



The Washtenaw Gardener

Washtenaw County Master Gardener Newsletter

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Master Gardener Fall Harvest Potluck

*Master Gardener
Fall Harvest Potluck
November 9th at 6:30 p.m.*

*Washtenaw County
Farm Council Grounds
Certificate and Award
Presentations
to Master Gardeners,
Advanced Master Gardeners
and for
Volunteer Hours*



**Junior Master Gardener 2011
Harvest Party
Carol Figarra (MG-2007)**

A successful year for the Junior Master Gardener program concluded September 13 with the final garden harvest and a potluck dinner. Students and family members all participated in collecting produce and clearing the JMG garden.

All 16 students worked the ten hours necessary for completion of the class. Certificates and photo mementoes were awarded to each student as were new gloves, knee pads and garden hand tools.

Those students who worked additional hours received prizes of seed starter kits, work aprons, books and planters.

The most hours recorded by any one student was 20.5 and this student received a cacti terrarium.

Collectively the group worked 172.5 hours.

In addition to the JMG garden, many students volunteered their time and efforts working in their own gardens and helped family members with gardens. They also worked in community gardens, at senior centers and complexes, at their places of worship and in city and county parks.

Many students enjoyed the JMG experience so much they expressed an interest in returning next year.

Good job, all! The MG volunteers are extremely proud of this class of bright, energetic and personable youngsters.



Ty, Livia and their father dig for potatoes prior to the harvest party.



Bella carefully carries a marigold plant out of the garden. She plans to transplant the marigolds into her home garden and enjoy the colorful plant into the autumn. This is the second year Bella and her sister Ember have participated in the JMG program.



Students and volunteers harvest string beans. All 16 students who enrolled in the program this year successfully finished the required 10 hours of work and learning in the garden.



Nick shows some of the produce from the JMG garden. He won a prize of a seed starter kit for working more than the required hours in the garden.



Harvesting is truly a family affair as parents and children clean out the summer garden.



The 2011 graduates of the Junior Master Gardener program, include: (standing left to right) Mary Schloss, Frances Nardelli, Bella Larson, Ember Larson, Seamus Fifelski, John Rickmil, Livia Worden, David Evans, Will Brinkerman, Joseph Weber, Cameron Wallace, and Ben McQueen, along with Ty Worden (seated at left) and Francis Fifelski (seated at right).

Use Your Garden Herbs in Flavored Syrups and Vinegars

Madolyn Kaminski (MG 2001)

When harvesting those last vegetables from your garden, don't forget the herbs. Here are two ways to use a variety of herbs, as well as fruit, rinds and even spices, in flavoring syrups and vinegars.

Herb Syrup

Use a non-aluminum pan for this recipe.

- 1 1/2 cups fresh herbs, rinsed and patted dry with paper towel
- 2 cups granulated sugar
- 2 cups water

Gently bruise herbs with 2 tablespoons sugar using mortar and pestle. Add remaining sugar to water and dissolve. Reduce heat of herb/sugar mixture and simmer 6 to 10 minutes stirring occasionally. Cool overnight and strain and press juices out of herbs. Make sure you strain fluid through a strainer or filter before serving. Store in refrigerator to preserve freshness (up to three months). This recipe makes a lot of syrup. I use it in tea, ginger ale, club soda or other drinks.



You can use a variety of herbs in syrups and vinegars.

Roses, orange zest, mints, thyme (lemon or orange), rosemary (use less), lavender, lemon verbena or balm make good syrups. Adding lemon, orange zest, herbs, spices and other flavors to the syrup can be interesting. I like lemon verbena and ginger together in syrup; I use it with green tea. Teas and syrups freeze well.



Add a sprig of an herb to the vinegar when you bottle it.

Herb Vinegars

Making these special vinegars is a very simple process and requires only the simplest of equipment.

First take fresh herb leaves fresh from the field and bruise them with a wooden mallet on a wide, thick board. Place the bruised foliage in a large, nonmetallic container and pour hot, but not boiling, vinegar over them. Cover tightly and allow the mixture to steep in a warm, dark place for 3 weeks, stirring the herbs every day. Over-steeping will bring out unpleasant flavors. When this process is completed, strain the mixture through three thicknesses of cheesecloth or two coffee filters. If the vinegar fails to come clear on the first straining, repeat the process until it does.

The herb vinegar is now ready to bottle and seal. Fill sterilized bottles, adding a sprig or two of your fresh herb, a hot pepper or garlic for a good appearance, and cap with corks or non-metallic caps. Store the bottles in a cool, dark place.

Why Do Leaves Change Color and Fall?

The Recycled Gardener (MG 1997)

Autumn is marked by changes in weather that begins the process turning trees the flaming colors that characterized the season..

It's Mother Nature's way of telling the deciduous community to prepare for the cold winter months.

During the summer, leaves have been manufacturing food through photosynthesis, using chlorophyll, a green pigment. As the weather cools, sugars build in the leaves, causing the chlorophyll to break down. As a result, other pigments become visible.



Instead of the dark to light yellow-green of chlorophyll, colors in the leaves show the red, orange or yellow of the carotenes or the yellow to brown of the xanthophylls.

The pigment anthocyanin turns leaves red if the sap is slightly acidic, blue if the sap is alkaline. If the sap is neutral, the pigment shows shades of violet.

Over time, the changes in temperature, daylight, water and other autumnal changes cause the leaves to fall, a process called abscission. Hormones, triggered by the environmental changes, break down tissue at the abscission zone near the base of the petiole of each leaf.

The tissues holding the leaf to the stem weaken, and wind breaks the few remaining vascular bundles freeing the leaf to fall gently to the ground.

Be a Cork Saver

The Recycled Gardener (MG 1997)

Keep several corks on hand to plug holes. The plastic corks are less likely to be chewed by mice; however, corks made of cork work just fine.

Wine corks in various sizes are handy to seal openings in lawn equipment. After you clean the sprinkler and drain the hose, plug the openings with snug-fitting corks.

The corks make excellent stoppers to plug drainage holes in flowerpots too.



Master Gardener Tote Bags

Master Gardener canvas tote bags are for sale at a cost of \$15 each.

The bag has the Master Gardener logo and "Master Gardener Volunteer" printed on one side. It has a zipper closure across the top and is large enough to hold the Master Gardener manual.



There is a bag on display at the MSU Extension Office for viewing. Stop by the office to purchase yours.

Peanut Butter Cookies

Preheat oven to 375 degrees

Beat until soft: 1/2 cup butter or shortening.

Add gradually and blend until creamy:

- 1/2 cup firmly packed brown sugar
- 1/2 cup granulated sugar

Beat in:

- 1 egg
- 1 cup peanut butter
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1/2 teaspoon baking soda
- 1/2 teaspoon vanilla

Sift before measuring and mix in: 1 to 1 1/2 cup all-purpose flour



Roll the dough into small balls and place them on a greased cookie sheet. Press flat with a fork. Bake about 10 to 12 minutes.

Master Gardener Clothes Available for Purchase

You can order items from a line of Master Gardener clothing, including T-shirts, sweatshirts, denim shirts, polo shirts, fleece vests and hoodies – both pullover and zip front. The clothing is offered in a variety of colors. Payment will need to be made at the time of the order. Prices range from \$9.50 to around \$50.

Orders will be placed on a monthly basis. If you have questions, please contact Cindy at 734-222-3948.



Apple Mocha Bread
Sam Parise (MG 2006)

- 1/2 cup strong coffee, chilled
- 1 teaspoon baking soda
- 1 1/2 cup flour
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1/2 teaspoon ground cloves
- 1 teaspoon cinnamon
- 1/2 cup butter
- 1 cup sugar
- 2 eggs
- 1 ounce unsweetened chocolate, melted
- 1 cup grated peeled apples
- 1/2 cup raisins



Line a loaf pan with brown paper or parchment paper. Grease paper and sides of loaf pan.

Mix coffee and baking soda together.

In a bowl, combine flour, salt, cloves and cinnamon.

With a mixer, beat butter and sugar together until fluffy. Beat in eggs. Stir in chocolate. Add flour mixture alternately with coffee mixture to butter mixture. Stir in apples and raisins.

Pour batter into prepared pan and bake in a 350 degree oven for 50 to 60 minutes. Cool for 10 minutes before turning out.

MSU research on grubs in turf is helping reduce pesticide use in Michigan

Bob Bricault, Horticulture Educator

Since the 1990's the European Chafer, (an introduced beetle) has damaged many lawns across the southern half of Michigan's Lower Peninsula. Currently the European Chafer has spread northward to Saginaw, Midland, and Muskegon and has been found in isolated spots in Traverse City, Alpena, and a few sites in the Upper Peninsula. European chafers along with another imported insect Japanese Beetles, feed on the roots of grass while in their grub stage making it difficult for the plants uptake of water. Grub damage has become so common that control of the insect has become a yearly routine on many golf courses and home lawns.

In fact in a recent article written by Dr. Dave Smitley, Professor and MSU Extension Specialist, he reported that approximately \$20 million is spent on lawn insecticides in Michigan and that it is mostly used to avoid grub damage to the turf. The C-shaped white grubs causing the damage are the immature stage of the European chafers and the Japanese beetles. Often the first sign of damage is browning turf caused by grubs feeding on the roots of plants in fall and early spring.

We have known for awhile that watering practices can reduce the impact of the grubs. Studies show that turf irrigated daily in mid to late summer can tolerate higher populations of grubs before damage occurs. Now we look to other lawn cultural practices to help reduce the use of pesticides in the battle against grubs. Recent research is looking at raising the mowing height to improve the root mass and how that larger root system lessens the chance of damage by grubs that feed on these roots. Smitley states, "Research at MSU indicates that if turf root systems are dense enough it is unlikely that grubs will consume greater than sixty percent of the root mass, which will leave enough roots for your lawn to survive without seeing any dead patches." Setting your mower to a height of 3.5 inches above the ground will help the turf develop this larger root mass.

The combination of turf growing at 3.5 inches along with watering lawns during dry periods makes it unlikely for the grubs to damage the lawn. Cutting it high is more than a slogan, a higher mowing height helps crowd out weeds and promotes deeper roots. Mowing high also helps the lawn withstand drought conditions and now a third benefit can be added that it prevents grub damage without the need for insecticides. Raise that mowing height even in the fall. Michigan turfgrasses, like Kentucky bluegrass grow best during cool moist weather. Fall is the perfect time for improving the health of your lawn and one simple practice to benefit the lawn is to raise the mowing height to 3.5 inches.

October Calendar

Matthaei Botanical Gardens & Nichols Arboretum

1800 Dixboro Road, Ann Arbor 734-647-7600

<http://www.lsa.umich.edu/mbg/>

Call for classes and to register

The Slippers of Venus

Sunday, October 9, 1 pm

Fall Presentation, American Rhododendron Society

Thursday, October 20, 6-9 pm

Are Alien Plants "Bad"

Thursday, October 27, 7:30 pm

Hidden Lake Gardens

Arboretum and Gardens

M-50, Tipton 517-431-2060

<http://hiddenlakegardens.msu.edu/>

Call for class fees and to register

Pruning Fundamentals

Saturday, October 22, 9 am to 12 noon

Ornamental Grasses and other Fall Highlights in the Garden

Saturday, October 22, 2 –4 pm

Washtenaw County Parks & Recreation Commission

<http://parks.ewashtenaw.org>

See calendar of events

Visit website for more information

In Search of the Michigan Banana

Saturday, October 8, 10 am to 12 noon

A "Blizzard" of Yellow—Visit to the Tamarack Swamp

Sunday, October 30, 2 to 4 pm

“So Easy to Preserve”

Have you ever had an abundance of fresh produce from your garden and wished you had the skills to preserve it for later use?

Take a look at the University of Georgia Cooperative Extension’s fifth edition of “So Easy to Preserve.”

This 375-page book contains the latest U.S. Department of Agriculture recommendations for safe food preservation and has more than 185 tested recipes, along with step-by-step instructions and in-depth information for both new and experienced food preservers.

To get your own personal copy for only \$18, contact Cindy Fischer at 734-222-3948 or email her at fischerce@ewashtenaw.org.



Master Gardener Alumni Association of Washtenaw County News

Your four-season landscape can start in Fall! Gardens and landscapes don't have to look like moonscapes during the off-season. Perennials have a lot to offer even from October to April, and the character of a tree or shrub is often better out of its bloom season than while it's in flower. To reap four seasons of interest from your landscape, start right now to choose plants that will fill seasonal gaps, but keep in mind that's only part of the answer. How you place and maintain those plants and other garden features is even more important. Here are design techniques, plant suggestions and maintenance tips from garden designer and author Janet Macunovich, who will talk about four-season gardening at 7 p.m. Oct. 18, at the extension office, 705 N. Zeeb Road.

**Master Gardener Alumni Association of Washtenaw County
Membership Enrollment Sept. 2011 thru August 2012**

(Please Print Clearly)

Name: _____ MG Year completion _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: MI Zip _____ - _____

Phone: (day) _____ (evening) _____

Email: _____

Check this box if this is an email change

New items:

Gardening interests:

Please Circle: Yes / No to include personal information in Alumni Membership Directory

Mail enrollment with a check for \$20 dues, payable to:

**Master Gardener Alumni
Association or MGAA
c/o Pat Belluci
5312 Fox Ridge Ct
Ann Arbor, MI 48103**

6960

Michigan State University
Washtenaw County MSU Extension
705 N. Zeeb Rd.
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**TIME SENSITIVE MATERIAL ENCLOSED
PLEASE DELIVER PROMPTLY**



Office Hours: 8 a.m. — 6 p.m., Monday—Thursday, CLOSED Friday

Washtenaw County MSU Extension.....	734-997-1678
Fax.....	734-222-3990
Bob Bricault, Horticulture Agent.....	734-222-3826
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Garden Hotline.....	734-997-1819
E-mail:.....	msuextension@ewashtenaw.org
County website:.....	www.eWashtenaw.org
State website:.....	web1.msue.msu.edu/mastergardener

Robert J. Bricault, Jr.

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Horticulture & Natural Resources

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