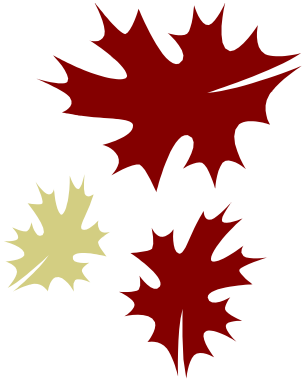


Roots & Shoots



Master Gardener
Society of
Oakland County, Inc.



October – November 2014



October 14, 2014 @ 6:30pm
MGSOC General Society Meeting & Location
Beautiful Savior Lutheran Church
5631 North Adams Rd, Bloomfield Hills, MI 48304

Speaker : Sue Grubba

Education: "Shady Characters in the Garden"

A business meeting will take place, prior to the start of our Educational Program.



November 11, 2014 @ 6:30pm
MGSOC General Society Meeting & Location
Beautiful Savior Lutheran Church
5631 North Adams Rd, Bloomfield Hills, MI 48304

Speaker : Julia Hofley

Education: "Take Back Your Garden and Protecting Your Investment"

A business meeting will take place, prior to the start of our Educational Program.



December 9, 2014 @ 6:30pm
MGSOC General Society Meeting & Location
Beautiful Savior Lutheran Church
5631 North Adams Rd, Bloomfield Hills, MI 48304

Holiday Potluck



Notes from Carol

I'm sure you were all quite busy this summer doing your good works as valued volunteers for your pet projects. Thank you for your dedication and passion!

As the volunteer season winds down, I hope you've taken advantage of all the opportunities to volunteer in the area. Please make sure you get your volunteer and educational hours submitted into the Volunteer Management System (VMS). Sooner is almost always better than later. Here are some dates to remember:

Recertification Time-Line 2015

December 31, 2014	VMS closes for 2014-Required Hours submission
January 7, 2015	2015 Re-Certification Opens
January 31	2015 Regular Re-Certification Closes
February 1, 2015	Late Re-Certification Opens-Late Fee applied
February 15, 2015	Late Re-Certification Closes

2015 RE-CERTIFICATION

The recertification process is:

1. Submit your hours for 2014 by the deadline above.
2. Re-certify for upcoming year – 3 steps

Select re-certification status

Read/accept Code of Conduct & Volunteer Agreements

Register and pay re-certification fee, as applicable

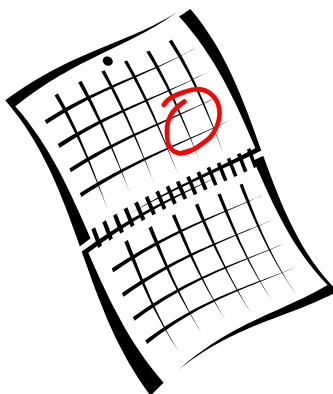
For Trainees: 2 steps to complete in VMS:

- Select Not Completed Hours re-certification status
- Add comment that "currently a trainee"
- Read/Sign/Accept the Code of Conduct and Volunteer Agreement

Over the year a number of people have contacted us that they cannot get into the VMS system. Most often it is because they have been locked out of the system due to inactivity (did not recertify the previous year), or they are trying to get into the old RKS system that has deactivated for about 2 years.

The website address is <https://michigan.volunteersystem.org/UniversalLogin.cfm>

Please do not hesitate to contact Cathy Morris at morrisc@oakgov.com or 248-858-0887 (note new phone number).



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

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		

...from the cabbage patch



everyone.

Please remember to notify our Corresponding Secretary, Nancy Schmid, with member news so she can forward the appropriate correspondence to our fellow Master Gardeners. As corresponding secretary, Nancy sends cards of cheer, congratulations and condolences to our members as the situation warrants and Nancy would welcome being alerted to any such opportunities. She would also appreciate knowing whether or not the member wishes to share their news with

Nancy has been a Master Gardener since 2010 as well as a member of the Project Support Team since then. Nancy is also the keeper of the Master Gardener cookbooks so please keep her in mind if you have news to share or need a gift for gardener.

Contact Nancy at 248.651.7639 or 586.662.9394 (cell) or via email at nancy.c.s@comcast.net.

Choosing, Placing and Planting Trees

Janet Macunovich talked about her love of trees in the landscape for our August meeting. Before actually choosing a tree, you should describe it: height, width, character, function, shape, color and texture. Your thought process should not be “I want an elm tree.” For the most part, trees bloom for a relatively short period of time, so bloom should play a minor part in selection. If possible, it is best to see a tree growing in place over time. Public gardens and arboretums are great places to see trees that have been in place a long time. Neighborhood garden walks are also good sources of information. Never use just one book, internet site, etc., and shop but don't select trees by a catalog. Janet's and Steve Nikkila's website www.GardenAtoZ.com is a good source of lists and charts as is the website maintained by the University of Minnesota. (*Editor note: MSUE has new bulletins on Smart tree selections showing photos, height, spread, site preferences, ornamental characteristics, pests etc. at the Gardening in Michigan website <http://migarden.msu.edu/>*)

As you consider each tree, you should answer “yes” to 4 questions: 1) will it excel here (not just survive or tolerate the conditions; 2) can I care for it; 3) does it fit in my time and money budget; 4) will it fulfill one of the goals of my landscape.

Now make a shopping list! Buy the right plant not the big plant. The rule of thumb is that for each inch of caliper, the tree does not grow for one year because of the root loss in transplanting, so that a 5” caliper tree will not really begin growing in your location for 5 years after you plant it. So even without considering that big trees are way more expensive than little ones, it is usually wise to plant small ones.

In deciding on the placement of the tree, identify a potential or existing focal point and consider the mature root spread. Position the tree as a frame and fill it based on expected growth. You can take a picture of the current landscape, place a paper on the screen and sketch in the basic features of the area to help with framing.

When shopping, look for correct, uniform leaf color and check for water stress. Avoid pot bound trees – you shouldn't see roots crawling out the bottom of the pot. Observe how the tree has been treated in the nursery: if it is ahead of the spring season here (might have been forced in the greenhouse or grown in the south), it will need hardening off here.

Fall is the best time to plant trees, but spring is good too. The ground should be warmer than the air. Dig the hole as deep (not deeper) as the roots, but make the hole wide enough for 2 years' root growth. Calculate root growth as twice the rate of branch growth. Find the flare and set the tree so the trunk flares at ground level. Sometimes trees are planted wrong at the nursery, so don't assume that you should plant it at the level it was in the pot. If there are adventitious roots around the flare, cut them off. Try to make sure there is no potential for girdling roots, and make sure you remove the cage. An easy way to get a tree out of a pot is to slice off the bottom and cut down the sides of the pot. When you backfill the hole, just use the soil that was there plus air and do not use water-soluble fertilizer until growth resumes. Be sure to keep the tree watered until it is well established.

Remember that trees are our legacy to future generations!

—Submitted by Jean Gramlich

Fall Folly with Molly

Molly Robinson presented our September program on decorating your home for the coming holiday seasons. Before each holiday, “edit” the rooms you will be entertaining in by removing everything from mantels, tables and sideboards and replacing them with items reflecting your holiday theme for a unified feel.

Pumpkins and gourds are appropriate for Halloween and Thanksgiving. Pumpkins can be decorated with paint (polka dots or other designs) and/or spray paint. Mini pumpkins can be used as place card holders or as a vase for a centerpiece. An anti-browning solution of 2T vinegar, 1t lemon juice with 1 quart water can be painted on carved surfaces to preserve the pumpkin.

At Thanksgiving pears can be used as a unifying theme with centerpieces and place settings. They can be used with candles, *Eucalyptus* and *Magnolia* leaves.

Christmas holiday accents can be created with kumquats, lemons, clementine tangerines and blood oranges that will fill the room with lovely scents. Holly, red twig dogwood and Christmas greens will add to the effect. Silver and white are definitely in style for Christmas. Replace and update small items like pillows, hand towels and scented soaps.

Fresh or preserved flowers are always a beautiful addition to your décor. Flowers that have been spray painted last a long time. Dried flowers such as straw flowers, statice, baby's breath, *Gomphrena* and *Hydrangea* make lovely, long-lasting arrangements. Fresh flowers should be snipped at an angle and put in water with floral food. The water should be changed every 2 days. Outdoor pots can be wrapped in waterproof paper and filled with greens and other holiday decorations.

Always do holiday arrangements in odd numbers, 1-3-5 and remember the “14 inch rule”: the centerpiece should be no higher than 14 inches!

—Submitted by Jean Gramlich



Why does it seem only weeks since summer finally arrived and here we are at the end of it? My sense of fair play says that we should be entitled to quite a few more weeks of growing season considering we were cheated at the front end of it. But that is not expected to be. Predictions are for an early winter sounding very similar to last year's autumn. I don't have last year's chores done let alone this year's, but what else is new?



The decision to leave the nursery business was based on a number of factors, one of which was the desire to eliminate some physical labor and concentrate on "my own stuff." Last year I questioned whether or not I had enough energy to do the usual vegetable patch(es). But how can you not have the fresh food you've been enjoying for like f o r e v e r? I like knowing that the only toxicity I should encounter on my fruits and vegetables is bug poop.

So you do the best you can. Sometimes it's enough and sometimes it's not. Certainly this was the summer for the old platitude "You win some, you lose some, and some get rained out." Our plantings were much later than normal, the garden didn't get its usual dose of chopped leaves and tillage (the rototiller caught fire and it wasn't pleasant), throw in a couple of health emergencies and restrictions and the cherry on the top of all of it was the invasion of moles.



I appreciated the regularity of the rain although it seems squash and cucumbers get terribly offended if not rained on every day once they get on a schedule. The flip side of that kind of precipitation is that it creates a nursery for pathologies. For Nutcase it was another disappointing year for cukes so making relish has been crossed off the agenda.

The summer squash appear to suffer from locational deprivation planted north to south and I should have remembered that from last year's growth pattern. I reversed the order of the row – whoever gets the front two "seat" fares the best as far as production. Last year the yellow squash had the front and the zucchini wound up in the cheap seats so this year we had far more zucchini than buttersticks. The real champions in the squash family are the butternuts. They have produced very well and they are the type of squash most resistant to squash borer. I swear I also planted acorn squash but I can't find anything that looks like one. The poor little watermelon plants are all of 3 inches high and it's a little too late to realistically expect any fruit. But this year the cauliflower is awesome. For me it's the most difficult cole crop to grow. The other coles, the Brussels sprouts and broccoli haven't formed any sprouts yet and some of the plants are so short they don't look like they'll be making anything. Usually we don't have a problem with those crops, although last year a little heat wave in August caused the broccoli to try to sprout and flower. This year I haven't seen any such activity yet so we really, really, **really** need an extended season, though the savoy cabbages are gorgeous and just waiting to sweeten with a chill.

This is the fifth year the Dingo declared herself in charge of the corn crop. Same MO – when the corn stalks are about 3 ½ feet high, she pulls two. Not tasty yet. Then she waits for the ears to

begin forming and tests a few more stalks. Still not right. In another two week or so, husks magically appear all over the lawn and we know the corn is ready.

Somebody's grandpa used to say "Plant two seeds – one for you and one for the birds." Here I just have to plant one row for the Dingo and the rest for us. The first picking almost got placed on the ground while I was snatching some peppers and I realized just in time that they would not be safe. So, thinking myself so very clever for outsmarting a dog, I put them on the patio table pushed as far away from edge as possible. I went back for the peppers and turned around just in time to see her run past me with an ear of corn in her mouth.

Oh but shame on me for naturally assuming she stole from my stash! Instead, she decided if I was picking, she could pick. For the first time, though, she brought me her prize instead of getting as far away from me as possible until she finished eating it.

There has been a change in her behavior this summer and it was due to the presence of another dog for several days. Every time I would work with the stray, the Dingo would obey each command first. People kept telling me that she was being more obedient because she thought she might be replaced. I didn't buy it for an instant. The latest breed profile I ran across started with a sentence stating a canine of this breed "is a con artist from the word go" and the phrase "aims to please" is unknown to the breed. There were several other negative attributes that leave no doubt as to her heritage. The breed is highly intelligent but decides whether or not it's interested in obeying so you can't rely on training. They lie, they cheat, they really can't be trusted. They were also voted second most impossible to train and it was that revelation that allowed me to realize that I am not completely to blame for the way she behaves. I don't believe for a second that she is worried about being replaced. She's just biding her time until she gets even. Who knows, maybe she's growing up; it's certainly time.

Earlier in the summer we received a letter saying Consumers Energy would be replacing pipes, meters and mains in our subdivision. As subdivision inhabitants none of us had any idea when the crews would appear at our pipes. Some people got new meters, some people got huge holes in their yards and a whole lot of us got moles. Lots of moles.

I had been gone for a short time and I am always amazed at the difference a few days make in the gardens. I took a very brief walk behind the house in the early evening when I returned, things looked like I wasn't missed a bit and went back in. The next day I planned a longer look, walked on the very same ground and sunk.

I took a few more steps and could make out the trail. I've been here over 30 years and have never had moles and have never had the neighbors complain about moles. We certainly have enough chipmunks and voles and squirrels but no one that I knew ever had a mole problem. It finally started to make sense one afternoon when I was in the basement and the pounding commenced. I slowly realized that the work being done had to be the reason for the sudden appearance of these poor critters. They probably were around but maintained a lower profile. Now all I could visualize were legions of moles moving like lemmings underground, decimating every square foot of my property and eventually the entire county.



Nutcase is not very hospitable to critters because as a pastime, even more than eating corn, the Dingo likes to hunt. Dingoes supposedly don't like water but she will sit outside until she's sopping wet and has to be blow-dried before giving up waiting for an SQ to come down the tree trunk. Just because she let the stray dig for moles as she lay a few feet away doesn't necessarily mean she's worried about her place and allowed him to "dig a hole" for himself in more ways than one. She's just a conniver.

The poor stray is a pubescent male with ADHD who is just learning how to pee like a boy. I am not shy letting it be known I do not appreciate any leg lifting near my plants. This poor Bubba is only too willing to copy what he sees from the other boys and also has come up with a few bad tricks of his own. As much as it irritated me, I had to laugh more than once when I noticed that he very much likes hitting the *Hydrangea* blooms and the leek blossoms to see them move. He needs a steady training program and constant supervision but he is willing to learn and doesn't need cookies to motivate him. With such a willing student, the Dingo found it easy to teach him to eat bugs and chives. She doesn't eat chives, she eats quackgrass but managed to get him to chow down on chives just the same. She eats only grasshoppers but I'm pretty sure I saw the poor boy trying to eat a cricket.

When the Consumers workers finally showed up here I informed them that I fully expected they take the moles with them when they left. So far the work seems to be over and I haven't seen new mole activity, unless the excavation done two days ago under the firepit was because of them. I thought the crisis might be over but this afternoon I got another damage report from across the street. Since there is very little available at this point to get rid of them, I'm trying to convince myself that moles are nature's aerators and my goal should be to just avoid falling down.

My biggest concern related to the underground inhabitants was damage to crops. The ornamentals and perennials are pretty much on their own as far as dealing with environmental problems. The moles made runs in places that had barriers like various types of edging. Unfortunately my entire crop of beets was planted just inside the edging in the veggie garden and the little nippers were merrily burrowing their way through the garden and ran into the barrier and burrowed under the beets lifting them all. I was not able to press them back in so I am hoping there's enough of a crop to pickle a few jars.

But not having beets, and losing some corn, and cucumbers that did not want to participate were not the biggest disappointments of the vegetable patch. The Brussels sprouts are not sprouting but the cauliflower came through like a champ for a change. I can't find any acorn squash (and I swear I planted some) but the butternuts have been pollinating their flower petals off and there are many. On the negative side the eggplant for the second year did not appreciate the cool weather. On the positive side, I finally convinced one of my brothers to plant the dill seed I gave him and this was the first year he had no tomato worms. It could be a coincidence but I prefer to credit IPM even though the experiment was flawed by the hail damage that took out his plants before their time so we can't be sure it was just timing but it gives me hope.

My biggest disappointment was that I had no Monarch caterpillars. Monarchs fluttered by, certainly not as many as in years past. All their food plants were available - - - 4 types of butterfly weed: *Asclepias tuberosa*, *incarnata*, and *syrriaca*, as well as pokeweed. (To apply for a Monarch waystation designation you need at least 10 plants of a minimum of two different kinds of butterfly weeds.) Besides all the larval plants, I always interplant the vegetables with annuals like *Zinnias*, *Cosmos*, *Malva*, *Calendula*, sometimes *Nasturtiums*, and of course, sunflowers to assist pollination. The butterfly plants are in the perimeters of the big vegetable garden. There was no shortage of cabbage butterflies, only every other kind I care about.

I kept checking the plants for caterpillars or just signs of egg-laying all summer. Nothing. No monarchs. No swallowtails on the dill or parsley. The only caterpillar of note I found was a woolly bear near one of the compost containers several weeks ago. It was only about an inch-and-a-half long and I haven't seen it since. They usually wind up in the garage for some reason so I have been keeping an eye out for the little guy. The Dingo probably conned the Boy into eating it.

My original project for the summer was to spread the word about creating habitats for bees and butterflies. I had spoken to some of the parents early in the year about it and asked if they would like their kids to participate. Last year two of them had a bee session and I taught them how to pet bees. I was very clear about conditions having to be just right or it wasn't a good idea to try it by oneself. One of the boys forgot the rule and got stung. So we had a few more sessions on bees, a new session on brown marmorated stinkbugs, and we also identified a gypsy moth larva and dispatched it. For the project I fully expected to raise a caterpillar with my little team and if there was an opportunity I must have missed it, though not for lack of trying. Out of the twenty recommended nectar perennials on the waystation application, we have 14 at Nutcase, all pretty much antiques.

I occasionally put out signs based on bulletins from MSU, such as "It's Time to Pull Garlic Mustard" with pictures, or other more personal warnings such as "Caution – Disobedient Dingo Crossing." For my project I put out a sign that read "Help Save the Monarchs – Plant Butterfly Weed – Free Plants while they last." I had only a few takers and I had debated over the use of the word "weed" on the sign and decided that "*Asclepias*" would be a little more off-putting than "weed." I don't keep the signs out all of the time because Himself has no sense of humor. He took away the sign I left for the gas company workers that requested they take the moles with them when they left. (The neighbors liked it though.)

So back to the butterflies. I am extremely worried because of their absence. Not only were Monarchs missing, I saw just two Red Admirals, one Sulphur (which is all I see every year), and possibly a Buckeye. The Monarch sightings added up to less than twenty and I even saw two together so I know there was more than one. But I'm not out there all of the time.

As far as the bees were concerned the Seven Sons tree (*Heptacodium miconioides*) is a bee magnet so I am not as worried about them as the butterflies. The Seven Sons attracts thousands of bees, so many that the tree appears to be moving. I saw a Monarch in it one afternoon at the very top and I don't blame it for staying out of swarm's way. What is so fascinating about "the bee tree" is the variety of bees. Some I have never seen anywhere else. I have no idea where they are the rest of the year but they all come out for the last big bundle of nectar available. To add to

the weirdness of the year, I caught one of the *Forsythia* reblooming last week and a spring-blooming Lily of Nepal is flowering as I write but they are hardly capable of enticing the array of flyers the tree does.

I will just have to try harder next season. What bothers me a lot is the fact that Nutcase doesn't really have plants that are new to the field, no pun intended. I have been evaluating the gardens as usual and I realized that most of them are full of very old specimens, some over thirty years. All that grew here before me were violets and four o'clocks. I have created many gardens over the years and new plants don't get added very often because there is no more room, so the plants that I am counting on to attract my subject insects are old, non-hybrid varieties that I consider pure, such as the *Echinacea*, *Gaillardia*, *Cosmos*, *Calendula*, *Rudbeckia*, *Coreopsis*, *Campanula*, etc. I have convinced myself easily that it would be unethical to update with designer varieties because that really is going in the wrong direction if I want my creatures back. And it would be serious work too. But, I could really raise some hell with a backhoe. And a crew.

Hopefully you don't have the same problems in your gardens and you will be able to fit in loads of bulbs in the coming weeks. Planting them deeper is better. And it's a good idea to make your planting site as invisible as possible since the squirrels will notice a suddenly cultivated area and dig for those jewels. One of the little geniuses is no doubt responsible for the fully mature purple Dutch *Hyacinth* I found growing in the middle of the asparagus patch this spring. I count it as a memorial to all of their friends the Dingo has sent to the big nut tree in the sky.

No bees, no farms, no food.



Some Information You Should Know

MGSOC Board Members

President: Margy Truza.....(248)644-3560
1st Vice President: Sally Bolle.....(248)909-8668 (c)
2nd Vice President: Margaret Dolan.....(248)770-0524
Secretary: Ruth Vrbensky.....(248)969-6904
Treasurer: Crystal Castle(248) 860-5445 (c)

MSU Extension Oakland County Coordinator

Advisor: Carol Lenchek (248)858-0900
lenchekc@oakgov.com

Team Coordinators

Bowers Farm: Sally Bolle (Tuesday Lead)..... 909-8668 (c)
Open (Saturday Lead)
Project Support: Denise Brown (248)640-5977
Hospitality: Kathy Sobanski.....(248)858-6980
Hospitality Greeter: Carole Carroll.....(248)321-8669
& Sally Teague.....(248)546-0280
Membership: Lavon Cook.....(248)939-7047
Programs: Betty Peters.....(248)651-8374
Door prize Coordinator: Janie Grissom.....(248)887-6096
Trips & Tours: Sandie Parrott(248)394-1532
Corresponding Secretary: Nancy Schmid..(248)651-7639
Communications: Lucy Propst.....(248)885-1082
Roots & Shoots Editor: Dick Wanat.....(248)644-5699

Web Site Address: www.mgsoc.org
Webmaster: Sheri Trout sheri@oaklandweb.com
Web Site Calendar: Peggy Wanat pwanat43@comcast.net

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”

North Office Building, #26 East
1200 N. Telegraph Road
Pontiac, MI 48341
Office Hours: M- F 8:30 a.m.-5:00 p.m.

Marie Ruemenapp
248-380-9100 or 248-858-0885
MSU Extension District Coordinator
Email: ruemenap@msu.edu

Charlene Molnar...248-858-0902
Horticulture Advisor
Plant & Pest Hotline
Hours of operation vary seasonally

Robin Danto...248-858-0904
Extension Educator~Food Safety
Email: dantor@oakgov.com

Tom Schneider...248-858-0905
Extension Educator~4-H Youth Programs
Email: schneidert@oakgov.com

Carol Lenchek...248-858-0900
Extension Educator~Master Gardener Program
Email: lenchekc@oakgov.com

Cathy Morris...248-858-0887
Horticulture Office Assistant
Email: smithlin@oakgov.com

[position vacant] ...248-858-1639
*Clerk & Contact for Certification of Volunteer
& Education Hours*
Email:

Bindu Bhakta...248-858-5198
Extension Educator~Water Quality
Email: bhaktabi@msu.edu

Saneya Hamler...248-452-9726
Extension Educator~Children, Youth & Family
Email: hamlersa@msu.edu

Eva Poole...248-858-1993
Extension Educator~Children, Youth & Family
Email: ander204@msu.edu

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November 15 for December/January issue

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