

The Grapevine

Bulletin of the Saginaw Valley Master Gardener Association

November 2005 Volume 9, Issue 11

Soak up details on rain gardens Nov. 16

Patricia Pennell may have a degree in environmental education and a background in botany, but she turned to rain gardens for the same reason as others across the country.

"I live on a river and it was being threatened by storm water," says the Caledonia resident. "I thought 'somebody should do something.'"

That somebody was her after she began learning all she could about what could be done.

Later this month, Pennell, an environmental advocate for the 37-year-old non-profit West Michigan Environmental Council, will share what she's learned about rain gardens and encourage members of the Saginaw Valley Master Gardener Association to plant their own. (Please note: Her talk begins at 7 p.m.)

"Rain gardens are important," explains Pennell. "It's a place where storm water can collect and be cleaned before it goes into local streams and rivers."

"It's also a good vehicle for teaching because it's something anyone can do and in the process they are helping the environment. It's also a new kind of garden



Patricia Pennell, an environmental advocate, in her garden.

that I think captures the imagination."

For Master Gardeners, it can be a chance to share their love of gardening, promote native plant species and do hands-on teaching with children and adults, she says.

In the four years since the council began promoting rain gardens, at least 25 have been planted to help protect lakes and rivers.

"They actually can clean up streams and rivers," said the Michigan State University graduate.

"In fact, I can't think of a downside to a rain garden. They've really caught on here – in new developments, as part of block clubs, for new and old businesses."

And with the Saginaw Children's Zoo planning on installing some rain gardens adjacent to its new pond, Pennell's talk should come in handy for Master Gardeners here.

"Unlike what it sounds, rain gardens do not have standing water in them. Instead the water soaks into the ground," Pennell explains.

"If you do have standing water, you've got a pond, not a rain garden –

Next meeting

- 7 p.m. – 9 p.m. Wednesday, Nov. 16, at the Andersen Enrichment Center, Ezra Rust Drive
 - 7 p.m. – 8 p.m. Patricia Pennell discusses "Rain Gardens"
 - 8 p.m.—8:30 refreshments
 - 8 p.m. – 9 p.m. business meeting
 - Please wear your badge
- NO GUESTS**

or you haven't done enough soil preparation, which is more important for a rain garden than a regular perennial bed."

While some people think you just dig a hole and throw in seeds, Pennell says a rain garden doesn't have to look messy.

"For those people who like things nice and tidy, you can design them as a formal garden."

"And today there are some gorgeous native species you can use and they attract butterflies, dragonflies, frogs and unfortunately, bunnies and deer, too."

She plans to have brochures, a plant list and garden designs ready to share at the November meeting, plus allow time for questions.

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Christmas potluck has fun, food, prizes

It's not too late to sign-up for the annual Christmas party, set for 6:30 p.m. Wednesday, Dec. 14, at the Andersen Enrichment Center, Hall of Fame room.

While Chairman Ruth Sny was reluctant to dwell on any type of winter wonderland with the 70-degree temperatures outside last week, she did promise the party is "strictly a fun night with lots of surprises, yummy food and good entertainment."

"It's a social event, with no speakers, just a chance to get to know the rest of the membership," Sny explains.

Those who want to attend are asked to bring a dish to pass — a main dish,

vegetable, salad, dessert, bread or help with the punch. The sign-up sheet will be at the November meeting, or call Sny at 928-7315.

And just like in years past, SVMGA is collecting canned food donations for Hidden Harvest.

"It's Christmas casual, and just a little more, with the linen tablecloths and lovely table settings," she says.

"And we have some really awesome door prizes (members receive a number upon arrival)."

Sny said the committee is still finalizing details, including the evening's entertainment.

Minutes of the Oct. 19, 2005 membership meeting

Vice President Nancy Hales welcomed members and thanked Patti Decker for the cake she brought for all the work Master Gardeners do at the zoo.

Shirley Oryczak moved the minutes of the September 2005 meeting be approved as published; Bill Wegner seconded the motion.

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

Balance as of last report	\$12,587.18
Deposits 9/28 to 10/18	\$2,241.65
Expenses 9/28 to 10/18	\$2,935.87
Balance as of 10/18/05	\$11,892.96

As of 10/18/05 we have 177 paid members.

Marilyn Karpicke moved the treasurer's report be accepted; Raeann Krauss seconded the motion.

Hales welcomed new members and guests.

Judy Henning and Aileen Cowan re-

ported 214 people attended the conference with most enjoying it. Cowan and Henning met with Susan Brasseur from SVSU to talk about the glitches that occurred. We received a discount for this year and will receive a discount if we go back to SVSU next year.

Henning suggested using Curtis Hall next year since Brassuer has control of that building and cannot control everything that happens at the Ott Center.

Curtis Hall has comfortable seats and fold-up desks. The ground level seats 185 and the balcony 100. Elaine Rappley made a motion to switch to Curtis Hall. Bob Gubbins seconded the motion. The motion carried. Henning will book Curtis Hall for 2006.

Cowan asked for volunteers to help plan next year's conference. Volunteers are needed to get speakers and should have information about the speakers, like price and topics.

Henning and Cowan outlined what needs to be done for the conference and are seeking chairmen and committees to take care of each aspect.

The committee that needs to form now is the speaker's committee. Anyone interested should see Cowan and Henning.

Henning also mentioned that Genesee County Master Gardeners are changing the date of their fall seminar next year so it does not coincide with ours.

More information about the make-up of the attendees will be available at the next meeting and in the newsletter.

Next year's conference will be Oct. 7. The most popular idea attendees listed was perennials for fall.

Hales said the bulbs attendees ordered at the conference will be available at the next meeting.

The Christmas party will be at 6:30 p.m. Dec. 14 at the Andersen Enrichment Center. Please bring a dish to pass; Ruth Sny has sign-up sheets. She wants a gentleman on the committee.

Judy Wegner won the drawing for reimbursement for attending the Summer Conference.

Anyone having problems with data input to the Master Gardener database should see Karen Siegel. There will be a short presentation on the database at the

November meeting.

Siegel will send out registration packets for those interested in signing up for the next Master Gardener class. She has a waiting list and expects the class to be full.

Anyone interested in taking the class needs to get on the mailing list. The class will be from 1 p.m. to 5 p.m. Wednesdays starting Jan. 18th.

Genesee County also has a class from 10:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. Wednesdays, starting Jan. 11.

Siegel still needs help with the hotline.

Siegel introduced Mark Torregrossa from the Weather Garden at Channel 25. Torregrossa gave a presentation about the weather garden asking for help from Master Gardeners in maintaining the garden and preparing programs for television.

He plans four half-hour specials for 2006 and needs help with topics, planning, tips and Master Gardeners who would like to be on the program. Master Gardeners would receive commercial time for the work done on this project. Anyone interested in this may e-mail him at markt@speednetllc.com

Siegel said Master Gardeners will visit the Weather Garden in August.

Gloria Schuler announced a clean-up of the southbound I-75 rest area.

Ben Pawlik had a sign-up sheet to put the rose garden to bed on Saturday, Nov. 19.

Marilyn Karpicke said the Woman's National Farm and Garden Association greens sale is Sunday and Monday, Nov. 20-21st. She had flyers and order forms.

Shirley McNier offered ideas for logo wear. Members chose the desert-wash long-sleeved T-shirts for \$17. Her committee will research how to get our logo onto day planners.

Thanks to Julie Trinklein for donating placemats; Judy Henning the wine markers and an anonymous donor for the Christmas tree pot.

Shar Hammer won the wine markers; David Quinnan, the placemats; and Bob Sawyers, the Christmas tree pot.

Susan Scott gave a wonderful presentation about grasses with many beautiful photographs and ideas.

Submitted by Ann Birkam, secretary

Officers for 2005-2006

President

Grey Gitzen 792-0615

Vice President

Nancy Hales 799-2118

Secretary

Anne Birkam 754-7090

Treasurer

Jan O'Dell 793-4357

Program Director

Amy Fitkin 781-1670

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Darlene Damp 746-9113

e-mail: shrew@att.net

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Letter from the President

One of my gifts from my wife June for Christmas 1995 was a gardener's journal. I have written in it sporadically over the years about the things that happen in our garden.

For example, do you remember the heavy snows of October 26-27, 1997, or that 2003 was a fall season like we are experiencing this year?

Mostly I forget to make entries, but the notations I have made are great reference points when I try new plants. Some grow well. Most do not as I'm always pushing the USDA Zone 6 button.

I have several entries about planting bulbs in late December. They do grow well as they still get the obligatory 14 weeks of dormancy.

The 2005 edition of "An Autumn Affair for Gardeners" is history, and a great big Thank You goes to co-chairs Aileen Cowan and Judy Henning. The two of them have agreed to be involved in the

2006 conference.

You will be hearing from them about the conference at our monthly meetings. They promise the 2006 seminar will be bigger and better.

There are still bulbs available from the conference. We will have them for sale at our November meeting.

Also, if you ordered bulbs at the seminar, they will be available at the meeting, so please bring your checkbook the 16th.

Ruth Snyder still needs help with the December potluck. Please consider giving her a hand.

This is our one purely social event of the year, so help her make it a success.

Incidentally, we will be bringing food-stuffs for Hidden Harvest instead of exchanging gifts at the potluck.

The current gardening season is winding



down and the time to start looking at next season is at hand. Amy Fitkin, our program director, is preparing a schedule of speakers for our monthly meetings to help enhance our skills as gardeners.

She is always looking for new and interesting presenters.

If there is someone or something you think would make an interesting session, don't be shy. Tell her your idea because this association is all about you and the other members. We want to meet your needs.

Finally, I would like to thank you all for making my first year as president of the Saginaw Valley Master Gardener Association a great experience.

I wish you a happy, exciting, memorable, and healthy holiday season.

I look forward to expanding our knowledge as gardeners and community volunteers in 2006.

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/

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 jgreygzn@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 make it easy to enter your hours on-line.

The database will be discussed at the November meeting.

Trainees must submit their hours in writing to MG Coordinator Karen Siegel.

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

Simply write/type in 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."

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 education 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.

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

5/1/05 or 5/8/05 — Fred Case garden tour, 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.

10/1/05 — SVMGA Fall Conference, Brent Heath, Jerry Somalski and Chuck Martin, 4 hours.

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

Entering hours on-line topic of November meeting

Grey Gitzen, Judy Henning and Darlene Damp will discuss how to enter your hours on-line at the November meeting.

However, the trio encourages you to try the system out before the November meeting so you're familiar with the process.

"If members go on-line and try to enter their education and volunteer hours on-line before the meeting, they will at least have a background in what we'll be discussing," said Damp.

"And, we'll be able to answer any questions that may result from that first attempt.

"Although we plan to have some handouts outlining the process, it won't be as clear cut as if you have at least looked it over and tried it."

The threesome encourage people to use the same approach as last year, when they were submitting their hours in writing.

If you were involved in an ongoing project, simply type in 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."

It is NOT necessary to record each individual day you were involved in an ongoing project. And it would be too time-consuming.

"What I did this year," said Damp, "is keep track of my hours on paper, then totaled up my hours for each project and entered each on-line.

"That made it go far quicker than say if I was trying to enter the hours I spend on the newsletter monthly."

See related story, Page 3.

Edible rose petals sought

Gail Caird, an Advanced Master Gardener, is seeking a source of edible

(pesticide and fungicide-free) rose petals for her daughter's wedding next summer.

If anyone has a source, please contact her at 793-1942, or sgcaird@hotmail.com.

Thank you for a successful Make a Difference Day

A big thank you to all of the Master Gardeners who helped with the Make A Difference Day project on Thursday, Oct. 20.

They are: Delores Hignite, Janet Martineau, Deb Keller, Sheila Hempsted, Nancy Cotcamp, Mary Ann Malek, Mary Weaver, and Trainee Gail Bender!!

We had great weather for this wonderful opportunity to help kids give back to eight area senior citizens. Fall garden cleanup, the addition of fall color with mums, and the planting of bulbs were only a few of the chores performed by the teams at each house.

The residents, some long-time gardeners who have been sidelined by illness, were thrilled with the results!

Gail Caird and Joe Madison

Sign-up for potluck at November 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.

Volunteers clean up Rose Garden Nov. 19

Please help Ben Pawlik put the Rose Garden to bed for the winter at 9:30 a.m. Saturday, Nov. 19.

Please bring rakes and shovels; several wheelbarrows and tarps also are needed.

For information, call Pawlik at 793-4238.

Next board meeting:
5:30 p.m. Wednesday, Dec. 7,
at **MSU Extension office,**
1 Tuscola, downtown
Saginaw

Newsletter deadline:
Wednesday, Jan. 9
No December edition
Send submissions to
Darlene Damp, editor
shrew@att.net

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

SVMGA committees

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

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

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."