

# The Grapevine

Bulletin of the Saginaw Valley Master Gardener Association

August 2007 Volume 11, Issue 8

## Rest area garden gets kudos from visitors

One of the prettiest public gardens in Michigan may be as close as the Southbound I-75 Rest Area.

But more than likely you haven't seen it because it is so close to home, says Gloria Schuler, the Advanced Master Gardener who chairs the multi-county project.

Saginaw Valley Master Gardener Association members have a chance this month when they meet for a picnic on the truck side of the rest stop.

SVMGA will provide the hot dogs, tableware and condiments. Members are asked to bring a dish to pass, a chair and a folding table if they need it for dining. Picnic tables will be used to lay out the food.

Members may bring one adult guest, but please make your reservation with Gloria Schuler by Aug. 17. Call 797-0100 or email [globobarama@excite.com](mailto:globobarama@excite.com).

The Bay City resident was one of three

dozen trainees from Midland, Saginaw, Bay and Tuscola counties who accepted the Michigan Department of Transportation challenge to rework the tired landscaping.

"Initially, MDOT ripped out everything except the mature trees. The bed Judy Henning's team cares for was all yews and the center bed was juniper and other bushes that were in vogue in the late '60s," Schuler explains.

"There was no color, just bushes, so Jim Kalishek (a former Master Gardener program coordinator) brought out people who needed their hours, divided us into teams and we developed a plan and then ordered the plants through MDOT."

Over the first year, as the volunteers earned their hours — and Kalishek left his position — help at the site dwindled.

"Being in Bay City, my friend Sue Fortune and I didn't know the other people so we called MDOT and asked if they had heard from anyone and if we could get some bulbs.

"Sue and I ended up planting 2,000 bulbs that fall."

Come the next spring, they contacted the Saginaw MSUE office and discovered who was involved. Only six of the original group returned.

"And we started to build from there," says Schuler. "Now we have a system



Gloria Schuler sits in front of the central bed at the Southbound I-75 Rest Area.

### Next meeting

- 6 p.m. — 9 p.m. Wednesday, Aug. 22, at the Southbound I-75 Rest Stop, near the Saginaw/Bay county line.
- 6 p.m. — 7 p.m., hot dog roast; please bring a dish to pass
- 7 p.m.— 7:30 p.m., business meeting
- 7:30 p.m. — 9 p.m., view garden
- **Please wear your badge and bring a chair (and a card table, if you need it for dining)**
- **Each member may bring 1 adult guest. Call your reservation and dish to pass in by Aug. 17 at 797-0100 or e-mail [globobarama@excite.com](mailto:globobarama@excite.com)**
- **Directions:** Take Bay Road to I-75 exit 160 near Delta College. Go south 1.5 miles on I-75 and exit at rest stop near mile marker 158.
- **Please park on the truck side of the rest area, parking two cars to a slot.**

and we know when MDOT needs to place the order for plants from Boehler's (Greenhouse) for the next spring."

The project encompasses 10,000 square feet with large beds surrounding the walkways to the restrooms and a new bed at the entrance to welcome visitors.

"People have told me they stop here 'even if they don't have to pee' and MDOT has told us they get many calls and compliments for this rest area,"

*(Continues on Page 2)*

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**The new garden** at the entrance of the Southbound I-75 Rest Area greets visitors as they pull in. Drivers see a flower pot shaped from flowers and a knot garden of boxwoods.

# MDOT replaces sidewalks, purchases benches, plants...

Continues from Page 1

Schuler says.

This year, MDOT is replacing the sidewalks with new concrete and stone to match the building.

It's also installed a number of benches, besides the picnic tables, so people can stop and enjoy the garden. And there's new edging around the beds.

"It's taken five years to get the gardens to this stage, because MDOT can't afford to do everything at once, but they are so accommodating."

When MDOT asked Schuler to take on the new bed at the entrance, she pointed out no water available there. That week, a watering system was extended to the site which now features a knot garden of boxwoods and a huge bed shaped like a flower pot.

"You can't really see it when you drive by in a car, but I'm told from an 18-wheeler or a camper, it looks lovely," Schuler says.

"And people really respect this as a

public garden. We've had very few losses. And, of course, the labels don't stick around for long.

"People ask us if they can take seeds and cuttings."

"We've got two beauty bushes, which bloom in the spring and aren't as boring after they flower like forsythia," she explains.

"We have five kinds of hydrangea — some 150 species altogether — to show people what you can grow in Michigan.

"Some push the envelope, like rhododendrons a truck driver from the South told me would never bloom here — and do (in pink, white, yellow and deep rose)."

Because of the mature trees, many of the beds are shaded much of the day, leading to such choices as petasides, ligularia, heliobores, ferns and hostas.

"We're trying to get all the colors of hyssop or agastache. The blue smells like licorice, Tutti Frutti like anise — and you can use them on salads."

Carefree Delight shrub roses serve as an edging in one bed — and have had no bugs or black spot since their installation, Schuler says.

"This year the center bed is all things tropical, from cannas to papyrus (King Tut and Baby Tut) because this area just bakes in the sun."

A bed north of the central planting area was once all ornamental grasses, but they didn't get enough sun.

They have been replaced by Forever and Ever hydrangeas, which Schuler says have bloomed and bloomed all summer.

"We have five tree peonies (in red, yellow, and red and white), ice plant because it's so showy and cascading artemesia."

Henning's team has the biggest challenge because that bed gets the most shade, Schuler says.

"In the spring there's Jack in the Pulpit, trilliums and Japanese anemone with asters in the fall for color."

Another shady bed features plants with

white flowers or leaves — like Dusty Miller, white astible, oxalis and fragrant clethra.

Schuler, a travel agent and co-owner of Grande Voyages in Bay City, took the Master Gardening class with her friend Sue Fortune.

"We both like to garden, but we didn't realize it involved volunteering until we were in class.

"But in taking the fall class, where there's little opportunity to get your hours in, we were chomping at the bit to complete them.

"So when this project came up in the spring, we were desperate to get our hours in."

It's obviously become a labor of love.

Besides Master Gardeners, the Aug. 22 meeting will feature MDOT representatives Larry Tibbits, also a Master Gardener, from Midland; Dan Medina from Bay City, and Cary Rouse of Saginaw, an expert on trees.

"She's a tree goddess, developing almost a baby arboretum with the nice varieties she's selected," Schuler says.

"MDOT should get a lot of the credit here. They're a superb group to work with, from providing a Bobcat when we need it to a generator to trim the boxwoods at the entrance.

"All we have to do is ask and they work with Boehler's to get the plants we want.

"Of course, we have to understand that with state budget cutbacks it may not always be at once, but we do get them.

"It's been a really good partnership and we both benefit," Schuler says.

"Master Gardeners have a place to earn their hours and MDOT gets a site that gives them a lot of calls and compliments because visitors are so pleased by what's here."

*Story by Darlene B. Damp, editor*

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## 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."

# Letter from the president

Hey! Hey! Hey! I want you all to know there is a new dance craze going around Clunie Street.

You stomp to the right, stomp to the left, stomp, shuffle forward and stomp, shuffle back!

This is called the **Mole Hill Stomp!** How many of you Master Gardeners are doing this dance around your yard?

If you happen to drive by my house, you may see me doing this dance all around my front beds. Moles have visited the back yard for a few years, but this is the first time they have gone through my new front beds. I have been known to do this dance 3 or more times in a day over the same territory.

I guess the moles are just looking out for me, by making sure I get some exercise every day!

As annoying as they are this year, I still cannot conceive of killing them.

It probably would do no good anyway as they are everywhere in the neighborhood. Any hints you have to discourage them would be appreciated.

**Please note our August meeting is an hour earlier to accommodate the hot dog roast.** (See story, Page 1)



At our September meeting, our scheduled speaker is unable to be present.

Instead, we have decided to have our fall plant exchange at the regular meeting. This is a good time to thin out plants and still have cool weather ahead to give them a good start in the garden.

There will be a **Master Gardener Plant Sale Friday, Sept. 21**, at the Saginaw Farmer's Market. Any plants left from the sale will be added to those brought for the plant exchange.

The Board also has a number of issues to address at the September meeting. This is a heads up so you can be thinking about these issues and have your questions and comments ready.

First is our web site. How many of you have gone to this site to check it out?

Please do. Our question concerns whether we want this site to have a unique look all our own.

If you check out the related story (See "volunteer hours," Page 5), there are a couple of Master Gardener associations that have done this.

We would also like to know if there's anything else we should have on the site.

2. Fund-raisers. How do you feel about them? Should we do more? Should we do less? Those of you who bought bulbs, how did they grow for you? Should we do the spring bulb sale again?

What do we as a group want to do with the money generated from these fund-raisers?

We are looking for suggestions here.

I will leave you with those two items to ponder and when the larger group meets in September we will bring them before the members.

Feel free to talk to me about how you feel whenever you see me.

Toodles!

Susan

## New resources promote native plants, pollinators

EAST LANSING, Mich. -- Building on four years of research on the delicate balance between native plants and insects, Michigan State University entomologists have created easy-to-use resources focusing on attracting natural enemies with native plants, strategies for conserving native bees and identifying natural enemies in the field.

Natural enemies, both predators and parasites, are a no-cost and chemical-free approach to pest control.

They prey on insects such as aphids, thrips, caterpillars and beetles that can damage crops and landscape plants. Pollinators, including bees, pollinate a variety of plants and crops.

"Entomologists have long recognized natural enemies and pollinators as essential parts of every growing ecosystem," said Doug Landis, entomology professor.

"However, not all farms and landscapes contain the resources these beneficial insects require, including a constant

supply of flowering plants providing ready access to pollen and nectar.

"In response, entomologists have frequently recommended the planting of several easy-to-grow non-native plants to attract and feed natural enemies and pollinators.

"But non-native plants do not add to native biodiversity, and some can become invasive. We wanted to see if native plants worked as well as non-native plants and discovered that they were equally good, if not better."

Landis and MSU entomology graduate student Anna Fiedler tested 43 native prairie and savanna plants that were once common in Michigan.

They contrasted these to the five most commonly recommended non-native plants to determine which ones were most effective at attracting beneficial insects. Of those tested, 26 were identified as best choices.

Landis and Fiedler combined their

findings on native plants and natural enemies with the results of native bee conser-  
(Continues on Page 6)

Next board meeting:  
**5:30 p.m. Wednesday,  
Sept. 5, at MSU Extension**

Newsletter deadline:  
**Monday, Sept. 10,**  
Send submissions to  
**Darlene Damp, editor,  
shrew@att.net**

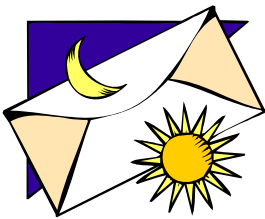
View the newsletter at:  
**web1.msue.msu.edu/  
mastergardener/saginaw/**

View the SVMGA web page at:  
**web1.msue.msu.edu/  
mastergardener/saginaw/  
association/**

## Odds and ends...

### Dear Master Gardeners...

Thank you for all your help at Birds, Bugs, Butterflies and Blooms at the Children's Zoo. We couldn't do the Zoo without great volunteers like you!



*Patti Decker and the Horticulture Committee at the Children's Zoo at Celebration Square*

### New homeowner needs help identifying garden plants

A new homeowner in the Lathrup Park subdivision is seeking help identifying the plants in her new garden.

Kelly Hamilton says they bought the house at 1672 Avalon from a former Master Gardener, but have no idea what the plants in the garden are — or how to care for them.

Call her at 737-2561 to lend a helping hand.

### Thanks go to volunteers

Many thanks to all of you who have worked so hard the last couple of weeks to help make the gardens look special for the Master Gardener Meeting that was held at Bridgeport Historic Village (July 25).

Your hard work was very much appreciated.

For Master Gardeners who still need hours, you may come over any time at your own convenience and work in the gardens for the rest of the summer.

There is always deadheading and weeding to be done.

If I'm gone for just a day and don't get to it, those horrible binder weeds seem to strangle everything and take over the entire area. Please pull any you see.

We have ordered new signs made and are waiting for them to be finished by the printer. Many of the gardens have been adopted, but don't have signs yet.

There are still a few left for anyone wanting a special garden area of their own to design and plant.

But I'm sure those who have adopted a garden won't mind if a volunteer helps

weed or deadhead their area.

The museum hosts the annual Flea Market Saturday, Aug. 18, at the gardens as part of the weekend for the Car Show and Bridgeport Days Festival. (The car show is at the Bridgeport High School grounds.)

Anyone wanting to set up a booth, may call the museum at 777-5230.

Or you can just come over and enjoy a walk around the gardens and shop a little!

The "Frankentrost" band will perform a free concert Monday, Aug. 20. Everyone is invited.

We also have a Boy Scout working toward his Eagle badge by painting some of the buildings in the park.

Again, thanks to all of you.

*Sue Lawcock and Sandy Lundy  
Project co-chairmen*

### Plants available for sale

Ruth Sny still has plants left from the plant sale in case there's something you want to purchase for your garden or a friend.

She's also looking to pay someone to weed her garden.

Those interested may call her at 928-7315.

### Butterfly exhibit wins praise

Thanks to all for your compliments and encouragement on the Butterfly Exhibit at the Children's Zoo at Celebration Square.

A big thanks to the Saginaw Correctional Facility for their flower donation again this year.

My feeling is that this may be the last year for flowers.

Therefore, I am asking that anyone who may be thinning out perennial beds this fall to consider donating them to the Butterfly Exhibit.

We are looking for the following: Bee balm or Monarda in all colors; Coreopsis, Gaillardia, Lavender, Liatris, Phlox, pink and purple Coneflowers, Pincushion flower or Scabious and Mexican Sunflowers — or any others to brighten the gardens.

One thing to remember, we are not allowed to have host plants (the kind that

butterflies would lay eggs in, like milkweed).

Please call me at 799-2118.

*Nancy Hales*

### Notebook sale continues

You can still order a new SVMGA garden notebook until the Sept. 26 meeting.

Use the 60-page notebooks to track year-to-year planting successes and failures. They also make great gifts.

See the order form on Page 7 of the newsletter. Orders must be pre-paid.

Members select their notebook color and cover preferences at time of order.

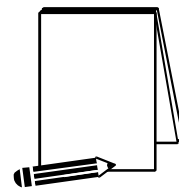
Covers will be individually printed with their names. The pages have the three-hole Mylar reinforced edges.

The board wants to have at least 50 orders before proceeding with printing, otherwise funds will be returned.

To date, only 16 orders have been placed.

Notebooks will be available at the October meeting, in time for Christmas.

Proceeds support SVMGA programs.



### Sixteen earn certification

Sixteen men and women have earned certification in the Master Gardener program for Saginaw County.

Susanne M. Smokoska and Joan S. Wendland are new Advanced Master Gardeners while Jackie J. Dunson, Marsha D. Eckerman and Barbara Jo Milwrick are newly certified Master Gardeners.

Those who have recertified to date are Mary Kathryn Andrews, Patty Decker, Holly Furlo, Darlene Damp, Grey Gitzen, Crystal Kauer, Susan Lawcock, Waunita Pettiford, Gus Schulwitz, Phyllis Shlien, Susanne Smokoska and Elizabeth Williams.

To re-certify, simply enter your hours now online.

### Correction

Dick Metiva of Bridgeport built the arbor, outhouse and a birdhouse for the Bridgeport Historic Village. The wrong person was named in the July edition.



## MSU, Dow Gardens offer classes for education credit

### MSU hosts Garden Day

EAST LANSING — Plant and garden lovers won't want to miss Michigan State University Garden Day, Friday, Aug. 10, at the Wharton Center.

The event, from 8 a.m. to 3:45 p.m., features two guest speakers and a selection of workshops brimming with new ideas and practical tips.

Author, illustrator and lifelong gardener Sharon Lovejoy will offer a morning keynote address featuring bountiful cottage gardens in Britain and the United States. Learn how to adapt her simple, inspirational ideas to a window box or an estate.

Brad Rowe, MSU associate professor of horticulture, delivers an afternoon keynote on green roof technology. He was involved in the design and installation of the world's largest green roof, at Ford Motor Company's River Rouge manufacturing facility in Dearborn.

Twelve one-hour workshops cover topics such as water gardens, growing small trees and small fruits, common plant pests and problems, garden tool maintenance and theme gardens for kids.

Master Gardeners earn five credit hours for participating in Garden Day.

Registration is \$85 and includes two workshops, keynote speakers, parking and

lunch.

To register or learn more, visit [www.hrt.msu.edu/outreach/GardenDay2007.htm](http://www.hrt.msu.edu/outreach/GardenDay2007.htm).

Or call Sandy Allen in the MSU Horticulture Department at (517) 355-5191, ext. 1339, or by e-mail at [allens@msu.edu](mailto:allens@msu.edu).

### Native plants topic Aug. 14

MIDLAND — Dr. Rufus Isaacs of Michigan State University examines "Gardening with Natives for Pollinators and Other Beneficial Insects," Tuesday, Aug. 14.

Entomologists at MSU researched native plants and natural enemies and combined it with the results of native bee conservation work conducted by Isaacs, also an entomologist. (See story, Page 3)

The session is from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m. at Whiting Forest, located one-quarter mile north of the Dow Gardens Visitor Center on Eastman Avenue.

Cost is \$12 and Master Gardeners earn two education credits. Call 631-2677.

### Learn how to prune trees

MIDLAND — Dan Veresh offers tips on how to properly prune trees in a session Saturday, Aug. 11, at Dow Gardens.

It is from 9:30 a.m. to noon and costs

\$10.

Please dress for the weather because most of the time will be spent outdoors in the gardens in discussion and observa-

tion. MGs earn 2.5 education credits.



### Garden design series begins in September, register now

EAST LANSING — A short course series on garden design begins in September at three locations.

The course features Intro to Garden Design, Advanced Garden Design I and II, Garden Design Graphics and Construction and Calculation.

The Saturday sessions meet in East Lansing from Sept. 22 to Dec. 1; Gaylord from Sept. 8 to Oct. 13; and Petoskey on Sept. 15, Nov. 3 and 17. Cost of each varies.

Instructor Lynn LaPointe Wiese is a licensed landscape architect

Master Gardeners receive 7 education hours for each workshop completed.

For the complete schedule and costs, please visit <http://web1.msue.msu.edu/mastergardener> or call (517) 355-0188.

## Earn volunteer hours with these projects

### HELP! We need a Web page designer...

President Susan Scott is looking a member who is willing to work on redesigning the SVMGA Web site and then managing any updates.

She's hoping the redesign would be more colorful and interesting than the standard MSUE Master Gardener association web pages, similar to those done by Iosco, Oakland and Otsego counties.

She's also interested in SVMGA having its own domain name that would ease access.

The SVMGA Web site would include most of the information already located there, plus the Volunteer Opportunities List, photographs of members and asso-

ciation projects.

You can view the SVMGA web page, as well as other association web sites at: [web1.msue.msu.edu/mastergardener/saginaw/association/](http://web1.msue.msu.edu/mastergardener/saginaw/association/)

For information, contact Scott at [SuhunSco@aol.com](mailto:SuhunSco@aol.com) or call 791-9270.

### Saginaw Art Museum hosts 'group weed...'

Shelley Whitehead needs help bringing the Saginaw Art Museum's historic Ring Garden back to a weed-free state.

She plans a "group weed" from 9 a.m. to noon Saturday, Aug. 18.

Volunteers may park in the back of the museum, near the railroad tracks. Call Whitehead at 892-0719.

### Japanese Garden needs tender, loving care....

Holly Furlo is looking for volunteers to help weed the Japanese Tea House garden any Tuesday night.

The gardens attract visitors and serve as a wedding site during the summer.

Volunteers meet from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m. Contact [hfurlo@svsu.edu](mailto:hfurlo@svsu.edu) or call 793-3860.

### Christmas party...

Ruth Sny says she will have a sign-up sheet at the September meeting for members who want to help plan and set up the annual Christmas potluck.

It is set for Tuesday, Dec. 4, at First Presbyterian Church fellowship hall.

## Minutes of the July 25, 2007 meeting

President Susan Scott welcomed 37 members to Bridgeport Historic Village's flower gardens in Bridgeport Township.

She thanked Bridgeport Historical Society President Diane McCartney and Vice President and Master Gardener Susan Lawcock for their hospitality.

Ruth Sny moved approval of the June minutes; Bonnie Dutcher seconded the motion. Motion carried.

Scott informed members due to the absence of Crystal Kauer, the treasurer's report would be read at the next meeting.

Vice President Karen Tilden reported that procedural changes for project fund allocations is working well. She added that project chairmen retain their purchase receipts in case some funding may become available in the future.

All funds approved for projects may

not be spent, allowing for remaining money to be distributed to new project requests.

Scott reminded members of MSU's Garden Day – 2007, on Friday, Aug. 10. (See related story, Page 5)

Judy Henning said volunteers were needed for the Children's Zoo's annual Birds, Bees and Blooms Day; a sign-up sheet was made available.

Gloria Schuler discussed the August meeting to be held at the Southbound I-75 Rest Area near M-84.

She requested members use the truck side when parking their vehicles. Members voted to start the August meeting at 6 p.m. for the hot dog roast.

Association members will tour the gardens and hear from Michigan Department of Transportation speakers. (See story, Page 1)

Reservations are required for members and their guests, and what dish they will bring. Hot dogs will be furnished by SVMGA.

Susan Lawcock thanked SVMGA members for coming to view the gardens. She shared the history of their formation and direction for future plantings.

Diane McCartney, daughter of the founder, William "Wally" Schomaker, gave the history of the site, including where many of the buildings originated and how they were moved to the site. McCartney also discussed plans for future building acquisitions and site enhancements.

Members enjoyed refreshments and touring Bridgeport Historic Village's gardens.

*Submitted by Melva Bond, secretary*

## MSU entomologists complete four years of research...

*Continues from Page 3*

vation work conducted by Rufus Isaacs, MSU associate professor of entomology, and Julianna Tuell, another MSU entomology graduate student.

Together, the results were used to create recommendations and best practices for establishing natural environments to attract native pollinators and predators.

The products of their work are a variety of science-based, user-friendly resources: two Extension bulletins, a small pocket-sized flip booklet and a comprehensive set of online tools available at <http://www.ipm.msu.edu/plants/home.htm>.

"This information is useful for a wide variety of audiences — farmers, horticulturalists, home gardeners and anyone else who is interested in increasing habitat for natural enemies and pollinators," Landis said.

"Native plant enthusiasts are especially thrilled."

"Attracting Beneficial Insects with Native Flowering Plants" (Bulletin E-2973, costing \$2) is colorful and picture-filled, showcasing plants growers should use to attract natural enemies throughout the

growing season.

A second bulletin, "Conserving Native Bees on Farmland" (Bulletin E-2985, \$2), provides recommendations for creating an environment to attract native bees and describes the various types of native pollinators found in a field.

The flipbook, "Identifying Natural Enemies in Crops and Landscapes" (Bulletin E-2949, \$10), is an easy-to-use pocket guide and field reference tool.

It offers quick access to information and pictures of natural enemies to help users readily identify the most common natural enemies in crop fields and home landscapes.

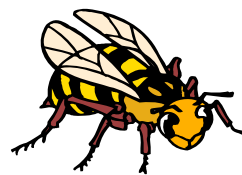
The Web site, <http://www.ipm.msu.edu/plants/home.htm>, has plant fact sheets, a chart explaining the best plants for certain insects and the time of year they are useful. Power Point slides also are available.

"Though the Web site offers one-stop shopping for all the information provided in the publications, we have multiple formats because not everyone has access to the Internet," Landis said.

"The Web site contains more detailed

information on plants and insects for people who want to learn which species are best for attracting natural enemies or pollinators."

To purchase the publications, contact the MSU Bulletin Office by calling (517) 353-6740 or visiting <http://www.emdc.msue.msu.edu/>.



Discounts are available if the publications are purchased for use with MSU Extension programming. Project GREEN

(Generating Research and Extension to meet Economic and Environmental Needs) is a cooperative effort with plant-based commodities, business, the Michigan Agricultural Experiment Station, MSU Extension and Michigan Department of Agriculture to advance Michigan's economy through its plant-based agriculture.

Its mission is to develop research and education programs for industry needs, ensure and improve food safety and protect the quality of the environment.

*Story by MSU News Service*

# An Autumn Affair for Gardeners

**8:15 a.m. to 4 p.m. Saturday, October 6,  
Saginaw Valley State University, Curtiss Hall, University Center, MI**

The Saginaw Valley Master Gardener Association invites you to learn more about your favorite past-time at its fourth annual fall seminar. Here's what the day includes:

- Monica Mila, Ann Arbor's Garden Faerie, is an Advanced Master Gardener and a Master Composter, who provides a jump on spring. Learn how to start seeds outdoors in the winter — without a greenhouse!
- David S. McKenzie, owner of the wholesale ground cover nursery, Hortech Inc., in Spring Lake, shares his alternatives to grass with "Unconventional Lawns."
- Have tools but don't know what to do with them? Master Gardeners Ruth Blumenstein and Susan Scott give the basics on gardening tools, their uses and maintenance, plus tips on proper body mechanics.
- Sue Grubba, a Michigan School of Gardening senior instructor, helps you deal with seasonal water bans and high water bills, with "Drought Tolerant Plants."

Early registration is \$50, including box lunch/snacks, by Friday, Sept. 14; \$55 after Sept. 14. Vendors, checks/cash. Master Gardeners earn 5 education hours. Call Judy Henning, (989) 799-4136 or Aileen Cowan, (989) 865-8784 or e-mail [judrich@sbcglobal.net](mailto:judrich@sbcglobal.net) or [scratchcreations@att.net](mailto:scratchcreations@att.net). For conference brochure and schedule: <http://web1.msue.msu.edu/mastergardener/saginaw/>

## REGISTRATION FORM

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Phone; \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail (conference purposes only) \_\_\_\_\_

- Please check if you are a Master Gardener  
Please choose a lunch entrée (chips, fruit cup, cookie, drink included):  
 Turkey/roast beef on croissant, or  Vegetable pita

Mail check, payable to SVMGA, to Treasurer Crystal Kauer, 5775 Mackinaw Road, Saginaw, MI 48604.  
No refunds; substitutes accepted. SVSU is located between Saginaw/Bay City on M-84 near I-75.

## Garden Journal Order Form

Name \_\_\_\_\_

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## Annual easy to grow and drought, frost-tolerant

EAST LANSING — As sunflowers come into bloom, it seems no other annual flower grown from seed offers a greater range of plant heights and flower types.

Doubt it? Then name another easy-to-grow annual flower that ranges in height from less than 18 inches to 14 feet.

Flowers may have huge centers fringed with petals or smaller centers surrounded by rounded, pointed, narrow, solid-colored or bi-colored petals in an array of warm colors as well as light green.

There's also shaggy-looking flowers made up of tiny double petals around a very small eye.

"Sunflower blossoms range in size from 3 inches to mammoth — a foot or more," says Mary McLellan, Extension Master Gardener program coordinator at Michigan State University.

"Some are great for cutting; the taller varieties are dramatic additions to a sunny garden."

Some sunflowers are even suitable for growing in containers, she notes. Aply called dwarf sunflowers, these reach a mature height of 3 feet or less, yet bear multiple 4-inch flowers.

You can even buy seeds in mixtures for a riot of color for cutting or enjoying in the garden.

"Some of the popularity of sunflowers may stem from the fact that they're easy to grow," McLellan suggests.

"The main requirement is plenty of sun. They're not particular about soil, and they're fairly drought-tolerant.

"Because young sunflowers are frost-tolerant, you can sow seeds before the local frost-free date.

"And sunflowers have few insect or disease problems, but if you want to harvest the seeds, you'll have to get there before the squirrels and birds do."

The traditional seed sources are the giant varieties, with names such as Kong, Paul Bunyan, Mammoth Russian and American Giant.

Each tall stem is topped by a huge flower with a large dark brown center and bright yellow petals. There are snack hybrids, bred for large, tasty seeds perfect for roasting and easy to crack.

Sunflowers grown for seed should be harvested when the back portion of the head turns brown.

If seedheads are left on the plant, the

sandeds will drop from the drooping heads or be harvested by birds and squirrels.

Garden sunflowers tend to have multiple smaller blossoms on strongly branched plants. Colors are yellows, oranges, dark red and mahogany; a couple of varieties have green blossoms.

What we think of as a single sunflower is made up of 1,000 to 2,000 individual flowers in a single base, McLellan notes.

The petals are individual ray flowers, which don't develop into seeds. Pollination and seed development begin around the outside of the head and move toward the center. The seedhead usually matures about 30 days after the last flower is pollinated.

"Whether you're growing dwarf types in a tub or planting a 'sun forest' of giants, planting is easy — work the soil to prepare a seedbed, sow an inch deep 4 to 8 inches apart in rows 12 to 18 inches apart, and step back!" McLellan says.

"Because sunflowers germinate quickly, grow rapidly and flower so dramatically, especially the giants, they're great for a child's garden. Not quite instant gratification, but close."

## Upcoming SVMGA programs

- 8/22 — Tour of I-75 Southbound Rest Stop at the Saginaw-Bay county line, with hot dog roast; members may each bring 1 guest**
- 9/21 — Fall plant sale at the Saginaw Farmers Market**
- 9/26 — Fall plant exchange at Andersen Enrichment Center**
- 10/6 — An Autumn Affair for Gardeners at Saginaw Valley State University, Curtiss Hall, featuring four speakers, vendors, spring bulb sale**
- 10/24 — Joel Miller, Goldner Walsh Nursery, "Freaks, Witches Brooms and Chimeras in Michigan's Landscape"**
- 11/28 — Ned Bromley, Riverby Gardens, "Glorious Ferns"**
- 12/4 — Annual Christmas potluck, First Presbyterian Church fellowship hall**

**Meetings from January to April and September to December are at the Andersen Enrichment Center. Meetings in May through August are at members' gardens or other garden sites.**

**Spring and fall plant exchanges are offered annually, along with a variety of field trips, depending on members' interests. The fall seminar, An Autumn Affair for Gardeners, Oct. 6, helps educate all gardeners on current horticulture practices.**