

The Grapevine

Bulletin of the Saginaw Valley Master Gardener Association

July 2003 Volume 7, Issue 7

'Bee' happy at Bridgeport garden

Darlene Damp and husband Craig Beins planned to retire to Pentwater, Michigan, where they had vacationed for years and bought property to build their dream house.

But when lung cancer claimed her mom's life two years ago, the thought of being so far from family and friends made them reconsider.

After casually looking at property across Saginaw County, they discovered 27 acres in Bridgeport, complete with woods, a pond for Beins' bees and a barn-style house big enough to accommodate large family gatherings.

They dubbed it Honey Bee Acres and Damp's father jokingly made a sign for the front yard to confirm it.

Saginaw Valley Master Gardeners can see it for themselves when the group meets there this month.

"It's like being out in the country but the 'city' is just two miles down the road," says Damp, who retired several years ago as a reporter and assistant Living editor for The Saginaw News.

Beins, a former Saginaw policeman and retired director of the police recruit academy at Delta College, wanted a place where he could keep his beehives without upsetting the neighbors.

He started beekeeping before retiring, but had to place his hives elsewhere because of their small yard in Saginaw Township. However, it was too time-consuming to monitor the hives in Thomas and Albee townships.

"I always wanted to live near Lake Michigan and Pentwater just had so many happy memories for us. It was our 'laughing place,' the place where we vacationed since we married 20 years ago," Damp explains.

"It was tough to think about giving up that dream, but still wanting to stay close to family, until we stumbled across this place."

"This place" has about 24 acres of woods, a one-acre pond, and a house set back off the road, surrounded by mature pines, maples and oaks.

The previous owners were enthusiastic vegetable gardeners and had turned an old cement foundation into a planting area for perennials like lily of the valley, day-lilies, lamb's ear, peonies and more.

However, when Damp tried to bring some semblance of order to the overgrown foundation garden last year, it became easier to simply start fresh. She relocated as many plants as she could around the yard, then gave the remainder – with a warning about their invasiveness – to her stepchildren to plant in their yards.

Her sister, a longtime gardener, came up with a design for the formal garden Damp wants to install in the foundation next spring.

"I'm covering the area with plastic this year to make sure to kill whatever is left. There were so many invasive plants that had been there so long, we had to replace dirt after everything was finally

Next Meeting

- 7 p.m. to 9 p.m. Wednesday, July 23, at the home of Darlene Damp, 5566 Baker Rd., Bridgeport
- 7 p.m. – 7:30 p.m. Meeting
- 7:30 p.m. Short talk by Darlene's husband, beekeeper Craig Beins, on bees
- 8 p.m. Refreshments, view gardens, bee hives and grounds

Directions: Take Dixie to State (at light near Dixie Cut Stone), which turns into Baker Road, follow about two miles, or I-75 to Frankenmuth exit (144 A), turn left on Airport, right on Baker. House is on south side, between Airport and Portsmouth roads. Limited parking in driveway & in front of white fence; may park on Baker Road. Bring a lawn chair.

pulled out," she says.

"I wanted a simple design you can see and enjoy from the patio – and something easy to maintain since it's a large area."

Damp did complete her "Bee Happy" garden in June. She took an area alongside the pond planted with creeping junipers, probably when the house was built in 1972, and began tearing them out last summer. The remainder was removed this spring.

"Craig was shocked when he came home and saw the pile of junipers I tore out and then burned. He thought we should keep the junipers because it would be easier to maintain but there were so many weeds mixed in with these really old, woody junipers, it was just a mess.

"I did a little research and found some plants and shrubs bees are supposed to prefer and started replanting with those while trying to use some of the less invasive plants from the foundation garden that the bees seemed to like."

Beins contributed hard physical labor, digging out stubborn roots, and then

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International Master Gardener Conference a winner

The title "Celebrate Gardening in the Ohio River Valley" piqued my interest when I first read it.

It referred to the International Master Gardener Conference, sponsored by Ohio State University and the University of Kentucky. The title, along with the close proximity of the event (Greater Cincinnati and Northern Kentucky), and the wide variety of workshops offered was enough for me to want to attend. Friends and fellow gardeners, Ellie Robertson and Peggy Shaver joined me.

Our trip down was uneventful, except for a wrong exit taken (directions that were sent by the conference people, not our error) but we arrived in Covington, Ky., safe and sound.

As we waited to register for the conference, the computers went down. Was this a sign? Not at all!

All workshops were at the Northern

Kentucky Convention Center and on the same floor. No leaving the building except to go to your hotel room or meet the bus for a tour. This was a big plus in my book.

The workshops covered such topics as: "Bees — Your Partners in the Garden," "The New Ornamental Germplasm Center," "Using Theme Gardens as Educational Tools," "Gardening for a Greener World," "Basic Pruning" (an exceptional class and teacher), and many more.

Each and every person I met was willing to share information they received in the classes they attended with me. It was quite the experience to enter a room, sit down next to a person, ask "where are you from?" and hear Idaho (she has family living in Frankenmuth!), Arizona, Texas, Alabama, etc. We were all there for the same reasons — to learn as much as we could, meet fellow MGs from other areas of the United States and Canada, and to talk gardening.

Michigan was second highest, only to Ohio, in attendance. The Saginaw Valley had representatives from Bay City, Midland, and Saginaw.

Keynote speakers were Holly H. Shimizu, Dr. Lonnie Thompson (a professor of geological sciences who talked to us about global warming), and Tracy DiSabato Aust.

Jim Wilson, past co-host of the PBS television show, "The Victory Garden," was there signing his new book "Gardening

Through Your Golden Years," a book I highly recommend. Wilson is a very gracious and humorous man.

There were many pre-conference events and tours, many conference tours, and ala carte events. The Riverboat dinner cruise was enjoyable - good food, good company, and great weather.

While talking with MGs from other states we discovered they had the same cool wet spring we did.

It was interesting to find we are on the very lean side of required volunteer and education hours for recertification as MGs. Some states require 25 to 50 volunteer hours and 20 to 30 education hours per year. Some states do not have a state MG Conference. We are very fortunate on all counts.

The IMG Conference was well worth attending.

You are invited by the University of Saskatchewan and Saskatchewan Master Gardeners to beautiful Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, Canada, July 24-27, 2005 as they celebrate "100 Years of Gardening on the Canadian Prairies!" Check the Web site for more up-to-date information on the international conference as it is available,

www.mastergardener2005.usask.ca

Judy A. Henning, IMG Conference attendee

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Minutes of the June 25 meeting

Judy Henning called the July Master Gardener meeting to order at 7 p.m. June 25 at the Hemlock home of Kathy Berger.

Elaine Rappley moved that the minutes of the previous meeting be approved as published and Sue Stemler seconded the motion.

There was no treasurer's report available.

Henning reported that there were 32 members at the state Master Gardener Conference. Only three organizations prepared display boards as had been requested. Angela did a great job on ours. It showcased seven projects. Mary Ellen Whitney was the winner in the drawing for the \$200 rebate of conference costs.

A show of hands indicated that there would not be enough book orders to meet

the \$1,000 minimum. We'll try again in the fall.

Rappley thanked all the homeowners who shared their gardens and all the volunteer workers who made the Garden Walk a great success.

Gail Caird returned checks to members who had signed up for the Toledo bus trip, as we had not reached the 40-person minimum.

After the business meeting, we enjoyed refreshments and Berger's beautiful yard.

Submitted by Ellie Robertson

**Next board meeting
Wednesday,
August 6**

Letter from the President

Our cool, wet spring is over and the heat has arrived.

The heat is having a positive effect on my garden. The lilies have never looked better, the scent from the honeysuckle is intoxicating, my clematis vines are gorgeous, and the ornamental grasses are growing by leaps and bounds.

Now if the heat could have a similar effect on the gardener!

My brain is thoroughly saturated with gardening information after attending back-to-back conferences, the International MG Conference and the State Conference.

There were 32 SVMGA members at the state conference. In my estimation

it was one of the better state conferences I have attended. The classes I had were well done and the keynote speakers were great. If you were not able to attend this year's conference, put it on your 'to do list' for 2004. Look for an article on the IMG Conference in this newsletter (Page 2).

Many thanks to Kathy Berger for sharing her lovely gardens with us for our June meeting. She certainly has gardens to be very proud of and I can't wait to see the greenhouse that her husband, Rol, is going



to build for her.

Thanks to the members who arrived home from the conference and still had stamina left to attend the meeting at Kathy's home. She appreciated it as much as I did.

Darlene Damp is our hostess for our July 23 meeting. Dar has been stripping, painting and remodeling the inside of her home for the last 4 months so as she tells me the gardens have been neglected.

But knowing her, they will be ready and waiting for us to see them in July. She also tells me things have changed in her gardens since I was there last year.

Take care and see you at the July meeting,
Judy

Dropping maple leaves concern area residents, may indicate borer problem

Calls are beginning to come into the Master Gardener Office from homeowners asking about leaves dropping from their maple trees, says Wil Hufton.

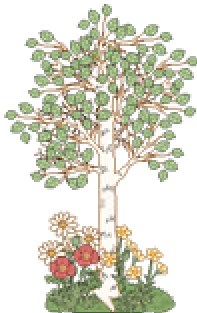
The most likely cause is the maple petiole borer. We advise the homeowner to check the petioles of fallen leaves for tunneling.

Symptoms:

A sudden drop of many sugar maple leaves in June may be due to injury by a small wasp larva that burrows in leaf petioles (stems). The stems usually break at a darkened area near the leaf blade.

Usually infestations are limited to sugar maples and only about 25% to 30% of the leaves fall to the ground. While spectacular, the leaf drop has little effect on tree health.

Buildups of scales or aphids, or drought stress can cause leaf loss but these typically occur later in the year. Leaf drop due to borers is seen earlier in



the season and the leaf blades may still be green.

Leaves from trees stressed by sucking insects or drought usually have turned yellow before they drop. Splitting the petiole carefully near the leaf blade should reveal the larva or the tunnel.

Biology:

There is one generation each year. Infestations begin as the adults, small wasps about 1/6" long, appear in May and lay their eggs in petioles near the leaf blades.

Legless, white grubs with distinct light brown heads hatch from the eggs and tunnel inside the leaf stem for 20 to 30 days. The weakened stem breaks and the leaf floats to the ground.

The borer larvae generally remain in the portion of the stem left on the tree. About 10 days after leaf drop, the rest of the stem falls to the ground.

The mature larva, about 1/3-inch-long, leaves the stem through a hole in the side and burrows into the soil. It will change to the pupal stage and remain in the soil until the following spring.

Control:

Maple petiole borer infestations are infrequent and unpredictable. Also they do not appear to harm tree health so insecticidal

control is not recommended.

In addition, probably preventive treatments, applied well before leaf drop, would be necessary.

It may be possible to reduce future infestations by picking up and destroying infested stems, the short sections without leaves, about seven to 10 days after the first leaves fall.

This sanitation program needs to be continued throughout the leaf drop period and must include all infested trees in the vicinity to be most successful. Raking and disposing of the leaves will not reduce the population because the insects are not in that portion of the plant.

From the Cooperative Extension Service, University of Kentucky, Department of Entomology.

Find us on The Web

The Grapevine is posted on the Michigan Master Gardener homepage. Angela Irwin will send a message via list serve when it is posted.

Go to <http://www.msue.msu.edu/mastergardener/saginaw/> for a copy. You need a current copy of Adobe Reader to open and read it.

Contact Beth Bedtelyon, editor, at 781-6834, or daysendfarm@chartermi.net if you have problems. The next newsletter deadline is Aug 11.

Saginaw Valley Master Gardener Association Mission Statement

"Joining together as Master Gardeners, our mission is to promote our enthusiasm and knowledge of gardening by a wide variety of educational and volunteer activities in a spirit of fun and friendship."

Where did all the dandelions, violets and stuff go?

God: St. Francis, what in the world is going on down there in the USA? What happened to the dandelions, violets, thistle and stuff I started eons ago? I had a perfect, no-maintenance garden plan. Those plants grow in any type of soil, withstand drought and multiply with abandon. The nectar from the long-lasting blossoms attracts butterflies, honeybees and flocks of songbirds. I expected to see a vast garden of colors by now. But all there are are these green rectangles.

St. Francis: It's the Suburbanites, Lord. They started calling your flowers weeds and went to great lengths to kill them and replace them with grass.

God: Grass? It's so boring. It's not colorful. It doesn't attract butterflies, birds and bees, only grubs and sod worms. It's temperamental. Do these Suburbanites really want all that grass growing there?

St. Francis: Apparently so, Lord. They go to great pains to grow it and keep it green. Each spring they fertilize grass, poisoning any other plant that crops up in the lawn.

God: The spring rains and warm weather make grass grow really fast.

That must make the Suburbanites happy.

St. Francis: No, Lord. As soon as it grows, they cut it, sometimes twice a week.

God: They cut it? Do they then bale it like hay?

St. Francis: Not exactly Lord. Most of them rake it up and put it in bags.

God: They bag it? Is it a cash crop?

St. Francis: No, sir — they pay to throw it away.

God: Let me get this straight. They fertilize grass so it will grow. And when it does grow, they cut it off and pay to throw it away?

St. Francis: Yes, sir.

God: These Suburbanites must be relieved in the summer when we cut back on the rain and turn up the heat.

St. Francis: You aren't going to believe this, Lord. They drag out hoses and pay more money to water it so they can continue to mow it and pay to get rid of it.

God: What nonsense. At least they kept the trees. That was a sheer stoke of genius, if I do say so myself. Trees provide beauty and shade in the summer. Later the leaves fall and keep

moisture in the soil, protecting the trees and bushes. As they rot, the leaves form compost, enhancing the soil. It's a natural circle of life.

St. Francis: You'd better sit down, Lord. The Suburbanites have a new circle. They rake the leaves into piles and pay to have them hauled away.

God: No. How do they protect shrub and tree roots in the winter and keep the soil moist and loose?

St. Francis: After throwing away the leaves, they buy mulch and spread it around in place of the leaves.

God: And where do they get this mulch?

St. Francis: They cut down trees and grind them up to make the mulch.

God: Enough! I don't want to think about this anymore. St. Catherine, you're in charge of the arts. What movie have you scheduled?

St. Catherine: "Dumb and Dumber," Lord. It's a real stupid movie about...

God: Never mind, I think I just heard the whole story from St. Francis.

July meeting continued...

(Continues from Page 1)

rototilling the entire area. Both, along with youngest son Craig Jr., hauled yard after yard of new dirt to create a workable soil base. Then with the help of her two sisters, Diana and Doreen, Damp arranged the plants and shrubs.

"My sisters were really worried after they volunteered to help and heard I had ordered 12 yards of dirt and a pallet of pavers," she chuckled. "But we got the really hard stuff done before they got here."

The summer before the sisters had

arrived for a weekend getaway, only to find Damp was creating new planting beds around the house and the front fence, including two huge pine trees, and numerous plants.

"They love it here," Damp says. "They call it the cottage...and even have their own room and beds picked out. They complain about the work, but they pitch in anyway, even when I've told them to just relax.

"Me? I can't believe this place is really ours. Craig knew he had to find someplace that would keep me busy after I retired or I would go nuts sitting

around — and he did!"

Damp says she will have Deet spray for those who want to stroll the ¾-mile path through the woods — and see the two fawns and doe that roam there.

And while there are no special plantings in the woods, Beins keeps the path cleared for two to walk abreast.

Beins will explain a little about bee-keeping and show his hives where the bees are busy at work. (The beehives are located away from where members will meet.)

Last year's four hives produced about 15 gallons of honey.

Odds and ends

Volunteers needed for zoo contest July 23

The Children's Zoo at Celebration Square is in need of volunteers to pass out and collect ballots for the People's Choice Garden Award from 10 a.m. to 8 p.m. Tuesday, July 29.

Volunteers also may be asked to explain the Adopt-A-Garden program, answer gardening questions, and identify plants growing in the gardens.

Volunteers will work in 2 to 2 1/2-hour shifts.

If you are interested, please call Patti Decker at 792-6633 or Colleen Sproul at 799-6877.

A sign-up list also will be available at the monthly meeting Wednesday, July 23.

Thank you Roethke crew

The Roethke project is done for the year and I want to thank the volunteers who made it possible. It involved a lot of work, cleaning up beds and planting, but we managed to get it all done.

Again, my thanks to Hillary Hare, Cyd Pasterz, Holly Furlo, Pam Luth, Mary Russell, Kay Wyatt, and Connie Rehmman.

Ruth Sny



Leaf printing class Aug. 18

Learn how to use nature's leaves and foliage to make works of art, says Patti Decker.

She will offer a class from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m. Monday, Aug. 18, at the MSU Extension office, downtown Saginaw.

"We will attempt to do three projects. Please bring to class something cotton, at least 50 percent cotton, that you would like to leaf print on, such as a T-shirt, sweatshirt, tote bag, cloth napkin, table runner, etc.," she explains.

"We also will make note cards and a garden apron. We will be working with paint, so dress accordingly."

Cost is \$5. Any questions about the class or supplies, please call Decker at 792-6633.

Toledo bus trip cancelled

The bus trip to the Toledo Botanical Garden scheduled for Saturday, July 26, has been cancelled. Everyone who had paid for the trip should have received their refunds by now. If you have not yet received yours, please contact Gail Caird, 793-1942.

Nurseryman resume meetings in fall

The Saginaw Valley Association of Nurserymen (SVAN) has scheduled meetings for Thursday, Sept. 11, Tuesday, Oct. 14; and Friday, Dec. 5.

More detail will be available when meetings resume in the fall. The Oct. meeting will be a joint session with the Genesee association.

For the garden of daily living...

Plant three rows of peas: Peace of mind, peace of heart, peace of soul.

Plant four rows of squash: Squash gossip, squash indifference, squash grumbling, squash selfishness.

Plant four rows of lettuce: lettuce be faithful, lettuce be kind; lettuce be patient, lettuce really love one another.

No garden is without turnips: turnip for meetings, turnip for service, turnip to help one another.

To conclude our garden, we must have thyme: thyme for each other, thyme for family, thyme for friends.

Water freely with patience and cultivate with love. There is much fruit in your garden because you reap what you sow.

Submitted by Grey Gitzen

Homeland Gardens has sale

PERRY, MI. – Homeland Gardens, 4455 Haslett Road, will have its annual plant sale now through Thursday, July 19.

The nursery offers a unique variety of perennials and shrubs. Business hours are from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. Tuesday to Friday and 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Saturday.

For information, call (517) 468-2341 or (517) 468-2444, or visit their Web site, homelandgardens@tds.net.

Author-speaker visits Troy

TROY, MI. – Tracy DiSabato-Aust, author of the "Well-tended Perennial

Garden," is the keynote speaker at the Woman's National Farm and Garden Association daylong seminar Saturday, Sept. 13.

The session is from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. at the MSU Management Education Center, 811 W. Sylvan Lake Road.

Fertile names quiz

Horticulture magazine says organic fertilizers have much to recommend them, "not the least their highly creative brand names, selected to hide and celebrate chief ingredients in the products."

Can you guess which brand goes with which major ingredient?

1. Grow Joe
2. Squanto's Secret
3. PooPets, including Stool Toads and Turdles
4. Dung Buddies and Pooliticals, including Repoobcan and Demacrap
5. Cricket Krap
6. Baa Baa Doo
7. Cockadoole Doo

Answers:

- A. Composted manure from the Memphis Zoo, plus gypsum for binding
- B. Composted chicken manure
- C. Dehydrated sheep manure
- D. Coffee grounds, plus other naturalized additives like palletized lime
- E. Baked cow manure
- F. Liquid fish-scrap fertilizer
- G. Droppings of crickets raised for fish bait, plus cricket food (corn, molasses, soybean and fish meal)

Sources for the organic fertilizer according to number, are:

1. The Amish Soil Co., (800) 856-9053 or www.amishsoil.com.
2. Bricker Organics, rickkrap@aol.com
3. Steve Connolly Seafoods, (800) 225-5595
4. Cool Beans Coffee and Tea, www.growjoeplantfood.com
5. Pure-Tex, (800) 542-0106 or www.organicdehy.com
6. Shepherd's Garden Seeds, (860) 482-3638 or www.shepherdseeds.com
7. ZooDoo Compost Co., (800)