



The Washtenaw Gardener

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Washtenaw County Master Gardener Newsletter

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Watching Kids Grow

Lissa Oliver (MG 2010)



Watering was a popular job.

As a member of the Master Gardener class of 2010, I spent many of my volunteer hours this growing season helping out in two gardens designed to engage children actively in gardening - one at my church and one at my neighborhood elementary school. I looked forward to using some of the plant knowledge I had learned in my classes, but in the end, just being present with the kids in their gardens was my biggest reward and most significant contribution.

Members of the Locovores group at my church (many are Master Gardeners) wanted to share their love of gardening with interested fourth and fifth graders, so they organized a class based on the Junior Master Gardener curriculum. "The Flaming Cauliflowers" planted vegetables and flowers in our church's 2-square-foot gardens.

I brought veggie "props" to an early class so we could talk about plant parts. I held up the carrots and asked what part we eat - "roots" - that was easy. I held up a bunch of spinach - "leaves" - of course the kids knew that one too. The celery and radishes gave them pause, but they worked out the answers pretty quickly. I finally stumped them when I held up the broccoli.

As the veggies got passed around, each child picked off a spinach leaf or took a carrot, then walked over to the sink to wash and eat it. Maybe they were desperately hungry, but I think they just liked to eat them.

Subsequent classes covered good bugs and bad bugs, flower pollination and growing potatoes in buckets. I noticed that no matter the lesson of the day, each child looked forward to planting, so the lead teachers wisely included time for getting dirty. During watering sessions, the kids loved checking on their plants. "Look how tall mine is!" "Can I pick this?" Their eyes focused on finding what had changed.

At the school, dedicated parents took hard, compacted soil on the south side of the building and transformed an empty plot into a sizable garden used by teachers, students and families to learn about growing fruit, vegetables and flowers. Great effort was made to make the garden kid-friendly and visually interesting. There is an outdoor classroom with tree stumps for seats, strawberries grown in tiered pyramids, flowers planted in stacked tires and tepee frames covered in bean plants.

On "Weed & Seed" days, students spent their recess working in the garden hauling mulch, turning soil, sowing seeds and planting plants. Watering was also a popular activity, especially when it was hot.



Kids enjoyed getting their hands dirty.

We found things in the garden besides vegetables. A big toad was seen hiding on the edge of the garden, and a small chrysalis was discovered dangling among the bean vines. Unfortunately, the chrysalis did not make it, but it was a beautiful deep purple color with little white dots making a ring around the middle.

I helped children plant strawberries, potatoes and flowers. We talked about "tickling" the plant's roots and why that was important, which direction a piece of potato needs to be planted and how to carefully separate young carrot plants.

The chatter from the children was gratifying. "I love planting things!" "What else can I plant?" "Can I eat this?" "I like this way better than recess!"



Recently, I went back to both gardens to help with harvesting, and what a bounty! At the church, there were stories of beans, tomatoes and a few cucumbers harvested over the summer.

Potato buckets were emptied, and I think the record was 21 potatoes in one bucket. We ate a harvest meal that included much of what the children had grown. When asked what surprised them in the garden, one child didn't know cucumbers grew with little "pointy things" on them.

At the school, harvesting included helping children gently pick ripe - or almost ripe - tomatoes, cucumbers and some final melons. Here too, potatoes were a big hit. They were planted in soil "volcanoes" so



Peas also came early in the season.

Radishes were an early crop.

the children got to dig around to find their treasures. I had to discourage some energetic waterers from target practice on bees and fellow classmates. I also had conversations with young gardeners who tried something new - a spicy radish, chives or mint that reminded them of gum.

I wondered what I could teach the children and what they could easily absorb. I found that learning for all of us came with experiencing the full life cycle of the gardens - the planting, the tending and the harvesting. And that was plenty.

Junior Master Gardeners Harvest Party

Carol Figarra (MG2007)



Proud Junior Master Gardeners (left to right) Dominic Gretz, James Downie, Jahi Hawkins, Ashley Banach, River Smyth, Sofi Rose, Hailee Foes, Bella Larson, Maya Bieszki and Ember Larson.

The 2010 Junior Master Gardener program came to an end Thursday, Sept. 17, at the traditional Harvest Party.

Students and their families all brought dishes to pass for the traditional end-of-summer celebration.

After a delicious meal, certificates of achievement were awarded to students who met the program requirements by completing 10 hours of classroom, garden maintenance and approved community gardening projects.

Following the dinner, the Junior Master Gardeners harvested the remaining crops and cleared the garden. Produce was divided among the students and their families.

Because of the efforts throughout the spring and summer, this was a successful season and produced a plentiful yield, while providing lots of fun and promoting pride in the students' achievements.

A special thank you goes to the Master Gardeners who assisted with classroom lessons and the hands-on garden maintenance.

Great job, one and all!

Winterize!

Jesse Raudenbush (MG 2010)

I wanted to share a couple simple techniques for winter bed preparation that have really paid off for me over the years. Plus, it might give you some productive outdoor work as our season comes to an end.

Here is a slight variation of what a lot of savvy backyard composters already do with fall leaves. I learned this from my grandmother who used to call it "winterizing" her garden.



A sign of autumn.

She would stockpile fall leaves, then grind them up. (I remember some extremely inventive and even perplexing grinding methods.) In the late fall - depending on things like when the leaves fell - she would sprinkle cornmeal on

the soil throughout her garden, then cover the beds with the ground-up, brown leaves. She explained that the corn meal attracts earthworms to the surface, and they would feed on the leaves, depositing their castings (worm poop), which made for great plant food.

In addition, the worms would cultivate the soil, aiding in plant root development. "And it gives you somethin' to do with all these damn leaves," Granny added.

This also can be done in the spring using wet newspaper instead of leaves. The newspapers are unsightly, but you can always cover them with mulch and they will compost down in a few days.

I personally recommend doing it in the fall because hey! It gives me somethin' to do with all these damn leaves, and your plants really do get a surprising jumpstart the next spring.

If you have open yard space, you might try something else I started last fall: Leaf walls using a few sturdy garden stakes and some garden fencing. I used green-coated chicken wire -about 2 feet tall, though various lengths are available.

Putting one stake at each end and enough in the middle to make the structure stable, I ran the fencing around all the stakes, making what amounts to a long, thin oval basket. I then filled it with the season's fallen leaves.

The walls are visually appealing and lend a nice seasonal feel to my yard. The leaves can sit outside exposed to the elements. In a year, an awesome leaf mold about an inch or two deep sits at the bottom of the walls, and the level of leaves had decreased in height by at least 9 to 12 inches.

Obviously this is a pretty slow process, but I have found the leaf mold to be a fantastic source of organic matter to add to my gardens, and aside from filling the walls with leaves, I put absolutely zero effort into the process, and I like zero effort.



Leaf wall

My Own Backyard - Well Almost

Deanna Searls (MG 2007)

There are a myriad of opportunities available for Master Gardeners to use our knowledge and skills.

When the discussion at one of our homeowner association meetings turned to landscaping the entrance to our neighborhood, I decided to offer my services.

Since we were the "new kids on the block" at the time, it was essential to gather information from those who had been involved in the past and listen to them express their visions, concerns and hopes.

The project developed over two years, and from the decision to restore the neighborhood's wooden sign to getting construction estimates, several folks pitched in and helped, including my husband, Fred, who repainted the sign.

The board approved the purchase and planting of two white pines, one on each side of the raised bed. At our spring meeting this year, the members agreed to allow me to create a design, purchase the plants and oversee installation.

After the board approved a budget, I got to work.

Keeping traffic to a minimum on our narrow, unpaved street is always a priority, so my task was to develop a design that



Deanna Searls working on the new entrance.:

was interesting without being too inviting.

Our road had been cut through a deciduous forest, so I decided on an informal, natural design and used boulders to build up the 12-by-14-foot raised bed around the sign.

Because of the woodland environment, deer frolic EVERYWHERE, so my plant selection needed to keep our whitetail friends in mind.

Fortunately, I was able to attend the Master Gardener Alumni Association meeting in February for a lecture on that topic. The list of deer resistant plants proved to be a handy resource while shopping. (A basic rule of thumb I learned is deer dislike plants with fuzzy, fringed or prickly leaves.)

Of course, another important aspect in planning the bed is the amount of sunlight. The raised bed site is graced with late afternoon sun, particularly in the front half.

Since I knew that deer would pass by both boxwoods and barberries and neither require full sun, they were first on my list. I selected *Berberis thunbergii* "Royal Burgundy" and Buxus Green Mountain (one of my favorites) for some height behind dwarf Franklin's Gem Boxwood.

While annuals provide summer long color, they require too much water and are too labor-intensive, since they only live

one season. So only shrubs and perennials made it into the design.

I was careful to install plants that would not require pruning or grow more than 31 inches and block the sign. I decided on Solomon's seal (*Polygonatum biflorum*), a woodland native species, to grow along the posts. With its arching growth habit and flexible stems, it should prevail even when the fierce west wind whips through. In addition, berries on the plants provide visual interest in winter when the leaves are gone.

Digitalis.purpurea "Dalmation Purple" made an impression with its spiky flowers flanking the Solomon's seal. The biennial foxgloves will need to be replaced, but the minimal cost and maintenance is worth the display.

Campanula carpatica "Pearl Deep Blue" provided color through much of summer (even though one decided to bloom white).

When it isn't blown back by the wind, Spotted Dead Nettle (*Lamium maculatum*) "White Nancy" drapes down the front of the rocks. It does bloom white, as its name implies.

Meadow Sage (*Salvia sylvestris*) "May Night," selected as Plant of the Year in 1997 by the Perennial Plant Association, takes center stage under and in front of the sign. This salvia put on a beautiful performance with its deep purple flowers and broad leaves. A little pruning brought back some blooms for an encore in August and into September.

Deer-resistant Dicentra "King of Hearts" lends contrast to the salvia. Its dark pink blooms flourish in the cooler temperatures of spring and fall. Smaller than the common bleeding heart, it grows only 12 to 15 inches tall and perseveres all season.

A big surprise has been the Japanese Blood Grass (*Imperata cylindrical*) "Red Baron", which frames the back of the bed where there is the most shade. Never wilting during dry spells, it has thrived, spread and grown and now provides rich, red autumn color which is appreciated now that other plants have died back in the shorter days of September.

Although this project is done, it will never be finished. No garden ever is. Yes, it takes time and care, but receiving comments of thankfulness from our neighbors and knowing that I was able to use my abilities to bring joy to all those who drive by or venture in is surely worth the effort.

So when you are deciding just where to volunteer your time, sometimes you don't need to look farther than your own "backyard."



The completed project.

Hotline Greatest Hits Season Wrap Up

Nancy Quay, MG 2009

As we near the end of the 2010 Master Gardener Hotline season, I'll take the opportunity to look back at a summer of working the phones.

My goodness, what a summer it's been.

For the last two shifts, I've had the opportunity to help log into our database the many questions we've been asked, and it's been fascinating to see how many lives have been touched by all the MG Hotline volunteers.

We've received questions from all over the state, sometimes because a caller lives in a county that doesn't have access to the kinds of services we have in Washtenaw County and sometimes because of our cross-state ties. For example, a city council member in Leelanau County called to learn more about how Ann Arbor handles phosphates because a new resident of Leelanau used to live here and carried with him our local standards when he moved north.



We've answered questions on flowers, trees, shrubs, vegetables, insects, mammals, soil, diseases - and we've settled the occasional marital spat over where to plant the dogwood.

We've taken common questions like "Why are the ends of my tomatoes rotting?", less common questions like "What should I do about bedbugs?" and downright unusual questions like "Can I use saliva strips to test my soil?"

We've educated, supported, empathized, comforted, reassured and more often than not, shared laughter and our love of the natural world with people who have reached out to us for help.

Perhaps some of my fellow Master Gardeners feel that working on the hotline is a chore. I know that some days, especially when the phone doesn't ring, it can be hard to believe that what we're doing is worthwhile. But I believe it is worthwhile. It does matter, and I'll tell you why.

Many people now have access to more information via the Internet than any other generation in history. A tap, a click and an answer for almost any question can be found on a desktop screen.

At least half the time I worked the hotline this summer, I, too, found the answer to a caller's question using the computer. And sometimes the caller reported having already found an answer online but called us anyway!

So here is my point (and I do have one): It isn't just the *information* that our callers want when they dial the hotline number - they want *us*. They want a voice on the phone, someone who cares about their plants the way they do, someone who will commiserate with them when they lose an entire cucumber crop to wilt or mourn with them as they face cutting down a beloved tree.

If you're a frequent hotline volunteer, you know what I mean. If you are not, I encourage you to sign up next year for as many hours as your schedule allows. It is an experience not to be missed, it is a pleasure and it is a privilege.

It is the essence of what we are as Master Gardeners.

TALES FROM THE HIVE

Richard Mendel (MG 2009)

This is a question and answer column dedicated to honey bees and in some cases, bees in general. I will answer any questions of general interest pertaining to bees and how they interface with agriculture, humans, animals and the



environment. Please send your question to Richard brescue@att.net. A number of questions of interest to most readers will be selected and answered in the monthly newsletter. Some of the questions and answers may be short, which means more can be published. If your question is of an urgent nature or involves a safety issue concerning honey bees, such as removing a swarm, please call me directly at 734-660-8621.

Yellow Jackets vs Honey Bees

There were a large number of questions recently regarding the increased activity of yellow jackets. I'll attempt to answer most, if not all, in one response this month.

Let me first make it very clear that it is easy to mistake a yellow jacket for a honey bee, especially in flight. I have been asked to rescue swarms of honey bees many times only to find when I get there that they are yellow jackets. As a result of the misidentification, honey bees are getting a bad reputation.

An obvious difference between the two is that the bands on the yellow jacket are a bright yellow or green-yellow, while on the honey bee the bands are more brassy gold tone or in some strains, no gold bands at all.

In addition, the yellow jacket is glossy or shiny looking versus the honey bee, which is dull and in most cases covered with short body hairs. The presence of body hairs is probably the most positive determinant factor.

There is evidence of wasps dating back 150 million years, and it is believed that the social honey bee of today is a descendent of a specific wasp genera.

There are many species of wasps in Michigan that can be categorized into two types known as social and solitary.

Yellow jackets and paper wasps are considered social and live in nests. Of the two, yellow jackets are by far the most troublesome group.

Yellow jackets are sometimes referred to as the "meat bee," because of their appetite and need for protein.

Paper wasps, on the other hand, are much less defensive and rarely sting humans. They tend to shy away from human activity, except when their nests are located near doors, windows or other high traffic areas.

Yellow jackets are often considered the most dangerous stinging insects in the United States. They tend to be unpredictable and usually will sting if the nest is disturbed. The most significant risk is from mass stinging attacks of agitated workers. Unlike honeybees, yellow jackets can sting many times.

Reaction to a wasp sting can include only a short-term, intense sensation, substantial swelling and tenderness, some itching or a life-threatening allergic response. Of specific concern is a condition that results from multiple-sting encounters, sometimes unfamiliar to attending health professionals. It is induced by the volume of foreign protein injected into the tissues, which can be damaged by destructive

enzymes in the wasp venom. Red blood cells and other tissues in the body become damaged; tissue debris and other breakdown products are carried to the kidneys to be eliminated from the body. Too much debris and waste products can cause blockages in the kidneys, resulting in renal insufficiency or failure. Patients in this condition require medical intervention, including even dialysis.

Most yellow jacket activity occurs in the late summer and early fall when colonies reach their highest numbers.

During late summer and fall, yellow jacket colonies are nearing maturity, and huge numbers of workers are out foraging for sugar and protein food for the developing queens and mature workers.

With insects (their usual diet) becoming scarce, the yellow jackets scavenge for other sources of nutrition, especially sweets, such as fruit, ice cream, beer and soft drinks. The persistent foraging of yellow jackets at picnics and other outdoor activities produces many complaints from homeowners and businesses wanting to know what can be done to alleviate the problem.

Concerns about yellow jackets are based on their persistent, pugnacious behavior around food sources and their aggressive colony defense.

Stinging behavior is usually encountered at nesting sites, but scavenging yellow jackets sometimes will sting if someone tries to swat them away from a potential food source.

Yellow jacket colonies

Yellow jacket colonies are founded in the spring by a single queen that mated the previous fall and overwintered as an adult, usually under the bark of a log.

Nests may be aerial or terrestrial, depending in part on the species of the wasp. Some species construct both types of nests.

Aerial nests are built in trees, utility poles or between walls or in siding or ceilings. Two species of wasps attach their nests to the eaves of buildings or hang them from the limbs of trees. The entrance to the nest is normally a hole at the bottom.

These aerial nesters do not become scavengers at the end of the season, but they are extremely defensive when their nests are disturbed. When in the defending mode, they sometimes simultaneously sting and bite. (Wasps can bite; honey bees cannot.) Wasp stingers have no barbs (honey bee stingers do) and can be used repeatedly (honey bees only once), especially when the wasp gets inside someone's clothing.

Subterranean nests are constructed in rodent burrows, rotted tree cavities or ground holes.

Regardless of location, each nest is a series of horizontal combs completely surrounded by a paper envelope. Initially, the solitary queen must not only construct the paper brood cells, but also forage for food, lay eggs, feed her progeny and defend the nest from intruders.

When the first offspring emerge as adults, they assume all tasks except laying eggs. The queen devotes the remainder of her life to this task and does not leave the nest again.

Colonies, which are begun each spring by a single reproductive female, can reach populations of between 1,500 and 15,000 wasps, depending on the species. For most of the season, the colony consists of sterile worker females, which are noticeably smaller than the queen. Each worker tends to persist at a given task, such as nest building or feeding larvae, for a given day, but may change tasks if the need arises. Working habits apparently are not associated with age as they are in the honey bee.

Workers progressively feed larvae a diet of the masticated flesh of adult and immature insects, other arthropods and fresh carrion. Larvae of the order Lepidoptera (butterflies, moths and skippers) larvae appear to be a favorite food.

In autumn, larger cells are constructed for the crop of new queens. Larvae in these cells receive more food than do those in other cells.

The queen also lays unfertilized or male eggs in either large or small cells. After emerging, the new queens mate and seek shelter for the winter. These will be the founders of next spring's colonies.

The old founder queen dies, and the workers begin to behave erratically until the social order breaks down. With winter's arrival, the remaining colony dies.

Other wasps, such as the paper wasps which are slender, 1-inch long insects with long legs and a distinct, slender waist.

Preferring to live in or near orchards or vineyards, they hang their paper nests in protected areas, such as under eaves, in attics or under tree branches or vines. Each nest hangs like an open umbrella from a pedicel (stalk) and has open cells that can be seen from beneath. White, legless, grublike larvae sometimes can be seen from below.

Paper wasp nests rarely exceed the size of an outstretched hand, and populations vary from 15 to 200 individuals. Most species are relatively unaggressive, but they can be a problem when they nest over doorways or in other areas of human activity, such as orchards.

Mud daubers are black and yellow, thread-waisted, solitary wasps that build a hard mud nest, usually on ceilings and walls, attended by a single female wasp.

They belong to the family Sphecidae and are not social wasps but may be confused with them. They do not defend their nests and rarely sting. During the winter, you can safely remove the nests as with most wasp nests in our Michigan environment.

The bald-faced hornets construct aerial nests often a foot or more in diameter. This wasp is easily recognized by its black with white markings, especially on the front of the head and the tip of the abdomen. Relatively little is known about this species despite its abundance and wide distribution.

Most social wasps provide an extremely beneficial service by eliminating large numbers of other pest insects and should be protected and encouraged to nest in areas of little human or animal activity.

For me, a wonderful sight to behold is a tomato worm that has been attacked by a parasitic wasp and the little larvae are in the process of removing the tomato worm from my plant.

Removing nests and avoiding stings

Social wasps are prey to many animals, including birds, reptiles, amphibians, skunks, bears, raccoons, spiders, preying mantis and bald-faced hornets. However, none provides satisfactory biological control in home situations.

Nests near homes may prove a source of irritation. If the nests are large or difficult to approach - for example, if they are within the walls of a house - the safest procedure would be to hire a beekeeper or pest control operator to eliminate the colony.

Any attempt to remove or destroy nests by the layman should be done at night when nest activity is at a minimum.

It is important to note that even though nests are relatively inactive at night, any disturbance will result in instant activity by the colony.

It is necessary to work cautiously but quickly. Protective clothing is advisable. These wasps are adept at stinging and are especially aroused if danger threatens the nest.

In fact, when a yellow jacket or hornet is injured, it often releases an alarm pheromone that quickly results in an aggressive attack from other members of the colony.

The best way to reduce the threat of foraging yellow jackets is to minimize attractive food sources. People eating outdoors should keep food and beverages covered until ready to be eaten. Spills and leftovers should be cleaned up promptly. Trash cans should be equipped with tight-fitting (preferably self-closing) lids.

Similar sanitation recommendations should be made for commercial establishments, including ice cream parlors, outdoor cafes and produce stands.

Whenever possible, trash cans should be located away from picnic tables, doors and other high-traffic areas. They



Yellow jacket trap

should be equipped with a plastic liner and emptied and cleaned frequently.

Apples, pears and other decomposing fruit falling from trees should be promptly raked up and discarded or buried.

Once food is discovered by wasps, they will continue to hunt around that location long after the source has been removed.

Combined with sanitation, avoidance is the best thing to do in most situations.

Yellow jackets foraging away from their nests are seldom aggressive and usually will not sting unless provoked. People should resist the temptation to swat at the wasps and instead carefully move away.

Be especially careful when drinking from beverage cans which may contain foraging individuals. When yellow jackets are abundant, keep your thumb over the opening of the can between sips.

Avoidance may also be the best advice if a yellow jacket or hornet's nest is located in a tree or other out-of-the-way location.

Throughout Michigan and much of the United States, yellow jacket colonies die off on their own in late autumn. Interestingly, abandoned nests are not reused by the bees and soon disintegrate. With the coming of spring, the process and cycle starts all over again.

Yellow jacket trap

Since I am a beekeeper and an avid do-it-yourselfer, this article would not be complete if I didn't include a project for budding entomologists or more adventurous souls in our group: A yellow jacket trap.)

1. Fill a 5-gallon bucket with about 6 inches of water. Add four or five drops of liquid dish detergent.
2. Place a stick or stiff wire across the top of the bucket.
3. Hang a can of tuna, mackerel or fish-flavored cat food

by a string or wire from the center of the stick.

4. Punch three to four large holes in the bottom of the can, which should hang about a half inch above the water.

5. Place the trap in a tree or other suitable place out of reach of children and pets. You can also cover the bucket with a half-inch mesh screen to keep out cats or other animals. The yellow jackets take the food and fall into the water because of the extra weight. The soapy water reduces surface tension, so they sink.



Yellow jacket

This can be similarly done on a smaller scale using a liter plastic soda bottle.

Cut a hole in the side of the bottle for the yellow jackets to enter. Use a stick with lunchmeat (turkey or ham) tied on the end and suspend it about a half inch above the soapy water.

If you use cat food, change it frequently, because it may repel the yellow jackets after a few days. The use of a wide mesh screen over the bucket will help prevent other animals from reaching and consuming the bait.

These traps also work best as queen traps in late winter to early spring. In summer and fall, they may assist in reducing localized foraging workers but usually not to acceptable levels.

Place them away from patio or picnic areas so wasps aren't attracted to your food as well.

Master Gardening Clothes Available for Purchase

You now 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 \$35. Orders will be placed on a monthly basis. If you have questions, please contact Cindy at 734-222-3948.



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 Office for viewing. Stop by the MSU office to purchase yours.

Master Gardener Recipes

Watermelon, Heirloom Tomato and Feta Salad

Barbara Saxton (MG 2009)

- 3 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil
- 3 tablespoons chopped mix fresh herbs (You can use any combination, but basil, chives, parsley and mint are marvelous.)
- 1 tablespoon fresh lemon juice
- 1/2 teaspoon kosher salt
- 4 Heirloom tomatoes, cut into chunks
- 1 cup seedless red watermelon (cut into 1-inch cubes or use a melon baller)
- 1 cup seedless yellow watermelon (cut into 1-inch cubes or use a melon baller)
- 1/4 cup vertically sliced red onion
- 1/2 cup crumbled feta cheese

Whisk together first four ingredients in a large bowl; add tomatoes, watermelon and onion; toss to coat. Sprinkle cheese and gently toss.

Makes 6 servings. This recipe may be doubled or triples very easily!

Zucchini Casserole

Barbara Saxton (MG 2009)

Use Pam to spray any sized casserole. Slice zucchinis like silver dollars into the casserole. If the zucchinis are large, cut them in half or quarters for more bite sized pieces. Fill the casserole almost to the top, grate fresh pepper on the zucchini. Cover with sour cream and then sprinkle Parmesan cheese on top. Finish with a sprinkling of dill.

Bake covered at 375 for 30 minutes; then remove cover, reduce heat to 350 and bake another 15 minutes to

Dill Corn Muffins

Madolyn Kaminski – (MG 1997)

- 1 1/2 cups-purpose flour
- 1/2 cup cornmeal
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 2 tablespoons sugar
- 1 teaspoon baking powder
- 1/2 teaspoon baking soda
- 1/2 teaspoon freshly cracked black pepper
- 1 egg, plus 1 egg white
- 3/4 cup buttermilk
- 1/3 cup vegetable oil
- 2 tablespoons freshly chopped dill

Preheat oven to 350 degrees

Brush a mini-muffin tin with oil. Set aside.

Combine all the dry ingredients and stir until well combined. In another bowl combine the egg and the egg white, the buttermilk and the vegetable oil and whisk until combined. Add the dill.

Pour the wet ingredients into the dry and stir gently with a wooden spoon or a rubber spatula until just combined and some flour still appears. Do not mix until smooth or muffins will be tough.

Pour the batter into prepared muffin tins and bake for about 8 minutes or until golden and tester comes out dry from center of muffin.

Remove muffins from tin and cool on wire rack.

**Master Gardener Alumni Association
of Washtenaw County News**

**Come join your fellow Master Gardeners at the monthly meeting of the
Master Gardener Alumni Association!**

WHAT? An informative and entertaining presentation on Bulb Forcing by **Adrienne O'Brien, Collections and Natural Areas Specialist at Matthaei Botanical Gardens.** Anyone who has worked with Adrienne during the annual May Plant Sale knows how knowledgeable she is and how willing she is to help others learn. This will be a fun and educational evening!

WHEN? October 19, 7 p.m.

WHERE? MSU Extension Conference Room, 705 N. Zeeb Road

NEED TO KNOW: MG Alumni Association members attend FREE. Annual dues are \$20 and may be paid at any meeting or mailed to the MGAAWC Treasurer using the application form found in each MG newsletter. Special note: members of the 2010 Master Gardener class are invited to attend free!

Remember, you earn education hours by attending these monthly meetings!

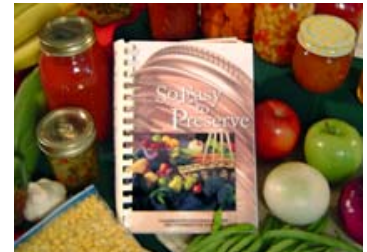
“So Easy to Preserve”

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

The University of Georgia Cooperative Extension is offering the fifth edition of its popular book “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 obtain your own personal copy for only \$18, contact Cindy Fischer at 734-222-



**Master Gardener Alumni Association of Washtenaw County
Membership Enrollment Sept. 2010 thru August 2011**

(Please Print Clearly)

Name: _____ MG Year completion _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: MI Zip _____ - _____

Phone: (day) _____ (evening) _____

Email: _____

**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**

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

October Calendar

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 16

9:00 a.m. - noon

Recycling With Mushrooms

Thursday, October 21

6:00 – 8:00 p.m.

Designing Gardens for Year-Round Interest

Saturday, November 13

10:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.

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

Fall Wednesday Hiker

Various locations visit website or contact 647-7600

Wednesdays, October 6 & 13

9 am - noon

Nichols Arboretum Exploration Day

Thursday, October 7

5:30 - 7:30 pm

Washtenaw County Parks Nature Programs

734- 971-6337

<http://parks.ewashtenaw.org> see calendar of events

Visit the web site for more info on classes

Autumn Trees and Shrubs Along the Huron

Burns-Stokes Preserve Hike

Sunday, October 10

2 - 4 p.m.

Volunteer Opportunities with County Parks:

Stewardship Day – Removing Invasive Shrubs

Kosch Headwaters Preserve

Saturday, Oct. 9

10 a.m. - noon

Stewardship Day – Removing Invasive Plants

West Lake Preserve

Saturday, Oct. 23

2 to 4 p.m.

MSU Extension Washtenaw County

734-997-1678

Dial A Garden for October

Phone 734-971-1129 to listen to current topics

- ◆ Poison Ivy Control
- ◆ Digging and Storing flowering bulbs
- ◆ Lawn Aeration
- ◆ Cover Crops
- ◆ Seeding or sodding a new lawn
- ◆ Planting hardy bulbs
- ◆ Wasp, Hornets and Yellow Jackets
- ◆ Autumn garden clean up
- ◆ Winter protection for tender plants
- ◆ Late fall fertilization of lawns



MSUE Washtenaw County Facebook Page

Heat, drought and insects took a toll on many lawns in Southeast Michigan this past summer. Thin lawns provided access for weed invasion. Fall in Michigan is a great time to reduce the weeds and improve the turf. Visit the MSU turf weed web site to identify problem weeds and learn how to manage them.

MSU Turf Weeds.net —

your weed identification & research resource

<http://www.msuturfweeds.net/>



6960

Michigan State University
Washtenaw County MSU Extension
705 N. Zeeb Rd.
P.O. Box 8645
Ann Arbor, MI 48107-8645

**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
Cindy Fischer, Master Gardener Coordinator	734-222-3948
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.

Robert J. Bricault, Jr.
Extension Educator,
Horticulture & Natural Resources

**This newsletter is a publication of
the Washtenaw County/MSU
Extension Master Gardener
program.**

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