition to accepting cash and checks, Four Star will be able to accept MasterCard and Visa. Oh... I almost forgot... P. Allen Smith will again be visiting to speak and sign his bestselling books.

Due to your previous interest in Four Star and Proven Winners, we are e-mailing you the 2007 Consumer Day Invitation and Registration before releasing the information to the general public. We wanted to give you an opportunity to register early this year since space is limited. Please note that we will not be taking registration over the phone this year and every person registering will need to fill out an official "Registration Form". "Registration Forms" may be duplicated. In order for a registration to be accepted, Four Star will need to have a complete "Registration Form" and payment.

We look forward to seeing you June 1st. If you have any questions, please contact Four Star at (734) 654-6420, mail@pwfourstar.com or visit www.pwfourstar.com.

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The deadline for articles for the next newsletter is April 18, 2007.

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