

# The Grapevine

Happy St. Patrick's Day!

Bulletin of the Saginaw Valley Master Gardener Association

March 2008 Volume 12, Issue 3

## Shiawassee River Basin Water Quality Is Important- Environmentally and Economically

Heidi M. Frei is a familiar name to Saginaw Valley Master Gardeners.

Before the Oscoda native took over as program coordinator for the Nature Conservancy's Shiawassee River Project in Owosso almost two years ago, she was working on an urban forestry project in the Heritage Square District of Saginaw.

Today her work centers on improving the habitat along the Shiawassee River, a major tributary which eventually empties into the Saginaw Bay.



Heidi Frei

"It's important not only environmentally, but economically," says Frei, who will discuss "Water Quality in the Shiawassee River Basin" at the March 26 meeting.

Her work with volunteers is taking a two-prong approach: instituting conservation measures with agriculture producers to limit the amount of soil, chemicals and other harmful materials that enter the river and working with volunteers to remove harmful effluence through local clean-ups, such as the two sponsored in Owosso and Corunna.

"What we're hoping to do is increase the forestry cover and the vegetation along the river so that animals, birds and other creatures will return to those habitats," Frei explains.

"The Shiawassee River is a migrating path for birds, but when you remove vegetation along the river, due to farming or land development, there's no place for birds to perch and their migratory corridor becomes fragmented."

She hopes to extend the river project, with the help of volunteers, to Saginaw, Genesee, Livingston, Oakland and other parts of Shiawassee counties.

"We also want to protect the river quality. We do that much like people are doing with rain gardens -- by having bushes, tall grasses and other vegetation there to act as natural filters for fertilizer, oil and other sediments that can be harmful to the river.

"Here in Shiawassee County we've had volunteers plant seedlings," Frei says.

In Saginaw County, she's hoping to attract Master Gardeners not just to reforest large tracts, but to work with owners of small riverside lots on rain garden-type projects that would be more appropriate for residential properties.

"I know Master Gardeners are always looking for volunteer hours," she adds.

See *Shiawassee*, page 6

### Next meeting

- 7 p.m.--9 p.m. **Wednesday, Mar. 26th**  
Andersen Enrichment Center,  
Ezra Rust and Fordney
  - 7 p.m. — 7:30 p.m. SVMGA meeting
  - 7:30 p.m.— 8 p.m. Refreshments
  - 8 p.m. — 9 p.m. Education/  
Guest Speaker  
(see story, this page)
- Please wear your badge**

### SEED EXCHANGE!

**Members! Bring your seeds to our March membership meeting for our annual Seed Exchange!**

## Meet the Gardener ~ Shirley Oryczak

This advanced master gardener says her garden goes from "Shabby Chic" to rustic. She uses garden art that she makes out of great finds at garage sales. Her husband has made a wooden arbor for her Michigan clematis to add to the look she likes. Shirley Oryczak also has two "bottle trees" one with blue glass and another with green and red. She said a friend showed her an article on the how-to of this bottle art. Says Shirley, "It's a Southern thing, keeps the Spirits away."

Southern, she likes Georgia when she can visit her son and family, which includes 6 year old twin grandchildren. About mid-June Shirley picks the twins up and has them for six weeks in the summer. Her granddaughter, Rory, likes to help in the garden. She likes cut flowers (just like her great -grandma!) and her grandson, Jack can't wait to pick sweet peas and green beans that Shirley tucks in between her flowers and plants.



Shirley was born the oldest of five in Oakley and lives on the same land that her Dad once owned. After graduating from

Chesaning High School, she went to Delta then started a 20 year career in banking in Owosso. Shirley first worked as a mortgage processor and then became Vice President of Mortgages. Because the job was phased out, Shirley "took a break for five years". Already familiar to taking classes on a variety of subjects, Shirley decided to try the MG class, "to learn gardening the proper way". The MG class, she says, "was the best she had ever taken."

See *Oryczak*, page 6

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## Minutes of January 23, 2008 meeting

Susan Scott welcomed 103 members to the Andersen Enrichment Center.

Elaine Rappley moved that the minutes of the January meeting be approved as published. Waunita Pettiford seconded the motion. The motion carried.

Crystal Kauer read the treasurer's report. There are 86 paid members. No motion for approval was made.

Scott mentioned that the project forms were available from her as Karen Tilden was unable to attend the meeting. She passed a clipboard around for project leaders to sign what their project was and whether it was still going to go on this year. She also had a sign-up sheet for members wishing to volunteer to help on the garden at the extension office.

Scott passed out a revised version of the budget. No money was allocated for field trips and \$500 was allocated for the Soil Conservation District. Due to illness, Ralph Heiden was not able to get the newsletter onto the MSU web site this month. Sue Stemler agreed to head up a committee to investigate putting together our own web page. She asked for help from tech savvy people. Bill Wegner moved that the vote to decide whether to continue mailing the newsletter or not be tabled until next meeting when Stemler's committee would report back on the viability of the web page. Bob Schust seconded the motion. The motion carried.

Scott asked for a vote on the budget since the organization does need a working budget. Crystal Kauer moved that the budget be accepted. Joyce Schultz seconded the motion. The motion carried.

Grey Gitzen mentioned that the certification forms for master gardeners were available that evening for members to pick up. He asked that any mistakes be written on the envelopes the certifications were in and given to him so changes could be made in the office.

Scott has called those members whose emails are getting bounced back to the office. Nancy Burd sends out emails on upcoming educational and volunteer opportunities.

Laura Keeven had a sign-up sheet for those interested in working on the St. Charles Greenhouse Project May 16<sup>th</sup>. This is when the high school students work on various projects in the community. They need volunteers to help with this project.

David Quinnan had a sign-up sheet for those interested in helping with the Rainbow's End Park near the Wal Mart on Bay Road. He needs people who have good ideas on how to beautify the park.

Gloria Shuler brought examples of the cow pots she mentioned at last month's meeting for a fundraiser. Crystal Kauer moved that SVMGA authorize an initial expenditure of \$300 for the pots. Grey Gitzen seconded the motion. The motion carried. A sign-up sheet for those members wishing to purchase some at the next meeting was available. Members can buy the 3 inch pots for 50 cents and the 4 inch pots for 65 cents; the pots will sell at a slightly higher price

to the public. Shuler will be purchasing one case that includes 300 of the 4 inch pots and 700 of the 3 inch pots.

Sue Stemler mentioned that the fund raising committee had brought some fund raising suggestions to the board at one of last year's meetings. They never heard back about any of these ideas. Scott will look into this matter and apologized for this happening.

Shirley McNier had forms available for those wishing to have their own clothing embellished. It will cost \$10. Members wishing to have this done should fill out the form and bring it with their money and clothing to the next meeting. Lanyards are \$2.50 with a minimum order of 70 needed. She can also get decals for car windows at \$4.50. She needs a minimum order of 24. McNier said that any clothing articles not picked up by April 30<sup>th</sup> will be at the extension office.

Thanks go to Gail Bender for donating the thermometer and an anonymous donor for donating the t-shirt and polo shirt for the raffle. Congratulations to Leo LeRoy for winning the t-shirt, Xenny Johnson for winning the thermometer and Pat Collier for winning the polo shirt.

Following the meeting Kris Leitner gave an informative presentation about landscape trees to replace the ash trees that have been devastated by the emerald ash borer.

Respectfully submitted by  
Anne Birkam sitting in for  
Melva Bond, secretary

### Next Board Meeting:

5:30 p.m. Wednesday,  
Apr. 2, 2008 at MSU Extension

### Newsletter Deadline:

See note below:  
Send submissions to  
**Sue Stemler, editor**  
suestemler@chartermi.net  
Through March 25th

**This month only!**  
**March 25 -April 7**  
Send submissions to  
**Darlene Damp**  
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/

### Projects receive approval for 2008:

The following Projects and Chairpersons received approval and for the 2008 year thus far:

Arthur Eddy	Melva Bond/Waunita Pettiford	\$200
YMCA Flagpole	Judy Wagner	\$100
Children's Zoo	Judy Henning	\$200
HealthSource	Jane Chard	\$200
Dow Event Center		
Entry planters and atrium	Ruth Sny	\$200
Roetke House	Bob Sawyer	\$200
Hoyt Rehab and Nursing Home	Sharla Hammer	\$200
Saginaw Art Museum	Shelley Whitehead	\$200

### 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

Hello

March is here! Can spring be far behind? I figure we still have one more good snow storm coming our way before spring actually arrives. As I write this, we have just changed our clocks and it is still really winter outside. How odd is that? I hope everyone remembered to set their clocks ahead.

I am starting to get curious about what may have survived the winter! I have forsythia in the house blooming now and that really starts me thinking about the coming growing season as well as adding a needed splash of color inside my home and office.

Many of you will have already started seeds indoors as you look towards the new planting season. It is time for me to start rooting geraniums. I am looking forward to my cowpots for planting these newly rooted plants. I invariably forget to fertilize my plants once they leave my house for the great outdoors. I am sure those plants will appreciate that burst of fertilizer to give them a great start for the growing season.



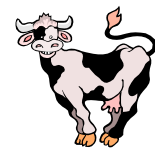
For those of you interested in the cow pots, they should be available at the next meeting and if you want to reserve a certain quantity, you can call Gloria Shuler. (See article on the cowpots in the newsletter, at right.)

Just a heads up, on May 31st at 9:00am volunteers will be needed to help plant 19,000 plugs at the Shiawassee National Wildlife Refuge. The area to be planted is on M-13 behind Rose Auto Parts. I will have more information and a sign up sheet at the March and April meetings. The expectation is to have 5 or more acres of wetland restored. The Horticulture Program at the Michigan Department of Corrections facility in Free-land is growing the plants to be used. This is a great way for a lot of people to be able to have an impact on our community! This is a one day project so hopefully lots of you will come and help.

Guess what!?! I'm done! Nothing more that I can think to say! I hear that sigh of relief coming from you all!

Toodles Susan

The Cow Pots  
Are Coming!!



At the February SVMGA meeting, members approved purchasing Cow Pots for resale to members and non-members as a fundraiser.

**Cow Pots**, Gloria Schuler, project chair tells us, are a product made from the by-products of "happy cows!" These biodegradable pots will not decompose as quickly or rot as peat pots can.

We will be offering the 3 inch pots for 50 cents each and 4 inch pots for 65 cents each to SVMGA members. The pots will sell at a slightly higher price to the public.

It is intended that this product be made available at area Garden Walks, Farmers Market and similar venues as a fundraiser for SVMGA.

Our initial purchase will be a case that includes 300 of the 4 inch and 700 of the 3 inch pots. It is hoped that these will be available at our March 26th membership meeting.

For further information, contact Gloria Schuler at (H) 892-7679 or (W) 797-0100 or Email at [globobarama@excite.com](mailto:globobarama@excite.com).



## Restoration Of Our Trees (ROOT) Program

A partnership initiative between the Michigan Department of Natural Resources, DTE Energy Foundation, USDA Forest Service, Michigan Department of Agriculture and Michigan's Governor's Office has been formed to restore trees lost to the Emerald Ash Borer.

The objectives of the program are to provide homeowners potted trees (5-8' tall in 5-7 gallon pots) at a reduced cost to replace trees lost to the EAB infestation. All residents in the 21 EAB contiguous quarantined counties are eligible to participate. By offering the trees to homeowners at half the price, the program is both affordable and encourages homeowners to care for their own investment. Diversity of replacement trees is also encouraged by specifying a variety of suitable tree species. It is also hoped that homeowners will visit Michigan nurseries and garden centers that supply the containerized tree stock, thus generating business for such centers.

Replacement tree species are as follows: Sugar Maple, River Birch, Ginkgo, Tuliptree, Dawn Redwood, London Planetree, Red Oak, and Swamp White Oak. A maximum of two trees per household at a cost of \$21 per tree is allowed. A generous donation from DTE Energy Foundation will pay the remaining cost of the tree. Pickup will take place in April of 2008.

Several Local Partners have been established for distribution and pickup of trees. Your request will be handled either in a Random Drawing Process, or on a First Come, First Serve basis, depending on the Local Partner's arrangements. To view the map of the area that includes Local Partners and determine which Local Partner you are nearest to, go to [www.michigan.gov](http://www.michigan.gov) and type in Restoration of our Trees (ROOT) Program in the search bar. You may also contact Kerry Gray at 517-241-1833 or [grayk@michigan.gov](mailto:grayk@michigan.gov).

## Officers for 2007-08

<i>President</i>	Susan Scott	791-9270
<i>Vice President</i>	Karen Tilden	777-6673
<i>Secretary</i>	Melva Bond	777-4092
<i>Treasurer</i>	Crystal Kauer	792-6874
<i>Program Director</i>	Mary Andrews	797-3319
<i>Newsletter Editor</i>	Sue Stemler	781-4656

[suestemler@chartermi.net](mailto:suestemler@chartermi.net)

MSU Extension 1 Tuscola Street  
Saginaw, MI 48607-1287

## Earn Credit Through Nearby Workshops. . . . .

### Spring Into Gardening Conference Scheduled in Mt. Pleasant

Comfort Inn Conference Center

April 26, 2008 8:30 am-4:15 pm

Sponsored by the Michigan Master Gardener Association, Isabella County Chapter  
**5 Education Credits for entire day**

● **Square Foot Gardening: No Hoeing, No Weeding, No Work—No Kidding!**

Pat Westaway, a Master Gardener from California:

“Square Foot Gardening—This is a gardening method that requires almost no work and gives you a bounteous harvest! It is adaptable to anyone, any age, any capability. Follow these simple steps and you’ll never want to garden any other way!”

● **Things I Learned from the NBC25 Weather Garden**

Mark Torregrossa has been at NBC25 since March 2003. The weather garden started at his first TV job in Cedar Rapids, IA in 1990, and he has had the Weather Garden every year since:

“I talk about microclimates, some organic gardening and some fantastic tips I’ve gotten from viewers over the years—like the guy that carpets his garden!”

● **Planting the Natural Way**

Dave Moore—Stone Cottage Gardens  
Dave & Mary Moore own Stone Cottage Gardens in Gladwin, MI.

“Planting the Natural Way is simply using what nature provides. Planting native plants, right plant-right place, biodegradable cocoa mulch and compost teas. There’s a lot out there that is NATURAL!”

● **Landscaping in Tune with Nature**

Dr. Art Cameron, MSU  
Dr. Cameron is an avid botanist and perennial gardener renowned for his exuberant presentation style, beautiful slide shows and his passion for plants!

“Many of us wish to create a garden that works with the natural scheme—not one that fights against it. We are looking for plants which are tough, but not aggressive; beautiful but not fussy, a blend of native and exotic plants that create a natural look.”

Your fee of \$50 includes all four speakers, a deli lunch, vendors (shopping) and door prizes.

To register, call: 989-772-0911, ext 302

Email: [MGHotline@isabellacounty.org](mailto:MGHotline@isabellacounty.org)

[www.isabellacounty.org/dept/msue](http://www.isabellacounty.org/dept/msue)

Registration Deadline: March 20, 2008

**Cost: \$50 Late registration: \$60**

No refunds; Substitutes are acceptable

### The Saturday Morning Gardener

Horticulture Gardens—MSU  
**2 Education Credits**

● **Designing Beds and Borders**

Special Extended Class

April 12, 2008

9 am-12:30 pm

How would you like to be able to design your own breathtaking garden beds or borders? Join registered landscape designer Lynn LaPointe Wiese as she walks you through the design process. You will learn how to apply garden design theory in a practical way. A comprehensive manual will be yours to take home. No plant knowledge is required. **Cost: \$40**

● **Container Gardening**

**3 Education Credits**

May 10, 2008

9-11 am

Join Vicki Buell, former owner of Homeland Gardens, as she shows you how to design a one-of-a-kind container garden. Vicki’s containers many plants you might not associate with container gardening! A container, all media and plants for the container will be provided as part of your registration fee. *If you wish to make a second container, plants, media and containers are available for purchase on a per-item basis in class.* **Cost: \$45**

For online information on enrollment status of a class, registration forms and maps, go to:

[www.hrt.msu.edu/outreach/SMG120.htm](http://www.hrt.msu.edu/outreach/SMG120.htm)

For further information or accommodations for persons with disabilities, call Ann Hancock at (517) 355-5191, ext. 1348.

### Organic Classes at Hidden Lake Gardens

Hidden Lake Gardens/MSU

Beverly Ruesink, owner of Needle Lane Farms in Tipton will be the instructor for the following classes.

● **Starting Seeds the Organic Way**

March 15, 2008 10 am-12 pm

This class will show you how to start your own transplants using the organic method. Media selection, timing, watering, greenhouse temperatures, seed storage and selection, and soil blocking will be covered. Seeding techniques and soil blocking will be demonstrated in class.



*Organic Gardening*

● **Organic Vegetable Production**

March 22, 2008 10 am-12 pm

This class will emphasize home-garden style vegetable growing using the organic method. Participants will learn how to start from the ground up. Topics covered will be soil testing, soil amendments, composting, seed selection, vegetable crops, crop rotation and harvesting techniques.

**Cost: Members of HLG: \$16 each class**

**Non-Members: \$18 each class**

**A garden is a grand teacher.  
It teaches patience  
and careful watchfulness;  
it teaches industry and thrift;  
above all it teaches entire trust.**

- Gertrude Jekyll

## More Workshops and Events. . . . .

### 2008 Nurturing Nature

#### Wednesday Series

Green Point Environmental Learning Center

**Cost: \$2.00 per person per class**

FREE for Friends members  
(Dues-\$12 per year)

- *Spring Tree and Wildflower Identification*  
May 7 7:00 pm

**1 Education Credit**

This involves a hike along the Green Point trails, led by refuge manager Steve Kahl, who will describe how to identify the trees and wildflowers that grow in our area and relate interesting facts about their life history. Dress for the weather and possible muddy terrain.

### Petoskey Hosts Two Workshops

Emmet County Fairgrounds-Petoskey, MI  
**3 Education Credits for each class**

- *Landscape Design Watercolor Workshop*  
March 15, 2008 10 am—1 pm

Learn the professional use of materials, color mixing and design with individual instruction. Workshop is open to any level of experience. **Cost: \$25**

- *Beds & Borders Workshop*  
April 26, 2008 9 am—12 pm

Join Registered Landscape Architect, Lynn LaPointe Wiese, as she walks through the garden design process to design your own breathtaking beds or borders. Includes 20 page manual. **Cost: \$35**

To register, call Emmet MSU Extension Office  
At 231-348-1770

### MSU Extension and City of Saginaw Present Home Maintenance Self Help Programs

**Series A—Tuesdays 1:00-3:00 pm**

**Consultant: Foster Moore**

- *Basic Home Repair Tools* March 11
- *Home Weatherization* March 18
- *Home Safety and Security* March 25
- *Minor Interior Repair* April 1
- *Interior Painting & Wallpapering* April 8

**Series B—Wednesdays 6:00-8:00 pm**

**Consultant: Darrell Eagan**

- *Basic Home Repair Tools* March 12
- *Minor Plumbing Repair I* March 19
- *Minor Plumbing Repairs II* March 26
- *Minor Electrical* April 2
- *Lamp Repair Workshop* April 9  
(Bring a lamp!)

All classes held at  
Michigan State University Extension Office—  
One Tuscola Street—Saginaw  
To register call: 758-2500

## Saginaw Valley Garden Show —Visit ! And Volunteer at the Garden Show

The Saginaw Valley Nursery and Landscapers Association will be hosting an event at the Horizon Center, State Street in Saginaw on March 29, 2008. This will strictly be a garden show (no Home & Garden).

There will lots of vendors and displays. Hours for this event are 9:00 am to 5:00 pm and there will be an admission charge of \$3.00 & \$5.00. Several sessions are included in the admission fee:

- Ann Hancock, Msu  
*Climbers and Vines for Your Garden*
- Peggy Shaver, Master Gardener  
*Basic Gardening Practices Children's Program*
- Doug Badgero, MSU  
*University Display Gardens*
- Larry Perrault, MDA  
*Emerald Ash Borer*
- Kip Northrup, Blue Thumb Distributors  
*Water in the Garden*  
**1 Education Credit per session**

Jan Rise, a Master Gardener Volunteer and Program Coordinator for MSU Extension in Bay City has been asked by the Saginaw Valley Nursery and Landscapers Association (SVNLA) to coordinate the Children's Program. SVMGA member Peggy Shaver will be presenting that session (see left).

SVNLA would like to have Master Gardeners from all three counties (Bay, Midland and Saginaw) help with a hands on activity for the children who attend with their parents. It is planned that Master Gardeners would help pot a plant item with each child. During the hands on project, Master Gardeners will talk with the child and help the child understand a little bit about growing the plant they will be taking home.

This is a one hour program at approximately 12:00. Five to six Master Gardener volunteers from each county should be adequate to handle this hands on program. The SVNLA will furnish all supplies.

If you would like to volunteer for the hands on project, contact Jan Rise at 989-895-4026



## Oryczcak continued from page 1

Although she grew up with a gardening mother, Shirley's interest wasn't there. Her husband started their garden when he put up a cold frame and began seeding flowers and vegetables. Now, he'll cut the grass "if I ask him".

With a country setting, Shirley prefers drought tolerant and native plants. She uses rain barrels for watering and mulches with shredded leaves. She is slowly cleaning up the wooded areas, exposing trillium and hostas and is increasing the number of her ornamental grasses. She also likes to fill in with little succulents.

Shirley enjoys the camaraderie of the association, but because of traveling distance, she stays with projects closer to her home. Her activities for M.G. Association have included hours of service at the MSU office when it was in the basement of Adams, annual tree distribution for soil conservation, Hartley Nature and Chesaning fair grounds. She also assists in local garden walks.

Working again, now as a technician in an eye doctor's office, "doing a little bit of everything" doesn't leave as much time for her hobbies of gardening, golfing and reading, but she is trying to get back to knitting and crocheting as well.

Travels in the past have included cruises in Europe and Alaska, but a dream trip would be to see the Cabot Trail in Nova Scotia.

Advice to other gardeners - Learn to identify all plants, especially harmful ones that often grow within our plants. Says Shirley, "I learned the hard way when poison ivy grew in my ostrich ferns."

Submitted by Joan Martin  
SVMGA Member

## Shiawassee Continued from page 1

"Here in Michigan we don't realize how much water we have and how important water quality is. Why 20 percent of all the fresh water is here, that's one-fifth in the whole world! We have the largest area of public lands east of the Mississippi, but we spend less on managing those resources than any other state.

"And when you consider we drink that water, that 80 percent of the people here depend on that water to drink, you see why we need to be better stewards of the land and the rivers."

Frei graduated from a forestry program at Michigan State University and went on to get a master's degree, focused on the forests of Latin America.

She became interested after working in Brazil as an English teacher and seeing the impact of a local paper plant on the community where she lived.

## Volunteer Opportunities

### We need YOU at the ZOO!

Volunteers are needed on Saturday, March 29th starting at 9 am for the beginning of spring clean-up at the Children's Zoo. Our goal for the day is to prune trees and shrubs. Other tasks to be tackled included picking up branches and cutting back any grasses or perennials that were not cleaned up in the fall.

Volunteers should come dressed for the weather and muddy, wet ground (construction is happening at the zoo). Tools that may be needed include: pruners, trimmers, hand saws and gloves.

The Horticulture Committee will also have regular clean-up sessions every Saturday morning in April and May from 9 am until noon each week (weather permitting - no snow or heavy rain and temperatures above freezing). Volunteers will assist in cleaning up garden beds, preparing soil, improving animal exhibits (landscaping), laying down mulch and early planting in the children's farm garden. Additional dates and times may also be scheduled as needed.

Garden Orientation for Gardeners including Adopt-a-Gardens has been scheduled for Saturday April 12th with both a morning and afternoon sessions (10 am and 1pm) at the Children's Zoo in Discovery Place. All Master Gardeners interested in volunteering at the zoo are encouraged to attend to learn more about what is expected.

### Help with planting at Shiawassee Refuge

On May 31st at 9:00am volunteers will be needed to help plant 19,000 plugs at the Shiawassee National Wildlife Refuge. The area to be planted is on M-13 behind Rose Auto Parts. The expectation is to have 5 or more acres of wetland restored. The Horticulture Program at the Michigan Department of Corrections facility in Freeland is growing the plants to be used. This is a great way for a lot of people to be able to have an impact on our community! This is a one day project so hopefully lots of you will come and help.

There will a sign up sheet at the March and April meetings.

### Demonstration Gardens at Extension Office

Vice President Karen Tilden will be heading up a committee of volunteers to work on Demonstration Gardens at the Extension Office.

This is a terrific opportunity for new (and seasoned) members to spend some time with their fellow Master Gardeners and beautify the building grounds as well. An early meeting is planned, with committee developing plans to enhance and update the existing garden. Work will begin this spring.

Anyone willing to host the planning meeting please call Karen at 777-6673.

There will be a sign-up sheet at the March meeting.

"I was always a biology major because I've always been interested in science. Forestry can take many different tracks and while my job now doesn't pertain directly to trees, there are recurring themes."

While Frei says she would like to garden, her house sits on a yard of mostly clay and the portions that aren't are pieces of concrete or compacted soil.

"I like to be outside and walking my two dogs -- Sadie, a golden, and Sargent, a funny character we rescued from along the river."

Frei also serves as director of the Friends of the Shiawassee River, a volunteer group of about 200 to 300 active volunteers and a mailing list of more than 1,200 past and present members.

Submitted by Darlene Damp  
SVMGA Member

# SVMGA Logo Wear



Shirley McNier has arranged for our SVMGA logo to be available to put on articles that we may already own.

- It can be embroidered on any item of clothing or cap we wish for a cost of \$10.00 each logo
- Bring the article to the March membership meeting with the information PER ITEM filled out below.

Your Name \_\_\_\_\_ Your phone Number \_\_\_\_\_

1st Item you wish to have logo attached to \_\_\_\_\_ Color and size of item \_\_\_\_\_

Please place the logo: (On upper left or right chest; on back)

2nd Item you wish to have logo attached to \_\_\_\_\_ Color and size of item \_\_\_\_\_

Please place the logo: (On upper left or right chest; on back)

3rd Item you wish to have logo attached to \_\_\_\_\_ Color and size of item \_\_\_\_\_

Please place the logo: (On upper left or right chest; on back)

The completed articles must be picked up by April 30th, after which time they will be taken to Saginaw MSU Extension office .

PLEASE BRING THIS COMPLETED FORM TO MARCH MEETING AND GIVE TO SHIRLEY McNIER.

## Odds and ends...

### Thank you and Kudos!

It has been brought to our attention that although we Saginaw Valley Master Gardeners have acknowledged and thanked **Darlene Damp** for her outstanding work in producing our newsletter for five years, she was always referred as "the editor".



Well yes, she was that, indeed. But the quality and improvements she brought to our monthly newsletter should be acknowledged gratefully, and by name. Darlene's professionalism was evident every edition, and as "the new editor", I can tell you that she has been unfailingly helpful and instructive as she turned over the reins to me. Additionally, April's newsletter will be finalized by her, helping with the final week's busy-work of getting a newsletter out for mailing, as my husband and I jet off to visit our children and family in Florida.

So, **thank you Darlene**, for the outstanding work and commitment you put into our SVMGA newsletter!

Sue Stemler, 2008 Newsletter Editor and Members of SVMGA

### Master Gardeners Earn Hour Pins !

#### 250 Hour Pin

- Mary Andrews
- Melva Bond
- Patricia Bourdow
- Marie Kreinbrink
- Susan Lawcock
- Leo Leroy
- Mary Anne Malek
- Judith Porter
- Elizabeth Proulx
- Sharon Rood
- Robert Schust
- Phylliss Shlien
- Janice Wazny

#### 500 Hour Pin

- Anne Birkam
- Patricia Burnside
- Robert Gubbins
- Barbara Milwrick

#### 1000 Hour Pin

- Darlene Damp
- Judy Ross
- Ruth Sny

#### 1500 Hour Pin

- Gus Schulwitz

#### 2500 Hour Pin

- Patricia Decker

#### 4000 Hour Pin

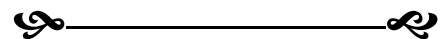
- Grey Gitzen
- Margaret Shaver

#### 5500 Hour Pin

- Judy Henning

### Attention Project Chairmen

Project Materials Funds Request forms will be available at the next membership meeting.





## How To:

Surely spring is the busiest season of the year for the avid perennial gardener. Fortunately, most of us have been cooped up indoors all winter and are anxious to get outside anyhow, and the cool but pleasant spring weather beckons to our gardening spirit!

### Is it time yet?

The dead tops of perennials that have been left to stand through the winter are truly not fussy about when you get around to cutting them back. However, heavy and wet clay soil is not a pleasant thing to slog through, and if you have clay soil it might be better to wait until it has a chance to dry out a bit. Treading on wet clay can easily lead to soil compaction — retarding soil drainage and reducing the tiny air spaces that plants require for strong and healthy root growth. Walking within the border too early can also damage the emerging or still-hidden tops of perennials and bulbs. It's a better idea to wait a bit until your bulbs at least begin to awaken. Some gardeners put down pieces of plywood to walk on, which helps to spread the weight and reduce compaction in any one spot. Another idea is to take advantage of the frozen soil surface first thing in the morning, a sneaky way to get across even a boggy site without causing very much damage.

### Which perennials to cut back, and how?

There are basically four types of perennial growth patterns to be aware of when it comes to cutting things back in spring:

**Evergreen perennials**, including many alpenes will require no cutting back or only a minimal amount of tidying up. By March or April, if the plant looks green and healthy still, then leave it alone. If just a few leaves are tattered or brown it's simple enough to trim them back or remove them using sharp scissors or hand pruners. Spring-flowering alpenes [for example: Wall Cress (*Arabis*), Rock Cress (*Aubrieta*), Basket-of-Gold (*Aurinia*), Pinks (*Dianthus*), Candytuft (*Iberis*), Moss Phlox (*Phlox subulata*)] may suffer a few brown tips over the winter, but no major pruning should be done until after they finish blooming. At that time plants may be trimmed back to half their height using a pair of hedge shears, to encourage a dense and bushy habit.

**Semi-evergreen perennials** sometimes stay completely evergreen in mild winter regions but for many of us they may look so beat up by spring that some of the more tattered leaves need to be removed.

Among these are: Bergenia, Coral Bells (*Heuchera*), Foamy Bells (*Heucherella*), Foam Flower (*Tiarella*), Japanese Sedge (*Carex*), and various ferns.

The tall, upright flower stems of Shasta Daisies (*Leucanthemum*), Coreopsis and *Rudbeckia* die back in late fall, but these plants keep low ground-hugging rosettes of evergreen leaves that become especially obvious in early spring. Remove the dead upright tops first, then see what the bottom leaves look like. These too may be trimmed a little if they look untidy, removing dead tips with scissors or shears. It's picky work, so if you just ignore them for a bit the new spring growth will quickly freshen up their appearance.

**Woody Perennials** are better left alone until well into mid-spring before pruning them back. Generally about 6 inches of woody stem is left at the base for the new buds to appear from. Accidentally cutting them right back to the ground will sometimes cause :

these plants to die. Some examples of woody perennials: *Artemisia* 'Huntingdon' and 'Powis Castle', Butterfly Bush (*Buddleia*), Blue-beard (*Caryopteris*), Shrubby Wallflower, (*Erysimum* 'Bowles' Mauve'), *Fuchsia*, St. John's-wort (*Hypericum*), Lavender (*Lavandula*), Tree Mallow (*Lavatera*), Russian Sage (*Perovskia*), Cape Fuchsia (*Phygelius*), Lavender Cotton (*Santolina*).

True **herbaceous perennials** are those that die completely back to the ground in winter. Fortunately, this includes the vast majority of common garden perennials. With these, it's an easy decision — cut everything right back to ground level. A few examples: Peonies, Daylilies, Summer Phlox, Solomon's Seal, Hosta.

**Don't wait TOO long!** Although cutting back too early can compact the soil badly, waiting until too late in the spring will leave you with a tangled mess of dead plant tops and fresh spring growth. This is very time-consuming to try and deal with, so waiting until late May for example is something to try and avoid also.

### What to do with the dead junk?

Unless you suspect or recall a disease problem from the previous season, the dead tops of most perennials can be chopped into small pieces and added to your compost pile. Alternating the dead stuff in layers with green lawn clippings and other "green stuff", along with the occasional shovel-full of garden soil will have your compost pile off to a great start.

Dispose of any dead tops from diseased plants. Also discard the seedheads of anything you want to discourage from spreading, including both weeds and flowers.

From Heritage Perennials—Internet

## 2008 SVMGA PROGRAMS

3/26	Heidi Frei, Nature Conservancy "Water Quality in the Shiawassee Basin" Andersen Enrichment Center, Saginaw	7:00 pm	8/27	Garden Tour and Annual SVMGA picnic Japanese Gardens, Saginaw	7:00 pm
4/23	Charlene Harris, Michigan Conifer Society "Conifers: The Backbone of the Garden" Andersen Enrichment Center, Saginaw	7:00 pm	9/24	To be determined Andersen Enrichment Center, Saginaw	7:00 pm
5/28	Plant exchange Location to be determined	7:00 pm	10/04	An Autumn Affair—SVMGA Conference (See below) Saginaw Valley State University	
6/25	Garden Tour at the home of Sharla Hammer, Freeland	7:00 pm	10/22	To be determined Andersen Enrichment Center, Saginaw	7:00 pm
7/23	Garden Tour at the home of Joan Martin, Saginaw Township	7:00 pm	11/19	To be determined Andersen Enrichment Center, Saginaw	7:00 pm
			12/09	Annual Christmas party First Presbyterian Church, Saginaw	

On October 4, 2008 at Saginaw Valley State University, Saginaw Valley Master Gardeners Association will sponsor an education seminar, *An Autumn Affair for Gardeners*. It is open to all gardeners and features experts sharing the latest in gardening information. For info: Judy Henning-799-4136 or judrich@juno.com or Aileen Cowan-989-865-8784 or scratchcreations@worldnet.att.net