



The Washtenaw Gardener

Washtenaw County Master Gardener Newsletter

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When to Control Tar Spots on Maples

Jan Byrne, MSU Diagnostic Services, Department of Plant Pathology



Tar spots are more visible now.

in commercial production, those with particular aesthetic importance or perhaps those that were recently transplanted.

Furthermore, regardless of the timing, it is typically not practical to treat large landscape trees with foliar fungicide applications.

(For more details on this disease, see the MSU Extension News for Agriculture article "Why do my maple leaves have spots?")

At this time of year, signs and symptoms of tar spot are becoming more noticeable on maples in the landscape. Initially, the lesions are yellowish in appearance, but by the end of the season they take on a shiny, black appearance, hence the name "tar spot."

The appearance of the spots can be unnecessarily alarming. Though severe cases can result in premature leaf drop, the health of large, well-established trees that are otherwise healthy will not be significantly impacted.

Now is not the time for applying chemicals. Since the lesions visible now are a result of infections that occurred earlier in the growing season, fungicide applications made now will not limit the severity of the disease. Fungicide recommendations are limited to spring applications for maples

St. Francis of Assisi's Sustainable Garden: Growing into the Second Decade

By Erich Jensen (MG 2009)

More than 10 years ago, a parishioner of St. Francis of Assisi Catholic Church broke ground just south of the rectory patio for an organic Sustainable Garden to harvest produce for families at Perry Nursery School on Packard Road in southeast Ann Arbor.

These days, garden coordinator Tracy Nagy is leading a diverse team of volunteers through several recent changes and improvements for the garden.

Last year, an Eagle Scout candidate from the parish troop dismantled the existing garden by extending two of four raised beds to form a freshly mulched, cross-shaped pathway and enclosing these beds with an animal-proof white picket fence and gate. He secured the garden tools into a weather-protected, lockable bench.



The St. Francis of Assisi garden has been resurrected.

(Continued on page 2.)

This year's volunteers were so encouraged by the new construction and storage that fundraising efforts were successfully expanded.



Garden volunteers Erich and Ann Marie Jensen, Rose Sherry and her sons Patrick and John, and Garrett White at the Sustainable Garden at St. Francis of Assisi Catholic Church.

This spring, two seed and plant sales were held using seeds from the previous year's harvest. Additionally, Joan Meagher, a garden volunteer, received a grant from the Master Gardener Alumni Association (MGAA) of Washtenaw County to purchase a new rain barrel and other gardening supplies and tools.

As part of an educational requirement under the grant, a hands-on "Pizza Garden" demonstration was held at Perry Nursery School on June 8.

Each family and staff member at the school could take home container of essential pizza ingredients, such as tomato, pepper and basil plants. In addition, garden volunteers deliver vegetables and herbs biweekly to the school.

The Sustainable Garden welcomes fellow gardeners to stop by at any time. If interested in making donations, please contact Tracy at tnagy123@hotmail.com or Erich at erichjensen@msn.com.



St. Francis volunteers Erich Jensen, Joan Meagher, Ann Marie Jensen and Bob Meagher at Perry Nursery School for the "Pizza Garden" event.



Families and staff at Perry Nursery received plants, such as tomatoes and basil, to make their own pizzas at home.



Rachel and Bella inspect corn for insect damage.

Junior Master Gardener Program 2011

Carol Figarra (MG 2007)

Weather conditions, diligence and hard work have given our JMGs a season of successful gardening.

The garden is prolific and the harvests have been bountiful.

The final harvest will be September 14, just before the potluck Harvest Party.

Students will receive their completion certificates at this time.

A special prize will be given to the student who has accrued the most hands-on activities.

**Dahlia Growing Contest
4-H Youth Show 2011
Carol Figarra (MG 2007)**



Master Gardeners Susan Wynne and Donna Conway view entries in the Dahlia Growing Contest.

The 4-H Youth Show Dahlia Growing Contest was held at the Washtenaw County Fairgrounds on July 25.

In the first week of May, participating 4-H members picked up their seedlings, which were donated by Sell's Greenhouse and Nursery of Ypsilanti. Participants were instructed to plant the dahlias in large pots. The 4-Hers tended the plants through the summer and brought the blooms to the fairgrounds for judging.

Judges Master Gardeners Susan Wynne and Donna Conway, both Master Gardeners, determined the winning plants in categories such as largest, smallest, greenest, tallest, most flowers and most marketable.

After the judging, Wynne and Conway asked participants about the care and growing of dahlias. Anyone who answered correctly received a bag of sweets.

All competitors received a certificate of participation, recognizing their efforts and interest.

Participants also placed their names in a bag for a drawing to win prizes consisting of garden tools, items and supplies donated by Meijer's Garden Center in Dexter.

Following a busy day of presenting exhibits to judges, 4-Hers had the chance to relax, show off their gardening skills and have a good time.



Participants were asked about the caring, growing and storing of dahlias. Anyone with a correct answer received a bag of sweets.



4-H members Mary and her brother Patrick proudly show off their contest dahlias. Mary is currently enrolled in the Junior Master Gardener program.

Tour of Urban Gardening in Detroit

Urban development folks, city planners and community activists all over the country - and a lot of foodies, too - are looking at what is happening with urban agriculture in Detroit.

There is a very exciting entrepreneurial energy fueling the urban agriculture movement, and you can learn more about it by visiting local organizations in person.

A tour of urban farms and food organizations in "The D" is planned for mid-September and offers an opportunity to learn from some of the committed people who are working on urban agriculture in Detroit.

Olivia Dobbs, an urban studies student at Wayne State University, will lead the tour as part of an undergraduate research grant from WSU. Dobbs has done a tour before and is conducting research on food deserts like Detroit.

The tour is scheduled to start at 8:30 a.m. on Saturday, September 17, at WSU. (Parking is free.) The tour is expected to end back at WSU at 1 p.m. or 1:30 p.m.

The cost is \$25 per person in cash. The funds will go to rent the bus and to give small donations to each group the tour visits.

Snacks and drinks will be provided.

The tour will hit a number of locations, including:

- ◆ Peaches and Greens. The produce farm, market and truck sales operation opened in 2008 to offer local residents better access to fresh produce. Like an old-fashioned ice cream truck, Peaches and Greens trucks travel in the summer months to neighborhoods. The program was featured on the NBC Nightly News and National Public Radio.



Peaches and Greens is a produce farm that sells fresh produce from their truck.

Michigan Dahlia Association Annual Show

The Michigan Dahlia Association Annual Show is scheduled for September 3 from 9 am to 9 pm and the 4 from 12 noon to 5 pm at the Mall of Monroe, 2121 N. Monroe St., in Monroe.

Dahlias of all colors, shapes and sizes will be on display..

The show is free to the public.

- ◆ Earthworks Urban Farm. A program of the Capuchin Soup Kitchen, the organization runs farms, supports markets and operates youth programs, including an apiary.

- ◆ Gleaners Community Food Bank. A vital link between available food and those who need it for 33 years, the bank collects and distributes food, providing nutrition education and cooking classes.



- ◆ Eastern Market. A dynamic local treasure, the market is a wholesale and retail district visited by more than 40,000 people each week. Expansion plans include providing facilities for food-related businesses and sustainable mixed-use development. There will be time here to do some shopping.

The tour will include time to shop at Eastern Market.

If you're interested in joining this tour, please contact Laura Gillis at 248-719-5319 by September 12.

(For recent articles about farming in Detroit, see <http://opinionator.blogs.nytimes.com/2011/05/17/imagining-detroit/>)

Native Seed Collecting 2011

The State Park Stewardship Unit invites volunteers to harvest native prairie seeds at several State Parks and Recreation Areas throughout the month of October and in early November.

The seeds collected by volunteers will be used to re-establish and restore tallgrass prairie, lakeplain prairie and oak savanna ecosystems.

Seed collections will take place in eight State Parks and Recreation Areas across southern Michigan.

A complete schedule of Native Prairie Seed Collection dates can be found on the DNR's website: www.michigan.gov/dnrvolunteers. Click on the "Calendar of Volunteer Stewardship Workdays" link.

For more information on southeast parks, contact Laurel Malvitz-Draper at malvitzl@michigan.gov or call 248-359-9057.

For information on southwest parks (Fort Custer and Grand Mere), contact Heidi Frei at 269-685-6851 x147 or email her at freih@michigan.gov.



Managing Magnolia Scale

Bob Bricault, MSU Extension Educator

The saucer magnolia, *Magnolia x soulangiana* is a valued ornamental plant in many landscapes across Michigan. Treasured for its large (5 to 10 inch) cupped flowers colored in white with pink and purple tints. It is a plant with few major problems. Often the most common problem is browning flowers due to a late spring frost. One other issue that many magnolias face is damage from the feeding of a scale insect. Often it goes unnoticed until other problems associated with it begin to occur. Late each summer we start to receive calls at the MSU Extension office concerning magnolias with branches turning black, and a large increase in bee activity in the tree. Close inspection of the tree reveals branches that are blackened and covered with gray to tan bumps. The gray to tan bumps are magnolia scale, *Neolecanium cornuparvum* (Thro), reaching up to ½ inches in diameter in its adult stage. This is the largest scale found in our landscapes. Though it does not look like an insect, it is. It feeds on saucer, star, lily and cucumbertree magnolias.



John A. Weidhass, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, Bugwood.org

These insects feed by sucking the sap out of the branches. Excess sap is excreted by the scale creating a sticky sweet material called honeydew that drips onto leaves and branches. A fungus, called black sooty mold begins to grow on the honeydew turning branches and leaves blackish. The sweet honeydew also attracts yellowjackets and bees which forage on the sweet substance.

Like other types of scale it often goes unnoticed until populations of the insect get so high that they begin to encrust the branches of the tree. Large numbers of scale pulling moisture out of the plant can cause branches to die. Getting the pest under control can be a challenge, but it can be done.

First of all the health of the plant needs to be considered. Watering during dry periods is critical to reducing the stress of plants in normal times and is even more important when scale insects are drawing moisture out of the plants. Insecticidal sprays can help if timed properly. Horticultural or "summer" oils can be used to manage the young of scale (called crawlers) which are born from August to September. These crawlers are the mobile stage of the insect. Moving from under the adult female scale they find sites along branches where they begin to feed. Treatments should target the crawler stage of the scale. Timing the hatch is easily predicted through the Enviroweather website from MSU at: <http://www.enviroweather.msu.edu> The Enviroweather website indicated that in Commerce Twp., Michigan crawlers began to appear on August 10, while in Elk Rapids, Michigan the crawlers appeared the last two days in August. A systemic approach utilizing insecticides would be to use a material such as Imidacloprid, which can be applied to the root zone of the infested plant, where it will be taken into the tree. Water movement within the tree will transport the systemic insecticide up the tree to where the scale is feeding. This type of treatment would have to be applied a few weeks before crawlers hatch to allow the insecticide to move up the plant. For more information on natural enemies and management options see the University of Kentucky Extension page on magnolia scale at: <http://www.ca.uky.edu/entomology/entfacts/ef431.asp>. Continued monitoring of the scale population is critical to determine if treatments are needed in future years.

Beekeepers' Upcoming Talks

The Ann Arbor Backyard Beekeepers group meets monthly to share information among longtime beekeepers and the general public who are simply interested in bees.

The group meets from 7-9 p.m. in room 125 of the main building at the University of Michigan's Matthaei Botanical Gardens.

Talks scheduled for the coming months include:

- ◆ Oct. 11: Fall Management. A discussion on how to determine whether a hive has enough honey for winter survival. We will review how to do a practical survey of your hives to determine their strength and survivability. We also will investigate some practical methods to protect the hives from mice.
- ◆ November 8: Winter Preparation. Learn about the different methods of preparing hives for winter with or without wrapping. Learn why condensation is one of the biggest winter hive problems, as well as practical approaches to managing internal condensation generated by honeybees.
- ◆ December 13: Alternative/Biodynamic Beekeeping. We will look at different shapes and construction of hives, along with the pros and cons associated with them. We will discuss the difference between organic and biodynamic beekeeping, as well as the advantages and challenges of both.



The Living Compost Pile

The Recycled Gardener (MG 1997)

Healthy compost is a complex food chain with thousands of living organisms.

The decomposers include fungi and bacteria that break down organic material. The decomposition releases heat energy, so healthy compost piles appear to be steaming during the winter months as they release water vapor.

Larger organisms in the compost pile can be found where temperature, food and moisture are within their tolerance range. These organisms select a comfortable spot to feed and reproduce in this unique environment.

Pill bugs and sow bugs are often found in these comfortable spots. They are often called wood lice and measure about half an inch in length. We find them under flower pots, in decaying logs, in basements and in moist compost. They have very primitive gill-like lungs that require them to obtain oxygen from moisture.

Pill bugs and sow bugs are related to millipedes and centipedes. They are terrestrial crustaceans in the order Isopoda. Their rough, armor-like bodies place them in the family Armadillididae.

At first glance, sow bugs and pill bugs may look alike. But sow bugs are oval, flat and brown to slate gray with tiny white spots. Pill bugs are grayer, darker in color and may appear shiny.

Both female sow bugs and pill bugs carry their young in a ventral brood sac. The sac is formed by flat projections on the thoracic legs.

You can see this by using a hand lens to view the young, which look like adults and go through a series of molts as they grow. In some species the process takes more than a year.

There is some question about whether both sow bugs and pill bugs roll into balls when disturbed. However, only pill bugs roll up - making them the true rolypolys!



Pill bugs are at the top of this photo; sow bugs on the bottom. (Photo courtesy of Texas A&M system.)

September 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

Herbal Syrups

Monday, September 12, 7 p.m.

Fall Hive Management Strategies I

Wednesday, September 14, 7 p.m.

Life of Fungi

Monday, September 19, 7:45 p.m.



Hidden Lake Gardens

Arboretum and Gardens

M-50, Tipton 517-431-2060

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

MSU Extension Washtenaw County

734-997-1678

Dial A Garden for September

Phone 734-971-1129 to listen to current topics

- ◆ Planting hardy bulbs.
- ◆ Read MSU Horticulture Newsletter online.
- ◆ Harvesting vegetable seeds.
- ◆ Digging and storing summer flower bulbs.
- ◆ Dividing irises and lilies.
- ◆ Autumn rose care.
- ◆ Poison ivy control.
- ◆ Ticks.
- ◆ Late summer and fall grub control.
- ◆ Bringing house plants back indoors.
- ◆ Harvesting tips for late summer and autumn vegetables.
- ◆ Wasps, hornets and yellow jackets.
- ◆ Indoor vegetable storage.
- ◆ Controlling mosquitoes.
- ◆ Lawn renovation.
- ◆ Ash tree alert.
- ◆ Insect and disease diagnostic services.
- ◆ Tips on selecting an arborist.
- ◆ Don't prune oaks due to oak wilt.

**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.



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

COMING ATTRACTIONS:

September 20th—Celtic Garden Imports discussing "Period Gardening"

October 18th— Janet Macunovich will share her special gardening perspective and talents with us.

If you have suggestions for future speakers or topics, please send a message to V.P. Bob Devereaux at rdevereaux@chartermi.net.

**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.
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

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