

The Grapevine

Bulletin of the Saginaw Valley Master Gardener Association

October 2005 Volume 9, Issue 10

Ornamental grasses still fascinate Scott

Grasses are the perfect fit when it comes to Susan Hunter Scott's Saginaw Township garden.

"I think what I like most about them is the way the sun shines through them – you really don't see that in any other plant," says the Advanced Master Gardener, a native of Gagetown.

"They glow in a way you don't see in other plants. The seed heads look good until February or March and the plumes are very impressive," she says.

"They don't really need any care, except to be cut down in spring and watered well that first year you plant them. Once they're established, you don't have to worry about them – gee, what's there not to like?"

Ornamental grasses is her topic for the Oct. 19 session of the Saginaw Valley Master Gardener Association at the Andersen Enrichment Center. (Please note, the meeting is one week earlier.)

She plans to focus the talk on what grasses offer in landscaping so members can "see the possibilities of using them in their landscape. People know how to plant a plant."

Those who visited her garden three

years ago, probably wouldn't recognize the front yard today. A simple driveway repaving project has become a major renovation of the front gardens, including a larger porch, new winding path and additional parking.



Susan Hunter Scott takes a break from gardening in her kitchen.

The gardens have taken new twists and turns, combining stone and compost-topped beds, while replacing old and overgrown traditional shrubs with those more to her liking.

"My goal has been to eliminate as much grass as possible – the kind you mow – and expand the front beds, adding more curves, so I can add more plants.

"I've been so busy composting and rototilling this summer, I began to wonder if this is really what I wanted to do – I haven't had time for much else."

But the results are satisfying, says the Fed Ex retiree, who now works part-time doing massage therapy, healing touch and reflexology.

"I only started gardening about 10 years ago, after I moved in here,"

Next meeting

- 7 p.m. – 9 p.m. Wednesday, Oct. 19, at the 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. Susan Hunter Scott, Advanced Master Gardener, looks at "Ornamental Grasses"
- Please wear your badge
NO GUESTS

Scott explains.

"I did 4-H in school and helped my mom with her flowers and vegetable garden, but not much since then.

"When I moved here, I wanted color and flowers. The landscaping was nice, but the plants weren't really right for the site and then they got too big. I looked at what I liked and what I hated, got some friends with trucks and took them out."

To help her pull her plan together, she asked Lynn LaPointe Wiese, a landscape architect in Mount Pleasant, for some advice. The plan enables her to reuse the plants she likes – after dividing – and add more, including ornamental grasses of all

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Those attending the second annual "An Autumn Affair for Gardeners," held earlier this month at Saginaw Valley State University, examine the bulbs and troughs. They were on sale by vendors during a break in the fall seminar. Some 211 people from across Michigan registered for the event.

Minutes of the Sept. 28, 2005 membership meeting

Grey Gitzen welcomed 79 members to the Andersen Enrichment Center.

Elaine Rappley moved that the minutes of the August 2005 meeting be approved as published; Joyce Schultz seconded the motion.

Jan O'Dell read the following treasurer's report:

Balance as of last report \$7,336.31
 Deposits 8/24/05 to 9/27/05 \$6,454.00
 Expenses 8/24/05 to 9/27/05 \$1,203.13
 Balance as of 9/27/05 \$12,587.18
 As of 9/27/05 we have 177 paid mem-

bers.

Shirley McNier moved the treasurer's report be accepted; Judy Henning seconded the motion.

Some 211 people are signed up for the fall conference. We will take walk-ins although no lunches will be available for them. There are 8 vendors. Catalogs for Brent and Becky's Bulbs will be distrib-

uted at the conference.

Anyone interested in attending can see Aileen Cowan as several who bought tickets are unable to attend.

Pictures of the bulbs we will have for sale at the conference were on display in the Hall of Fame room.

Unfortunately the amaryllis bulbs will not be available due to shipping problems. Most of the bulbs are different from last year, although there will be a few bestsellers returning.

Ruth Sny has agreed to chair the Christmas party. Anyone interested in helping her should see her at the break. The Christmas Party will be Wednesday Dec. 14.

The October meeting will be Oct. 19 due to a scheduling conflict with the Andersen Center and the November meeting will be held Nov. 16.

Shirley McNier still has logowear for two people who have yet to pick it up. She will bring samples for the next order to the October meeting. A long-sleeved T-shirt will be available.

Shelly Whitehead announced there will be a clean-up Oct. 15 at the Saginaw Art Museum.

Make a Difference Day is Oct. 20. Anyone interested in this volunteer opportunity should see Gail Caird at the break.

The Andersen Enrichment Center needs help in cleaning up the perennial beds. Volunteers interested in doing this should check in at the office when they come over to volunteer.

MG Coordinator Karen Siegel announced the current Master Gardener class has 21 students.

She also said there will be new volunteer opportunities in the spring as speakers and helping to design demonstration gardens at area garden centers. Opportunities will be printed in The Grapevine.

Siegel's office extension is 250; her e-mail address is siegelk@msu.edu. This information has been updated on the

Master Gardener web page. She is usually at the office Tuesday through Friday. The hotline also needs volunteers.

Karen Tilden has perennial sweet pea vine available for anyone who wants it.

Patty Burnside suggested instituting an honorary membership program for members in good standing at age 65.

This suggestion has been made before and needs to be addressed at the state level. After discussing this issue, Siegel will check at the next Master Coordinators' meeting.

Judy Henning mentioned all our project funds come from our dues.

Nancy Hales asked special project coordinators to please turn in their receipts as someone is waiting for additional funds. Receipts were due Sept. 1.

Patti Decker thanked all the zoo volunteers. Volunteer Appreciation Day is Oct. 8.

There are more volunteer opportunities at the zoo on Oct. 4 moving trees, Oct. 5 moving grasses, and the final clean-up Saturday, Nov. 5.

A new pond will be installed so there is much work and planting to do. They will solicit help from Master Gardeners in planning.

After adjournment of the business meeting, refreshments were enjoyed in the Hall of Fame room and tickets for the raffle were available in the lobby.

Thanks to Joe Leach for donating the crocuses; Aileen Cowan for the pumpkins, gourds and corn; Waunita Pettiford for the watering can and Ben Pawlik for the hand-painted vase with roses for our raffle.

Congratulations to Mary Kathryn Andrews, Grey Gitzen and Jan Richards for winning the crocuses; Rosemary Tinney, the pumpkins; Mary Weaver the vase; and Katharyn Morley the watering can.

Members enjoyed a presentation about and with bugs by Joe LaForest from Dow Gardens in Midland.

Submitted by Anne Birkam, secretary

Officers for 2005-2006

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Grey Gitzen 792-0615

Vice President

Nancy Hales 799-2118

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Anne Birkam 754-7090

Treasurer

Jan O'Dell 793-4357

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Karen Siegel 758-2500

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Saginaw Valley Master Gardener Association mission statement

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

Letter from the President

What a great fall season this has been. Because of the extended warm weather the flower beds in our backyard are presenting daily surprises.

The reblooming Iris Immortality is in full bloom. An event that happened last in our garden in the fall 2000. We have some Pacificum Mums that are blooming. The garden books tell us to buy them for the foliage because their blooming season is too late for this climate.

The Tricyrtis are exceptional, and the Colchicum bigger and brighter than ever. We also have Japanese Anemone "volunteering" in profusion. We have several stems of "Whirlwind," the double white Anemone, that are about 7 feet tall. It's been a fun season to be a gardener.

The second "Autumn Affair for Gardeners" is history. The day was great, our presenters first class, and the facility second to none. Of course, like all events,

there were some minor glitches — things that have been covered with the University and won't happen again. I'm sure all of you who attended enjoyed yourselves and are looking forward to next year, just as I am. Thank you Aileen Cowan and Judy Henning for overseeing an exceptional day for the SVMGA.

You have an opportunity to purchase spring blooming bulbs at our October meeting. We will have the balance of what we had for sale at our seminar. There is still plenty of time to plant them for next spring.

Another thank you goes to Ruth Sny and her crew of gardeners for the great job at the Dow Event Center. Ruth and Bob Sawyers have planted the conifers in the patio beds. All that is left is gluing the rock

cairns in place.

Please circle Nov. 16 on your calendars. This is the date of our November association meeting, and we plan a short session on how to enter your volunteer and education hours into the Master Gardener data collection system. This will allow you to do away with mailing your accumulated hours into MSUE office. (See story, below.)

Those who know me or have visited our garden know of my affinity with the genus *Hosta*. This time of year I sometimes regret my penchant for all those great leaves. I enjoy planting and hunting unusual specimens, but I never remember all those great looking leaves have to be cut down in the fall. That's my next task — filling four or five lawn bags full of spent leaves. Enjoy what's left of this marvelous season.
Grey



Hours for 2006 recertification due Dec. 31

Start compiling your hours now for recertification as Master Gardeners in 2006.

You need a minimum of 15 hours of volunteer work and 5 education hours by Dec. 31.

Education credit is earned by attending SVMGA meetings with a speaker or other classes approved by the state or local MG coordinator for this calendar year.

Volunteer hours are earned by working on projects approved by the MG coordinator this calendar year.

For the first time, Master Gardeners may enter their own hours on-line by going to web1.msue.msu.edu/mastergardener/

However, you will need to obtain your password first. Individual passwords are available from Grey Gitzen for those with last names from A-G; Darlene Damp for last names from H-M and Judy Henning for last names from N-Z.

Contact Gitzen at 792-0615 or e-mail jgreyzn@aol.com; Damp at 746-9113 or shrew@att.net; and Henning at 799-4136 or judrich@sbcglobal.net.

Once you log onto the site, go to the volunteer reporting box and click on it. You can either download the instructions or click on the volunteer record keeping box

and begin recording your hours.

Gitzen, Damp and Henning are available if you have questions about the process. The computer forms were streamlined for ease of use.

"We're going to cover this at our November meeting, but I would advise those who are going to use the computer to get their passwords now and try the system out so if they have questions, we can answer them at then," Gitzen said.

Like last year, it is NOT necessary to put down each individual day you were involved in an ongoing project.

Simply write the start date, what you did, and the TOTAL number of hours spent on the project.

For example: "5/5/05 Adopt a Garden at Children's Zoo, hands-on work, total hours, 50."

Those entering hours on-line are checked, just like those submitting forms, which is the reason for the mandatory state deadline Dec. 31.

Forms were mailed with your recertification card, or are available at the MSUE office, 1 Tuscola.

Please print clearly and include the date, the title, the speaker and the educa-

tion credit hour for each education session attended.

Here is the list of education hours from the SVMGA meetings this year:

1/26/05 — "Tree Identification,"

David Sutton, 1 hour.

2/23/05 — "Composting," Bill Wegner, 1 hour

3/23/05 — "New Perennials," Paul and Mark Begick, 1 hour.

4/1/05 or 4/8/05 — Fred Case garden tour, 1 hour.

4/27/05 — "Creative Containers," Grey Gitzen, 1 hour.

5/15/05 — Celtic Conifers, 1 hour.

6/20/05 to 6/22/05 — Master Gardener Summer Conference, 25 hours

8/7/05 — Frankenmuth Mutual Insurance garden tour, 1 hour.

9/28/05 — "Insect Identification," Joe LaForest, 1 hour.

10/19/05 — "Ornamental Grasses," Susan Hunter Scott, 1 hour.

11/16/05 — "Rain Gardens," Patricia Pennell, 1 hour.

MGs earn service award pins for all the hours they work. You must record all your hours to have it put toward that total, not just the minimum number.

Odds and Ends

Another successful seminar for SVMGA

The second annual "An Autumn Affair for Gardeners" is history. By all calculations we received a "congratulations" from over 75 percent of those who attended and completed their evaluation form.

The final registration count was 211, well over the 151 registrations of 2004.

Our keynote speaker, Brent Heath, along with our other speakers, Jerry Somalski and Chuck Martin were well received. Many positive comments were made about their topics and the presentation of those topics.

The seminar would not have been a success without the hard work of the following members: Charlotte Huebner, Judy Ross, Nancy Hales, Patty Burnside, Mary Anne Malek, Brian Ott, Jan O'Dell, Nancy Kleekamp, Marilyn Karpicke, Anne Birkam, Margie Englehardt, Dar Damp, Tom Brubaker, Terri Bailey, Ellie Robertson, Ruth Gardstrom, Pat Korkus, Judy Porter, Grey Gitzen and his wife, June Gitzen. If we have forgotten anyone, we apologize.

We also wish to thank the members who attended the conference, we hope you enjoyed the day.

Thank you all, you are the best.

Aileen Cowan and Judy Henning, co-Chairs –

Next board meeting:
5:30 p.m. Wednesday, Nov. 2,
at MSU Extension office,
1 Tuscola, downtown
Saginaw

Newsletter deadline:
Wednesday, Nov. 2
Send submissions to
Darlene Damp, editor
shrew@att.net

To view the monthly newsletter
on the Web site, please go to:
www.msue.msu.edu/
mastergardener/saginaw

Herb workshop meets Nov. 12 in Mount Pleasant

MOUNT PLEASANT — Learn everything you need to know about growing and cooking with fresh herbs.

Gail Caird, Advanced Master Gardener from Saginaw, will cover growing requirements and cultivation tips for a variety of kitchen favorites, as well as how to preserve them for year-round flavor.

The workshop meets from 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. Saturday, Nov. 12, at the Isabella County Building, Room 320. Cost is \$10 each.

It is sponsored by the Isabella County Master Gardener Association.

Recipes showcasing fresh herbs, from flavored vinegars and salad dressings to main dishes, will be presented and sampled during class.

To register, send a check, payable to MSU Extension to MSU Extension, 200 N. Main, Mount Pleasant, MI 48858, by Nov. 1.

For questions, please call (989) 772-0911, ext. 302.

Bulbs available for purchase from fall seminar

While all of the alliums bulbs sold out at An Autumn Affair for Gardeners this month, a variety of others still remain.

Grey Gitzen said there are still tulip, daffodil and grape hyacinth bulbs for purchase at the October meeting.

Sign-up for potluck at October meeting

Ruth Sny will have a sheet at the October meeting for the Dec. 14 Christmas Party.

She wants to know who will bring salads/veggies, main dishes, breads, desserts and pop to the annual potluck

Saginaw Library has new book

The latest book by Jamaica Kincaid titled "Among Flowers" is about her trip to the Himalayas with Dan Hinkley, looking for plants.

The library owns the book, says Anne Birkam.

There also is an article by Becky Heath

in the latest American Gardener about bulbs.

Dow Gardens offers classes

MIDLAND — Dow Gardens offers three classes in November.

"Using Biological Controls," from 6:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. Wednesday, Nov. 9, looks at how to minimize pest problems in the landscape.

Joe LaForest, Dow Gardens pest manager, shows how to utilize biological controls as part of an integrated pest management program.

Cost is \$10. Please register by Wednesday, Nov. 2. Earns 1 Master Gardener education credit.

"Tree Identification," from 2:30 p.m. to 4 p.m. Wednesday, Nov. 16, features Dan Veresh, associate horticulturist, and the science of identifying trees when they don't have their leaves.

Participants will learn to rely on buds, bark and tree forms to identify a tree. Please register by Wednesday, Nov. 9. Cost is \$5. Earns 1.5 Master Gardener education credits.

"Fresh Evergreen Wreaths" helps create the decorations for display at Dow Gardens during the holiday.

The session, from 1 p.m. to 3 p.m. Tuesday, Nov. 22, requires no previous experience.

It is free, but please call (800) 362-4874 so enough refreshments will be on hand.

Welcome new member!

The new addition to the Saginaw Valley Master Gardener Association membership roster is:

Rosemary Tinney, Bridgeport, Master Gardener Trainee.

There are now 177 members. To become a member, you must complete the Master Gardener class or be a certified Master Gardener.

Design classes meet

LANSING — A fall Garden Design Short Course series meets this fall at Michigan State University.

It was created for those interested in

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Summer drought affects fall color display

Michigan ranks as one of the top states for brilliant fall color. Native maples, oaks and ash provide dazzling displays that can last for up to eight weeks.

Dr. Bert Cregg, MSU horticulture and forestry professor, says he's frequently asked, "How good will the fall color display be this year?"

Last year's cool, wet fall launched the fall color gurus into false predictions of poor color — only to be blown away by its brilliance.

Cregg says there is no concrete science for making predictions but there are horticultural reasons why leaves change color.

Basic plant science finds three pigments in leaves, including the most familiar, chlorophyll, the green stuff.

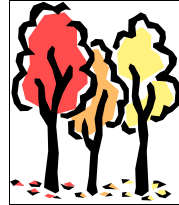
However, the leaf also houses other pigments which help the plant absorb a fuller spectrum of sunlight. Carotenoids, which give the characteristic orange-yellow fall color also are present with chlorophyll.

The last pigment, anthocyanin, is largely produced in autumn and has a blue-purple appearance. During the growing season, chlorophyll is produced in great abundance, but slows down as light levels decrease in autumn. As the green pigment dissipates, the other colors make their glorious debut.

Fall also is a time for planting trees, says Cregg. Certain species are noted for their autumn brilliance. One of Cregg's favorites is the Black Tupelo, also known as *Nyssa sylvatica*.

This native species tends to be a bit smaller, but the glossy green leaves are one of the first to turn a brilliant crimson with shades of burgundy and orange toward the center of the tree.

Another landscape specimen Cregg suggests is the Sweetgum. The star-shaped leaves and upright habit make this one of the nicest trees for this area.



Some gardeners are opposed to the interesting fruits that are noticeable in the winter but are shed abundantly in spring, but who's perfect?

Cregg's unsung hero and a rather late performer is the Scarlet Oak. In the Red oak family, its deep green, glossy foliage turns a perfect crimson.

Scarlet oak is somewhat slow growing, but will make a lasting impression.

For information, visit: www.hrt.msu.edu/ash.alt or buy the bulletin, "Recommended Alternatives to Ash Trees for Michigan's Lower Peninsula E-2925" at the MSU Extension office.

As for predictions, Cregg says due to the prolonged drought, some species will drop leaves before they turn color.

Spotty rain showers up north may make the color a "flash in the pan."

Log on to www.fs.fed.us/news/fallcolors or call the fall color hotline at (800) 354-4595.

Rebecca Finneran
MSU Extension, Kent County

Need more volunteer hours? Try these projects...

Saginaw Art Museum...

A clean-up of gardens at the Saginaw Art Museum is set for 9 a.m. to noon Saturday, Oct. 15.

The museum is at 1126 N. Michigan.

For information, contact Shelley Whitehead at 892-0719.

Master Gardener office...

Volunteers are needed to help with filing and other office tasks, along with handling homeowners' questions.

For information, contact Master Gardener Coordinator Karen Siegel at 758-2500, ext. 250.

Make a Difference Day...

Make A Difference Day, set for Thursday, Oct. 20, is seeking Master Gardeners to help students spruce up the yards of 10 senior citizens throughout Saginaw County.

Teams of students, representing 10 to 12 schools, along with school staff and

Master Gardeners will plant flowers and do fall clean-up for elderly homeowners who are no longer able to do their own yard work, window washing or gardening chores.

The day begins at 7:50 a.m. at the Andersen Enrichment Center where teams will assemble and then take buses to the work sites.

Teams work from 9:15 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. and then return to the center for lunch and the trip back to their home schools.

Master Gardeners who wish to participate may contact Joe Madison at 790-6417 or Gail Caird at 793-1942.

Saginaw Children's Zoo...

The annual clean-up day is at 9 a.m. Saturday, Nov. 5, at the Saginaw Children's Zoo, 1730 S. Washington.

Volunteers will put gardens to bed for the season. Bagels and hot beverages are provided.

Contact Patti Decker at 792-6633 or rizzobfrank@aol.com; or Colleen Sproul at colleensproul@hotmail.com.

Winterize Andersen rose beds...

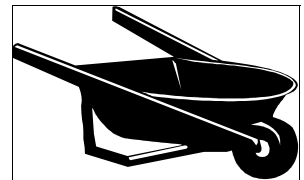
Volunteers are needed to help cover the rose beds at the Andersen Enrichment Center on Ezra Rust Dr.

Work begins at 9:30 a.m. Saturday, Nov 19.

Roses will be mounted with compost and covered with leaves. Please bring shovel and rake.

Several wheelbarrows and tarps are also needed.

A sign-up sheet will be available at the October meeting. Or contact Ben Pawlik at 793-4238 or e-mail bennzita@aol.com.



More odds and ends

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developing or sharpening their own garden design skills.

Participants may enroll in individual classes. Each is a day-long immersion course with a comprehensive manual.

Participants will not work on their personal landscape plans.

Sessions are from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Saturdays, including lunch. Master Gardeners earn 7 education credits for each workshop completed.

The courses include: Introduction to Garden Design, Oct. 8; Advanced Garden Design I, Oct. 15; Advanced Garden Design II: Nov. 5; Garden Design Graphics, Nov. 12; and Calculations, Install, Maintenance: Dec. 8.

For registration brochure go to: <http://web1.msue.msu.edu/mastergardener/>

Brent Heath provides tips

Brent Heath of Brent and Becky's

Scott also favors variegated irises...

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kinds.

"I'm not sure how I got started with the grasses. I don't even know where I got my first one, but I knew I wanted a lot. I started with a miscanthus variegata and a zebra grass and just went from there."

She can count the varieties on more than two hands and is always looking for new ones.

"It's interesting how it's affected the neighbors," Scott says.

"I put in several, then my neighbors liked them so much, they put in some. If you don't see them, I don't know if you think to use them."

And many of hers survive in less than full sun.

"I want to do more masses," Scott explains. "I also like anything with pretty flowers. A fair amount of my plants have come from Master Gardeners and the plant exchanges."

Some also came from talking with customers on her former Fed Ex route, like the variegated irises that are a favorite.

"I also like bear's breeches. It looks like soft green thistle, but the flowers are

Bulbs in Gloucester, Va., says there's no reason to divide bulbs when they stop blooming.

It's simply time to fertilize. Bone meal, he says, just attracts animals who then dig up bulbs.

Instead, try using Holland Bulb Booster or some other 10-10-20 mix with a slow-release nitrogen. And fall is the best time to do this. Osmocote, he says, will give you lots of leaves, but not many flowers.

He also likes to spray compost tea instead of using a fungicide.

When he plants bulbs, he uses plenty of compost and some gravel to deter animals from eating them. Cover with sand or dirt.

Or spray Ropel to discourage creatures from using bulbs as part a feast.

He plants about four bulbs per square foot and about three times the height of bulbs deep.

this mauve and off white.

"I saw them at Bordine's (a Detroit area nursery) and had to have them. You just don't see that mauve color in the garden very often and you get 10 to 12 flowers on a stalk."

When she's not gardening or working, Scott enjoys walking her dog, Rascal, roller blading and concerts.

Retirement has allowed her to take piano and singing lessons – along with Chinese brush painting.

She serves on the board of the Friends of the Shiawassee National Refuge, which is where some of her volunteer work is centered for SVMGA, taking care of a planting bed at the Stroebel Road entrance.

She and neighbor Janet Martineau, another Advanced Master Gardener, also share duties with a flower bed at the Saginaw Children's Zoo.

"It's been nice since I retired, being able to explore other things.

"Once I'm done with the yard, I want to travel – the Far East, India, Europe, Africa, Australia, everywhere I guess."

Story by Darlene B. Damp, editor

And next spring to add a special touch to your salads, try tulip petals.

"If they smell good, they taste good," he says.

Pink Queen Anne's Lace?

A Master Gardener in Connecticut has spent eight years cultivating an unusual pink variety of Queen Anne's Lace.

And it keeps getting darker each year, says Judy Gasparino of Preston, Conn.

Her effort was detailed in a Connecticut newspaper article from member Ruth Gardstrom.

To purchase 20 seeds, send \$5 and a self-addressed stamped envelope to Judy's Floral, 370 Route 164, Preston, CT 06365.

SVMGA committees

MSU Extension Office orientation — Wil Hufton, 792-9323

Mentor coordinator — Waunita Pettiford, 777-6918

Historian — Janet Martineau, 790-7340

Refreshments — Becky Geidans, 781-1552

Member handbooks — Angela Irwin, 777-7947

Membership roster — Nancy Hales, 799-2118

Newsletter mailing label-maker — Debbi King, 791-4001

Newsletter mailing committee — Bonnie Stewart, 793-1442

SVMGA wearables — Shirley McNier, 799-7172

Speakers bureau — Judy Henning, 799-4136

MSUE Demonstration Garden — Peggy Shaver, 695-5489

Volunteer opportunities — Karen Siegel, Master Gardener Coordinator, 758-2500, ext. 250 or 224

Raffle drawings — Ruth Sny, 928-7315

Not receiving the newsletter? — Nancy Hales, 799-2118

Dan Keane joins Saginaw Emerald Ash Borer program

Saginaw County has a new education coordinator to assist homeowners, businesses and government leaders in the battle against the Emerald Ash Borer.

Dan Keane, a retired forester and member of the Michigan Department of Agriculture, Pesticide and Plant Pest Management Division for 28 years, will provide information, outreach and identification of the pest.

To date it has killed more than 12 million ash trees in Michigan, Ohio and Indiana, including the Saginaw. Saginaw County remains in quarantine.

Keane has a bachelor's degree in forest management from Michigan Technological University and worked on the MDA's gypsy moth suppression in the 1980s.

"This is a great opportunity to provide current information and answer as many questions as possible about this serious insect pest," says Keane.

"It's my goal to make sure anyone within Saginaw County can get the best

information that is available. I want people to be able to make informed decisions whenever possible."

The emerald ash borer, *Agrilus planipennis* Fairmaire, is an exotic beetle that was discovered in southeastern Michigan near Detroit in the summer 2002.

Keane is available to speak at local government meetings, service groups and assist businesses in learning more about the Emerald Ash Borer.

Information and advice to homeowners is a top priority of Saginaw MSU Extension's Emerald Ash Borer Education Program.

Homeowner out-

reach includes:

- Educational materials available at the office.
- Answering homeowner questions.
- On-site visits to check trees for Em-



Leaves from an ash tree

erald Ash Borer infestations.

To date, the emerald ash borer infestations have been limited to the St. Charles and Thomas Township areas.

The borer spreads slowly, about one-half mile a year.

Products are available to deter the borer, however, once it weakens the tree, by attacking the vital life management or vascular system, the cambian layer, not much can be done.

In addition, the tree can then fall prey to other insect and disease problems.

"The good news is that it doesn't destroy the wood, which can be processed into products, like chipped wood for the fuel regeneration plant in Genesee County," Keane explains.

To contact Keane at the Saginaw County Extension office, 1 Tuscola, call (989) 758-2500 ext. 224, or e-mail keaned@msu.edu.

For more information about EAB, go to www.emeraldashborer.info, or www.michigan.gov/eab.

Fertilize lawn, apply herbicide if turf is still growing

An effective late fall fertilization will benefit the turf by producing carbohydrates, encouraging early spring root growth, providing good fall and spring color and improving turf density so the turf will better compete with weeds next spring.

Late fall fertilization is always a challenge for timing because it's really tough to figure out when fall stops and winter begins. The rule of thumb is to keep a close eye on when the turf stops growing.

When top-growth stops, that's the time to put down that late fall fertilizer. Generally for Michigan, in the northern portions of the Lower Peninsula, the late fall application would be about the last week of October and in the southern Lower Peninsula, around the first or second week of November.

Always make sure to apply the late fall application in advance of when the soil freezes, you never want to apply fertilizer to a frozen soil. Also, use fertilizers that

have a high percentage of fast release/water soluble nitrogen because we want to have the nitrogen taken up by the plant quickly so it can start storing carbohydrates before winter sets in.

Seeding in fall is always a tough decision. You can put seed down and you'll get germination and emergence. The challenge as we move closer to November is the amount of time those young seedlings have to mature before winter.

Young seedlings are more susceptible to winterkill. Along the Grand Rapids/Lansing/Detroit corridor you are probably safe to seed until around October 1 and have enough time for the seed to germinate and survive the winter.

If you're north of that line and still want to seed, hope for a warm fall. Consider that seed is relatively cheap and there's always next spring.

October and early November are the ideal time to control broadleaf weeds because the weeds are storing carbohydrates

in their root system and are more susceptible to herbicide applications.

So if your turf is being overtaken by a wide array of broadleaf bandits, applying an herbicide now could make the difference for next year.

Apply the herbicides on a sunny day when rain is not in the forecast for 24 hours.

Herbicides should dry on the leaf surfaces and not be immediately washed off. Also, make sure the turf is actively growing, cool weather and timely rains should ensure active growth in most areas.

There are many different herbicides that could be used including the most common three-way broadleaf weed control mixtures. In many cases you may not see the obliteration of these weeds this fall but next year they won't be there or will at least be reduced in numbers.

Kevin Franks,
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