

Roots & Shoots



Master Gardener
Society of
Oakland County, Inc.



December 2014 – January 2015

	<p>December 9, 2014 @ 6:30pm MGSOC General Society Meeting & Location Beautiful Savior Lutheran Church 5631 North Adams Rd, Bloomfield Hills, MI 48304</p> <p>Holiday Potluck</p>
	<p>January 13, 2015 @ 6:30pm MGSOC General Society Meeting & Location Beautiful Savior Lutheran Church 5631 North Adams Rd, Bloomfield Hills, MI 48304</p> <p>Speaker : Jim McDonald Education: "Treating of Fevers with Common Herbs"</p> <p>A business meeting will take place, prior to the start of our Educational Program.</p>
	<p>February 10, 2015 @ 6:30pm MGSOC General Society Meeting & Location Beautiful Savior Lutheran Church 5631 North Adams Rd, Bloomfield Hills, MI 48304</p> <p>Speaker : Cheryl English Education: "Hydrangeas"</p> <p>A business meeting will take place, prior to the start of our Educational Program.</p>



Notes from Carol

Happy Winter to you! Hoping you all had a wonderful Thanksgiving and are having fun, not stress, as you prepare for Chanukah and/or Christmas. If you've never attended the MGSOC Holiday party, consider coming this year. It's on December 9 and is always a fun evening!

Winter has its snowy grip on us already. It seems so early. I have never added a "snow day" to our Fall MG Training classes but will in 2015 just in case.

Thanks for all your hard work during this growing season. I'm looking forward to seeing the total hours for Oakland County MG's! It's always an impressive number. You make a difference in the lives of others, no matter what you choose to volunteer for as a Master Gardener.

We are gearing up for our winter training class. It will run from January 22-April 30 from 6pm-10pm in the Executive Office Building Conference Center on Pontic Lake Road in Waterford and all the classes will be taught in person. We still have openings, so let your friends, family, and neighbors know that the time to register is now! Registration is done online. You can find the link to the registration system on our Oakland County MSUE website under "Classes and Activities".

http://www.oakgov.com/msu/Pages/classes_activities/gardening_classes.aspx

Time is running out to report your 2014 volunteer and educational hours. The deadline is December 31, 2014. You will not be able to enter any 2014 hours after that date.

The 2015 Recertification website will open from January 7-31, 2015. If you miss this deadline you will have until February 15 to do late recertification (there is a late fee). You should be getting emails from the VMS Administrator with these dates and links.

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:

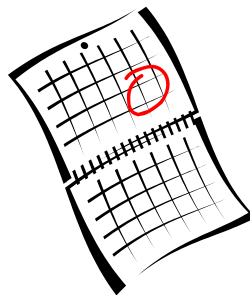
- Select Not Completed Hours re-certification status
- Add comment that “currently a trainee”
- Read/Sign/Accept the Code of Conduct and Volunteer Agreement

The website address (opens on 12/7) is

<https://michigan.volunteersystem.org/UniversalLogin.cfm>

Please do not hesitate to contact Lynne Shull at 248-858-1639. Lynn is in the office on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays).

Please do not wait until the last minute to figure out that you need help!



The Year at a Glance—MGSOC Meetings/Events for 2015

January 13	Jim McDonald	Treating of Fevers with Common Herbs	
January 26		MGSOC Board Meeting	7PM @ Extension Office
February 10	Cheryl English	Hydrangeas	
March 10	Heidi Densmore	Saving Winter Ravaged Trees	
March 16		MGSOC Board Meeting	7PM @ Extension Office
April 7	George Papadelis	New Annuals and Perennials for 2015	Telly's Greenhouse, 3301 John R, Troy
April 25		MGSOC Conference	Oakland Schools Center
May 12	TBD	TBA	
May 18		MGSOC Board Meeting	7PM @ Extension Office

June 9	Keith Berven	Care and Raising Dahlias	
June 24-26		Trip: Chicago Botanical Gardens, Milwaukee, and More	
July 14	Donna and Les Abel	All About Garlic	
August 11	Heather Glenday	What's Going on in the Garden	
August 17		MGSOC Board Meeting	7PM @ Extension Office
September 8	Janet Macunovich	Bulbs: Choosing, Planting & Growing	
October 13	Karen Burke	Dehydrating Vegetables: Basics and Beyond	
October 19		MGSOC Board Meeting	7PM @ Extension Office
November 10	John Gaydos	New Annuals for 2016 and How to Use Annuals in the Garden	
November 16		MGSOC Board Meeting	7PM @ Extension Office
December 8	Holiday Potluck		

...from the cabbage patch



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 everyone.

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.

Shady Characters in the Garden

Sue Grubba, who is president of the Association of Professional Gardeners, gave our October talk about shade gardening. First the basics: plants need water, air and nutrients. In dense shade under trees, we have to think more about these needs than in more hospitable environments. Trees can take up huge amounts of water, so the soil can be very dry under them. Lily of the valley can thrive in this condition, but be aware that you'll never get rid of it once you have it! One way to mitigate dense shade is to prune away very low branches and open up the canopy a bit. A soaker hose can be used to create moister conditions.

Sometimes gardens are shaded at different times of day either by buildings or trees and shrubs. Sometimes the soil under overhangs is very dry. Foundations can also make the soil more alkaline because the cement leaches lime. Sulfur, coffee grounds and tea can be used to make alkaline soils more acidic.

In making a shade garden, loosen compacted soil and add organic matter to keep it loose. Microorganisms help the plants take up water and nutrients, so it can be useful to add them. When using bagged fertilizer, it is best that the K (potassium) number be higher than the N (nitrogen) number. She recommends using fertilizer formulated for holly in early November and again in May.

Sue gave us a handout of her favorite plants for shade emphasizing textures. Fine textured plants include maidenhair, royal and Japanese painted ferns, fringed bleeding heart, *Astilbe*, and *Cimicifuga*.

Plants with medium textures include *Ajuga* 'Chocolate Chip' paired with *Sedum* 'Angelina' and *Lamium* 'Orchid Frost' and 'Pink Chablis.' European ginger likes cooler temperatures, and green-leaved cardinal flowers live longer than those with red leaves. *Hakonechloa* brightens up a dark area, but it is slow-growing. Sue uses *Fuschia* 'Black Cherry' in hanging baskets under trees. At the end of the season she brings them indoors, cuts them back to 3" and completely changes the soil in the pots. She puts them in pots in the basement with no light and waters them about every 3 weeks. Of course, we all think of *Impatiens* in the shade. (Note: I used *Impatiens* in hanging baskets this year with no problem.)

Coarse textures include bleeding heart *spectabilis* 'Gold Heart,' coral bells of many varieties, *Hellebores*, *Caladiums* and lily of the valley. Many varieties of *Coleus*, *Hosta* and *Begonia Rex* fill this niche. Persian shield gives unique color to the shade garden. *Mukdenia* 'Crimson Fans' is quite spectacular. *Ligularia*, *Brunnera*, *Trillium*, and various sizes of *Aruncus* provide textural interest. *Hosta* is a favorite plant for shade, but many people have trouble with slugs eating it. Fertilization will make the leaves thicker and thus less attractive for slugs.

Recommended shrubs for shade include oakleaf *Hydrangea* and red bud hazel which grows well in partial shade with wind protection. Tea *Viburnum* has small flowers with

red leaves and orange berries in the fall. *Fothergilla* 'Blue Shadow' needs a minimum of 4 hours of sun and gives excellent fall color.

Trees for shade include *Amelanchier* that has flowers, berries for the birds and good fall color. Japanese maple is an understory tree, and 'Waterfall' has beautifully sculpted leaves and gorgeous fall color. Kousa dogwood 'Venus' has long-lasting flowers and grows about 25' tall; while 'Wolf Eyes' has small cream and green variegated leaves and grows up to 15." 'Arnold's Promise' is the best of the witchhazels.

—Submitted by Jean Gramlich

Protecting Your Garden from Animals



Julia Hofley gave our November talk on “Take Back Your Garden!” She lives near Maple and Telegraph, a very developed area where deer and bunnies firmly assert that the area is still theirs. Through many bad experiences of having a prized plant eaten to a nub, she has learned how to protect them before they get damaged.

First you need to determine which animal is doing the browsing. Deer do not have front teeth, so their cut is very rough; while bunnies leave a very smooth sharp cut. Bucks rub trees at antler level at this time of year to establish their territory and rub the velvet off their antlers, and they can do considerable damage to the bark. I just witnessed this phenomenon in my son's new yard where deer had rubbed the outer trees of a grove of cottonwoods. We sprayed with a product made of blood with oil, and I expect we will see no more damage. I spray this extensively in the fall, and its repellent power lasts ‘till spring when the deer have other things to eat in the wild areas around my house. Other products made of repellents like garlic and onion are available as well, but I find the blood lasts for months through rain and snow, and other products are more water soluble.

When you buy bedding plants, it is wise and easy to spray them before you put them in the garden and then spray the new growth later on. Julia uses a very small rake to lift leaves to spray underneath the leaves. Be aware of the microclimates in your garden, especially where your bulbs and perennials come up earlier – the critters love a new green buffet after a long winter.

Of course the best way to avoid critter damage is don't plant things they like, although they will change their tastes when you are not looking. But we are gardeners: we look at plants in the catalogs and in the nurseries and decide we just have to have that new variety of *Hosta* or other dessert for the wild things. We then have to take the time and the care to protect them from harm.

Julia showed wonderful pictures of her own garden and others including many varieties that are, indeed, critter-resistant. There are many lists of such plants available in books and on the web. I will name just a few including the evergreens juniper and boxwood. Resistant early spring bulbs include squill, daffodils and species tulips. Shade lovers that critters don't like are *Corydalis*, *Epimedium*, European ginger, ferns, *Hackonechloa*, *Brunnera*, *Astilbe*, *Hellebore* and lily of the valley. Perennials for sun are *Geranium*, *Verbena*, sages, *Allium*, poppies, *Dianthus* and peonies.

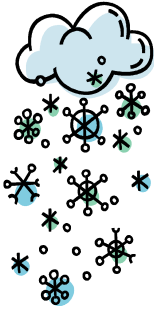
Your choices for ornamentals are to plant flora that the fauna don't like or to keep constantly vigilant and spray, spray, spray. My solution for my vegetable garden is to have a high fence around the area which keeps the deer out. Inside the deer fence, I have a short solar-powered fence which repels bunnies, woodchucks and raccoons so I even get to eat my own corn, peas, lettuce and beans – all favorites of my wild neighbors.

—Submitted by Jean Gramlich



Notes from Nutcase Nursery

Winter 2014



I am hoping it isn't so, but so far it seems that we may have a repeat of last year's fall into winter. We have already been visited by early frigid weather that may have cursed our perennial hope for an easy-going passage into dormancy. Last year, it turned cold early, and, of course you recall, it stayed that way for almost forever. From the lips of the weather prognosticators it sounds like we may be in for a similar winter. Winter weather advisories before Thanksgiving do not bode well, even for the tough citizens of Michigan. And the snow on Halloween should have just been banned on general principles

I am not a big fan of temperatures that veer too far either way from 70 degrees. I find it difficult to deal with the cold; I wear long johns from October to May. But deep-freeze weather at least provides me much-needed closure for the season, even though I can only accept it kicking and screaming and whining. I will doggedly try to work in the "chilly" but I just can't handle the thirties with a wind chill.

The bottom line is this: What didn't get done, just ain't gonna get done. There is no point in beating ___insert name here___ (myself) up for not getting everything "done." It never happens anyway. Actually, it has never happened so there's no sane reason to expect it.

Of course I say the same thing every year. Gardeners never give up --- they cut back.

One of the lessons I've learned in gardening is, if at first you don't succeed, lower your expectations. Okay it's actually not a lesson but a defense mechanism but it's right up there on the list of truths learned from Nature with "don't pick food and put it in your pockets," "weeding never ends" and "it's not a good idea to use your fingernails as tools."

The point is to just do the best you can because those who know say that spring really begins in October - - everything that gets done in the fall sets the stage for the failure or success of the next season. So to combat the darker days, I start with looking at the positive first. I check my list for tasks I actually accomplished. It helps not to judge success by the size of the task unless it's the only one on the list. I have to pick my battles and as much as "re-do the driveway bed" sounds like a wonderful thing, it will only ever happen in small chunks, fits and starts. But I did give myself a muscle spasm patting myself on the back for getting all the peonies cut down, fed and mulched. I'm just not as fast as I used to be.

If, instead of writing "do *Asparagus*," I put down the separate activities that are actually involved in the "doing" of the *Asparagus*, I could cross three things off my list - - cutting them back, feeding, and mulching, just like the peony job. That could be a waste of ink, unless I don't finish the job in one day. Since I usually don't, it helps to break the tasks

into elements since the detail reminds me to go back and finish that particular job. And I get to cross off more things. Many years ago, Himself made the mistake of asking about a list I had with words like oven, roof, furnace, insulation, on it. He has feared lists ever since so he rarely looks at mine. Or his, unless food is involved.

Once the weather has banished me to the inside for the season and I get over the various stages of grief for the gardens, I can devote myself to examining the year's production, as in things that went wrong and things that were right. Many times these exercises don't produce answers but I take note of them just the same, sometimes in pictures.

This year was a very good year for cauliflower here at Nutcase as, traditionally, cauliflower is the biggest pain in the cole family. I don't know why they were so cooperative but neither do I know why the Brussels sprouts produced nothing but little pimples and were only half as tall as they normally are. And the broccoli, which is consistently the most dependable of the bunch, never made anything remotely resembling a head. Last year, the broccoli flowered early, but there was an explanation for that behavior, thanks to an unneeded late August night warm spell. But there was still edible broccoli last year. This year, just leaves. (They're edible as well, but how many broccoli, cauliflower and kale chips can you consume in a season?) As far as the Dingo's favorite, cabbage, was concerned, some became Christmas gołąbki and some never headed, just pretended to.

One thing that makes me feel more positive heading into the Seasonal Affective Disorder season is the fact that, unlike last year, I was able to get several loads of shredded leaves to fill the vegetable gardens with. Last year, every Tuesday in the fall I watched as bags and bags of perfectly wonderful leafage wound up in the back of the yard waste truck because I was not able to carry them off and recycle them. This year I even have bags hidden on the side of the garage where Himself never goes and a neighbor is rumored to be holding several more for me down the street. By loading the carrot patch with shredded leaves I am usually able to pick long into the winter. Last year, the early freeze stopped my picking at the beginning of December so in order to harvest them I had to warm water and thaw the ground to get them out. I had no leaves and I have blamed that for every problem in the veggie patches this entire year. Two inches was all I asked.

I was out harvesting what veggies I could the other day when the Dingo, who dearly loves carrots and who has been seriously hunting since the squirrels were silly enough to return, performed one of her stealth moves and sneaked up behind me. Crouched, with nose to the ground and taking a step only every eight seconds, she happened to catch my eye, on course to intercept something from my pile of carrots. I growled "Don't even think about it!" and she turned around and went back to torturing squirrels, showing nothing that remotely resembled remorse. If she gets the chance she will surely be in the carrot patch digging up anything I might have missed. She has a conscience but blatantly and very vocally lies, mostly about needing cookies. Owners of her particularly strongest breed describe the breed's verbal abilities as yodeling but here we mostly describe it as swearing. There is no mistaking her inflections.

So back to the exercise we used to call “Who Shot John?” at work. What went right out there? All of the questionable material has been removed from the big garden and most of the smaller beds. Diseased materials go to the yard waste bins and not the compost bins. Anything that harbors the possibility of tainting the next crop leaves the premises, hopefully to very hot compost piles. Pea vines and healthy bean plants get chopped up and composted. The Dingo seems to have finally stopped exploring the compost coffin and the only drawback there was she at least turned it for me while she looked for “stuff.”



There was not a big tomato crop but a few quarts of sauce managed to make it to the freezer. The butternuts came in well but I don't ever recall there being enough of them. I even made a batch of butternut tomato sauce which was amazing with ravioli. Butternut bisque is another winter favorite and I am sure I need to score more of them to get through soup season. Never saw an acorn squash plant, which was weird and my little watermelon plants never managed to get any bigger than my hand. I can't blame everything on the Dingo but I am sure she is responsible for some of the disasters. Surely she blames me for having planted in inappropriate and unapproved locations. Right plant, right place, wrong dog.

As a small token of appreciation to myself I ordered two Krossa Regal *Hostas* last spring. They kept mysteriously shrinking so I put wire baskets around them. I was suspecting rabbit munchers but they shouldn't have been able to get into the cages. It had to be something smaller than a rabbit but not slugs. The Dingo was useless as protection and I knew that she was responsible for moving one of the cages as it interfered with some preferred path to one of her bunkers. But it wasn't as if they were puny little transplants. They were well-sized, I know how to plant them and they certainly aren't exotic. I'm too embarrassed to ask for a refund. After all, I couldn't blame the vortices for their demise since they weren't planted until May. There might be one at the Market with my name on it. Or, who knows, come spring the Krossas might just be alive. Hope springs eternal, that's why it's called spring.

While some of the *Hostas* around the willow garden are being trampled due to that area being repurposed as a launch pad during squirrel hunting, some others have managed to have rather intimate relationships resulting in interesting offspring. Ms. Frances Williams apparently has been fraternizing with Big Daddy and the couple gave birth to a plantlet that I am watching very closely as this is how the *Hosta* family has expanded over the years to hundreds, maybe thousands, of varieties. Frances herself was a “sport” in the industry, found in Frances Williams' backyard. (“Sport” is a much more genteel way of saying “mutant.”)

Back to evaluating the good, bad and ugly I discovered that leaving the stems on swamp milkweed is good for bee sheltering. *Baptisia* stems are good as well. I cut all of the milkweed back, partially to avoid a population explosion but left enough stem lengths to be useful. I was lucky to find time to prune the grapevines out of the lilacs and nut trees

(again) and load up a large yard waste can with some of the more obnoxious weeds like creeping Charley. Fall is the best time to treat it in the lawn but when conditions are right it can be unthreaded from open soil fairly easily. The same goes for quackgrass and the longer the pieces the more gratifying the exercise. Feels like an accomplishment to me.

The best way to deal with the “what went wrongs” is to note them, plan a correction and move on. If something didn’t work out, we fix it, rip it out, maybe replace it a couple of times if we really, really loved it and finally deal with the reality that it’s not meant to live in our gardens. Living with critters requires a more relaxed attitude if everyone wants to live happily ever after.

Having gotten only 14 usable beets from a twelve foot row was not entirely my fault. The moles raised by the underground construction undertaken by the power company tunneled in the vegetable garden and when they hit the edging I use to keep the grass out, they made an abrupt turn looking for an escape. Unfortunately they turned left instead of right and lifted the beets instead of bumping into onions. On the positive side, we had lovely greens.

The catalogs started arriving around Thanksgiving and I have been folding the tips of the pages that interest me. Johnny’s Selected Seeds has produced a beautiful edition this year and it’s now almost twice as thick as when it arrived because of the earmarks.

I get to make more lists.

I am not really sure that we even had what is usually known as an Indian summer this year, unless it was the holiday weekend in November. Although my long johns were in the laundry I ventured out and managed to cut the sprouts from below the graft on the Harry Lauder *Corylus*. They had been bothering me for months and I wasn’t able to crawl into the bed deep enough to banish them. They’re now put away for the spring when they might start new lives as teepees for vines. For pea fence, my favorite material is *Buddleia*, with its little arms that the peas love to cling to. But now is not the time to cut.

If there happens to be a lovely day in the near future, I will drag out the mower one more time and suck up the willow leaves that never give up until mid-December. There are always plenty for making willow tea, which I use for rooting hormone. For now, there are all kinds of other gardening entertainments available to me. I just ran into some seeds that I want to winter sow. I stuffed some *Hydrangea* blooms in the pots on the porch. As long as the potting mix doesn’t freeze I can build a display over the coming weeks.

Very few of my tropicals made it outside this summer. The elephant ears were lucky to be carried out and stuck next to rain barrels. One tiny *Caladium* came up in a way too otherwise empty pot and when I thought I had found its pot-mate, I discovered I had made perhaps a fatal mistake. I saw sprouts, lots of them, so I watered. I thought *Caladiums* would be delightful in the house for the winter months. I expected each pen-shaped sprout to begin showing color any minute but they just kept getting taller and staying green. Turns out they’re *Calla* lilies and there’s no way they’ll ever get the light

they need in the house. I saw some at the grocery store the other day and I never used to see them until Easter and I thought they were crazy for selling them.

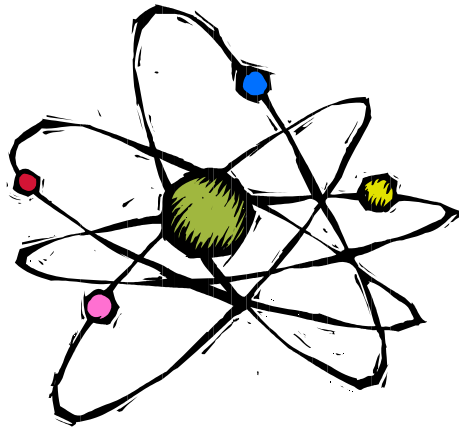
I took the one surviving yellow *Brugmansia* from last year outside in June and nestled it in the four o'clocks. I forgot about it until I tripped on it cleaning up and as soon as it came in, it sulked. There wasn't time to ease it in because a freeze was coming and leaving it by the dryer vent just wasn't going to cut it.

There's plenty of gardening to do. The holiday cacti should be budding. I could probably use a couple of sticky traps, and there are greens markets to be checked out. And of course I must make the usual amends to rest of the houseplants that were not so nurtured during the summer.

One last note: I don't know about you but I have been finding it harder and harder to find the seeds I like locally. Selections last year were very sparse compared to years previous. Keep an eye out and if you happen to know where to find good variety, share the info at an MG meeting.

Have a safe holiday season, especially while cleaning your tools, a great New Year and wish Sylvia Happy Birthday on December 31st.

A New Year's Resolution: never trust an atom - - they make up everything.



Some Information You Should Know

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President: Margy Truza.....(248)644-3560
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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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March 15 for April/May issue
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November 15 for December/January issue

To help reduce mailing expenses, if you have Internet access we encourage you to read Roots & Shoots online at the Master Gardener Society website www.mgsoc.org.

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