



**MASTER  
GARDENER**  
MICHIGAN STATE  
UNIVERSITY EXTENSION

# *The Washtenaw Gardener*

Volume 13, Number 7

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## Washtenaw County Master Gardener Newsletter

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### *Plantae Aquarum* – Water Plants

Dorothea Coleman (MBG 1990)

In honor of the mystical, magical pond tour last month, which I missed because I had to stay home with a sick child, I thought I'd talk about plants you might have seen in or near the ponds.

What's a pond without water lilies (*Nymphaea*)? They were named for the Nymphs of mythology: young women who inhabited various aspects of nature – trees, rivers, lakes, streams, etc. and were always beautiful, fond of dancing and music, usually amorous (having many dalliances with gods, satyrs and mortals), of prophetic powers, and capable of filling mortals with a divine madness.

Was anyone growing Lotuses? This is the Greek name for the plant. There is a species, *L. americanum* (I don't have to translate that, do I?), which is native to this area and once lined our rivers and lakes. The Lotus Garden Club in Monroe has been actively working for many years to return them to their native habitat.

*Typha latifolia* (Cattail), *T. angustifolia* (Narrow Leaved Cattail) and *T. laxmannii* (Graceful Cattail) are others you may have seen. *Typha* is another one that is simply the Greek name for the plant. *Latifolia* and *angustifolia* mean, respectively, broad- and narrow-leaved. *Laxmannii* is an honorific for Erich Gustav Laxmann, an 18th century Russian scientist and explorer (I tried to find more information on him but all the texts were in German – I can fake my way through Romance languages but German is not one of them.)

*Acorus calamus* (Sweetflag) gets its genus name from the Latin and the common name from its sweet-scented root that once was used in cosmetics and its specific, *calamus*, is Greek for reed.

*Sagittaria latifolia* (Arrowhead) takes its name from the Latin word for arrow, *sagitta*, which its leaves resemble.



*Pontederia cordata* (Pickerel)

*Pontederia cordata* (Pickerel Rush) is named for Giulio Pontedera, a Professor of Botany in Padua who lived from 1688 to 1757. *Cordata* means heart-shaped.

*Orontium aquaticum* (Golden Club) took a little sleuthing to find its nominal origins, but it appears to have been named for a Syrian river, Orontes, and its god of the same name. Any legend that may have been associated with him is lost in antiquity although there is a Roman coin from 5 CE that depicts him being stepped upon by the female deity of Antioch.

*Phragmites australis aurea* (Golden Reed) comes from the Greek, *phragma*, meaning fence in reference to its habit of growing hedge-like along ditches. Then *australis* is southern and *aurea* is golden.

*Myriophyllum aquaticum* (Parrot's Feather) is simply the many-leaved aquatic.

*Eichhornia crassipes* (Water hyacinth) was named for J. A. Eichhorn, the Prussian Minister of Education who lived from 1779-1856. *Crassipes* means thick-footed or thick-stemmed.

## “Where Do The Seeds of Seedless Watermelons Come From?”

Submitted by Susan Horvath (MG 1998)

*Editor's Note: This is an excerpt from the article “Q & A with Bob Polomski, Extension Consumer Horticulturist, Clemson University”, found in the April, 2005 Horticulture Magazine.*

### Where do the seeds of seedless Watermelons come from?

— L.D., by e-mail

**Answer:** Seedless watermelons were first developed at Kyoto University, Japan, in 1939. The parents are two-seeded varieties. The male is a diploid variety—that is, a watermelon with the ordinary number of 22 chromosomes. The female parent, however, is a tetraploid variety; it has been treated with colchicine to double its chromosome count to 44. Breeders select diploid and tetraploid parent lines separately for desirable traits: taste, flesh color, size and shape, rind thickness, productivity, maturity time, and others. Once the parent lines breed true — that is, the offspring exhibit consistent traits, which may take 10 generations — the crosses are made. The resulting hybrid seed is a triploid, with chromosomes numbering 33. Although these triploid seeds will sprout, the subsequent plants are sterile. The vines flower and make fruit, but these fruit are seedless.

Growing seedless watermelons is somewhat more challenging than raising ordinary watermelons. Seed of the latter will germinate at 75° F. Seedless watermelon seeds, by contrast, need at least 80° F, preferably 85° F, to sprout. The thick seed coat sometimes sticks to the cotyledons on the emerged seedlings and must be carefully removed by hand. Sowing the seed with the pointed end down reduces the occurrence of this problem.

Seedless watermelon flowers must be pollinated to set fruit. Because the plants produce no pollen of their own, a seeded watermelon variety must be grown nearby. When you buy seedless watermelon seed, a few seeds of another variety are typically included. Plan on growing one of these seeded plants for every three seedless ones. These seeded watermelons will set fruit of their own; they are usually selected to have a different shape or rind color to make it easy to distinguish their fruit from the seedless fruit. Seedless watermelons tend to keep longer in storage because there are no seeds to serve as focal points for decay.



## C.A.T. Alerts

Here are excerpts from a few of the more interesting items for homeowners from the August 12th Crop Advisory Team newsletter. To check current and previous issues, you can access the site at <http://www.ipm.msu.edu/landCAT.htm>

### Fall webworms make a splash

*Dave Smitley, Entomology*

Just about everywhere you go in southern Michigan this week you will see lots of webbing covering the branch tips of Walnut, hickory, ash, crabapples and many other types of trees. The small yellowish-gray webworm caterpillars hide in the webs during the day. Some trees have actually been defoliated from having a tent on nearly every branch. But in most cases, each tree has three or four tents. They look bad, but cause little harm to

the trees. Tree health is not affected until more than 50 percent of the foliage is consumed, and even then, the trees usually come back just fine the following spring.

Pruning-out infested branches is the best strategy if you can reach them. Spraying the foliage around tents with B.t., Sevin, Orthene, or a pyrethroid insecticide will prevent further feeding injury, but the old tent will remain visible. We have many natural parasites and pathogens of fall webworm that will bring these infestations under control. Places with lots of fall webworm this year may not have much next year. Outbreaks usually last two or three years.



### Status of grub infestations in Michigan

*Dave Smitley,  
Entomology*



Japanese beetle and European chafer are by far the most important grub pests of turfgrass in Michigan: Japanese beetle in irrigated turf and European chafer in low-maintenance turf. Japanese beetle has now spread north along Lake Michigan to the Traverse City area and inland as far north as a line through Bay City, Midland, Big Rapids and Ludington. European chafer has now been picked-up in the Traverse City area and at several other locations in the northern Lower Peninsula, but has not built-up enough in the northern Lower Peninsula to cause extensive turf damage like it has in the southern half of Michigan.

Several species of native June beetle grubs occasionally cause turf damage (especially when skunks or raccoons dig-up turf to eat them) throughout the state. Oriental beetle has been found near Monroe Michigan and just west of Grand Rapids. Sampling is now underway to determine how widespread it is in Michigan. The grubs of Oriental beetle could become just as serious of a turf pest as Japanese beetle grubs, but the adults do not cause nearly as much feeding damage to trees, flowers and shrubs as the Japanese beetle adults do. An active population of green June beetle was discovered in southwest Michigan near Sturgis. I don't expect the green June beetle to become much of a problem in Michigan.

*Ataenius* and *Aphodius* are about the same as they were 10 years ago: a sporadic problem on golf courses throughout the state.

### New professional grub control products

Two new products are now available for professionals to control grubs: Allectus and Arena.

1. **Allectus: imidacloprid + bifenthrin** (like Merit + **Talstar**). Bayer and FMC have joined forces to offer a product that combines grub control with surface insect control. Imidacloprid has been a turf standard for grub control for many years, and bifenthrin has good activity on cutworms, ants, ataeinus adults and annual bluegrass weevil (not found in Michigan, yet). The only downside is that at the high rate you are only applying 0.25 lbs ai/Acre of imidacloprid, somewhat less than the 0.4 lbs ai/Acre on the Merit label.

2. **Arena: clothianidin**. Arena is a new turf insecticide in the same chemical class as Merit. In the first two years of testing, it has worked at least as well as Merit for grub control. Like Merit, it works great for grubs when applied in June or July for late summer and fall grubs. We are in the process of testing May and September applications to see if they work as well as the July application.

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### Mosquito season – it's not over yet

Mike Kaufman,  
Entomology



It's been a relatively subdued year thus far for mosquito activity and related disease threats. West Nile virus (WNV) in Michigan and elsewhere in the United States seems to have slipped beneath the radar of public interest, and indeed human cases are down this year nationwide. Nonetheless, the disease is still present in Michigan; birds have tested positive in some areas and the percentage positive is rising, and we've recently detected the virus in mosquitoes collected from the Detroit and Saginaw areas. It's important to note that there's still a lot of time left for risks to increase – particularly if our trend of higher than normal temperatures continues into September. Additionally, WNV isn't the only mosquito-borne disease one can contract in Michigan. St. Louis, La Crosse, and Eastern Equine viral encephalitis diseases are always present at low levels in the state in some areas. August is a prime month for mosquito-borne disease activity because it follows periods of adult mosquito population increases and amplification cycles in animals. It's not yet time to let your guard down.

Aside from disease risks, however, mosquitoes are simply annoying and protection from being bitten is most often a question of comfort. It's important to remember that we have about 60 species of mosquitoes in the state and each has different "favorite" habitat, host range and seasonal activity schedule. The mosquitoes trying to bite you in the spring are not the same ones looking for blood in late summer.

There are relatively few new approaches to minimizing your chances of mosquito bites. The basic common sense approaches still apply. Repair screens, minimize outdoor activity between dusk and dawn, eliminate mosquito breeding sites where possible or practical, and use an effective repellent. I still recommend using repellents with 10 to 30 percent DEET, but am happy to report that there are a few newly available alternatives that approach or equal the effectiveness of DEET. The CDC now lists repellent formulations with picaridin (also known as KBR 3023, sold under Cutter brand) and lemon eucalyptus oil (active ingredient PMD = p-menthane-3,8-diol, sold under Repel brand). Both of these tend to be less irritating than DEET-based products and give protection duration comparable to 15 percent DEET products. All three products work to mask attractive odors and confuse host-seeking female mosquitoes. Picaridin has been widely used in Europe and Australia and has been recommended by the World Health Organization. PMD has been used for years in China. Picaridin is also derived from natural plant compounds, but for those of you who think all botanicals are safer than synthetic compounds, note that picaridin is derived from the active substances in poison hemlock (piperidine). None of the repellents should be ingested or applied near the eyes, and only lower concentration versions should be considered for use on young children.

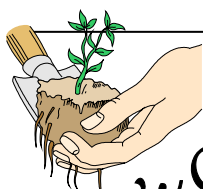
An additional protective measure that has recently emerged on the market is the use of permethrin-impregnated clothing and fabric. Permethrin, of course, is a plant-derived insecticide with an excellent safety record and widespread use. It's approved for use in animal flea collars and for control of head lice in humans, so it has low toxicity risk even with prolonged and direct applications. Permethrin-impregnated bednets have been used for years as an effective means of malarial control in Africa and Asia. It can also be applied to existing fabrics or clothing can be purchased with the substance already incorporated. If properly applied, it can withstand repeated washings. Permethrin on fabrics has insecticidal properties, but usually acts as a contact repellent for questing mosquitoes. That is, the mosquito lands, experiences irritation and then flies away. Although permethrin-impregnated fabrics repel mosquitoes, it's important to note that exposed skin is not protected.

### Poison ivy control options

*Ron Calhoun,  
Crop & Soil Sciences*

Poison ivy is an aggressive perennial vine that takes some dedication and persistence to eliminate. Physical removal can be tricky because of the inherent perils of breaking out in a rash. Poison ivy is most susceptible to chemical controls when sprayed in the late summer and early fall. At this time the poison ivy will be transporting energy reserves to the root system to ensure next year's growth. Products containing triclopyr and 2,4-D or triclopyr and glyphosate (e.g. Roundup Poison Ivy Killer) are the most effective.

In addition to following the label directions, be mindful that either of these products will kill any broadleaf plants to which they are applied. If you use the product that contains glyphosate it will kill any green plants that come into contact with the spray solution. I would recommend making your first application in the next few weeks (before Labor Day) and then again one month later. It is OK if you don't see a lot of injury on the poison ivy after you make the applications. Actually, the healthier the top remains the better the product is being moved into the root system. You should notice a big difference next spring. I would keep a small amount of spray solution handy for follow-up, and spot treat the ivy at first signs of growth next year.



## Bob's Corner

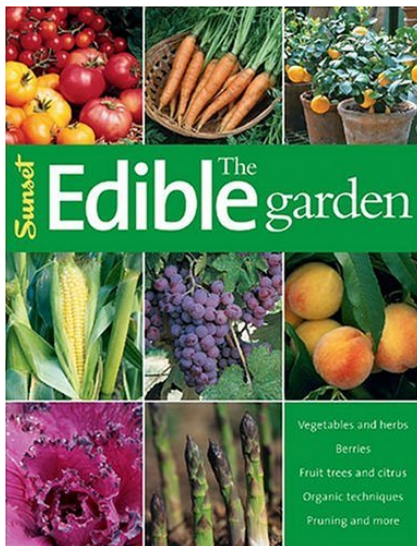
Our Master Gardener Coordinator, Cindy Fischer has been very busy in her first year in that position. Not only working on daily duties of managing the hotline a helping answer Master Gardener questions, but also finding time to volunteer 40 hours to become certified as a Master Gardener. Cindy recently planned and organized a vegetable drop off at the MSU Extension office for Food Gatherers. Working with her were both Master Gardeners and Junior Master Gardeners. All that were involved deserve special thanks. Cindy was also involved in the Junior Master Gardener program. Last week she proudly showed off to Extension staff, the Junior Master Gardener's vegetable garden at Mattheai. What a great garden! I attended one of their classes this summer and was impressed with the group of Master Gardeners hosting and teaching the program.

I am always amazed at the many activities Master Gardeners are helping out with throughout the community. If you need help finding ways to achieve your hours or a volunteer opportunity that will fit your schedule please let us know. I want each new volunteer from this year's class to reach your goal and receive your Master Gardener certificate.

Each fall, new Master Gardeners and our alumni recertifying as Master Gardeners are honored for their volunteer efforts at a Harvest Banquet, in November. This is our opportunity to award Master Gardener certificates. For recognition at this banquet we must have you submit your hours by **September 30**. Do not put this off! Your hours are important for your recognition but also to provide a better picture of how the program is helping the community. Submit hours on-line at the Master Gardener website <http://web1.msue.msu.edu/mastergardener/> or use Google to find the site by typing in Michigan Master Gardener. If you need help with submitting hours or ideas for volunteering, contact Cindy Fischer at 222-3948 or me at 222-3826. Please get your hours submitted now!

## Book Review

By Kathy Kamm (MG 2002)



**Janet H. Sanchez, Hazel White**

**Sunset Books 2005**

Paperback \$19.95

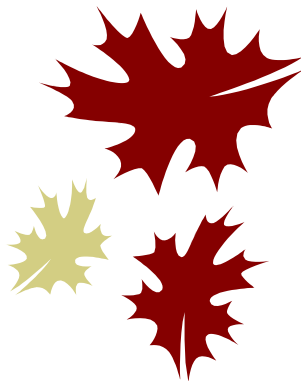
ISBN 0-376-03179-0

*The Edible Garden* begins with a chapter entitled Design Basics that discusses formal and informal styles and then goes on to talk about paths, boundary fences, focal points, vertical plantings and the city garden. The next chapter, Design Options, delves into such topics as plant supports, containers, color, fragrance, kids' spaces and year round appearance. The following three chapters cover the four seasons. Spring gives us information on selecting a site, what to plant, making a garden plan, combining flowers and food, starting seeds, sowing, staking, growing in containers and in a small space. Summer brings instruction for the necessary watering, fertilizing, mulching, weeding, and pest and disease control. Fall and winter tells how to plant cool weather crops, grow cover crops, and plant and train fruit trees. Winter also gives us tips on ordering plants, seeds and supplies.

A chapter on special techniques follows where the reader can learn how compost, create raised beds as well as cold frames and hot beds to extend the growing season. There is an interesting discussion on french intensive methods to give the gardener impressive harvests from small gardens. The cornerstones of this method of gardening include thorough soil preparation, planting on rounded mounds or beds and close spacing of plants. By the way, the lower case "f" in french is used in the book.

The last section is called Edibles A-Z (apples to zucchini). The listings in this section include 15 fruit crops for spring and fall planting, 40 kinds of vegetables, herbs and edible flowers. How to plant, grow and harvest each of these is included and there are excellent descriptions and photographs accompanying each entry. Popular varieties are listed and the many sidebars feature appropriate garden projects or recipes.

## Fall Harvest Potluck



The Annual Fall Banquet Potluck will be held on Tuesday, November 15th, at the Washtenaw County Farm Council Grounds, 5055 Ann Arbor Saline Road in Ann Arbor, Michigan. Start and end times are yet to be determined. Certificates and awards will be presented to newly certified Master Gardeners, Advanced Master Gardeners and for Volunteer Hours. Plan to arrive early so that we can eat promptly at 7:00. Bring a favorite dish to pass. Please include the recipe in order to aid those with special dietary needs and for possible inclusion in an upcoming newsletter. Family members and friends are invited and encouraged to attend, but only MGs will be eligible for door prizes.



## MYSTERY POND TOUR UPDATES AND OTHER SEPTEMBER STUFF

Marilyn Eggers (MG 2001)

### THE AQUA THUMB

Carter and I would like to sincerely thank the following people for taking time from their busy summer schedules to stop by and view our water gardens on the evening of July 18<sup>th</sup> (any omissions or misspellings are mine alone and I apologize for my errors): Peggy Beharendt, Bob Bricault, Ilona Donakowski, Bernie Heston, Dave and Sue Horvath, Kathy Kamm, Paula Karnopp, Maris Laporter, Bethany Lindner, Kathie and Richard Mann, Linda McCall, Camille Mrozowski, Deb Myers, Jacki Saunders, Elaine and Joe Schmidt, Tom Shope, Susan Snyder, Rex Soper, Sally Tamm and Diane Willis.

I would especially like to thank Sue Horvath for all of her efforts in putting this Mystery Pond Tour together, and to Bob Bricault for his kind words in Bob's Corner in the August issue of the Washtenaw Gardener. I agree wholeheartedly with Bob that master gardeners from all over the county are doing wonderful things through serious commitment to projects of their own special interest. We need to seek these people out, visit their sites, and show them our support for their dedication.

I regret that I did not take the time to talk to each of you in attendance at the Pond Tour, place a name with a face, talk about the gardening issues that are of special interest to you and answer any individual questions that you may have had about our pond setups and maintenance. If you do have questions you can email me at [m-eggers@sbcglobal.net](mailto:m-eggers@sbcglobal.net). I will address those questions in future columns since the questions that you raise may also be of interest to others.

Your visit was truly appreciated by Carter and I and we believe that it may have brought us a bit of good luck as well. Remember Cuddles, the large rehabilitating snapping turtle with the broken jaw and head injury? This was the turtle that had to be fed by a stomach tube for over a year and, the day before your visit, had just begun to eat solid food?

Well... the day after your visit, Cuddles ate a record setting 16 (you read that right, 16) night crawlers at one time. Finally, deciding that he was full, he asked for a couple of Roloids, burped, and then promptly fell asleep for the night.

He has been eating us out of house and home ever since, and if he keeps gaining weight, he will be eligible for release sometime next summer. How do you weigh a large snapping turtle, you may ask? *Very carefully* is the only answer!!

He is now recuperating outside of his hospital tank during the day. Free to stroll around the yard, his favorite spot is sitting on top of the water lilies in the large pond watching the koi swim over and around him. Believe it or not, he seems uninterested in having any of them for dinner, a' la Hannibal Lector. He spends his evenings in his hospital tank, never tiring of the all-you-can-eat menu of night crawler de jour.

Maybe ol' Cuddles just needed to know that a few master gardeners were rooting for his recovery. Thanks folks, for your concern.

### Pond Tips for September

Thin out floating plants like water hyacinths to prevent late summer water temperatures from rising. Plants like these act as insulators and prevent the pond from venting properly. Water hyacinths are easily composted and provide terrestrial plants with an excellent source of nitrogen.

Make sure to do a water change and vacuum any debris from the bottom of the pond. September is a great time to refresh your pond in this way. Because your fish are heavy summer feeders, you will be surprised at the amount of 'junk' they are leaving behind on the bottom of the pond. A water change now will go a long way towards reducing the labor involved in preparing your pond for winter in a couple of months.

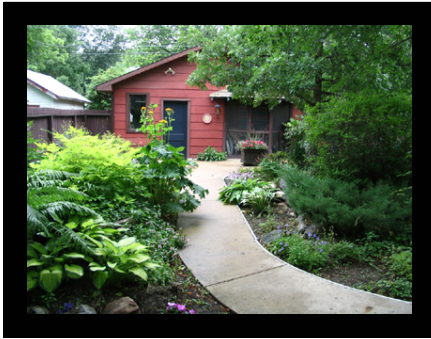
Clean your filter. Not only will the increased water flow from a clean filter allow for better oxygen saturation - it will also keep your pond looking crystal clear. Your fish will thank you for it.

Until next time, keep both oars in the water and remember to check your shoes in case I missed one in the backyard. Marilyn



## The 2005 International Master Gardener Conference

By Monica Milla, MG 2004



Almost every home in downtown Saskatoon has a beautiful and well-maintained garden. Many homes have little or no lawn.



A view of the gazebo garden at Innovation Place at the University of Saskatchewan.



Monica Milla gets ready to give her presentation at the 2005 IMGC. What, me nervous?

Over 500 master gardeners from the U.S., Canada, and Great Britain gathered in sunny Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, Canada on July 24-27 for the 2005 International Master Gardener Conference. I was pleased to be one of them.

In the opening ceremony, Mayor Donald J. Atchison welcomed us to Saskatoon and informed us that Saskatoon has the most sunny days of any city in Canada. Other unique tidbits about the city are that its buses run on biodiesel fuel made from canola, and it's known as the Volunteer City of North America because 53 percent of its residents volunteer their time to charitable organizations.

Two keynote speakers informed and entertained. David Tarrant, Public Relations Coordinator for the University of British Columbia Botanical Garden and longtime host of TV's *Canadian Gardener*, discussed a global look at gardens. He stressed that each gardener is changing the world "one garden at a time." He also mentioned that gardeners are unique because we read every gardening article we can get our hands on, watch every gardening program we can, and go to all kinds of educational seminars – only to go ahead and do things our own way, anyway.

David Cavagnaro, author, photographer, and naturalist, spoke about heirloom plants. He traced the historical progression of flowers, vegetables, and fruits – mostly from gardener to gardener – which resulted in today's great gardening diversity. He echoed David's message that gardeners can contribute, and historically have contributed, to the natural diversity of plants and the reclaiming of land into natural habitat.

Search for Excellence Awards were presented to several gardeners for outstanding contributions to their communities. Winners' projects included designing and giving adaptive gardening classes for blind seniors at the Braille Institute in San Diego County; creating and maintaining acres of demonstration gardens, open and free to the public, in Dakota County, Minnesota; and the creation of a mobile plant clinic (IPM on wheels) in Lake County, Florida.

Each day, participants could choose to attend tours, workshops, and/or lectures. Because I wanted to see as much as I could of Saskatoon, a location I am not likely to return to, I primarily focused on tours. I saw city gardens, home xeriscape gardens, and the landscaping at Innovation Place on the University of Saskatchewan campus. Although it's a business park, Innovation Place looks very much like gardens, as it was designed to feel relaxing, with open, outdoor spaces to foster tenant interaction and a collaborative work environment.

While each garden on the tours was noteworthy in its own right, what impressed me most was the sheer number of home gardens, both downtown and in more suburban areas. Very few houses used lawn as the primary landscaping. So many homeowners had flower gardens that it wasn't immediately obvious for which garden the tour bus would be stopping! Moreover, there were huge and well cared-for containers of annuals all over downtown, as well as flower plantings in city medians and easements. Also, because of the lower angle of the sun and longer hours of daylight in summer, flower colors were deep and vibrant. Delphiniums, for example, were especially resplendent (and much taller than in Michigan, about 6 feet on average).

I was also honored to be able to present my lecture, Gardening for our Feline Friends, based on my experience creating a garden for a local cat retirement community. I met a woman, Amy Bruhn, from, of all places, Dearborn who said she had traveled the 1,500 miles just to hear my talk (no pressure there, then). There were several other Michigan master gardeners at the event including Nancy Lindley and Jackie Stengel of Wayne County, and others from Grand Rapids and Battle Creek. Mary McLellan, State Master Gardener



Coordinator, was also on hand and introduced herself to me on the first day, as she'd recognized my green and white Michigan MG name-tag. (Incidentally, Amy clued me into the Wayne County MG's annual event, Growing with Master Gardeners. It's a daylong education session, taking place this year on September 24. Details at [http://www.mgawc.org/prog\\_gwmgconf.htm](http://www.mgawc.org/prog_gwmgconf.htm).)

I also talked at length with gardeners from Alaska, northern Nevada, northern Florida, Ottawa, Alberta, and all over Arkansas (the site of the next international conference in 2007 is Little Rock, so Arkansas had a large contingent in Saskatoon). It was interesting comparing notes on climates and plants, as well as the level and types of activities and projects that various MG organizations pursue.

It was exciting spending a few days in the camaraderie of other people as wild about plants as I am. It was wonderful touring gardens with dozens of other avid gardeners -- Latin names were bandied about with ease and every few minutes you heard excited "oohs" and "aahs" in discovering new plants. In other words, I wasn't the only freak talking to and about plants! (Oh please. I know you've bored your family, friends, and co-workers with gardening talk, too, so don't even pretend you haven't.)

I really enjoyed my time at the conference, and encourage everyone to attend in 2007. Check out <http://mastergardener2005.usask.ca> for more information, including a slide show of the event (under the heading "Media." Bonus points if you can spot the author rushing to a bus after her original tour had departed without her!).



## What to do About the Troublesome Canada Goose

By Eloise Anagnost (MG 2004)

How many Canada geese does it take to become a nuisance? Pittsfield Township recently hosted a workshop on Canada geese.\* Two representatives from the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) presented information about the natural history of the Canada goose and some options for managing their population. It turns out there are 11 subspecies of *branta canadensis*. We are most familiar with one of them: the Giant Canada Goose. Around the turn of the twentieth century, it seemed they had disappeared entirely, until a small number of them were discovered in Minnesota. Since then, their communities have thrived from federal and state protection. Geese typically live about 20 years, and begin breeding when they are two to three years old. They are very adaptable to areas heavily populated by humans, and they will usually return to the site where they were fledged. The population of geese in Michigan peaked at 325,000 in 2000. Surprisingly, their numbers are currently about half that, although to lakefront property owners it may not seem like less. Perhaps the goose problem is one of distribution, rather than simply the sheer number of them.

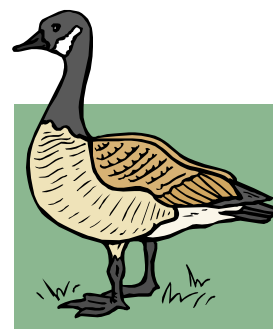
Geese are troublesome to wheat, corn, and soy growers, since they feed on young seedlings, and we have all experienced what a nuisance it is to dodge droppings when enjoying parks and beaches, but their droppings only pose a health threat to people with weakened immune systems. Although it is possible for them to pick up *E. coli* bacteria from cow pastures, which can then spread to lakes where the geese frequent, it is still uncertain whether or not they carry any disease pathogens harmful to humans. Their droppings near our lakes and streams also deposit excess nitrogen that promotes algae production, so I suspect that large populations may affect water quality.

There are several strategies to control the geese, both lethal and non-lethal. As with most pest management strategies, an integrated approach is more effective than any one single solution. First, it turns out that many of the natural features we appreciate about Michigan are the same features geese look for in a habitat. Since geese feed on grass seedlings, golf courses and maintained lawns are major attractants. Combine that with legal protection and the numerous lakes and streams that Michigan offers, and you have the closest thing to goose heaven you can get. An integrated management approach attempts to disrupt this triangle of food, water, and protection.

We can:

**Break the feeding cycle** Eliminate manicured, fertilized, watered lawns. Allow grasses to grow, especially around bodies of water. The wider the berth of these unmown areas, the more effective it becomes. Geese have an aversion to artificial grape flavoring (unsweetened) that can be sprayed on lawns, but it is expensive and needs to be reapplied frequently. Some species of native grasses are less desirable to geese than lawn grasses: Indian grass, switch grass, big blue stem, little blue stem, reed canary grass, and cattails. A pamphlet about plant alternatives is available through the City of Ann Arbor Natural Areas Preservation Division or through Plantwise, a local landscape contractor. A demonstration pond of plantings that deter geese is maintained at the Pittsfield Township building site. Pittsfield Township also has a technical assistance group you can contact for more information about deterring geese.

**Harassment** In order to be effective, this approach needs to be initiated right away and persistently. Since geese are protected, they cannot be physically hurt or harmed, so there are limits to this approach. You (or your dog) can chase them away, or use sprinklers activated by an attached motion detector. There are businesses that provide trained dogs, usually border collies, to chase geese away from golf courses, etc. You can scare them with loud noises such as banging pots and pans, or by hanging strings of Mylar tape. If your intent is to frighten them, you may have to “mix it up” since eventually they will become acclimated to such practices once they learn that the stimulus does not result in harm of any lasting consequence.



\* Note: A packet of information distributed at this presentation now resides in the Master Gardener Hotline resource files, under “wildlife”.

*Banding* the birds can also be a form of harassment. Since they find this experience unpleasant, they will often move away from sites where they've been banded. Harassment may be most effective early in the season when geese first arrive from their migration before their flightless period. Since the birds always return to the place where they fledged, preventing them from settling in and nesting in the first place will prevent them from returning in subsequent years.

*Exclusion* This approach consists of installing barriers that prevent access, so the smaller the area, the easier it will be to implement. Install fencing around bodies of water to prevent geese from landing when they are out over the water. Soon after geese arrive in our area from their migration, they are too pooped to fly, so this strategy proves most effective during their flightless period, usually May and June. Installing a grid over small ponds about 30 inches above water can also be effective.

#### **Management strategies on the statewide level.**

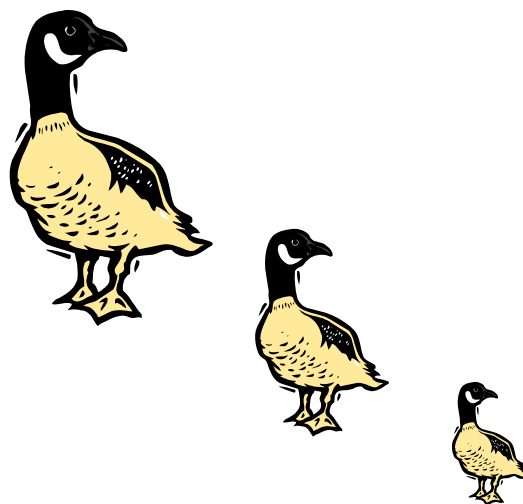
*Relocation programs* This consists of capturing the birds and moving them to other areas. There is an application process that must occur first. You must provide a petition with at least 70% landowner support. Private contractors that have received state training are hired to round up the geese. The State finds the relocation sites, usually in neighboring states that agree to take them, where birds are released on state land. Relocation east or west of us is more effective than north or south and, of course, the further away the better, so the same geese do not return to the area where they were just removed. It is getting more and more difficult to find areas that will accept the emigrated birds. In subsequent years, some of the birds that have been relocated will return. Females, in particular, persist in returning to the area in which they were fledged.

*Nest destruction* A permit and a petition showing 70% approval by landowners are necessary. Volunteers or contractors who have received mandatory training from the DNR collect eggs from the nests. Not only will this prevent future generations of fledglings returning to their place of origin, it also induces what is known as a molt migration. This occurs from April to late June. Two- to three-year-old birds that have been "pushed out of the nest" along with any unsuccessful nesters fly far north and return in September to join the mass migration south. The City of Ann Arbor participated in this experimental program in 2003.

The state has been using a combination of these two management strategies to control goose populations, along with:

*Hunting* Limited in urban areas, hunting usually takes place in September. The number of kills allowed and duration of hunting season depends on population.

The State of Michigan has a goose population goal of 200,000 (up from 180,000). Currently the statewide goose population is below that, at 170,000. If populations increase, and relocation areas run out, the State will need to devise new management strategies, although there are not a lot of other options. Few predators will take on an aggressive Canada goose. Swans may scare geese away, but they may be less desirable than the geese. Mute swans are non-native, bigger birds with bigger droppings, and more aggressive. Euthanasia was employed in 1995–97, but this practice was halted due to pressure from animal rights groups, and most people agree that this is not a desirable choice. Hopefully, where Canada geese are a problem, we will be able to continue striving for a balance between human concerns and those of the natural environment we steward.



<b>MASTER GARDENER VOLUNTEER HOTLINE SCHEDULE  SEPTEMBER</b>	Date	9:00 – 12:00	1:00 – 4:00	
		Monday, Sept 5	Closed—Holiday	Closed-Holiday
		Tuesday, Sept 6	Terri Holderith	Stu Snyder
		Wednesday, Sept 7	Barbara Frederick/Deanna Beyer	Linda McCall
		Thursday, Sept 8		Doug Evitt
		Friday, Sept 9		
		Monday, Sept 12	Lilly Ferguson/Mary Beth Ditrano	Doug Evitt
		Tuesday, Sept 13	Terri Holderith	Stu Snyder
		Wednesday, Sept 14		
		Thursday, Sept 15	Deanna Beyer	Norma
		Friday, Sept 16		
	<i>There are still many slots that need to be filled for September and the rest of the season. Please call Cindy or come in and sign up if you would like to volunteer for any of these openings.</i>	Monday, Sept 19		Doug Evitt/Deanna Beyer
		Tuesday, Sept 20	Mary Curtis	Stu Snyder
		Wednesday, Sept 21		
		Thursday, Sept 22	Barbara Frederick	
Friday, Sept 23		Deanna Beyer	Deanna Beyer	
Monday, Sept 26			Doug Evitt	
Tuesday, Sept 27		Barbara Frederick	Stu Snyder	
Wednesday, Sept 28				
Thursday, Sept 29		Deanna Beyer	Deanna Beyer/Norma	
Friday, Sept 30				

### TEAM UPDATES

**Garden Team**

If you are interested in helping, please contact Alisande Read at [alisande@ameritech.net](mailto:alisande@ameritech.net) or call Cindy Fischer at 222-3948. Please bring your gloves, favorite tools, kneelers, water, hat and sunscreen to the workdays.

**Diagnostic Team**

Diagnostic team members should sign up for lab work on the lab calendar or call Bob for assistance at 222-3826.

**Dial - A - Garden Team**

The Dial-A-Garden group will meet at the Extension Office at 2:00 p.m. on the third Tuesday of the month from now on unless otherwise scheduled. Please call the Extension Office to confirm meeting date if you would like to attend.

**Newsletter Team**

If you're interested in joining the newsletter team, contact the Extension Office. We are happy to include anyone interested in helping keep our newsletter a vital link with Master Gardeners. To submit articles or ideas, contact Editor Sue McDonald at [SueMcD52@hotmail.com](mailto:SueMcD52@hotmail.com) or 734-214-7882.

*If using email, please put "MG Newsletter" in the subject line. Please remember all articles should be into the Extension office by the 10<sup>th</sup> of the month prior to publication.*

**Alumni  
Association  
News**

Natural and Native Plants • Steven Nikkila • **September 20, 2005 at 7p.m.**  
 The Washtenaw Master Gardener Alumni Association invites all Master Gardeners and MG Trainees to the 2005-6 season kickoff meeting in the Extension basement conference room at 705 N. Zeeb Rd, Ann Arbor at 7:00 p.m. on Tuesday, September 20. It is time to pay MGAA annual dues of \$20, but the September meeting is free and open to all Washtenaw County MGs.

We have invited a special speaker, Steven Nikkila, for the September meeting and look forward to a full crowd. Steve has planted, maintained and photographed gardens and landscapes since 1983, is co-owner of the garden and landscape design firm "Perennial Favorites", and is a member of the Michigan School of Gardening faculty. Don't miss this meeting!

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# CALENDAR

**GREAT LAKES ROSES**

Belleville 734-431-1230  
49875 Willow Road, Sumpter Towns

**Fall Rose Planting Demonstration & Bed Preparation**

Sun. Sept. 4 at 1 PM; repeated Mon. Sept. 5 (Labor Day) at 11 AM

**Success with Climbing Roses**

Sun. Sept. 11 at 1 PM; repeated Mon. Sept. 12 at 11 AM

**Wonderful Rugosa Roses**

Mon. Sept. 19 at 11 AM

**Winter Preparation for Roses**

Sun. Sept. 25 at 1 PM; repeated Mon. Sept. 26 at 11 AM; Sun. Oct. 2 at 1 PM;  
Mon. Oct. 3 at 11 AM; Sun. Oct. 9 at 1 PM, and Mon. Oct. 10 at 11 AM

**HIDDEN LAKE GARDENS**

M – 50, Tipton 517-431-2060  
*Call for schedule of fall offerings*

*All events, meetings and Adult Education classes are held at Matthaei Botanical Gardens,  
and are free and open to the public, except as noted.  
For the full description of the classes please visit the website at [www.sitemaker.umich.edu/mbgna](http://www.sitemaker.umich.edu/mbgna).*

**The Natural History of Bats (Adult Education)**

**1**, Thursday, 6:30 – 9:30 pm

This class is an introduction into the research techniques used by scientists to study bats.

Fee: \$30 (Members: \$27.50) #05-AE-18

**Pruning Workshop (Adult Education)**

**7**, Wednesday, 6 pm – 8 pm and **10**, Saturday, 10 am – noon

This workshop is designed to teach proper techniques for pruning deciduous shrubs and small ornamental or native trees.

Fee: \$50 (Members: \$45) # 05-AE-19

**Fall Warblers and Other Birds (Adult Education)**

**8**, Thursday, 6 pm – 8 pm and **10**, Saturday, 8 am – noon

This class will debunk the myth that fall warblers are too difficult for beginning and novice birdwatchers to enjoy.

Fee: \$65 (Members: \$58.50) #05-AE-20

**Arboretum Restoration Workday**

**10**, Saturday, 9 am – noon

Join Arboretum staff in working to remove invasive plant species from the Arb to promote native plant growth. We typically mix a little bit of hard work with education about the Arboretum and restoration ecology work here and in the local area. Dress to work outside! Snacks and tools provided, but you are welcome to bring your own loppers or pruners. Locations vary from month to month, so call 734-998-7061 or email [Arb@umich.edu](mailto:Arb@umich.edu) for more information. If you would like to join our email list serve for workday information, send a note to [arbworkdays-request@umich.edu](mailto:arbworkdays-request@umich.edu) with the word “subscribe” in the subject line of the message.

**Prairie Walks**

**11**, Sunday, 1 pm at Matthaei Botanical Gardens and 4 pm at Nichols Arboretum

Join us on these informative and enjoyable tours with a passionate guide. Discover the richness of the prairie – its plants and history. The prairies at each site are strikingly different. Take both tours and discover this for yourself.

Fee: \$6/tour (Members: \$5/tour) #05-ED-3

**Friends Evening Herb Study Group Meeting**

**12**, Monday, 7 – 9 pm

**Michigan Mushrooms Section I: (Adult Education)****13, 20, 27 and October 4**, Tuesdays, 7:15 – 9:15 pm and**17, 24, October 1 and 8**, Saturday field trips, 9 am – noon

Wild mushrooms are studied through slide lectures and field trips to collect mushrooms in four different natural areas.

Former students may register either for the complete course or for the field trips only.

Fee: \$185 (Members: \$170) #05-AE-17-1

**Michigan Mushrooms Section II (former students only): (Adult Education)****17, 24, October 1 and 8**, Saturday field trips, 9 am – noon

Former students may register either for the complete course or for the field trips only.

Fee: \$120 (Members: \$105) #05-AE-17-2

**Huron Valley Rose Society Meeting****13**, Tuesday, 7 – 9 pm**Ann Arbor Garden Club Meeting and Fall Luncheon****14**, Wednesday, noon – 2:30 pm**Wild Ones Meeting****14**, Wednesday, 7 pm – 9 pm**Fall Dragonflies and Damsels (Adult Education)****17**, Saturday, 9 am – noon

Collect, identify and release dragonflies in this field class.

Fee: \$30 (Members: \$27) #05-AE-21

**Great Lakes Judging Meeting****17**, Saturday, Lecture at 11 am; Judging at 1 – 4 pm**Botanical Illustration in Graphite (Adult Education)****17, 24, October 1, 8, 15 and 22**, Saturdays, 9:30 am – 12:30 pm

Adults and high school students develop skills to draw plant portraits with botanical accuracy and graceful composition.

Fee: \$180 (Members: \$162) #05-AE-22

**Wild Swan Theater and MBGNA present: *Jack and the Beanstalk*****18**, Sunday, 2 pm

The last of the series, this performance will take place at the Nichols Arboretum followed by 'hands-on' nature exploration led by MBGNA Docents.

Fee: \$9/adult, \$7/child #05-ED-1

**Asters and Goldenrods (Adult Education)****18 and 25**, Sundays, 9 am – 1 pm and**20 and 27**, Tuesdays, 7 pm – 9 pm

In classroom and field you will study these plants that dominate the fall flora.

Fee: \$120 (Members: \$108) #05-AE-23

**Friends Herb Study Group Meeting****19**, Monday, Potluck at noon; Program at 1 pm**Ohara Ikebana (Adult Education)****19, 26**, October 3, 10, 17 and 24, Mondays, 7 – 9 pm

This introductory course will teach the basics of this style of flower arranging..

Fee: \$120 (Members: \$108), Materials Fee: \$5/session #05-AE-24

**Michigan Botanical Club Meeting****19**, Monday, 7:45 – 9:30 pm**Sierra Club Meeting****20**, Tuesday, 7:30 – 9:30 pm

**Audubon Society Meeting**

21, Wednesday, 7:30 – 9:30 pm

**Hawks and Fall Migrations (Adult Education)**

22, Thursday, 6 pm – 8 pm and

24 and October 1, Saturdays, 8 am – 2 pm

Basic hawk ID will be taught in the classroom and field trips to Point Pelee, Ontario will provide practice.

Fee: \$140 (Members: \$126) #05-AE-25

**Bug Walk (Adult Education)**

24, Saturday, 10 am – 12:30 pm

Explore the arboretum in search of insects and see first-hand the results of their presence.

Fee: \$25 (Members: \$22.50) #05-AE-26

**Ann Arbor Garden Club's 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Flower Show**

24, Saturday, noon - 4:30 pm

**Ann Arbor Orchid Society Meeting**

25, Sunday, 2 – 4 pm

**Wild Shrubs and Vines of Southeastern Michigan (Adult Education)**

26 and October 3, Mondays, 7 – 9 pm and

October 8, Saturday, 1:30 – 5 pm

Discover the importance of shrubs and vines in the natural world and how some exotics are invading our native habitats.

Fee: \$75 (Members: \$67.50) #05-AE-27

**Wed. A.M. Hiker, Fall (Adult Education)**

28, October 5, 12, 19 and 26, Wednesdays, 9 am - noon

Features weekly hikes to unusual habitats to learn about edible plants and mushrooms, other plants of interest and intriguing habitats.

Fee: \$150 (Members: \$135) #05-AE-28

**Ann Arbor Bonsai Society Meeting**

28, Wednesday, 7 – 10 pm



6960

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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:** 8:30—5:00, Monday—Friday

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

**This newsletter is a publication of  
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Extension Master Gardener  
program.**

*Robert J. Bricault, Jr.*

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

**AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY EMPLOYER**

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