

THE GREEN SCENE

Newsletter of the
MIDLAND COUNTY
MASTER GARDENER ASSOCIATION



Next meeting: Tuesday, October 9, 2007 - 6:30 PM.

Location: Midland County Building, The Commissioners' Room, ground floor

Program: Probably nothing is anticipated as much in a garden as the first bulbs that come up in the Spring. Snowdrops and early tulips can make it possible for us to have something in bloom from April through October in our part of Michigan. October is a perfect month for planting bulbs, so it's appropriate that at this meeting, Chuck Martin, a Dow Gardens horticulturist, will speak to us about selecting, planting and feeding tulips and daffodils, as well as some of the lesser known flowers that stem from bulbs.

Business:

Greeting Master Gardeners,

Fall is upon us and you can sure feel it in the air. Fall is such a beautiful time of year. I sure wouldn't want to miss it.

The Master Gardener class is going very well. All of our speakers have been super and I thank them for their time and effort given to this important project.

Dan Draves made an important statement at the last class, "Amend your soil in the fall. Even just a good job in the fall beats an excellent job in the spring." Thanks, Dan. That is good advice for all of us.

Hope to see you at the meeting,

Sue Wilber, President MCMGA

Midland County Master Gardener Association, Executive Committee:

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**MASTER GARDENER BUSINESS MEETING
SEPTEMBER 11, 2007**

MENTORS NEEDED

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

President Sue Wilber had all in attendance introduce themselves. We had several guests, a visitor from Saginaw and some of the trainees that are attending our Midland Master Gardener class.

Bill Farris gave an excellent talk on bees.

Treasurers Report: We have \$3534.41.

Sue read a thank-you letter from the 4-H. We had donated \$200.00 for prizes for the kid's gardens at the fair.

Dow Gardens has asked us to participate in next year's marketplace. The date is February 23, 2008.

Update on the Master Gardener class. The first class was last week. Twenty people are enrolled. We have tentatively scheduled the next class for a January start date.

There was some discussion regarding the Christmas party. We are considering renting the Carriage House with a possible tour of the Bradley House. We will discuss this and other options at our October meeting.

Sherry Kalina announced that the King's Daughter's plant sale is tomorrow. They will have lots of daylilies for sale.

Sue announced the list of nominees for officers for the Midland County Master Gardener Association for the two year term beginning in January, 2008.

They are:

President: Cheryl Weeks-Rosten
Vice President of Projects: Chris Hays
Vice President of Programs: Jean Krause
Secretary: Nancy Stark
Treasurer: Dorothy George

Anyone who would like to nominate someone else should contact Sue Wilber.

Linda Duffy won the door prize.

Meeting adjourned at 8:20 p.m.

Janelle Steckley

The first Midland County Master Gardener Training Class is well underway with 20 enthusiastic students.

They will be "graduating" late in November and will be ready for mentoring. Several students have already started their volunteering in the rose garden at Dow Gardens. The rest of the students will be looking forward to working on our many projects and will need a mentor.

Please contact Jean Krause at 631-1050 or e-mail her at jekrause@charter.net to let her know that you will be able to mentor one or more trainees in 2008.

We have invited all the students in the class to be our guests at the regular Master Gardener Association meetings this fall, as well as our Christmas get-together. Please introduce yourself and welcome them to our Association.

The second training class will begin in January and it looks promising for another full class. Please be thinking about mentoring one or more trainees from our Midland classes.

Jean Krause

KING'S DAUGHTERS GARDENING EFFORTS

Sherry Kalina is leading our group of garden tenders in transplanting many species of plants to a "holding garden" at Judy Page's home in Hope. Many of you are aware that King's Daughters will begin an expansion of their facility at the end of this year. We wanted to rescue and hold as many of the existing plants as possible. These plants will be returned to King's Daughters when the project is complete, in the spring of 2009.

During the summer of 2006, we started the transplanting project and moved the first group which included hosta, daylily, Solomon's Seal, Jacob's ladder and several others. These plants are all thriving in their temporary home. This summer, we moved another large group which included rhododendrons, hosta, red bud starts, and lavender.

Many of you helped with the sale of the extra plants this past month. The sale was a big success and we want to thank everyone for your efforts and support of this project.

Jean Krause

AFTER LABOR DAY - WHAT'S IN BLOOM?

For me, the fun of gardening is anticipating the flowering of various plants you have put in the ground to cover the entire six months of potential blooms: April through September, in the lower peninsula of Michigan. In early Spring, I eagerly make the rounds looking for the first crocus or early blooming hyacinth. After the tulips and daffodils, I know my iris will kick in. And so it goes.

But sometimes a garden looks tired by August. Drought and powdery mildew have taken their toll. Some plants have entirely croaked or have been decimated by insects or disease. You went on vacation and your garden caretaker didn't quite hit all the pots or outlying flower beds. That's when you need something to look forward to in September.

In my garden I have a few plants that give me fresh hope in the early fall. First of all, for those of us dahlia lovers, tubers planted just before Memorial Day are at their peak in September and offer beauty, perhaps in the same flower beds where other items, such as daylilies, are on the decline. But aside from dahlias, I have three favorites that energize my flower beds, and me, in September.

One is a favorite hardy mum from the "My Favorite Mum" series. The plant is absolutely covered with little white daisy-like flowers. It flops over on to the grass, which drives my husband, the grasscutter, crazy. Also, every Chinese ESL student who has toured my garden has felt obligated to tell me that white mums are apparently only for funerals, but I love the scent and abundance of this very reliable plant.

Recycled Easter lilies are another favorite that I anticipate. Friends know that I'm crazy enough to want their leftover Easter lilies and I've rescued some from church on more than one occasion. Every gardener knows the value of a perennial is in its root system, not the blooms, but I've had great luck getting a second bloom in the early fall. They have to have a lot of sun. Otherwise, in too much shade it's a race against time and frost will occur before blooms. It's kind of a nifty shock to see an Easter lily in full glory in September.

Leading into my patio is a very ordinary metal tubular archway that is absolutely laden with the little white star-shaped blooms of the fall-blooming clematis. About five years ago I planted a spindly clematis plant on either side. Not only do they meet in the middle at the top, but are wildly intertwined and it's a mass of blooms that shimmers in sunlight.

For me, these plants are the last hurrah of the summer and perhaps I enjoy them so much because they have kept me waiting. Or maybe it's because when they're in bloom, I'm planting bulbs and already anticipating another gardening season. In general, most gardeners have learned to let go of "instant gratification," for which our age is derisively known. Some things are very much worth the wait.

Cheryl Weeks-Rosten

FALL CLEAN UP IDEAS

The garden is dying but is it over? No, not yet. The clean up of the fall garden is just beginning. Yes, the color of annuals may be gone but the work of cleaning up the garden has just begun.

What to clean? Well, cut down the *Liatris* heads or if you want more plants lay them on the soil. In the spring you will have dozens of new plants. Cut down the *Monarda* and compost the stems. Cut down the *Rudbeckia* and compost the stems unless you want to feed the seed to the birds over the winter. Flower seed is much cheaper than birdseed. Cut down the *Hosta* seedheads unless you want more plants. You know that the seed will produce new plants in the spring.

What not to cut. One thing is *Lavender* because it resents being pruned in the fall. When spring arrives you can cut and shape the plant after it begins to grow. Do not cut down or pull out the *Dusty Miller* as it too may make it through the winter. Cut to shape after growth starts in the spring.

What is not yet blooming? Well, my *Toad Lilies* are yet to bloom and the *Monkshood* is yet to bloom. The white autumn *Clematis* is just coming into full bloom. The *Asters* are about half gone and they need to be divided and given away to friends. A plant that I have this year for the first time is the annual *Persian Shield*. It still looks really good.

Any plant that has seedheads can remain in the garden for bird food or you can cut it down and clean up the area. *Daylilies* are a good example. Leave all of the plants leaves for winter protection or dispose of them. If you have a new plant use mulch to help prevent heaving.

The weather has been just great for clean up but walk around and dream... collect seed and dream some more. Gardening in the winter is so slow.

Ann Adam

MIKE MCGROARTY'S ONE MINUTE GARDENING TIPS**FALL IS THE TIME TO PLANT GARLIC**

Fresh garlic is a staple in many kitchens, and good cooks know that a hint of garlic can enhance many dishes. The pungent bulbs are incredibly easy to grow and homegrown garlic will be far better and keep longer than what is sold in the supermarket.

Fall is the best time to plant garlic. Garlic cloves may be planted in well-drained soil from about the time of the first frost up until November. It is harvested in the summer after the bottom half of the leaves have begun to turn brown.

To plant garlic, break apart the bulbs into individual cloves. To grow larger garlic bulbs, plant only the largest cloves. Plant the cloves about two inches deep and four to six inches apart in rich soil. The roots will start to grow over winter, but you won't see any top growth until spring. Give your garlic a blanket of mulch to protect the bulbs from heaving out of the soil over winter and to help keep down weeds.

Young garlic can be mistaken for grass when it begins to sprout, but a quick pinch of the leaves will release their aroma and eliminate any mistakes when weeding the patch.

There are many varieties of garlic available to choose from, but two main types; soft neck and hard neck. The soft neck varieties have a soft stem that makes them easy to braid. Soft neck garlic bulbs have larger cloves on their outside layer with smaller cloves towards the center of the bulb. Soft neck garlic generally stores well, up to nine months.

Hard neck garlic has a stiff central stalk with fewer but larger cloves. It tends to be more winter hardy than soft neck varieties but doesn't store as well, typically only five to six months. Hard neck garlic is a bit easier to peel than the soft neck varieties.

If you enjoy garlic, try planting some this fall. You'll be glad you did!

<http://www.freeplants.com>

Reprinted from the one minute newsletter by

Mike McGroarty

**FALL BULB PLANTING
FOR BEAUTIFUL SPRING DISPLAYS**

Spring flowering bulbs can be planted from September until the ground has frozen. Daffodils, however, will do best if planted early in the fall so they have time to develop a good root system.

All fall planted bulbs will grow best if planted in a sunny location, although most will tolerate partial shade. Bulbs that bloom early in the spring can be planted in areas that will be shaded later in the season once the trees leaf out. Bulbs should be planted in well drained soil and they will appreciate being planted with some good compost or well aged manure. Bulbs don't care for heavy clay soils, but clay soil can be improved by adding compost and a bit of sand, working it in to a depth of 12 to 18 inches.

For bulbs to bloom well over many years, it is important to plant them at the proper depth. A good rule of thumb is to plant a bulb twice as deep as the height of the bulb. Spring bulbs are their prettiest when planted in groups and they can be planted closely together, but the bulbs should not be touching each other. In most cases they should be planted 4 to 6 inches apart. Bulbs should be planted with the roots downward, but occasionally it can be difficult to tell which is the root end of a bulb. If in doubt, just plant the bulbs lying on their sides. The bulbs will know which way is up when they start to grow.

Thoroughly water your bulbs after planting.

Cover the planted area immediately with a layer of mulch. The mulch will keep the soil warm enough to allow the bulbs to start growing roots before the ground freezes. Mulch also keeps the bulbs from waking up too early in the spring when the buds could be damaged by a late freeze.

<http://www.freeplants.com>

Mike McGroarty

I found this website and registered to receive the weekly One Minute Gardening Tips in my email. I don't support all the information he sends but he does have some good ideas. He gives permission to reprint his articles as long as the following web address is included. This web address directs you to his main site so that you too can register to receive the One Minute Gardening Tips.

<http://free.nursery-plants.info/>

ENVIRONMENTAL SECTION III

There are four sections that will be reported on from the Environmental School. This is the third section and the final section will be presented in next month's Green Scene.

This section of the Environmental Class was about air, water, pollution and hazardous waste. There are several avenues of contamination to our environment which include direct venting into the environment, improper incineration and discharge into water. The most serious effect from improper disposal of waste is to ground water.

There are ways to deal with many of the problems if we know the source. We can reduce emissions, we can recycle waste whenever possible and we can treat waste to reduce the impact of the hazard.

According to Laura Vosejпка, here are four questions to ask your self each day to be a responsible consumer: "Where do things I consume come from? What do I know about the place where I live? How am I connected to the earth and other living things? What is my purpose and responsibility as a human being?"

Environmental Literacy was discussed by Janea Little, Senior Naturalist at the Chippewa Nature Center. She made the following statements to increase our understanding and appreciation of the environment. "Develop respect or reverence for all life. Understand as much as we can about how the earth works and sustains itself and use the knowledge to guide our lives, communities and societies. Become seekers of environmental wisdom instead of vessels of environmental information. Understand and evaluate our environmental world view and see this as a lifelong process. Learn how to evaluate the beneficial and harmful consequences of our choices of lifestyle and profession on the earth today, tomorrow and in the future. Foster a desire to make the world a better place and act on the desire."

"True growth occurs as civilizations transfer an increasing proportion of energy and attention from the material side of life to the non-material side and thereby develop their culture, capacity for compassion, sense of community and strength of democracy." -- Laura Vosejпка

There are a lot of animals, birds, bugs and plants that are in danger of extinction. The BIG FIVE causes are: Habitat degradation (85%), Invasive exotics (49%), Pollution (24%), Overexploitation (17%) and Disease (3%). The grand total is well over 100% because many

struggling species are being hit by more than one factor.

In 1966 the Endangered Species Preservation Act was passed but was of little help. In 1973 the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild fauna and Flores (CITES) restricted international commerce in plant and animal species believed to be harmed by trade. Our own Endangered Species Act was passed that same year.

"Can any civilization wage relentless war on life without destroying itself and without losing the right to be called 'civilized'" Rachel Carson

There are many things we can do to reduce the threat of mass extinctions:

Reduce your energy use. Buy as much locally-grown and in-season produce as you can.

Preserve native plants as much as you can in your own yard .Reduce, reuse and recycle. Live and shop "green" - read labels! Care.

Sue Wilber

We need your contribution to the Green Scene. Please consider writing an article for a future edition. You could write about any gardening related topic.

Please consider writing about your favorite project or a gardening book. Your time spent writing the article can be counted as volunteer time and I know you have something to share with your fellow Master Gardeners.

If you would like to contribute an article to the November - Green Scene, the deadline is October 18th but I would be happy to accept your article anytime. Send your article to Chris Hays. Everyone is invited to contribute to make this a more useful newsletter.

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