



# The Washtenaw Gardener

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<http://www.ewashtenaw.org/government/departments/extension/>

## Washtenaw County Master Gardener Newsletter

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### Backyard 2010

Amanda Woodward (MG 2010)

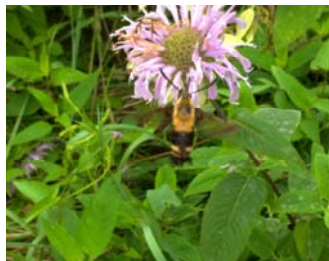
Each year my backyard surprises me with something new and unexpected.

Last year it was the nest of snapping turtle eggs in my newly tilled vegetable garden and the praying mantis tiptoeing through the tomatoes.

This year - the Hummingbird Hawk-moth and the Stinkhorn.

The leader at hummingbirdmoth.com says "So you think you saw a baby hummingbird, but you just couldn't explain those antennae."

Yes, that thought did indeed cross my mind and apparently I am not alone. Strolling through a field of monarda my husband and I were enjoying the busy buzz of bee activity – big ones, little ones, fast



Hummingbird Hawk-moth  
(Photo by Carl Woodward.)

ones, slow ones – flitting from flower to flower.

We also happened to be, dare I admit it, walking with our cats.

If you've ever gone on a walk with a cat you know that it's not generally a cardiovascular exercise. It's more of a meditative experience and one that never really leads you in a straight line from here to there.

Because of that, walks with my cats have led to some of my most interesting backyard experiences. Having a fawn walk up to me, literally nose to nose, for example, while I was sitting quietly on a fallen tree waiting for the cats to decide to move again. Discovering a patch of morels in a spot I wouldn't even have walked through if the

cats hadn't led me there. Ditto the time I almost tripped over a skunk. (Notice I said "interesting" backyard experiences, not good.)

So, standing in a field of monarda, waiting for the cats to do something interesting, we had time to watch the bees.

I'll admit, the buzzing, the gentle breeze, and the sunshine quickly put me into a stupor. My husband, however, noticed something that moved like a hummingbird, swooping from flower to flower and hovering with fast beating wings, but with the body shape and coloring of a bee.

The Hummingbird hawk-moth is apparently not that unusual, but it's the first time we've noticed them (thank you cats), and we enjoyed frequent visits with them while the monarda was still in bloom.

Next time you hear the buzzing of bees, take a peek. Maybe some of them aren't what they at first appear.

The other find in my yard this year is the stinkhorn.

With the wet and humid summer, this isn't the first fungi I've encountered in my lawn, but it has so far been the most striking.

Stinkhorns start out looking like a little egg from which a spongy, stinky tube emerges.

When they first come up, they each have a slimy, stinky cap that attracts flies and other insects who enjoy such things. They hang out for a bit enjoying the stench and then happily spread the spore along to other places.

Did I mention the stink? Honestly, I thought my dog had done something disgusting because he was standing nearby. This was even after the peak of its stinkiness because the slimy cap was already gone.

Stinkhorn are in the Phallaceae family of fungi and the lovely pink-hued tubelike version in my yard is only one variety. They can be star-shaped, latticed,

round or tentacled and in a variety of colors. One even looks a bit like a morel.

They all, however, have in common the stink.

Apparently they are even edible, or perhaps I should say they are not poisonous, and they are sold dry in some Chinese markets.

Alas, stinkhorns are very short-lived and the next morning, after I had learned about their edibility, my stinkhorn was gone.



### Little Dragons

Jacqueline Stickney (MG 2010)



I've been growing herbs for years, exploring the culinary, as well as the medicinal, on my own. This year, I've been attending Madolyn Kaminski's Herb Study sessions at Matthaei, and I have to tell you the world of herbs is a sensory experience beyond compare - all of your senses are engaged!

I started trifling with tarragon a few years back, French tarragon that is.

Its original name is Herbe au dragon (thought to be a poorly pronounced l'esdragon), hence the name little dragon (*Artemisia dracunculus*). It has a bit of a peppery-anise flavor (firey like dragons).

I have moved mine at least three times and potted it up from time to time for fresh winter herb usage. It continues to flourish. In fact, one of the secrets to successful French tarragon is to split it up every other year or so.

Like most *Artemisias*, this plant likes it hot, sunny and dry, so long as the soil is well-drained, and a bit on the sandy side - consider its origins near the Caspian Sea and in Siberia.

French tarragon's foliage is narrow and airy. Relatives like the Spanish and the Russian, both of which have a broader leaf, are lovely to look at but short on flavor.

French tarragon really does like to be potted. As for propagation, the plant is best split - it does not flower nor does it seed. If you are planting tarragon seeds, you are most likely planting the Russian variety.

Medicinally, French tarragon was originally used as a treatment for snakebite. Pilgrims of the Middle Ages usually wore some on their boots when they started out on their journeys.

Legend has it that it came to English gardens during the reign of Henry the VIII. Supposedly he divorced Catherine of Aragon because of her reckless use of the herb.

In her defense, French tarragon does exhibit antioxidant and antifungal properties, and it's potentially a good food preservative. It has been used to stimulate the appetite, relieve flatulence and colic, cure rheumatism and relieve toothache. Apparently Anne Bolyn had no taste for it.

Thomas Jefferson was an early distributor in the United States, probably as a result of his time in France.

As a culinary herb, the herb is lovely, absolutely lovely.

French tarragon and eggs are a match made in heaven.

It's divine with chicken divine, good snipped up in salads, and lovely with lamb and fish. It's a key ingredient to Bernaise, remoulade and French Dressing. It goes with most everything, so long as you use it judiciously—it can overpower.

Because gardeners are such good cooks, and we take great pride and joy at presenting what we grow, I thought I would offer a couple of recipes.

### Tarragon Omeletta

Serves 4

10 large eggs well beaten  
 ¾ cups shredded cheese (gruyere, cheddar, fontina or your favorite mix)  
 3 tablespoons fresh herbs (tarragon, parsley, thyme, basil or a mix) or 4 tablespoons dried  
 Large pinch sea salt  
 Large pinch fresh ground black pepper  
 2 tablespoons olive oil

In a large bowl, combine the eggs, cheese, herbs, salt and pepper, and beat lightly with a whisk to combine. Heat a large frying pan over low heat; add the oil, then pour in the egg mixture. Cover and cook for 5 minutes. Lift the lid, and with a spatula lift the edges of the omeletta and let some of the uncooked egg from the top run underneath. Replace the lid and continue cooking over low heat for another 3 minutes. Again, lift the edges, and let the uncooked egg on top run underneath. Cover and continue cooking until the egg is set, another 5 minutes or so. If you prefer to have the top browned, either flip the omeletta and cook for 1 minute, or place under the broiler until the top is lightly browned. Serve hot or at room temperature.

### French Tarragon & Grapefruit Sparkler

This is wonderful to drink in the evening when you want to relax and unwind. Good with a leisurely brunch. Serves 4.

2 cups water  
 2 tablespoons French tarragon, preferably fresh  
 1 teaspoon lavender  
 1 teaspoon honey or agave nectar (to taste)  
 2 cups grapefruit juice (either pink or white, and preferably fresh squeezed but boxed will do)  
 Fresh French tarragon sprigs for garnish  
 Crushed ice  
 Sparkling mineral water or club soda  
 Combine water and dried herbs in a pot. Heat to a near boil. Remove from heat and let steep for at least 10 minutes to desired strength. Add sweetener. Strain and cool.

Combine herb infusion with grapefruit juice. Stir. Put tarragon sprigs and crushed ice in tall 16 oz. glasses. Add herb-juice mixture and top with mineral water or club soda. Gently stir.

Lovely!

While French tarragon dries well, it does lose some of its flavor. It's best preserved in white vinegar or olive oil—and makes a nice presentation too. Freezing is another alternative.



Participants in the 4-H Youth Show 2010 Annual Tomato Growing Contest

### 4-H Youth Show Annual Tomato Growing Contest

Carol Figarra (MG2007)

The 4-H Youth Show Annual Tomato Growing Contest was held at the Washtenaw County Fairgrounds on July 26.

Participating 4-H members picked up their seedlings, donated by Sell Greenhouse and Nursery, the first week of May and were instructed to plant the seedlings in 5-gallon pots.

The 4-H members chose from several varieties of tomatoes such as Roma, Golden Girl and Early Girl.

The tomato plants were tended by the youngsters, who brought their entries to the fairgrounds to be judged. After the stress of presenting still exhibits to the judges during the day, this event allowed the 4-H members a chance to relax and show off their gardening skills, while having a guaranteed good time.

MG Donna Conway and MG Susan Wynne were the judges for the show. Categories included prizes for the most unusual, ripest fruit, most fruit, greenest plant, largest plant, shortest plant, healthiest plant and tallest plant, to name a few.

The 4-H members were asked about the care of their plants and answered questions about gardening in general. Correct answers were rewarded with a sweet treat from the judges.

Participants could place their names in a bag to win door prizes, such as trowels, forks, gloves, rakes, hose nozzles, sprinkler cans, sprinkler nozzles and hats donated by Meijer Garden Center, on Jackson Road in Ann Arbor.



Donna Conway asks the enthusiastic 4-H youngsters about the care of their tomato plants, special growing techniques and general gardening questions.



Tallest Plant



Healthiest and shortest plants



Greenest Plant



Ripest fruit

**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 you have pertaining to bees and how they interface with agriculture, humans, animals and the environment. Please send your questions to Richard { [brescue@att.net](mailto:brescue@att.net) } 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 many can be published. If your question is urgent or a safety issue concerning honey bees, such as removing a swarm, please call me directly at 734-660-8621.

**Q: In one of your earlier articles, you said that bumblebees were used to pollinate tomato plants in hot houses because honeybees would leave the hot house and that honeybees could not sonicate the tomato blossoms. Could you explain what you meant? I assumed sonicate meant they couldn't locate the blossom, and a zoologist friend of mine said to ask you to explain yourself.** Rhonda M.

**A:** Thanks for catching me on this one. My intention is not to play "Stump the Stars," but to have you come away knowing more about bees after you take the time to read the articles. My apology for using \$25 words without an explanation or in this case, using a familiar sounding word that could be misleading. I should have used the word "buzz pollination" and then explained it, as I will do now.

Bumblebees and other native bees were long ignored by farmers because they produce little or no honey and don't form large, portable colonies like honeybees do.

But the true importance of all bees is their ability to pollinate plants, that is, to perform the essential task of transferring pollen from plants' male to female reproductive organs, starting the process of fruit and seed formation.

Bumblebees are now being heralded as important crop pollinators, especially in these times of declining honeybee populations. And bumblebees are especially effective pollinators because they, as well as some other native bees, can employ a method not practiced by honeybees, called sonication or buzz pollination.

Although discovered relatively recently, buzz pollination is no secret. Buzz pollination can be useful for releasing or collecting pollen from many types of flowers, but it is essential for some, including tomatoes and blueberries. The anthers (male reproductive organs) of these flowers have small pores through which pollen is released, like the holes in a pepper shaker. Sometimes wind or visits from insects can inadvertently shake out some pollen, but the amounts are small. Many of these flowers do not produce nectar, so honeybees ignore them.

Bumblebees, by contrast, actively collect and eat not just nectar, but also protein-rich pollen. A bumblebee can cause a flower to discharge a visible cloud of pollen through buzz pollination. The bumblebee grasps the flower with its legs or mouthparts and vibrates its flight muscles very rapidly without moving its wings. This vibration shakes electrostatically charged pollen out of the anthers, and the pollen is attracted to the bumblebee's oppositely charged body hairs. The bumblebee later grooms the pollen from its body into pollen-carrying structures on its back legs for transport to its nest.

Sometimes bumblebees use buzz pollination on flowers that don't require it, such as California poppies. This may release the already accessible pollen more quickly and efficiently.

They also use the energy of buzz pollination for other purposes, such as compacting soil in their underground burrows (bumblebees don't build hives like honeybees) or moving a pebble or other obstacle.

Honeybees cannot perform buzz pollination — only a few kinds of bees are known to do it— so they cannot pollinate some important crops and wild plants. In fact, commercially-grown greenhouse tomatoes were traditionally pollinated by handheld electric vibrators with names like "Electric Bee" or "Pollinator II."

Buzz-pollinating bumblebees make a distinctive, middle-C buzz, which is noticeably higher pitched than the buzz of flight. No special equipment is needed to hear the sound of buzz pollination, just listen for a distinctive middle-C "raspberry" next time you find a plant buzzing with bumblebees.

**Q. I had a heated discussion with my sister about whether or not honey can be used to heal an open wound. What do you say?** Peter P.

**A.** Honey is once again becoming accepted as a reputable and effective healing agent. This is not just among the general public, but also among those who practice conventional medicine.

It is known from evidence, such as bees trapped in amber, that the honey bee as we know it has been around

for about 150 million years.

Man, in recognizable form, has been around for less than 2 million years, but it would not be hard to conclude that honey has always figured somewhere in his diet.

It is difficult to know when honey became recognized as more than a welcome food supplement, a treat or something used for special religious ceremonies.

The oldest record of honey used as a medicine is a prescription written on a Samarian clay tablet about 2000 BC.

In Asia, where there are other sources of sweetness, honey has always been recognized as having prime medicinal value. It is mentioned as such in Chinese literature dating from about the same time.

Honey has been used as a contraceptive. An Ancient Egyptian prescription used powdered crocodile feces, salt peter and honey. Another prescription substitutes elephant dung. Allegedly, cotton soaked in honey and lemon juice was still being used as a contraceptive in Egypt in the 1990s.

In 1759, Dr. John Hill wrote the first book solely on the topic of the medicinal value of honey in English. It had a very remarkable title of *The Virtues of Honey in Preventing Many of the Worse Disorders; Particularly the Gravel, Asthmas, Coughs, Hoarseness and Tough Morning Phlegm*.

In some areas where medicines are unavailable for reasons of cost or remoteness, the beehive is looked on as a self-replenishing medicine chest.

In Africa, honey is an important ingredient in the potions of the traditional healers. In Russia and Eastern Europe, honey is regularly used to treat burns, open wounds and septic infections.

In the past, the only source of food for bees was nectar from flowers. Today bees are kept in modern movable frame hives and may produce totally or partially non-floral honey if, for example, they have been fed on sugar syrup in the late fall or early spring.

The honey extracted from such colonies does not differ in color or major components from floral honey but may have inferior curative powers.

Furthermore, honeys vary according to their origins and the conditions under which they are produced.

Processing and storing may bring about physical and chemical changes. When honey is heated to over 140 degree F, many of the beneficial enzymes are destroyed. Many commercial honeys are processed with high heat and filtered to aid processing and reduce granulation while on the shelf. This can remove any beneficial effects that would normally be found in unprocessed honey.

It should be remembered that honey is not the only product to be found in the beehive with either nutritive and or medicinal benefits. The others are pollen, beeswax, royal jelly, propolis, venom, and bee bread.

The researchers at the Department of Medical Microbiology at the Academic Medical Center in Amsterdam discovered a protein that bees add to honey that can kill bacteria.

The scientists say this could be the basis of new drug development.

Researchers from the University of Strathclyde in Glasgow working with Natures Laboratory in North Yorkshire have isolated two compounds from bee propolis (bee glue): Propolin C and Propolin D, which have stopped the bacteria superbug MRSA (Methicillin-Resistant *Staphylococcus aureus*) from growing. More research is needed to establish if the extracts actually kill it.

In New Zealand, research has been ongoing relative to the benefits of Manuka honey from the flower of the Tea Tree of New Zealand. Research at Waikato University indicates that Manuka honey appears to kill the bacteria *Staphylococcus aureus*, streptococcus, *Helicobacter pylori*, as well as MRSA and VRE (Vancomycin-Resistant *Enterococci*).

During World War I and World War II, a prescribed field dressing for wounded soldiers was a salve created by mixing olive oil and raw honey.

There is so much that is still unknown about these fascinating creatures. It is one of the reasons why I continue to work with and study them with admiration and awe.

### Hotline Greatest Hits

Nancy Quay, MG 2009

As summer wanes—though it may be hard to tell what with temps in the 90s—hotline questions in late July and early August have been weighted toward growing food. Here are some common queries the intrepid hotline volunteers have fielded over the past weeks.

### The Rotters

Most vegetable growers are familiar with blossom-end rot, seen in tomatoes and squash plants. It's very ugly.



The rot is caused by environmental factors affecting the supply of water and calcium. A sudden period of drought while the fruits are growing can cause the syndrome.

Another cause is any disturbance around the roots of the plant that affects the plant's ability to absorb water and calcium.

Blossom-end rot doesn't affect all fruits on a particular plant and does not spread from plant to plant. However, if the conditions exist for one plant, they may also exist for other plants in the same bed.

Avoid blossom-end rot by consistent watering, mulching to maintain moisture in the soil and good cultivation techniques around developing plants. Also, blossom-end rot tends to appear in plants that are planted too soon in cold soil, so be patient in the spring when setting out your tomato plants and wait for the soil to warm sufficiently.

The Beetles

Oh, how I wish the beetles in my garden—and apparently, in many gardens this summer—could sing instead of eat. They are leaving massive destruction in their wake.

A number of callers are concerned about squash or cucumber beetles.



Damage from beetles

The most disturbing part of this is that one day your plants can look just fine, and within 24 hours they can be irretrievably damaged.

There are several options for controlling squash beetles. No one says it better than an Extension Educator, and Gretchen Voyle from Livingston County recently addressed the concern in her gardening blog. Follow this [link](#) to her advice.

And THEM!

If you have never seen "Them," a classic film from 1954, it is a must-watch. It demonstrates what happens

when your common, everyday ant is exposed to atomic radiation, apparently a huge concern in the 1950s. (Remember to duck and cover).



The Ants are Coming!

Callers this month are complaining of ant invasions in the house, the garage and the garden. I'll bet local garden supply stores are running low on sprays, powders and traps!

The first and most important step is to identify the type of ant. On the hotline, we can do some preliminary identification based on location, size, movement and what the ants are getting into. More precise identification would be done by bringing some "samples" into the Extension office for the diagnostic lab.

Treatment depends upon the type of ant and the goal of pest management.

**Chelsea Area Garden Club Sponsors Presentation by:  
Art Cameron, MSU Horticulture Professor**

The Chelsea Area Garden Club is sponsoring a presentation by MSU horticulture professor Art Cameron at 7 p.m. Thursday, October 14. The talk is free, but donations will be accepted at the door.

The presentation will be at the First United Methodist Church, 128 Park St, one block off Main (M52 and across from the Purple Rose Theatre. Parking is available next to the Church and behind Merkel's Furniture Store, as well as next to the Purple Rose Theatre.

Cameron, director of the MSU horticulture gardens, is a keynote speaker at the MSU Garden Day. He is renowned for his exuberant presentation style, beautiful slide shows and passion for plants.

An avid botanist and gardener with an interest in native and exotic, flowering and non-flowering perennials and annuals, Cameron has designed several demonstration gardens specifically dedicated to ornamental grasses, herbaceous perennials and vegetables.

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

Please join us for the first meeting of the year at **7 p.m. Tuesday, September 21**, in the basement conference room of the County building at 705 N. Zeeb Road. Michael Saint will be speaking on "The Transitional Garden" and discussing the seasonal nature of our gardens from fall cleanup to the emergence of spring bulbs. Saint, an Oakland County MG, is owner of the Good Earth Landscape Institute in Clarkston. Meetings of the Master Gardener Alumni Association of Washtenaw County are held on the third Tuesday of the month. The MGAAWC "year" runs from September through the following May. Annual dues are \$20 and may be paid at any meeting or mailed to the MGAAWC Membership Chairperson. (See application form below.)

Members of the 2010 MG class are invited to attend for free until they become certified Master Gardeners, at which time they are eligible to become full members by paying the \$20 dues. Other non-members may attend any meeting for \$5. The primary purpose of collecting dues is to provide an honorarium to our speakers. Extension provides the meeting room and advertising via the MG email list and newsletter but is unable to provide financial support for paying speakers. Bottom line: As the number of dues-paying members goes up, so does our ability to attract high quality speakers. Where else can you spend a mere \$20 to earn the five education hours needed for re-certification?

**REMEMBER TO TAKE PHOTOS**

Don't forget to take photos of your MG projects this summer! We will use them to create a slideshow to display at the Fall Awards Banquet. Please send photos, or a website link if the photos are online, to mgaami@yahoo.com.

**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 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 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: \_\_\_\_\_

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**

## Master Gardener's Recipes

### Caramel Apple Roll-ups

1/3 cup white sugar  
 1 teaspoon ground cinnamon  
 2 apples - peeled, cored and diced (try Red Delicious for a sweet flavor or Granny Smith for extra tartness)  
 1 package (8 ounces) cream cheese, at room temperature  
 2 tablespoons caramel topping  
 1/2 teaspoon vanilla extract  
 9 (7-inch) square egg roll wrappers  
 1 tablespoon cornstarch  
 1 tablespoon water  
 Refined canola oil, for frying (or any oil with a high smoking point)



Heat oil in a deep fryer or skillet to 375°F. In a medium-sized bowl, mix together 1/3 cup of white sugar, 1 teaspoon of cinnamon and cream cheese until smooth. Mix in the vanilla and caramel topping, and fold in apples. Lay out egg roll wrappers on a clean surface with the corners facing you. Spoon 2 tablespoons of apple filling onto the center of each wrapper. Mix together the cornstarch and water and brush the edges of the egg roll wrappers. Roll up wrappers by folding the corner closest to you over the apple mixture and roll the wrapper over the mixture 1-1/2 times. Fold in the two opposite corners and continue rolling the wrapper so it covers these corners, tucking them in. Brush edges with more cornstarch and water mixture if needed, and press to seal. Fry the rolls in hot oil until golden brown, approximately 4 to 6 minutes. Remove with a slotted spoon and drain briefly on a paper towel-lined plate.

#### For Simple Glaze

3/4 cup confectioners' sugar  
 1/2 teaspoon vanilla extract  
 1 tablespoon milk

Combine confectioners' sugar, vanilla and milk in a small bowl.

Stir well and add more milk if necessary to achieve drizzling consistency.

Drizzle each roll with glaze, serve warm and enjoy.

### "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 734-222-3948 or email her at [fischer@ewashtenaw.org](mailto:fischer@ewashtenaw.org).



### Roasted Beets with Feta

From [www.allrecipes.com](http://www.allrecipes.com)

Submitted by Nancy Quay, MG 2009

A beet recipe for all you non-beet fans out there. You know who you are.

4 beets, trimmed, leaving 1 inch of stems attached  
 ¼ cup minced shallot  
 2 tbsp minced fresh parsley  
 2 tbsp extra-virgin olive oil  
 1 tbsp balsamic vinegar  
 1 tbsp red wine vinegar  
 ¼ cup crumbled feta cheese

Preheat oven to 400 degrees F. Wrap each beet individually in aluminum foil and place onto a baking sheet. Bake beets in preheated oven until easily pierced with a fork, 45 minutes to an hour. Once done, remove from oven, and allow to cool until you can handle them. Peel beets, and cut into ¼ inch slices.

While beets are roasting, whisk together shallot, parsley, olive oil, balsamic vinegar, and red wine vinegar in a bowl until blended; season to taste with salt and pepper, and set aside.

To assemble the dish, place the warm, sliced beets onto a serving dish, pour vinaigrette over the beets, and sprinkle with feta cheese before serving.



*Note: I use low-fat feta cheese, which makes this a pretty low-calorie dish. I serve it on a decorative white plate, and if you add a few sprigs of parsley on the feta, it makes a beautiful presentation.*

*Finally, as someone who has disliked beets in the past, I have to admit that the leftovers (if there are any) become the object of heated competition the next day.*

# September Calendar

## Hidden Lake Gardens

Arboretum and Gardens - M-50, Tipton 517-431-2060

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

Call for class fees and to register

### **Journey of the Cranes**

Saturday, September 11

9 - 10 am

### **Harper Conifer Collection Tour**

Saturday, September 11

1 - 2 pm

## 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

### **Growing your own Mushrooms in Nursery Containers**

Wednesday, September 15

6 - 8 pm

### **Walking to Wildflowers**

Wednesday, September 15

4:30 - 6 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

### **All About Spiders!**

Saturday, Sept. 11

1 - 2:30 p.m.

County Farm Park – Platt Rd. Entrance

### **Botany of the Prairie Fen**

Sunday, Sept. 19

2 - 4 p.m.

Park Lyndon North

## MSU Extension Dial A Garden for August

Phone 734-971-1129 to listen to current topics

- ◆ Poison Ivy Control
- ◆ Bringing houseplants back indoors
- ◆ Ticks
- ◆ Late summer control of grubs in turf
- ◆ Seeding or sodding a new lawn
- ◆ Autumn rose care
- ◆ Preserving herbs
- ◆ Planting hardy bulbs

## MSU Extension Washtenaw County

734-997-1678

### **The Conservation Steward Program**

will be offered this fall starting Sept. 11 and running through Nov. 3.

This program develops volunteers and provides opportunities to be involved in local conservation opportunities.

The course is held on eight Wednesday evenings and three Saturdays. There are 40 hours of training with both lectures and hands-on field education. Topics include ecological foundations, managing natural resources, land use and understanding ecosystems (forest, grasslands, stream and wetlands).

The certificate program requires 40 hours of volunteering. Class fee is \$250.

Contact Bob Bricault 734-222-3826 for more information. Class size is limited to 20-25 participants. A limited number of scholarships are available.

See photos from 2009 class at the MSUE Washtenaw County Facebook page.



### **MSUE Washtenaw County Facebook Page**

View current problems coming into the Diagnostic Lab

Maple tar spot is showing up all over the Washtenaw area as big black spots on the leaves. It actually was on the leaves most of the summer but becomes noticeable as the spots darken. Not a serious problem since the leaves continued to function throughout the season. Raking and destroying leaves can help reduce the instances of this fungal disease.



Picture from the July 16, 2010 Landscape Crop Alert article on Tar spot. Visit either the MSUE Washtenaw County facebook page or the Landscape Alert page at: <http://ipmnews.msu.edu/landscape/> and type in Tar Spot in the search section.

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**TIME SENSITIVE MATERIAL ENCLOSED  
PLEASE DELIVER PROMPTLY**



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