

The Grapevine

Bulletin of the Saginaw Valley Master Gardener Association September 2007 Volume 11, Issue 9

Plant exchange, dues increase on agenda

This month's meeting promises free plants during the annual fall exchange, plus members will discuss several key issues facing the Saginaw Valley Master Gardener Association.

The plant exchange will be first on the agenda.

You do not have to have plants to participate, but you must be a certified Master Gardener and SVMGA member.

Each member receives a ticket upon arrival at the Andersen Enrichment Center and when your number is called, you and your group choose a plant. The process will be repeated until all the plants are gone.

Those bringing plants should pot or bag them up and arrive early to place them on tables outside the center, near the meeting room. Any plants left from the fall plant sale Friday, Sept. 21, also will be available.

Please label each plant with the botanical/common name along with light requirements, height and color – any information a new owner would need for making their selection.

"Hopefully, we can do this fairly

quickly," said President Susan Scott, who has a full agenda for the business meeting.

They include: a raise in annual dues; a discussion of fund-raisers; the spring bulb sale; creating a new SVMGA web site and if so, what information it should include; the Christmas party; and whether to make the August picnic for members and guests an annual event.

Increase annual dues?

First up, is whether to raise dues in 2008 to keep up with rising costs, the first increase in the organization's 10-year history.

This year, the \$20 dues brought in \$3,360 but fixed expenses totaled \$3,830, she said. Dues cover costs of the Andersen Center meeting room rental, Michigan Gardener magazine, supplies, monthly newsletter and program speakers.

"We don't take in enough money with dues to cover our basic costs," Scott explains.

"This does not include the fall seminar or the projects we fund."



Susan Scott, SVMGA president

Next meeting

- 7 p.m. — 9 p.m. Wednesday, Sept. 26, at the Andersen Enrichment Center, Ezra Rust and Fordney
- 7 p.m. — 7:30 p.m., plant exchange
- 7:30 p.m.— 8 p.m., refreshments
- 8 p.m. — 9 p.m., business meeting (see story, this page)
- **Please wear your badge**

The fall seminar funds itself through registration fees and the bulb sale. Meanwhile, project money comes from fund-raisers. However, this year, the number of projects was reduced to 12, from 15 in 2006, although the limit, \$200 each, remained the same.

The fund-raising research committee has recommended a dues increase for the same reasons.

"Do we want to raise it?" Scott asks. "Based on 170 members, raising it to \$25 would bring in \$4,250, while raising it to \$30 would total \$5,100.

"All of our costs have gone up and we need to decide how we are going to deal with this. I don't want to shove this

(Continues on Page 2)

Inside this issue:

<i>President's letter</i>	3
<i>Mystery of seeds solved</i>	3
<i>Odds and ends</i>	4,6
<i>Education opportunities</i>	5
<i>Volunteers sought</i>	5
<i>Minutes of the August meeting</i>	6
<i>Fall seminar application</i>	7
<i>Garden notebook order form</i>	7
<i>2007 schedule of events</i>	8

Register now for 'Autumn Affair'

Time is running out to register for this year's fall seminar, "An Autumn Affair for Gardeners."

And for those who haven't been able to make SVMGA meetings and earn education hours, attendees of the day-long conference Saturday, Oct. 6, at Saginaw Valley State University's Curtiss Hall, walk away with five credits.

"I think you're getting a bigger bang for your buck," says Judy Henning, co-chairman of the event.

"We'll have five speakers instead of the three we had last year — and there's

even a more hands-on approach with the tool demonstration."

Henning is referring to the team of Susan Scott, SVMGA president, and Ruth Blumenstein, a Bay City Master Gardener, who will demonstrate an assortment of garden tools, their use and maintenance.

In addition, Scott provides information on effective body mechanics for gardening.

Also on the bill are David S. MacKenzie, owner of the wholesale ground cover nursery, Hortech Inc., in

(Continues on Page 6)

SVMGA board looking for direction on key issues...

(Continues from Page 1)

down members' throats."

If members propose raising dues, a vote will take place in October. Any increase would be effective Jan. 1, 2008, with the new calendar year.

More fund-raisers – or none?

The second issue is fund-raisers, she says. A committee looked at a variety of projects that SVMGA could sponsor to bring in more dollars for the projects it funds.

They included selling clipboards, specialty pruning shears, a used gardening books and logo wear.

"Do we want to have fund-raisers?" Scott says.

"I think the committee came up with good ideas, but I don't want the membership to feel they are being nickel and dimed to death. The board has always tried to have fund-raisers of value to the membership and the community."

Instead of sponsoring fund-raisers, perhaps the membership will want to

continue to limit the number of projects available for each growing season, she says.

"Some fund-raisers are more successful than others. Right now, we've got a garden notebook for sale through the end of the month, but we've only sold 20 or so. If we don't get enough orders to cover our printing costs, the funds will be returned to those who ordered books."

If the membership wants to have fund-raisers, Scott wants to look at how many and where the funds should be spent.

"It could be project grants, donations to special groups, like the Master Gardener Program with the spring bulb sale or the Saginaw County Soil Conservation District, which may go under without additional funds."

(Those still interested in ordering a gardening notebook can find an order form in this newsletter or at the meeting.)

Continue spring bulb sale?

"The spring bulb sale made \$500 for the Master Gardener Program. But we need feedback. Did the people who bought them find the bulbs performed well? Could we have more choices? Should all the money go to the Master Gardener Program?"

"I know the program could use it, but maybe we might want to split the proceeds."

New web site

Scott also wants to take advantage of the Internet and create a SVMGA web site that meets membership needs as well as offering information to prospective members.

"What would be nice is if we have a member who would be willing to take this on and earn volunteer hours and save us some money," Scott says.

"But if not, we could probably get this done for \$300 to \$500. What I'm hoping is that by doing this we'll have more control of our web site."

If there's interest, she wants to discuss what the web site should contain, besides the basics, like the officers, volunteer op-

portunity list and calendar of events.

It certainly would mean a simpler address, she adds, than the current web site.

"Maybe they would want a link to me so they could email me when they've got questions or concerns. I would like to know what would be of value to them.

"Members may want to see what we have and take a look at what other associations do, prior to attending the meeting."

Simply go to <http://web1.msue.msu.edu/mastergardener> and click on the association web sites to see what other Master Gardeners have created.

Guests at Christmas party

A new and larger location for this year's Christmas party means members could open it to guests, like they did at the August picnic at the Southbound I-75 Rest Area.

"Each member could bring their spouse or significant other," explains Scott. "There's always enough food at the potluck so that's not an issue.

"People seemed to like the idea at the August picnic – we got quite a nice response, considering August is usually a month when people are on vacation or out of town.

"This can be a quick and easy, up or down vote," she says.

Have another August picnic

"We also want to take a vote on having another August picnic with members and guests. Certainly there are enough members with yards big enough, or a park where we work that could hold it," Scott adds.

"Another easy, quick vote, up or down."

Those unable to make the meeting are welcome to discuss their opinions by calling or emailing Scott at 791-9270 or SuHunSco@aol.com.

Story by Darlene B. Damp, editor

Officers for 2007-08

President

Susan Scott 791-9270

Vice President

Karen Tilden 777-6673

Secretary

Melva Bond 777-4092

Treasurer

Crystal Kauer 792-6874

Program Director

Mary Andrews 797-3319

Newsletter Editor

Darlene Damp 746-9113
shrew@att.net

MSU Extension

1 Tuscola Street
Saginaw, MI 48607-1287

Master Gardener Coordinator

Nancy L. Burd, 758-2504
burd@msu.edu

Michigan State University Extension programs and materials are open to all without regard to race, color, national origin, gender, disability, age, religion, political beliefs, sexual orientation, marital status or family status.

MSU is an affirmative-action, equal opportunity institution.

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!

Well, fall is here and our meetings are back at the Anderson Enrichment Center.

For all of you who were not at any of our summer garden tours, let me say you missed some lovely gardens.

Last month we were at the Southbound I-75 rest stop, just south of M-84.

I was expecting a couple of nice flower beds and some bushes.

Well, the article in the newsletter could not begin to describe the lovely gardens there.

If you are coming home from up north, make sure you take time to relax and tour these gardens. There is a wonderful variety of plants and colors from the point where you enter the parking area, surrounding the rest area and beyond.

I was just blown away with the design

creativity as well as how nicely maintained they were.

MAJOR KUDDOS TO ALL INVOLVED !!!!!!!!



We had two speakers from the Michigan Department of Transportation as well as Scott Boehler from Boehler's Greenhouse, which provides the plants for rest area.

All in all, it was a lovely evening with too much **excellent food** to fit on my plate or in my stomach.

There were four cooks operating the hot dog grills. The weather was sunny and comfortable.

In case you can't tell, I am trying to make those of you who were not there jealous.

If you missed Janet Martineau's arti-

cle in The Saginaw News, the Saginaw Valley Master Gardeners were part of a tie for first place in the Saginaw Children's Zoo garden contest and an honorable mention for the rain garden.

I have to admit, each year those front beds by the entrance are distinctly different from the year before and always gorgeous.

MAJOR KUDDOS!!!!

I hope you all have read the first page of the newsletter and are thinking about the items that are up for discussion at our next meeting.

I want you all to have a say, so that as your board, we have a sense of what the members expect.

After all, this is **your** organization.

Toodles,
Susan

Jed Fulkerson solves seed mystery for fellow volunteer

There was a lull in activity at the Ranger Station where I was volunteering for the Forest Service, helping hikers, and the other volunteer, Geri, was helping visitors locate local sites and lodging.

She and her husband moved to Arizona from the Seattle area. She asked what I did in retirement so I mentioned grandkids, fishing, birding, hiking and gardening.

She zeroed in on the gardening.

"Well," I said, "I'm a Michigan Master Gardener. My wife and I grow about 400 varieties of daylilies and we're garden judges for the Hemerocalis Society. We have many perennials."

"I have a question," she said. "Many years ago my mother grew this plant and she saved the seeds and made rosaries for my sisters and me.

"Do you have any idea what the plant is. I'd like to do the same thing for my daughters. Mom dried the seeds, put a hole through, end to end, then strung them. I've asked many people and no one seems to know."

The answer is Job's Tears, family: Poaceae; genus: Coix; Species: Lacryma-Jobi. Hardy to zone 9, not invasive, Job's Tears is a leafy, jointed-stemmed annual

grass, native to tropical Asia. It grows 3- to 10-foot-tall while the name comes from the hard, shiny, tear-shaped beads that enclose the seed kernels.

Off-white or dark in color, about 1/4- to 1/2- inch long, they are used in jewelry and rosaries.

Geri's mother grew them in Pennsylvania and after harvesting the seeds, she dried them and drilled them end to end.

Originally domesticated as a food source, Job's Tears became important to the bead world. Seeds can be purchased in health food stores in the U. S. and are perfect for stringing (not many seeds are).

There is a hole at the tip where the flower emerges. When picked from the stem, the rounded end breaks off, leaving a hole. The soft inside is easily pierced.

It resembles a miniature corn plant (they are related). Cultivation of this annual is easy. Soak the seeds for 24 hours before planting in full sun or partial shade. It should do well in any climate corn likes.

Job's Tears tolerates wet areas with poor drainage. Finding seeds is difficult since they are not usually available lo-

cally or in most catalogs.

The plant's medicinal uses vary from anti-inflammatory and sedative, to remedies for tumors, warts and pneumonia.

A weed to some, necklaces to others, or staff-of-life, this useful and productive grass is increasingly viewed as an energy source. It has a higher protein to carbohydrate ratio than other cereal grains.

(Continues on Page 6)

Next board meeting:
**5:30 p.m. Wednesday,
Oct. 3, at MSU Extension**

Newsletter deadline:
Monday, Oct. 8,
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...

Fall plant sale Sept. 21

SVMGA is sponsoring a fall plant sale Friday, Sept. 21, at the Saginaw Farmer's Market.

It is the same day as Harvest Days, when the market sponsors music and food for visitors.

To volunteer, call Ruth Sny at 928-7315.

Spring bulbs, books for sale at fall conference

Grey Gitzen and his committee have selected a variety of spring flowering bulbs to sell during SVMGA's annual fall seminar Saturday, Oct. 6, at Saginaw Valley State University, Curtiss Hall.

The selection includes:

Colchicum

Giant, Violet and Waterlily

Allium

Globemaster, Queen Schubertii and White Giant

Fritillaria

Michaikovskiyi, Pallidiflora and Meleagris

Arum Italicum

Marmoratum

Calochortus

Symphony and Venustus

Daffodil

Beersheba, Pineapple Prince, Extravaganza, Katie Heath and Pipit

Eremurus

Spring Valley Hybrid, Robustus and White Beauty

Tulip

Happy Family, New Design, Prinses Irene, Blushing Girl, China Town, Humulis Odalisque, Humulis Alba Lady Jane and Peppermint Stick

Ipheion

Wisley Blue and Charlotte Bishop

Iris

Reticulata Harmony, Danfordiae and Bakerana

And some Prinses Irene bulbs will be packaged with a booklet by bulb growers Brent and Becky Heath, called "Tulips for North American Gardens."

Prices for bulbs vary.

Books available from SVMGA are:

"IPM" by Raymond A. Cloyd, Philip L. Nixon and Nancy R. Pataky;

"Native Trees, Shrubs, Vines, Etc." by Bill Cullina, last year's speaker;

"Invasive Plants of the Upper Midwest" by Elizabeth J. Czarapata;

Plus two books by this year's speaker, David S. MacKenzie — "The Timber Press Pocket Guide to Ground Covers" and "Perennial Ground Covers."

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 projects.

More earn certification — you can too! Input hours now

Eleven more Master Gardeners have turned in their volunteer and education hours for certification.

New Master Gardeners include: Cynthia Ann Hartz, Kim Kaufman, Carol Lechel and Lorraine Lund.

Those who recertified are Victor Knowlton, Shirley Oryczak, Sally Shepardson, Ruth Sny, Mary Whalen Swift and Joan Wendland.

To obtain certification, simply go to <http://web1.msue.edu/mastergardener> and click on the volunteer reporting box.

All you need is your log-on and password and you can enter your volunteer and education hours for 2007.

If you don't have that information or have questions, contact the appropriate local administrator — those with last names starting with the letter A to G, Grey Gitzen, 792-0615 or jgreygn@aol.com; H to M, Darlene Damp at 746-9113 or shrew@att.net; and N to Z, Judy Henning, 799-4136 or judrich@sbcglobal.net.

Education hours must be entered individually. Volunteer hours can be grouped by the site where they were performed, from the starting to the ending date.

Hours are due Dec. 31.

Those without a computer may use one at a library or pick up a form at the MSUE office.

Attention project chairmen

Vice President Karen Tilden is asking project chairman who have not turned in receipts for reimbursement to update her on their plans by Sunday, Sept. 30.

Those who received grants must account for funds spent and turn in receipts for audit purposes.

Contact Tilden at 777-6673 or e-mail katil7@charter.net.

Conservation District fall tree and shrub sale under way

The Saginaw Conservation District is sponsoring a fall tree and shrub sale through Friday, Sept. 28.

Conifer seedlings and transplants, along with shrubs for wildlife and habitat, hardwoods, berry bushes, bird seed and publications are available.

Got to www.saginawcd.org to view the list.

The district is sponsoring a fall barbecue meet and greet at 5 p.m. Wednesday, Sept. 26, at the Mid Michigan Old Gas Tractor Association grounds at Ferden and Brennan in Oakley.

Cost is \$7 prepaid for chicken, coleslaw, grilled squash, salad, rolls and dessert.

Send your name, address, number attending, check number and check to the district office, 178 N. Graham Road, Saginaw, 48609.

(Continues on Page 6)



Take a tour of gardens of France in May

EAST LANSING — Travel with Mary McLellan, state Master Gardener Coordinator, and see the Gardens of France.

This once-in-a-lifetime trip is set for May 2008, starting in Nice and ending in Paris.

Along the way, McLellan will visit the Chateau de la Napoule, just west of Cannes; the Italian-style gardens of the Abbaye St Andre near Avignon; Monet's garden in Giverny; Chateau Courance in the Loire Valley and so much more — not just gardens!

Although the trip doesn't begin until May 11, 2008, reservations must be made now, with a deposit for the airline and hotels.

Non-gardening spouses are welcome and have enjoyed McLellan's previous garden tours.

Complete trip information is available at: <http://web1.msue.msu.edu/mastergardener/programs/2008/2008-05->

GardenTourdeFrance_Brochure.pdf

For questions, contact Robin at: robyn@travelhouseinc.com or (269) 629-9248.

Native, beneficial plant sale and workshop Sept. 22

The Saginaw Conservation District with Designs for Nature and Faber's Greenhouse sponsors a workshop from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. Saturday, Sept. 22, to help provide honeybees with continuing sources of pollen and nectar.

The session is at Gander Mountain on Tittabawassee Road near I-675.

Plants will be for sale during the workshop. Cost of the workshop is \$5.

To register, mail your name, address, number of attendees, check number and check to the district office, 178 N. Graham Road, Saginaw 48609, or call 781-4077, ext. 4, and pay at the door.

Genesee Master Gardeners sponsor seminar

FLINT — The annual Fall into Spring gardening seminar meets from 8:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. Saturday, Oct. 6, at the Genesee Area Skill Center, 5081 Torrey Road.

Sponsored by Genesee County MSU Extension, it features four speakers sharing their expertise on "Conifers in the Fall/Winter Landscape," "Growing Herbal Gifts," "The Garden in Fall," and "New Annual and Perennial Plants for 2008."

Vendors will have garden art, herbal products, perennials, bulbs, tools and more.

Cost is \$50, including continental breakfast, full lunch, door prizes and all handouts. Registration brochures available online at www.msue.msu.edu/genesee.

Earn volunteer hours with these projects

Make a Difference Day...

Make a Difference Day is set for Thursday, Oct. 25.

Gail Caird, who managed the Master Gardener contributions to this marvelous day, during which high school students volunteer to spruce up homes and businesses, passed the torch to Janet Martineau.

We will, as always, need Master Gardeners to help work alongside the students that morning.

If you can volunteer, e-mail Martineau at jmartineau@thesaginawnews.com or call 790-7341 and leave a message.

Free snacks and a lunch are among the perks.

Clean-up at I-75 rest area...

Gloria Schuler has tentatively set Saturday, Oct. 13, for fall clean-up and bulb planting.

Those interested in helping may call her at 797-0100 or email globobaram@excite.com.

Web page designer...

President Susan Scott is looking a member who is willing to redesign the SVMGA Web site and manage updates.

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

The SVMGA Web site would include the basic details about the association, plus the Volunteer Opportunities List, photographs of members and association projects.

View the SVMGA web page, and other association web sites at: web1.msue.msu.edu/mastergardener/saginaw/association/

Contact Scott at SuHunSco@aol.com or call 791-9270.

Japanese Garden...

Holly Furlo needs volunteers to help weed the Japanese Tea House garden any Tuesday night.

Volunteers meet from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m.

Contact hfurlo@svsu.edu or call 793-3860.

Christmas party...

Sign-up in September to help with the annual Christmas potluck set for Tuesday, Dec. 4, at the First Presbyterian Church fellowship hall.

Call Ruth Sny at 928-7315.

Arthur Eddy needs help...

Arthur Eddy Academy is seeking one or two Master Gardeners to help students for an hour once or twice a month at 1000 Cathay.

Volunteers work with small groups of youngsters in third to sixth grades teaching planting, growing and harvesting techniques — and patience.

Volunteers work one-on-one with a teacher.

The program seeks to prepare students to become productive citizens through job training and teaching civic pride.

Call Amanda Kitterman-Miller at 399-5254.

Fall seminar...

(Continues from Page 1)

Spring Lake, who looks at alternatives to grass; Monica Milla, Ann Arbor's garden faerie, who shows how to start seeds outdoors in the winter without a greenhouse or grow lights; and Sue Grubba, a Michigan School of Gardening senior instructor, who discusses drought-tolerant plants.

"I think one of the exciting features this year is that all of the speakers are from Michigan. We have a lot of talent here and we want to use it," Henning said.

And, the seminar moves from the first floor to the second floor of Curtiss Hall, including the 11 vendors.

SVMGA is back selling spring-flowering bulbs and books. (See complete list on Page 4.)

Other vendors are: Puddingstone Pottery; Two Sisters Gourmet; Rich Crafts' garden ornaments; Wild Ones with books; Imagine That, a group of artists selling pins, necklaces, note cards and more; and Stone Cottage Gardens with plants, pruners and gloves.

There's also Farmbrook Designs with troughs and rock fountains; Ruth Sny and her Faux Fantasy Wall Work and Christmas ornament; and the Practical Gardening Institute selling books by Janet Macunovich and subscriptions to its e-newsletter.

The seminar opens with registration from 8:15 a.m. to 8:45 a.m., has two morning sessions, a box lunch at noon and time for shopping before and after the two afternoon sessions.

See the registration form on Page 7.

Mystery seeds...

(Continues from Page 3)

The seed has a very tough shell and extracting the grain is difficult.

MSU Extension has a plant description under ornamental plants.

Seed prices seem to vary from reasonable to beyond my budget. One of the reasonable costs is \$2.50 for 50 seeds.

Jed Fulkerson,
Advanced Master Gardener

Minutes of Aug. 22 meeting

President Susan Scott welcomed members and their guests to the public gardens at the Southbound I-75 Rest Area. Some 88 people attended. Scott thanked Gloria Schuler, project chairman, for her hospitality.

Mary Andrews moved approval of the July minutes; Crystal Kauer seconded the motion. Motion carried.

Kauer read the treasurer's report. Scott informed members that Garden Journals could be ordered through the end of September. A minimum 50 journals must be ordered for printing to take place. If not, money will be refunded to pre-paid members.

Scott also had additional newsletters available and the July Michigan Gardener magazine.

Scott said Kauer would accept fall conference registrations at the meeting.

Shirley McNier displayed and discussed the latest logo wear — a long sleeve denim shirt and a hoodless, zippered, waffle-texture sweat jacket.

She said garden flags would be available this fall and reminded member some spring orders have not been picked up.

Brian Ott gave a brief history of the Master Gardeners' maintenance of one of the beds at the rest area.

Schuler thanked everyone for coming and acknowledged the people involved in making the gardens a success.

She gave a brief history of the gardens, and detailed the annual planning that upgrades the gardens with new and unique

plants.

Karen Tilden requested all project leaders advise her of their status by Sept. 30.

Dan Medina of the Michigan Department of Transportation thanked all those involved with the gardens. He also explained the process and time frame that have made the gardens a success.

Larry Tibbits, a Midland Master Gardener and MDOT representative, also thanked Master Gardeners and detailed partnership that has made the rest stop a place tourists appreciate.

Scott Boehler whose Saginaw Township greenhouse provides plants for the rest area, gave thanks for being chosen to work with the Master Gardeners and MDOT.

Grey Gitzen said the fall Master Gardener Class has 15 students. He presented certificates to new Master Gardeners and those earning advanced status.

Ruth Sny said a plant sale was planned for Sept. 21 at the Saginaw Farmer's Market. She has a sign-up sheet to get plants ready for the sale and at the sale.

Scott asked members to read the next newsletter for background on issues that will be discussed at the September meeting. Association members would vote in October. She added that the fall plant exchange would be at the September meeting.

Members enjoyed a picnic prior to the meeting and toured the gardens.

Submitted by Melva Bond, secretary

More odds and ends

Japan Festival Sept. 22

The Japanese Cultural Center and Tea House at 527 Ezra Rust Drive, hosts a Japan Festival from 1 p.m. to 5 p.m. Saturday, Sept. 22. Call 759-1648.

Sny needs help with weeding

Master Gardener Ruth Sny is seeking help to weed her Saginaw Township garden — and she'll pay for the help.

Call her at 928-7315.

Winter class dates set

The next Master Gardener class is from

1 p.m. to 5 p.m. Wednesdays, from Jan. 24 to April 17. Call 758-2504.

Special thank you to Donna

I wanted to extend a special thanks to my co-garden keeper, Donna Kieselbach for all her work again this season at the Saginaw Children's Zoo at Celebration Square. She's been helping me with the butterfly exhibit ever since I took over the project.

I just wanted to make sure she gets the credit she deserves. Thanks, Donna!

Nancy Hales

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 or 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 _____

Address _____

City/State/Zip _____



Orange



Chartreuse



Blue

Color: Quantity: Total : Name to be printed on cover:

Periwinkle blue _____ @\$15 each = _____

Chartreuse _____ @ \$15 each = _____

Orange _____ @\$15 each = _____

Make checks payable to Crystal Kauer, and mail to 5775 Mackinaw Road, Saginaw, MI 48604

It may be time to rethink your watering practices

EAST LANSING — While it's possible to receive rain at just the right time and avoid watering your garden, it's highly unlikely to get through a Michigan growing season without irrigating.

"How and when you apply water, and how much, can be important factors in your garden's success," says Mary McLellan, Extension Master Gardener program coordinator at Michigan State University.

"A variety of methods and techniques are available. Which one you choose depends mostly on the size of your garden."

All plants need water, but the water needs of a container garden are on a different scale from those of a half-acre of sandy loam.

A simple watering can is adequate for a few container-grown plants, but a large plot requires a less labor-intensive approach.

The choices are often between overhead watering with a lawn sprinkler or soaker hose, more directed watering with a hand-held hose or a water- and labor-saving trickle irrigation system.

Watering with a hand-held hose is cheap and easy — you turn on the water and hold the hose. But you can easily apply too much water too fast and wash away seeds and small plants, and it's hard to know just how much water you're applying.

It's easier to underwater plants than to overwater them, simply because most people probably don't have the patience to stand in the garden holding the hose

long enough to thoroughly saturate the soil, McLellan observes.

And even if you apply the stream of water along the rows or at the bases of plants, much of it may simply run off into the walkways between the rows.

A major advantage of sprinklers is convenience -- you simply put them in place, turn the water on and walk away.

A drawback is that sprinklers water everything: the soil around the plants, the plants themselves and the areas between rows and hills.

As a result, they are not very efficient — you use a lot more water than the plants need because you're watering such a large expanse of soil.

Part of the extra water used never even reaches the soil — on a hot, windy day, a significant amount will blow away or evaporate.

"Wetting the areas between rows and hills not only wastes water but also promotes weed growth," McLellan notes.

"It also tends to make the garden inaccessible for some time after irrigation."

One way to make a soaker hose more efficient is to turn it upside-down so the water runs directly into the soil rather than spraying up into the air, she suggests.

This eliminates a great deal of evaporation loss, puts the water directly into the plants' root zones and keeps the walkways between rows dry.

It also keeps water off the plant tops, and this can be a big factor in preventing some diseases.

Many bacterial and fungal diseases re-

quire the presence of moisture on the plant foliage to get a foothold.

"You can't do much about rain or dew, but you can keep irrigation water off the foliage," McLellan points out.

Probably the ultimate in garden irrigation is a trickle irrigation system.

A pipeline carries water to the garden, where a system of smaller pipes carries water down the rows and little plastic tubes or perforated tubing delivers water directly to plants.

Because water is applied directly to the soil around plant roots, relatively small quantities of water can meet plants' needs.

You can buy all the components for a trickle irrigation system, from piping to emitters and even controls to automate your system.

Or you can improvise — fasten gallon plastic milk jugs to stakes next to individual plants or hills after poking holes in the rug bottoms.

Fill them with the garden hose, and allow the water to trickle into the soil around the roots.

To get the most out of the water you apply and to discourage weeds, McLellan suggests mulching.

A few inches of compost or other organic materials will slow the evaporation of water from the soil, reduce the need for irrigation, make the garden more accessible after rain or irrigation, keep tomatoes and other edible parts of plants free of mud splatters, and help control weeds.

Upcoming SVMGA programs

- 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**
- 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**

The fall seminar, An Autumn Affair for Gardeners, Oct. 6, helps educate all gardeners on current horticulture practices.