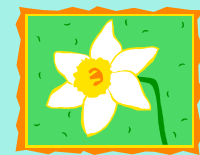


# The Grapevine



Bulletin of the Saginaw Valley Master Gardener Association

April 2007 Volume 11, Issue 4

## Backyard sales grow into aquatic nursery

Mike O'Sullivan never dreamed using fill dirt from his new 40-acre plot in Montrose would lead to a thriving plant business.

However, that's just where the 58-year-old finds himself today, operating Easy Growin Water Gardens off Duffield Road, 1 1/2 miles south of M-57.

In April, he will discuss "How Deep Is the Water." He will look at aquatic plants used at the Saginaw Children's Zoo, along with others, and answering water gardening questions.

"I got a degree in fisheries and wildlife, but there were no jobs when I graduated," said O'Sullivan.

In 1979, he returned to college for a teaching certificate, then taught science and mathematics for 32 years at the junior and senior high school level. He retired in 2004.

"The business started off when we



Mike O'Sullivan is the owner of Easy Growin Water Gardens in Montrose.

went to build a house on 40 acres that were pretty low and wet," he explained.

"Our choice was bring in dirt or dig a pond and use the fill for the house. We did the latter, but once the house was done, we wanted to start putting some plants around the pond."

O'Sullivan found an older woman who grew aquatic plants for sale.

"We planted them and they grew so fast, we had to figure out what to do with them," he says.

"Fortunately, for us, water gardening was just starting to take off so local nurseries were interested, as well as people driving by. We put a sign on the road and started the business in the backyard with a few little greenhouses and some tents."

Before long, multi-million dollar nurseries were buying his stock and he was doing wholesale and retail sales.

"Now, I'm trying to cut out the wholesale part," said O'Sullivan.

"It's gotten to be too much and I want to concentrate on retail sales. The economy has changed too. It seems like half of the population of Michigan has moved out of state."

He prefers to combine different plants

### Next meeting

- 7 p.m. — 9 p.m. Wednesday, April 25, at Andersen Enrichment Center, Ezra Rust Drive
- 7 p.m. — 7:30 p.m., business meeting
- 7:30 p.m.— 8 p.m., refreshments
- 8 p.m. — 9 p.m., speaker **Mike O'Sullivan**, of Easy Growin Water Gardens, discusses "How Deep Is the Water?"
- **Please wear your badge.**

to attract frogs and fish as well as other woodland creatures to his own pond.

"I think with (water) falls, you have the sound and people find that appealing, soothing, especially after a hard day at work."

While Easy Growin no longer installs ponds, O'Sullivan has products and advice for the do-it-yourselfer.

"What's the perfect pond? I think it has a lot of plants, but it's a personal decision for each person, just like the choice of clothing or colors of paint."

His stock consists of aquatic plants for

*(Continues on Page 2)*

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## McLellan outlines state MG policies

Master Gardeners "are master leaders not master weeders," said Mary McLellan, state coordinator of the Michigan Master Gardener Volunteer Program at Michigan State University.

She was in Saginaw in March to answer questions about volunteer and education hours and explain the overall program to SVMGA members.

"Garden clubs are wonderful things, but not all of them have the educational components you people have in your background," explained McLellan.

"All of us could pull weeds without an education. What you need to ask yourself

is, 'am I educating other people?'"

Instead of pulling a truckload of weeds alone, she suggested inviting Girls Scouts and Boy Scouts to the clean-up and showing them how and why to pull weeds.

She said three factors must be taken into account for volunteer hours:

Master Gardeners are not paid; the work must be horticulture-related, and Master Gardeners should educate others.

"Like this eye park (at the Saginaw County Rail Trail), you've been talking about. Sometimes, you do have to stretch

*(Continues on Page 2)*

## 'Be master leaders, not weeders' and 'have fun'...

(Continues from Page 1)

it, such as going in and labeling the plants.

"Take a picture of what it looks like today, then weed, and do a take-away brochure, showing how the clean-up is done. Or, maybe you post something on your website and let people know that."

"That's the same with your work at the interstate rest stop. It's not technically education, but we know people stop and ask questions on their way in and out of the restrooms when you're working there."

She said rising costs may force the Master Gardener class on-line, with weekly hands-on sessions. Speakers, who once volunteered their time, now want compensation, which the state program can't afford.

"If it comes to that, I would like to use Master Gardeners for the hands-on sessions. They might circulate among classes in four counties. The Master Gardeners wouldn't get paid, except maybe mileage. They could do the same sort of

program with children."

She added, "It's remarkable that this one county (Saginaw) could have so many teachers. Other counties aren't like you. Many don't have an association like yours."

Remember, McLellan said, the Master Gardener Volunteer Program "is supposed to be fun."

Switching topics, she said another one-day conference may be offered next spring.

Costs of putting on the long-time three-day Summer Conference, coupled with the current economy and dwindling attendance, forced the change this year.

Some 600 Master Gardeners from across Michigan participated in the March 17 session.

"I could have had 700 people, but next year, I have to make sure it's not running at the same time as Hosta College,"

McLellan said.

"And although we opened it to a friend or family member of a Master Gardener, probably only 20 of those attended.

"Our vendors were very popular and said

it was the most successful event for them ever."

The online Master Gardener Shopping Mall has a new line of clothing.

"You're going to find it a little different this year, because we're going to be less obvious. Instead of the clothing saying Master Gardener, it's going to have this tree. We're hoping this tree will become what the swoosh is to Nike."

The shopping mall, the spring conference and the Master Gardener classes, raise funds for the statewide program.

"In Michigan, we are the only state that is self-funded," McLellan said.

May 18 to 23, the state will offer a Garden Design Boot Camp for the Area of Specialization certificate. Landscape designer Lynn LaPointe Wiese is the instructor. (See Page 7 or the state website for more details.)

"Master Gardeners are the biggest hearted, giving people. They pay money to take the classes and they help other people grow," McLellan said.

*Story by Darlene B. Damp, editor*

### Officers for 2007-08

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## Easy Growin has unusual plants...

(Continues from Page 1)

a variety of conditions. He also sells perennials.

"People are surprised some plants will grow in the water and on land too.

"Living here, I had to come up with plants that would work with clay, sand, dry conditions, wet conditions, so we have a large assortment.

"We also have some unusual plants, like Voodoo lilies."

O'Sullivan has promised to show how to divide the lilies at the April meeting.

"I've had to cut back my own workload because I've got bad knees and my shoulder bothers me due to arthritis.

"I was too much of a workaholic when I was younger, lifting things that were very

heavy."

The aquatic plants are not only planted in rich soil with a layer of gravel, they're also in water, making a "typical" pot quite heavy.

"But I still enjoy it," O'Sullivan said, adding that he has a couple of strong college students on staff to help out.

"I can see myself in a rocking chair, shouting out orders," he joked.

Master Gardeners who have water gardening questions can email them to O'Sullivan prior to the meeting. This will allow him to research the answers, if necessary.

Please go to [www.easygrowin.com](http://www.easygrowin.com) for more information.

*Story by Darlene B. Damp, editor*

### 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 everyone!

Well, it's a tidbits kind of day. So you get to hear tidbits from my sessions at the spring Master Gardener Conference. I always find it interesting what sticks in your mind from a class. Some of these were "a ha" moments for me.

I took a class on native plants and, although I always knew they were good for the landscape because they are so well adapted to the area, this tidbit took me by surprise.

Did you know turf grasses have root systems of about 2 inches, whereas native plants have root systems that, over time, can go as deep as 18 to 20 feet into the soil? Thus, they are great for erosion control, as well as pulling rainwater deep into the earth and reducing runoff into lakes and streams via our ditches and sewer systems. Tenacious little things!!!

Most of you know that I am a big fan of ornamental grasses. Well, I am now considering low-growing, drought-tolerant fescues as an alternative to grass. I have a spot in my backyard where I am

going to experiment with these.

Also took a pruning class and found more tidbits to share. Did you know it takes up to 21 days for a deciduous plant to harden off to prepare to survive the winter season and only 3 days for the process to reverse itself? I can't remember if I learned that in my MG class, but I certainly will remember it now.

Because of this process, it may well be that some deciduous plants are more vulnerable than the needled evergreens. What happens is the 'tips'/buds lose winter hardiness when warm temperatures come. They will still push a new flush of growth, based on the resources stored in the buds, but then, as the season continues, the tissue that was injured can no longer support the new tender growth. As a result, the new tender growth 'wilts' or collapses.

So, the best remedy is to prune off the damaged tissue, back to healthy tissue and, of course, to a side branch or point of origin.

This just goes to show that no matter how many times you have a speaker or attend a class on a subject, there is always something to learn.

Tidbits now being done, it is time to move on to our own MG projects.

At the last meeting we had lots of sign up sheets and information for all these projects. Just an FYI if you wish to speak on a subject: Please call in advance and let me know so I can put you on the agenda. My phone number is 791-9270 and you can leave a message. Please state your name slowly (as it is sometimes hard to understand a quickly spoken name on my machine) and your topic. I will return the call and confirm you are on the agenda.

**Spring bulbs are in! You can pick them up at the April meeting or contact me for pick up at my home.**

Well, the snow is going away and it is time to check out the garden again.

Toodles!

*Susan*



## Earn education credits through these offerings

### **Dow Gardens pruning classes**

Midland — Arbor culturist Dan Veresh offers two pruning classes this month at Dow Gardens.

Learn how to prune small trees from 10:30 a.m. to noon Saturday, April 21.

He offers information about the structural form and thought process behind the cuts. Dress for the outdoors. Cost is \$10.

Veresh also teaches "Perfectly Pruned Shrubs" from 10:30 a.m. to noon Saturday, April 28, outdoors. Learn how to properly prune evergreen and deciduous shrubs. Cost is \$10. Please register by April 20.

Call (989) 631-2677 or visit [www.dowgardens.org](http://www.dowgardens.org). Master Gardeners receive 1.5 education hours per class.

### **Garden Day Aug. 10 at MSU**

EAST LANSING — Sign up now for Michigan State University's annual Garden Day Friday, Aug. 10.

Keynote speakers are Sharon Lovejoy, a naturalist and award-winning author and

watercolor illustrator, and Brad Rowe, MSU associate horticulture professor, who directs the Green Roof research project.

Registration is at 8 a.m., followed at 9 a.m. with Lovejoy's discussion of "Cottage Gardens." Learn how to adapt her simple ideas to your own yard.

At 10:15 a.m. and 1:15 p.m. choose from 12 one-hour workshops: water gardens; small trees for small orchards; invasive plants; small fruits for home gardeners; common plant pests and problems; garden hand tool maintenance; theme gardens for kids; herbal mustards; wild weeds; herbal first aid; herbal papermaking; the MSU Diagnostic Lab; Stories from the Twilight Zone; and landscaping with native plants.

In between is lunch, a plant sale and garden marketplace.

At 2:30 p.m. Doug Badgero, MSU greenhouse and gardens manager, provides a garden update and at 2:45 p.m. Rowe offers "Green Side Up," on rooftop gardening.

MGs earn 5 education hours.

Cost is \$75 for early bird registration through July 27, and \$85 after. No

*(Continues on Page 7)*

**Next board meeting:  
5:30 p.m. Wednesday,  
May 2, at MSU Extension,  
1 Tuscola**

**Newsletter deadline:  
Monday, May 7**  
Send submissions to  
**Darlene Damp, editor,  
shrew@att.net**

View the newsletter at:  
**[web1.msue.msu.edu/  
mastergardener/saginaw/](http://web1.msue.msu.edu/mastergardener/saginaw/)**

View the SVMGA web page at:  
**[web1.msue.msu.edu/  
mastergardener/saginaw/  
association/](http://web1.msue.msu.edu/mastergardener/saginaw/association/)**

## Odds and ends...

### Garden notebooks go on sale at April meeting

Pre-paid orders for the new SVMGA garden notebooks will be taken at the April meeting.

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

Notebooks, available in tangerine, bright blue and lime green, will have personalized covers. (Look for them on a table in the refreshment room.)

Members will select their notebook color and cover preferences at time of order. The pages have the three-hole mylar reinforced edges.

### New newsletter editor sought for 2008

Darlene Damp is seeking a replacement as editor of The Grapevine for 2008.

The editor is responsible for collecting information and writing stories to fill the newsletter each month, from January through November. There is no December newsletter.

The newsletter is produced using Microsoft Publisher, then taken to the printer for copying. The copies are delivered to the mailing committee. A computer version is forwarded to the MSU Master Gardener Volunteer Program Webmaster, who places it on the county web site.



Damp is willing to continue writing some of the copy for the 2008 newsletter, including the cover story. She will use the remainder of this year to train her replacement, if necessary.

Damp has edited the newsletter since January 2003.

The editor earns volunteer hours for the time spent on each issue.

If interested, please contact Damp at 746-9113 or e-mail shrew@att.net, or Susan Scott at 791-9270 or e-mail Su-HunSco@aol.com.

### Turn in skill sheets now

Program chairman Mary Andrews is

seeking the return of the Master Gardener Skill Survey at the April meeting.

The questionnaire was developed by Andrews and Master Gardener Coordinator Nancy Burd to better access SVMGA volunteers when the need arises, from office work to gardening.

Volunteers are asked to list their names, addresses, e-mails and telephone numbers, along with their interest in office work: answering phones, greeting the public, horticulture research, solving problems, filing and organizing and other activities; and gardening activities: designing gardens, designing water gardens, planting, yard clean-up, teaching, trimming and watering atrium plants or other activities.

Please note whether your interests are ongoing or one-time activities.

"We're trying to get organized so we can respond to community requests," said Andrews, who is helping prepare the new Volunteer Opportunities List.

Additional surveys will be available at the April meeting. MGs receive full volunteer credit for projects on the list.

Andrews also distributed the Project Description form, which must receive annual approval from Burd.

Project Description forms were due April 6, so that a Volunteer Opportunities List can be finalized.

Project chairmen who did not turn one in may contact Burd at 758-2504 or burd@msu.edu; or Mary Andrews at 797-3319 or iyahmary@yahoo.com.

In addition, Anne Birkam, SVMGA historian, is seeking any pictures or stories about the progress of SVMGA projects to make them part of the record. Contact her at 754-7090 or e-mail a.birkam@netzero.net.

### Botanist Fred Case offers tours of his garden

Thomas Township botanist Fred Case will open his gardens to Master Gardeners the first two Sundays in May.

Case taught for Saginaw Public Schools and has authored two books. He has nearly all of the 38 species of native North American trilliums, plus a large collection of wildflowers, pitcher plants, unusual trees and shrubs on his 40 acres

at 7275 Thorne Apple.

Tours are at 11 a.m. or 1 p.m. Sunday, May 6, or May 13. MGs receive education credit for Case's guided tour.

### SVMGA plans plant sale fund-raiser for June 22

Don't forget as you're potting up plants for the annual May exchange to include some for the SVMGA fund-raiser Friday, June 22, at the Downtown Saginaw Farmer's Market.



Last fall's effort was such a success, the association will sponsor another sale during market hours, 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Ruth Sny will take donations at her home, 4465 Mackinaw, south of Shattuck Road.

She's also looking for volunteers to transport and sell plants. Call 928-7315.

### Board awards project grants

The remaining \$600 in project grant funds have been awarded to four local efforts. They include:

- A bird and butterfly garden first- and second-graders will install at Immanuel Lutheran School. The \$200 buys plants, birdbath and mulch.
- \$200 for perennials for the May 18 St. Charles Beautification Day by high school students.
- \$200 for the Saginaw County Rail Trail eye park for ground cover plants
- \$64 for a new flagpole garden at the Saginaw Family YMCA. Project leader Judy Wegner could receive up to \$136 more, if other approved projects don't use all the funds.

Project leaders will be reimbursed once they have turned in all receipts.

### Fund-raiser aids local chorus

Abele Greenhouse and Garden Centers has a \$20 gift coupon available for \$18 to help fund the Saginaw Choral Society.

Coupons are available from any Choral Society member, Abele Greenhouse or SVMGA member Katheryn Lewis. Call her at 791-1492 or e-mail lewisk@americitech.net.

# New (and approved) volunteer opportunities

Only approved projects are listed here so that Master Gardeners may earn full credit for the volunteer hours they work.

## **Japanese Gardens...**

Dan Veresh, Dow Gardens arbor culturist, will demonstrate how to cut dead wood from junipers and cherry trees from 9 a.m. to 11 a.m. Saturday, April 14, says organizer Holly Furlo.

Because it is too late in the season to prune cherry trees, that has been rescheduled for August.

Please bring pruners, loppers, saws, and a spray bottle of alcohol, if you have them. Call Furlo at 792-6982.

## **District tree sale...**

Volunteers are needed to wrap trees for the Saginaw Conservation District tree sale Thursday to Saturday, April 19-21.

April 21 is the sale day and they need help passing out tree orders to buyers, says Karolyn Karl.

Tree wrapping and sales will be at the Saginaw County Fair Grounds on Peet Road in Chesaning. Call 781-4077, ext. 4.

## **Saginaw Children's Zoo...**

Work days at the zoo begin Saturday, April 14, and continue every Saturday through May, weather permitting, says Patti Decker, program chairman.

Work sessions are from 10 a.m. to noon. In addition Adopt-A-Garden orientations are set for 10 a.m. and 1 p.m. Saturday, April 28.

Contact Decker at 792-6633 or e-mail rizzobfrank@aol.com

## **Freeland Falcon Arboretum...**

Volunteers will clean up and plant trees at Freeland Falcon Nature Arboretum, 8250 Webster Road, at 9 a.m. Saturday, April 21.

Master Gardeners will help supervise planting and mulching efforts by Boy Scouts, Freeland students, teachers and community members.

The one-acre site behind Freeland High School also needs fencing repair, wood markers replaced and trees trimmed.

Volunteers are asked to bring shovels, post-hole diggers, chain saws, wheelbar-

rows and hand trucks to move trees and shrubs.

The arboretum was started in 1994 when Harold Hoelzel turned a small piece of land into an outdoor classroom. Some 70 different trees, plants and wildflowers are found there.

Contact Katrina Eudis at 695-2586, ext. 3228, or 714-9314.

## **Andersen Rose Garden...**

Master Gardeners will meet at 9 a.m. Saturday, April 14, to open the rose beds at the Andersen Rose Garden.

Please bring tarps, wheelbarrows and small rakes.

The garden also needs a volunteer to oversee maintenance of the roses through the growing season, including spraying and deadheading. Contact Bob Schust at 781-0473.

## **'Weedstock' at Rail Trail...**

Aileen Cowan has organized Weedstock 2007 at the Saginaw Rail Trail eye park at 9:30 a.m. Wednesday, April 11, and Saturday, April 14.

Please bring rakes, shovels, wheelbarrows, and weeding equipment to the site off Swan Creek and Benkert roads.

"It's a nasty mess," she says. "Hopefully the dead trees will be cut down and then we will come back at 10 a.m. Saturday, April 28, to move some mulch in there."

Call Cowan at 865-8784.

## **Beautification Day...**

Laura Keeven is seeking volunteers to help with the annual Beautification Day in St. Charles.

It is from 8 a.m. to noon Friday, May 18. Master Gardeners work with local students who clean up and plant during the event. Contact Keeven at 865-6154 or e-mail laura2000@email.com

## **Spring into Service Day...**

Master Gardeners are sought to help supervise students from 10 different Saginaw County high schools Thursday, May 17, when they clean up two local parks.

Known as Students Spring Into Ser-

vice, the focus this year is Crayola Park, located between the Saginaw Family YMCA and Ezra Rust, and the Garber Tennis Courts/ Park.

Volunteers supervise and assist high school students along with other adult volunteers.

It starts at 8 a.m. and goes until about 1 p.m. Call Gail Caird at 793-1942.

## **Historical Society gardens...**

Susan Lawcock is looking for volunteers to help maintain the gardens and teach youngsters more about gardening at the Historical Society of Bridgeport, 6190 Dixie Highway.

She also plans to plant a garden that children would enjoy, focusing on birds and butterflies, herbs, food and unusual plants.

Call Lawcock at 777-4423 or e-mail moose2frog@hotmail.com.

## **MG info table at market...**

Chris Thompson needs help manning a weekly information table at the Downtown Saginaw Farmer's Market.

Initial plans are to operate it at least once a week, preferably on Wednesdays.

At the table, Master Gardeners will promote the Master Gardener Volunteer Program, the upcoming Master Gardener class and the Plant and Pest Hotline.

The market opens Friday, May 25. It will be open from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Wednesdays and Fridays.

It is closed July 4 and Labor Day, Sept. 3.

The grand opening week begins Monday, July 9, and the first Saturday market date is July 14, from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.

The season ends Wednesday, Oct. 31.

Contact Thompson at 642-3283 or e-mail chrismarit@charter.net

## **Dow Event Center...**

Ruth Sny is seeking volunteers to help plan and plant containers and gardens at the Dow Event Center, downtown Saginaw.

Staff at the center water the plant containers and gardens through the season.

Contact Sny at 928-7315.

## Minutes of the March 28, 2007 meeting

Susan Scott welcomed 106 members to the Anderson Enrichment Center.

Ruth Sny moved approval of the February 2007 meeting minutes; Bill Wegner seconded the motion.

Crystal Kauer read the treasurer's report.

Mary Andrews discussed the e-mail Nancy Burd sent to association members regarding volunteer projects. Burd wants to ensure they meet the criteria for approved volunteer hour certification, and that the projects are still active.

Andrews also distributed two forms, the MSU Master Gardener Volunteers Project Description and the Master Gardener Skill Survey.

All SVMGA members were asked to complete the latter form and return it to the MSUE office. Grey Gitzen will correlate the skills data, and match it to future project needs.

Andrews said members may e-mail questions for the upcoming speaker, Mike O'Sullivan, at [easygrowin.com](mailto:easygrowin.com).

Members approved a hot dog cookout at the Aug. 22 meeting at the I-75 rest stop and allowing one guest per member to attend.

Andrews also discussed possible collaboration with the Traverse City association for a September road trip to the Chicago Botanical Gardens; and attending the Philadelphia garden show next year. Andrews is working with several county associations about sharing road trip expenses.

Wanita Pettiford has enough mentors for the current MG class, but will seek more for the fall session.

Historian Anne Birkam appealed for

historical information, i.e., stories, photos, telling the history of our organization.

She will preserve this data, and store it in the basement of the MSUE building.

Scott said the association members list will be available in April.

Gitzen announced Fred Case would host tours of his gardens the first two Sundays in May. (See Page 4)

Sue Stemler had a sign-up sheet to 'brainstorm' future fund-raising ideas. She indicated ideas can be for events, merchandise, etc. Ideas will be researched, presented to the Board, and submitted to the MG Coordinator for approval. Volunteers earn credit for their time.

Scott asked for volunteers to sort and pack spring bulbs in mid-April.

Amy Fitkin asked for volunteers to supervise students April 21 at the Freeland Falcon Nature Arboretum. (See Page 5)

Volunteers also are sought for the Saginaw Township Playscape.

Bob Schust asked for volunteers for opening the Andersen Rose Garden on April 14, and for someone to supervise summer maintenance of the roses. (See Page 5)

Susan Lawcock asked for volunteers to help maintain the gardens at the Bridgeport Historical Society site. (See Page 5)

Lawcock also sought advice for unusual plants for the mystery raised planting box, a part of children's garden; Gitzen suggested she contact Jessica Albright at MSU.

Holly Furlo had a sign-up sheet for learning to prune cherry trees. Dan Veresh from Dow Gardens will teach a class at the Japanese Tea House gardens.

(See Page 4)

Chris Thompson wanted volunteers for a Master Gardener information table at the Downtown Saginaw Farmer's Market. (See Page 5)

The market will be open from May 25 through October 31.

Vicki Flynn, from the MSUE Family Garden Project, wants volunteers to mentor participating families and to rototill the garden plots. (See Page 5)

Flynn handed out pamphlets detailing the program.

Ruth Sny and Scott asked for volunteers to assist with a fund-raising spring plant sale at the Downtown Saginaw Farmer's Market. (See Page 4)

Sny also wanted help planning and planting planters at the Dow Event Center.

Patty Decker was seeking help with gardens at the Saginaw Children's Zoo, Saturday, April 14. (See Page 5)

Aileen Cowan needed volunteers for "Weedstock" at the Saginaw County Rail Trail's eye park April 11 and 14. April 28 will be a mulching day. (See Page 5)

Gail Caird asked for mentors for Students Spring into Service on Thursday, May 17. (See Page 5)

Becky Geidans reminded members to sign-up for supplying refreshments at the summer meetings.

For the monthly drawing, thanks to Bob Egbert for donating the Hibiscus; Kasper's Watch, Clock & Jewelry Shoppe, a \$15 gift certificate; Patty Copes, two books, "Crop Tree Management" and "Pest Management Record keeping."

Also an anonymous donor for the insect wind chime; Brian Ott, the hummingbird feeder; Abele's, the \$20 gift certificate; Judy Henning, the mug, notepad & pen set; Wil Hufton, the chocolate bunny; and Gaye Sass, the Simply Smashing mosaic stepping stone.

Congratulations to the respective winners: Mary Weaver, Ruth Averill, Anne Draper, Bob Gubbins, Pat Collier, Mary Lysogorski, Bonnie Duclos, Mary McLellan, and Barb Boggess.

*Submitted by Melva Bond,  
secretary*

### More volunteer opportunities...

(Continues from Page 5)

#### Frankenmuth garden walk...

Sheryl McNally of the annual Frankenmuth Garden Walk is seeking Master Gardeners to answer visitor questions from noon to 5 p.m. Sunday, June 24.

There are 8 gardens on the tour this year. Contact McNally at 652-9299. Volunteers may preview the gardens the Saturday evening before.

#### MG Hotline....

Phyllis Shlien is looking for help to man the Plant and Pest Hotline. Call her at 642-6656.

#### Family gardening project

Vicki Flynn needs volunteers to rototill and serve as mentors. Contact Flynn at MSUE, 758-2500 ext. 242 or e-mail [flynn@msu.edu](mailto:flynn@msu.edu).

## Cleveland Botanical Garden has show May 24-28

CLEVELAND — The largest outdoor flower show in North America returns to Cleveland Botanical Garden Thursday to Monday, May 24-28.

This year's theme is "Rhythm and Hues," celebrating the marriage of the garden and musical arts.

The show includes 10 acres of lush gardens, expert lectures and demonstrations, a world-class horticulture and flower arranging competition and 30 vendors from across the nation.

At the heart of the show are 18 all-new gardens. The new gardens, of all shapes and sizes, represent the best ideas and most current thinking in horticulture and garden design.

Six major new gardens will remain on the grounds for two years, until the next flower show.

These gardens include a formal opera garden; one inspired by Duke Ellington and The Cotton Club; a blues garden based on the song, "The Thrill Is Gone;" a country music garden paying tribute to Appalachia; a New Age music garden and even a salsa music garden.

The first day of the show superstar floral designer Pim vanden Akker from Holland will detail the latest trends at a special ticket luncheon.

The speaker series is free with admission Friday, May 25, through Monday, May 28.

The show is open from 10 a.m. to 8 p.m. Thursday, May 24, to Sunday, May 27, and 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday, May 28.

Tickets are \$16 in advance and \$20 at the door; children under 3 are free while those ages 4 to 12, enter for \$6 each. An all show pass is \$40.

The botanical garden is located in the heart of University Circle, Cleveland's cultural district, across from the Cleveland Museum of Art.

The address is 11030 East Boulevard. Some 30,000 people are expected to visit the show this year.

Visit the Web site at [www.cb garden.org](http://www.cb garden.org), or call (888) 853-7091.

## More offerings to earn education credit ...

(Continues from Page 3)

refunds, but you may send a substitute.

Registration includes two workshops, keynote speakers, parking and box lunch. Visit [www.hrt.msu.edu/outreach/GardenDay2007.htm](http://www.hrt.msu.edu/outreach/GardenDay2007.htm)

### Spring Into Gardening open

MOUNT PLEASANT — Registrations are still being accepted for the Saturday, April 21, Spring Into Gardening seminar.

The day includes three speakers and 20 vendors.

Download a brochure from the website

at: <http://www.isabellacounty.org/dept/msue/flyers/07sigbrochure.pdf>. Or contact Tracey Knack at (989) 772-0911, ext. 215.

### Garden Design Boot camp

EAST LANSING — Lynn LaPointe Wiese teaches a five-day boot camp to learn practical design skills Friday to Wednesday, May 18-23, at the MSU campus.

Each day is a combination of lecture, in-class design, and practical on-site application. In the evening students will have a variety of activities— plant iden-

tification, walks, group projects, individual instructor input and/or homework.

Registration includes a 250-page manual, all lecture material and design exercises, all drafting supplies and materials, on-site training and lunch.

Master Gardeners pay \$649 while regular registration is \$998. Housing is available in the Owen Graduate Center for \$34 per night with an \$8 food allowance. For room reservation, call (517) 355-5068.

For a registration form go to <http://web1.msue.msu.edu/mastergardener> or call (517) 355-5191, ext. 1-408.

## SVMGA standing committees

**Mentor coordinator** — Waunita Pettiford, 777-6918

**Historian** — Anne Birkam, 754-7090

**Refreshments** — Becky Geidans, 781-1552

**Member handbooks** — Bonnie Dutcher, 777-1209

**Membership roster** — Karen Tilden, 777-6673

**Newsletter mailing label maker** — Debbi King, 642-2940

**Newsletter mailing committee** — Bonnie Stewart, 793-1442

**SVMGA wearables** — Shirley McNier, 799-7172

**Speakers bureau** — Judy Henning, 799-4136

**MSUE Demonstration Garden** — Sara Clark, 964-7141

**Volunteer opportunities** — Mary Kathryn Andrews, 797-3319

**Prize drawings** — Ruth Sny, 928-7315

**Christmas potluck** — Ruth Sny, 928-7315

**Not receiving the newsletter?** — Karen Tilden, 777-6673

**An Autumn Affair for Gardeners** — Judy Henning, 799-4136, and Aileen Cowan, 865-8784

**Fund-raising** — Sue Stemler, 781-4656

**SVMGA Speakers Bureau** — Judy Henning, 799-4136

## Would-be grape growers need to find the right site

EAST LANSING — Life can be tough for wannabe grape growers in Michigan.

Tom Zabadal, viticulturist at the Michigan State University Southwest Michigan Research and Extension Center in Benton Harbor, is the bearer of bad tidings for would-be backyard grape growers: in most of Michigan, winter temperatures are just too low for the culture of the grape varieties traditionally grown in Michigan.

Exceptions would include the use of extraordinary cultural practices to protect grapevines against low temperatures, such as mulching or even burying vines in soil.

“Some are experimenting with growing vineyards under plastic-covered structures to modify the growing season,” Zabadal observes.

Another factor is the relatively recent introduction of “super-hardy” varieties, capable of withstanding extremely low winter temperatures without injury.

“The drawback is that the juice and wine grape quality of these grapes is radically different from that of the traditional varieties,” he says. “Making wine from

these grapes requires special winemaking practices.”

For the varieties traditionally grown in Michigan, the best areas for grape growing are along the Lake Michigan shoreline from the Indiana border to Grand Traverse County, along the Lake Erie shore in southeastern Michigan and around the Saginaw Bay.

Inland areas in southern counties are not automatically ruled out, he notes. But away from the lakes, it’s more critical to have a relatively long growing season — at least 165 days between the last spring frost and the first freezing temperatures in the fall — a sloping site so cold air can drain away from vines, and deep, well-drained soils.

“It’s important to avoid low-lying areas, or frost pockets,” he says, “because cold air drains into them and tends to stay there. This increases the likelihood of frost damage to flower buds in spring and cold injury to the vines in winter.”

The first steps in establishing your planting are improving soil internal

drainage and eliminating perennial weeds. These must be done before you plant your vines, Zabadal says. Vigilance in weed control -- annual weeds as well as perennial ones -- must continue after planting, especially during the first two or three years, when vines are developing the roots and trunks that will support crops later.

Because grapes are grown on sloping land, controlling erosion is another concern, along with providing proper nutrition and disease and insect control.

“And then there’s pruning, a key task that affects vine hardiness and vigor, yield and fruit quality,” Zabadal says. “Proper pruning increases your chances of good yields of high quality fruit without a reduction in vine hardiness the following winter.”

Failure to prune means grapevines set more fruit than they can mature and still have time to harden off before winter. The result is winter-killed vines.

“There’s a lot more to growing grapes than meets the eye,” he says.

## Upcoming SVMGA programs

- 4/25 — Mike O’Sullivan, Easy Growin Water Gardens, “How Deep Is the Water?”**
- 5/23 — Annual spring plant exchange at Pat Bourdow’s Kochville Township garden**
- 6/ 27 — Tour of Mary Andrew’s Saginaw Township garden**
- 7/25 — Tour of Bridgeport Historical Society gardens with Susan Lawcock and Sandy Lundy**
- 8/22 — Tour of I-75 southbound rest stop at the Saginaw-Bay county line, with hot dog roast; members may each bring one registered guest**
- 9/26 — Chris Lentner, Kluck’s Nursery, “Landscape Trees”**
- 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. There also is a fall seminar, An Autumn Affair for Gardeners, on Saturday, Oct. 6, to help educate all gardeners on current horticulture practices.**