

Roots & Shoots



Master Gardener
Society of
Oakland County, Inc.



February – March 2014

	<p>February 11, 2014 @ 6:30pm MGSOC General Society Meeting & Location Beautiful Savior Lutheran Church 5631 North Adams Rd, Bloomfield Hills, MI 48304</p> <p>Speaker : Lisa Steinkopf Education: "African Violets: Their Care & Cultivation"</p> <p>A business meeting will take place, prior to the start of our Educational Program.</p>
	<p>March 11, 2014 @ 6:30pm MGSOC General Society Meeting & Location Beautiful Savior Lutheran Church 5631 North Adams Rd, Bloomfield Hills, MI 48304</p> <p>Speaker : Marna Nemon Education: "Let them Eat Your Garden"</p> <p>A business meeting will take place, prior to the start of our Educational Program.</p>
	<p>April 15, 2014 @ 6:30pm MGSOC General Society Meeting & Location Telly's Greenhouse 4343 24 Mile Rd, Shelby Twp, Michigan 48316</p> <p>Speaker : George Papadelis Education: "New and Under Utilized Shrubs"</p> <p>A business meeting will take place, prior to the start of our Educational Program.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">← Note Location</p>

Carol's Corner



The winter Master Gardener training class is now underway. We have 70 participants and are holding the classes at Tollgate. This is our first foray into distance learning. We are nervous and excited! We are partnering with Livingston County, so every other week the presentation will be live in Oakland and “beamed” to the class in Livingston. Using this technology will enable us to bring this program to Counties that have not had a class in years.

As always, if you’d like to sit in on the classes as a refresher, you may submit 2 hours of education. You might want to call Linda Smith to make sure we have not had to change the scheduled topic for that week. She can be reached at 248-858-0887.

Winter MG Training Classes 6:00pm-10:00pm Tollgate Education Center Conference Center

<u>Date</u>	<u>Topic</u>
January 23	Introduction/Water Quality
January 30	Plant Science
February 6	Soil Science
February 13	Tree Fruit
February 20	IPM
February 27	Vegetables
March 6	Small Fruit
March 13	Household Pests
March 20	Annuals and Perennials
March 27	Indoor Plants
April 3	Lawns
April 10	Woody Ornamentals
April 17	Diagnostics
April 24	Volunteering Potluck
May 1	Make up class if needed

Watch the Oakland Gardener for upcoming classes being brought to you by the Continuing Education Committee. These classes will help you to increase the wow factor of your flower beds and introduce you to plants you may not be familiar with. I hope you're all managing to stay warm and are dreaming of spring as you peruse the multitude of garden catalogs that are probably arriving on your doorstep.

The Year at a Glance—MGSOC Meetings/Events for 2014

February 11	Lisa Steinkopf	African Violets: Their Care & Cultivation	
March 11	Marna Nemon	Let them Eat Your Garden	
March 17		MGSOC Board Meeting	7PM @ Extension Office
April 15	George Papadelis	New and Under Utilized Shrubs	(DATE & LOCATION CHANGE)- Location: Telly's Greenhouse 4343 24 Mile Rd (NOT the one on John R.)
April 26		2014 Conference	"Gardening and All that Jazz"
May 13	Pat Seibel	Container Planting	
May 19		MGSOC Board Meeting	7PM @ Extension Office
June 5 - 8		Bus Trip to St. Louis, MO	
June 10	Cheryl English	Species and Small Flowering Clematis	
July 8	Janet Macunovich	Choosing and Planting Trees	
August 12	James Rizzo	Creating Living Walls	
August 18		MGSOC Board Meeting	7PM @ Extension Office
September 9	Molly Robinson	Decorating with Molly	
October 14	Sue Grubba	Shady Characters in the Garden	
October 20		MGSOC Board Meeting	7PM @ Extension Office
November 11	Julia Hofley	Take Back Your Garden and Protecting Your Investment	
November 17		MGSOC Board Meeting	7PM @ Extension Office
December 9	Holiday Potluck		

Tickets on Sale for the MGSOC 2014 Educational Gardening Conference
Saturday, April 26, 2014
“Gardening and All That Jazz”

Tickets are now on sale to our 2nd **Annual Educational Garden Conference** for new and experienced gardeners. This conference is open to the public (that’s right, you need not be a Master Gardener to attend so you can bring *all* of your garden-lovin’ friends!). The **MGSOC Conference Committee**, under the direction of **Denise Brown**, wants you to know that ticket sales are brisk already so please don’t hesitate to get your early-bird ticket soon.

Keynote speakers this year will include **Allan Armitage** on *“If You Are Going to Spend My Money, You Might As Well Buy the Right Plants,”* **David E. Perry**, on *“Garden Photo Magic: Improve Your Photos While Lightening Your Load with Smart Phones and Point-&-Shoot Cameras,”* **Stephanie Cohen** on *“Native Plants – Sustainable, Colorful & Wonderful ,”* and **Stacey Hirvela** on *“Shrubs: Making Your Dream Garden Reality.”* In other words, there’s something for everyone.

If you’d like to know a little more about our tremendous speakers, peruse their web sites: www.allanarmitage.net, www.davidperryphoto.com, www.theperennialdiva.com, and www.staceyhirvela.com. A quick “Google” for each one also brings up link after link of their accomplishments.

With the thought that music and gardening go hand in hand, the theme for the 2014 conference is *“Gardening and All That Jazz!”* featuring two well-known area jazz musicians. **Kerry Price** of Royal Oak – vocalist, pianist and long-time area educator and performer – will entertain us during the morning registration period. Kerry is featured in *“Who’s Who”* of American Jazz and Blues singers. In addition, **The Dave Bennett Quartet** (www.davebennett.com) will provide a little Benny Goodman-style clarinet during our luncheon and shopping break. David, from Waterford, has been the featured soloist for several years with the Detroit Symphony Orchestra and will make his debut at Carnegie Hall on November 1 with the New York Pops orchestra.

The conference will again feature a Garden Market with more vendors than last year, raffle prizes and gift bags. Although open to any interested gardener, the conference will provide Master Gardener education credits for those Master Gardener Volunteers seeking to add to their volunteer hours. The **Oakland Schools Conference Center on Pontiac Lake Road in Waterford** will provide a larger, brighter and more comfortable venue with better food choices.

You can download an application at the MGSOC web site: www.mgsoc.org, or a copy of the full-color brochure. The information is the same on both, however the application form will save your ink. We’re working on being able to register online, however that option is not available at the moment. Fill out your application and mail it to our **Registrar, Margaret Dolan**. Her address is on the registration form. We also take credit and debit cards this year. The **early bird registration of \$70 ends on March 14**, after that your fee will be \$80. The **registration deadline is Wednesday, April 16, 2014**.

—Submitted by Sally Bolle

Slope Restoration In Metropolitan Detroit



Nanette Alton is a Licensed Landscape Architect for the Michigan Department of Transportation who gave a talk on the problem of slope restoration on interstate highways in the Detroit metropolitan area. She showed pictures of the typical landscaping on the side of our highways: fairly sickly-looking grass with areas of erosion. This kind of landscaping is not ecologically sound and is quite expensive to maintain because it has to be mowed frequently, and it is often

quite sloped making it difficult to mow and prone to erosion. Because there is no way to water the grass regularly, it often looks brown in Michigan summers.

Alternative slope restoration projects have several goals: alleviate the safety and financial concerns related to mowing steep slopes; decrease damage to waterways by covering eroded slopes with vegetation that will catch run-off that previously went into storm sewers; demonstrate alternative treatments for steep slopes; plant attractive plants that will flourish in harsh urban conditions and be attractive to travelers as they pass by.

A pilot test plot using research by Cornell University was planned in 2005 on one acre of the M-10 reconstruction project in Southfield. First they used herbicide to get rid of vegetation that was there, and then they spread 4-8" of compost that acted as a sponge and provided a good medium for the plants. Various grasses, perennials and some woodies were used on the plot if they met the selection criteria: drought and heat tolerant, zone 3-5 and low maintenance. Examples of plants used are *Nepeta*, prairie dropseed, *Echinacea*, *Allium*, little bluestem, *Panicum*, *Miscanthus* and shrub roses. The project used 13,000 plants at a total cost of about \$193,000. The plan included watering five times annually for the first 2 years.

The photos we saw showed spectacular results – curving lines of color and texture with so much more aesthetic appeal than half-dead grass.

Following this project, the same kind of restoration was started on a section of I-696 using the knowledge gained from the M-10 plot. At this site, a barrier wall was installed to prevent erosion of soil onto the roadway before the slope restoration and planting. 55,000 plants will be used for this project, and they will remove 33 million pounds of carbon dioxide from the air over the next 40 years. Another project is in the works along I-75 in Hamtramck between the Grand Trunk Western Railroad and Commor Street.

As always, the pictures presented at our talks made the concepts much clearer than my words can convey. The presentation handout and Cornell Paper can be found at <http://www.mgsoc.org> (News and Events / January 14, 2014).

—Submitted by Jean Gramlich

Chipmunks and Us

Evidently backing up to a wooded area alone will not guarantee that you have chipmunks. It takes careful planning and the addition of large rock walls to provide the perfect environment for chipmunks. In our neighborhood, many landscapers decided that the addition of large rocks to form retaining walls for planting beds was a super good idea. Bear in mind, there are a lot of great planting plans that do not require all these rocks but they would not provide homes for hundreds (or so it seems) of chipmunks. Now one or two errant chipmunks are easy to relocate, as my friends with boulder-less yards and no woods tell me. But lots of these cute critters require a more diplomatic approach. In other words, we will have to find a way to live together and like it. This article describes the ways chipmunks have infiltrated territory where we didn't want them and what we were able to do about it.



In our yard, the chipmunks are generally not destructive. So we enjoy them and they like the variety in the our yard. Over the years, we have made some dumb mistakes that disrupted the balance between chipmunk territory and our territory. Feeding birds and other critters too close to the house is guaranteed to create problems. And our cats are not really good deterrents. The chipmunks have the run of the yard 100% of the time while the cats only get to go out a few hours a day. And one of our cats is pretty oblivious to what goes on around her since she knows she will be provided with unlimited Fancy Feast, pretty much on demand.

Once the chipmunks discovered our brick patios and foundation plantings, they decided that these would make much better homes than the boulder walls. The tricky thing about chipmunk tunnels is that you don't notice them until it is too late to avoid repairs or replacements to structures or plants. When the brick edges on our raised patio began to sink, we were concerned that the bricklayer had installed a poor foundation. Little did we suspect that we had chipmunk tunnels running all along the periphery of the raised patio. Evidently the slag in which the bricks are laid is ideal tunneling media for chipmunks. And a raised brick patio with a southern

exposure is nice and warm in winter. We also discovered tunnels under the yews next to the patio which finally explained why one of the yews was chronically stunted compared to the other one next to it. The bricklayer who reset the bricks did not have any really useful suggestions for keeping the chipmunks out. So even though we moved all the bird feeders to the far perimeter of the property, it seemed the chipmunks were there to stay.

We keep the birdseed for our bird feeders in the garage in plastic cat litter containers. These work very well for keeping critters out of the seed. But if we left a bird seed bag on the floor of the garage, for even a few days, the chipmunks would find it and chew holes in it to get to the seed. Later, after we elevated the bags to shelves far above the floor, the chipmunks would climb up the side of things to get to them. So we tried to keep the garage doors down but this can be inconvenient if you are working outside. As soon as we would walk away, chipmunks would infiltrate the garage looking for seed. It takes a long time to extinguish feeding behavior, even after you remove the feed source. And because it only takes a few seeds dropped on the floor to reinforce the desire to search for tasty birdseed this became a longer term problem. If it were just a losing a little seed to the chipmunks, that would be ok with us. But a chipmunk inadvertently trapped in the garage will industriously chew through an expensive, hard-to-replace, wood door threshold to get out. We knew they were not trying to get in because all the chewing was on the inside of the door.

There were so many chipmunks in our area that trapping and relocation wasn't a reasonable approach. We already knew that deer repellent products did not work against chipmunks - so no luck there. We suspected that cat hair was bedding material for them (or something else) since it quickly disappeared. More to the point, our cats had seemingly little interest in controlling the chipmunk population aside from an occasional half-hearted chase around the shrubbery. We think the chipmunks might have actually enjoyed the chases because they kept coming back right away. The cats wear electronic pet fence collars and the chipmunks knew how to stay just outside its' boundaries to tease the cats. So lacking natural predators, at least any we could rely upon, our chipmunk population seemed intent on incursion into new territory - namely ours. We were able to solve our problem in the garage by being vigilant in cleaning up birdseed and by keeping extra bags in chew proof covered containers. It took a while but eventually, since there was no food, the chipmunks lost interest in our unheated garage. The brick patio and the tunneling under the some of our shrubs turned out to be even easier to fix - once we had the right solution. We found a squirrel repellent called "Squirrel Stop" by Messina Wildlife. This is a pleasant minty smelling spray that effectively repels chipmunks. It is sold at local garden centers and online. We sprayed it directly onto the brick patio into crevices and onto the bricks. We also sprayed it into tunnels and around shrubs. So far it has worked wonders with only a few applications a season. It also works wonders to keep the squirrels from climbing a columnar beech that is close to the house and getting onto our roof. We just spray it on the base of the tree. We did not test this as a repellent from a food source but it works great for tunneling and climbing behavior. We are going on two seasons now using the product and our shrubs and patios have been chipmunk free.

—Submitted by M. M. Golla

Some Information You Should Know

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Currently Available Opportunities: Communications, Education, Project Support, Volunteer Activities

Mission Statement

It is the Master Gardener Society of Oakland County's Mission to assist, enable, and encourage its members to use their horticultural knowledge and experience to help the people of their communities, enrich their lives through gardening and good gardening practices.

Michigan State University Extension- Oakland County
“Bringing Knowledge to Life”

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