



The Washtenaw Gardener

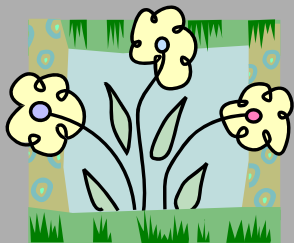
Washtenaw County Master Gardener Newsletter

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Inside this issue:

Avoid Grub Damage	1
Soil Testing Thank You	2
Make a Soil Profile	2
Jr. Master Gardener	3-4
Rural Education Days	5
So Easy to Preserve	5
Master Gardener Tote bag	5
Master Gardener Clothes	5
Master Gardener Recipes	6
Calendar	7
Master Gardener Alumni News	7



Avoid Grub Damage by Adjusting Your Mower

Dr. Dave Smitley

Professor and MSU Extension Specialist
Michigan State University

If you are looking for a way to avoid grub damage of your lawn without using a pesticide, research at Michigan State University is pointing toward a simple solution: Raise the height on your mower to at least 3.5 inches - usually the highest setting - and water during dry periods.

Michigan residents treat their lawns with approximately \$20 million worth of insecticides each year, most of which is used to avoid damage from European chafer grubs.



Grub damage may cause dead patches in a lawn.

These are the C-shaped white grubs that eat turf roots in the fall and early spring, sometimes leaving dead patches in lawns.

Damage also can be done by skunks, raccoons or birds that dig up turf looking for grubs to eat.

Although insecticides work, they may not be necessary if you raise the setting on your mower to a height of at least 3.5 inches above the ground. This will increase the depth and mass of roots under the turf.

Research at MSU indicates that if turf root systems are dense enough, it's unlikely that grubs will consume more than 60 percent of the root mass, which will leave enough roots for your lawn to survive without any dead patches.

We have known for awhile that lawns watered daily with an irrigation system do not need an insecticide to prevent grub damage.

Now we are learning that even non-irrigated lawns can grow a dense root system that is tolerant of grubs if the mowing height is raised to 3.5 inches or higher.

With a combination of raising the mowing height to 3.5 inches and watering lawns during dry periods, you are unlikely to see any grub damage.

"Cut it high...and let it lie" is a key slogan for the Healthy Lawns and Landscapes campaign sponsored by the Southeastern Oakland County Water Authority, Michigan Green Industry Association and Michigan State University.

This is also a key message of the Go-Green Tip Sheet developed at Michigan State University with support for Project GREEN.

These campaigns were initiated because raising the mowing height will crowd out weeds and promote deeper roots, as well as help lawns better withstand droughts

Now we can add a third benefit: Raising the mowing height prevents grub damage without using an insecticide.

Lawn care professionals in Michigan are already mowing at 3 inches or above, unless a customer demands otherwise.

So when you get your mower out this spring, you know what to do: Raise the mowing height to 3.5 inches.



White grubs damage your lawn by feeding on turf roots.

Make a Soil Profile

The Recycled Gardener (MG 1997)

Even though the soil testing program has ended for the season, you can bring in soil samples to the MSU Extension anytime.

Looking at soil samples can be most interesting. To visually see the composition of your soil sample, a jar of water and soil does the job.

As rocks are weathered and broken by rain, wind, freezing and thawing, glacial action and flowing water, the small mineral particles left form the basis of soil. The particles range in size from very fine clay to mid-sized silt to larger pieces of sand and gravel.

The smaller the soil particles, the more they stick together when wet.

Soils with lots of clay hold water, but drain poorly. Clay soils can be sticky and hard to work with. There are few air spaces.

Sandy soils are easy to work, but they don't hold water and nutrients very well.

Loam soil is generally good garden soil. It has a combination of clay, silt and sand.

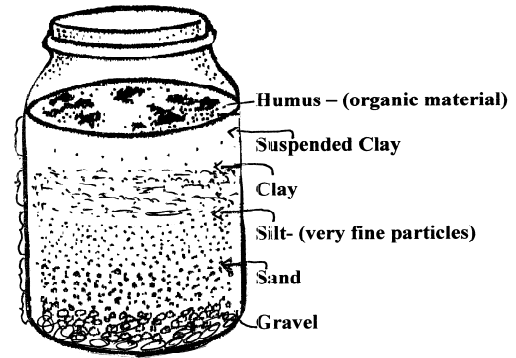
The organic portion of good garden soil is humus which helps hold water. Humus is a storehouse for nutrients.

A loam will hold together when squeezed, but crumbles when touched.

To test your soil, squeeze it!

Then, shake it up!

First, fill a recycled plastic jar (a salad dressing jar is



Soil Layers – Size / Weight / Density
(Soil samples, water in recycled plastic jar)

good) three-quarters full of water. Add enough of your soil sample to almost fill the jar.

Notice the escape of bubbles that were trapped between the soil particles.

Shake the jar until the soil sample appears to be well-mixed with the water. Set the jar aside and wait until the soil settles in layers. It may take several hours. An overnight "rest" for the soil sample is generally good for morning observation.

Note: Adding just a quarter teaspoon of alum to the soil before shaking can help mark the separation process more clearly.

More about soil next issue!

Soil Testing Thank you!

Thank you to the volunteers who assisted with the five weeks of soil testing program.

Here's a summary of the number of samples collected at each of the sites:

- Saline Town and Country: 18
- Ace Barnes: 35
- Dexter Mill: 29
- Farmer's Supply: 19
- Downtown Home and Garden: 73
- Willis Feed Mill: 2
- Grand total: 176 samples



Besides handling soil testing, MG volunteers do a range of activities. Here Carole Moody, left, Phyllis Ponvert, center, and Gayle Dickerson from Wayne County staff the MSU Extension table at a Matthaei Botanical Gardens plant sale.



Junior Master Gardener Program 2011

Carol Figarra (MG 2007)

The 2011 Junior Master Gardener Program began Tuesday, May 3, at Matthei Botanical Gardens.

This program is sponsored by the Washtenaw County 4-H and was created to inspire youngsters ages 9 to 11 to become interested in gardening. The program provides a hands-on fun environment for a positive learning experience in gardening.

Master Gardener volunteers assist in conducting the various classes and provide guidance to youngsters who want to achieve their goal of a successful garden.

The program runs for six weekly class presentations, including lessons on soil composition, plant science, garden planning and design, vegetable growing, yard and garden pests, flowers, woody plants and lawns. JMGs learned which elements are essential for good soil and what vegetables need to thrive.

In spite of weather difficulties, the participants have managed to plant lettuce and mixed greens, carrots, radishes, spinach, onions, potatoes and a few hardy annual flowers.

Students are expected to attend garden maintenance sessions throughout the summer.

Traditionally, on the week after the last class, the JMGs and their families are invited to attend a Salad-Pizza Party. The young gardeners harvest their greens for a salad to share with all who attend. Pizza is provided through the JMG program.

In September, a potluck Harvest Party is scheduled for the students and their families. At this time, the youngsters will conduct the final garden harvest and divide the produce among themselves.

Following the potluck and harvest, JMG participants will receive a certificate of accomplishment if they have accumulated the 10 volunteer hours necessary for completion of the course.

Students receive credit for class participation and garden maintenance. In addition, incentive awards will go to students who complete the most volunteer hours.



Joseph and a parent volunteer take a look at a seed catalogue to determine the best flowers for a shade garden.



Mary and Rachel discuss their findings after one of their classes.



Master Gardener volunteer Laurel Livingston helps Frances identify objects found in garden soil.



Enthusiastic JMGs place seed potatoes.



Master Gardener volunteer Shelly Worden oversees planting cool weather crops of mixed greens and radishes.



Ember and Bella, foreground, are engrossed in setting white onions.



This year's Junior Master Gardener class of 16 eager students takes time from their planting to pose for a group photograph.



Rural Education Days
 Carol J Figarra, MG 2007

Project RED (Rural Education Days) was held April 26, 27 and 28 at the Washtenaw Farm Council Grounds. This annual program provides third graders from around Washtenaw County an opportunity to learn more about agricultural products and natural resources in Michigan. The children gain an appreciation of what is involved in producing our food, fuel and fibers.

The activity is sponsored by the Washtenaw County MSU Extension 4-H Program, the Farm Bureau Promotion and Education Committee and the Washtenaw County Farm Council. It's supported by many agricultural organizations, businesses and individuals.

This year, more than 2,500 students, teachers and parents attended and learned about Michigan's agricultural bounty.



Master Gardener Linda Freeman, left, encourages students and volunteers to test their knowledge of cool and warm weather crops.



In preparation for Project RED, Master Gardeners participate in wrapping white pine saplings. Children at the event are given a sapling to plant in their yards.

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



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 Clothes Available for Purchase

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

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



Master Gardener Recipes

Vegetarian Linguine

Barbara Fredrick (MG 2010)

6 ounces uncooked linguine
 2 medium zucchini, thinly sliced
 ½ pound fresh mushrooms, sliced
 2 green onions, chopped
 1 garlic clove, minced
 2 tablespoon butter
 1 tablespoon olive or canola oil
 1 large tomato, chopped
 2 teaspoon minced fresh basil
 ½ teaspoon salt
 ¼ teaspoon pepper
 4 ounces provolone cheese, shredded
 3 tablespoons shredded parmesan cheese

Cook linguine according to package directions. Meanwhile, in a large skillet sauté the zucchini, mushrooms, onions and garlic in butter and oil for 3 to 5 minutes. Add the tomato, basil, salt and pepper, cover and simmer for 3 minutes. Drain linguine, add to vegetable mixture. Sprinkle with cheeses and toss to coat.

Serves 6



4 Bean Baked Beans

Marlene Chockley (MG 2010)

1 pound ground chuck
 ½ pound bacon, diced
 1 cup diced onion
 1-pound can pork and beans
 1-pound can kidney beans
 1-pound can butter beans
 1-pound can cannellini beans
 1 cup ketchup
 ½ cup brown sugar
 1½ tablespoon vinegar
 1 teaspoon prepared mustard

Sauté chuck, bacon, and onion until well cooked. Drain and add all beans and other ingredients.

Bake at 350 for 1 hour covered or ½ hour at 400 and indefinitely at 250. Or cook in a crock pot on high for 1 hour and low for 4 hours.

Serves 12-16

Crostini with Sun-dried Tomatoes and Chickpeas

Lissa Oliver (MG 2010)

Crostini:

1 baguette, cut into 24 diagonal slices, ⅓-inch thick
 2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil

Dip:

1 large garlic clove
 1 15 ½-ounce can chickpeas (garbanzo beans), drained and rinsed
 3 tablespoons fresh lemon juice
 ½ teaspoon salt
 ½ teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
 ¼ cup extra-virgin olive oil
 ¼ cup oil-packed sun-dried tomatoes, drained and coarsely chopped
 2 tablespoon dried basil leaves
 2 tablespoon dried Italian parsley
 Lemon zest for garnish

To make the crostini:

Preheat the oven to 375 degrees. Place the baguette slices in a single layer on a baking sheet and lightly brush with oil. Toast in the oven until golden, about 8 minutes. (You can toast the bread 1 day ahead. Cool, then store airtight at room temperature.)

To make the dip:

Mince the garlic in a food processor. Add the chickpeas, lemon juice, 2 tablespoons water, salt and pepper. Process until the mixture is almost smooth. With the machine running, gradually blend in the oil. Process until the mixture is completely smooth, scraping the sides of the bowl occasionally. Add the sun-dried tomatoes and dried herbs. Blend until the tomatoes and herbs are finely chopped. (The dip can be made 1 day ahead. Cover and refrigerate.)

To serve, spoon 1 teaspoon of the dip on each crostini and garnish with lemon zest or fresh herbs.

Cabbage & Corn Slaw

Banquet 2010
 (M. Robinson)

½ cup frozen orange juice, concentrated, thawed
 ⅓ cup unseasoned rice vinegar
 ⅓ cup canola oil
 ½ bag carrots sliced
 1 bag broccoli slaw
 1 bag frozen corn
 1 medium red bell pepper, cut into squares
 6 medium green onions, sliced
 ½ cup fresh cilantro



Whisk liquids, combine veggies. Toss.

June 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

Ann Arbor Backyard Beekeepers

Tuesday, June 21, 7 - 9 p.m.

Hidden Lake Gardens

Arboretum and Gardens

M-50, Tipton 517-431-2060

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

Call for class fees and to register

Frogs & Salamanders

Saturday, June 4, 6 - 9 p.m.

Succulent Topiary

Wednesday, June 8, 6 - 8 p.m.

Ogden Station Daylilies

Thursday, June 9, 7 p.m.

MSU Extension Washtenaw County

734-997-1678

Master Gardener College

June 24 and 25, on the road in Grand Rapids

http://mg.msue.msu.edu/mg/mastergardener_college

Dial A Garden for May

Phone 734-971-1129 to listen to current topics

- ◆ Putting house plants outdoors for the summer
- ◆ Growing tomatoes
- ◆ Container gardening
- ◆ Mulching vegetables and flowers
- ◆ Pruning needled evergreens
- ◆ Poison ivy control
- ◆ Spring control of lawn grubs
- ◆ Eastern Tent Caterpillar
- ◆ Pruning flowering shrubs
- ◆ Ticks
- ◆ Slugs and cutworms
- ◆ Mowing lawns
- ◆ Controlling mosquitoes
- ◆ Black walnut toxicity in plants

Master Gardener Alumni Association of Washtenaw County News

PEONY GARDEN TOUR, SATURDAY, JUNE 4, 1:30 p.m.!!!

The 2011 Nichols Arboretum Peony Festival opens on June 4 with a Peonies Galore plant sale, live music (June 4 only) and guided tours. Bob Devereaux, MGAAWC vice president, suggests that we gather for the 1:30 tour, which will be led by our dynamic speaker of last February, horticulturist Carmen Leskoviansky. Carmen also will lead tours at 10:30 a.m., 11:30 a.m., 12:30 p.m. and 2:30 p.m. However, if we join the 1:30 tour, Carmen says, "I would love to see you all, and I will try and give your group a longer, more informative tour than the other, more general tours."

Remember to stop by the Visitor's Center to learn more about peonies and see the peony cut-flower display. The Peony Garden is one of the largest collections of antique and heirloom peonies in North America. Its bloom time, mid-May to mid-June, is weather dependent, but whatever the weather, the festival will go forward from June 4-12 with guided tours available Monday, June 6, through Friday, June 10, from noon to 12:30 p.m., and self-guided tours available at the garden entrance throughout the week.

COMING ATTRACTIONS: Although we have no meetings in June, July or August, the fall meeting calendar is taking shape. Watch for Celtic Garden Imports discussing "Period Gardening" on Sept. 20, and on Oct. 18, Janet Macunovich will share her special gardening perspective and talents with us.

CALL FOR PHOTOS: Don't forget your cameras this summer. All Master Gardeners are encouraged to take photos of their MG projects and their own home gardens this summer and send them, or a link to a website containing the photos, to bobdevereaux@gmail.com. We will use those photos and links to create a slideshow to display at the Fall Awards Banquet.

The MGAAWC meetings are held on the third Tuesday of the month, September through May, starting at 7 p.m. in the basement conference room of the County Building at 705 N. Zeeb Road. If you have suggestions for future speakers or topics, please send a message to V.P. Bob Devereaux at rdevereaux@chartermi.net.

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**TIME SENSITIVE MATERIAL ENCLOSED
PLEASE DELIVER PROMPTLY**



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

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State website:.....	web1.msue.msu.edu/mastergardener

Robert J. Bricault, Jr.

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**This newsletter is a publication of
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Accommodations for persons with disabilities may be requested by calling the Extension Educator in charge of the program two weeks prior to the program or activity to ensure sufficient time to make arrangements. Requests received after this date will be met when possible.