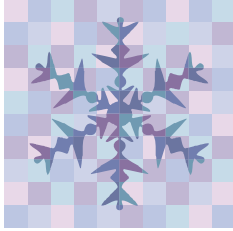


Roots & Shoots



Master Gardener
Society
of Oakland County



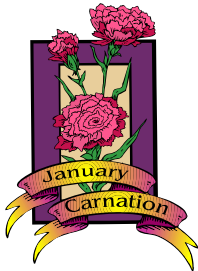
December 2008 / January 2009



December 9, 2008 @ 6:30pm
MGSOOC General Society Meeting & Location

“Holiday Potluck”

**Location: Beautiful Savior Lutheran Church
5631 North Adams Rd, Bloomfield Hills, MI 48304**



January 6, 2009 @ 6:30pm
MGSOOC General Society Meeting & Location

**Beautiful Savior Lutheran Church
5631 North Adams Rd, Bloomfield Hills, MI 48304**

Speaker : Michael Saint–Education: “Winter Interest in the Garden”

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



February 10, 2009 @ 6:30pm
MGSOOC General Society Meeting & Location

**Beautiful Savior Lutheran Church
5631 North Adams Rd, Bloomfield Hills, MI 48304**

Speaker : Janet Schenk–Education: “Pruning”

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

Master Gardener Society of Oakland County's December Potluck



This year's Holiday Potluck Meeting will be held December 9th, 2008. The event will be held at the Beautiful Savior Lutheran Church, in the front hall. The address is 5631 North Adams Road, Bloomfield Hills, MI. This is located just south of Square Lake Road on Adams.

This meeting is different from the others as that there will be entertainment, singing holiday carols and the tables will be laden with delicious food. All guests must bring a dish to be shared. This could be your time to shine. Please bring your specialty. The society will provide turkey, ham, and beverages.

Those who desire may bring a generic \$10.00 gift to exchange. Participation is voluntary.

This year we will be holding a can food drive (or any non-perishable food) for the Gleaners food bank and a gift drive for the Haven Shelter. Haven is a non-profit agency that supports families of domestic violence in its shelter. Families who have received services this year are eligible to go 'shopping' to select gifts for each member of their household.

Gift ideas include: Badly needed teen gifts – gift cards to Kohl's, Old Navy or Blockbuster, clothing, games, electronics, teen stocking stuffers – nail polish, jewelry or key chains.

Other items needed include:

Gift cards – Kroger, Sam's Club, Meijer, Target, CVS, Rite-Aid.

Presents for Infants (2-24 months): Clothing (6-9 months, 12 months, 18 months, 2T) Diapers, wipes, diaper pails, blankets, crib sheets, bibs, bottles, bath toys, stacking toys.

Presents for Younger Children (3-6): Clothing (3T to 6X) – coats, boots, shoes, slippers, dolls of all races, puppets, Matchbox cars, Lego's, action figures, Tonka trucks, Leapfrogs, board games.

Presents for Older Children (7-12): CDs, CD players, Craft kits, jewelry/bead kits, art supplies (stickers, paints, modeling clay), Model planes, robots, radio controlled cars.

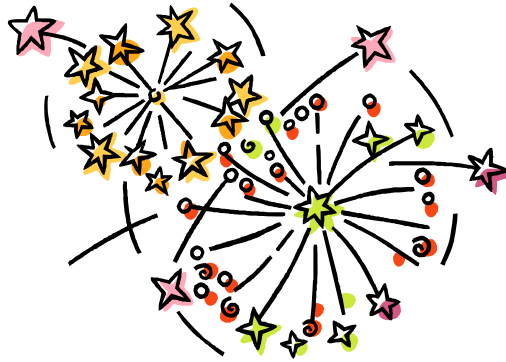
Presents for Parents: Dishes, pots & pans, cooking utensils, bake ware, silverware, toasters, coffee makers, picture frames, photo albums, candles.

If you have time to help with any of the prep or clean up activities, you can contact me either via email or phone at the information below.

Look forward to seeing you there!

Christine Covell

Phone: 248-568-7089 Email: ccovell@sbcglobal.net



Congratulations to the 35 people who just completed the Fall 2008 MG V Training class! Please make them feel welcome when you see them at various volunteer activities and the MGS OOC meetings.



Carol's Corner



The deadline to Re-Certify is December 31 and it's approaching fast. The yearly requirements for re-certification are 15 volunteer hours and 5 educational hours. Please try your hardest to get your hours in to our office by the deadline or better yet, a little before the deadline! If you haven't tried the online reporting, maybe now's the time. Cathy Morris can give you the web address, your personal login and password. If you want to give it a try call Cathy at 248-858-1639 or email her at morrisc@oakgov.com. Cathy is a part-time employee and is usually in on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 7:30am-6:00pm. If you can't contact her when she's in the office, leave a message for her any time and she will get back to you when she's in.

The October 11th Herb Extravaganza class was a huge success with 58 people in attendance. Comments ranged from "Great Presenters" to "This should be a weekend long conference"! The Oakland County MGVP would not be able to offer these classes without the Continuing Education Committee. At our monthly meetings we decide on the programs to offer based on what you told us a few years ago in an online survey. Then we brainstorm possible presenters and it takes off from there. Committee members are fully engaged in the process and even spend time in their kitchens making incredible snacks for the events! **Continuing Education Committee members are Mark Boynton, Peter Bray, Janet Downey, Sherry Gaines, Barb Near, Mary Jo Showalter, and Nora Wojciechowski.** All who attend our programs agree they do a great job! If this sounds like something you'd like to be involved in, please contact me for further information. Next year we look forward to bringing you a composting class, an herb class incorporating culinary herbs, seed saving, and a garden tour.

Lastly, I want to thank all of you on behalf of all of us in the Oakland County MSUE office. It is a privilege for me to be a part of this great Oakland County MSUE Master Gardener Family. Your giving nature and fun-loving spirit inspires me. Thank you and have a wonderful and safe holiday.

Winter 2009 Master Gardener Volunteer Training Class Schedule Thursday's 6:00pm-10:00pm

The classes are now held in the Oakland County Executive Office Building Conference Center at 2100 Pontiac Lake Road in Waterford. It is just east of the Oakland County Farmers Market.

Date	Subject	Instructor
January 8	Introduction Native Plants	Carol Lenchek Ruth Vrbensky
January 15	Plant Science	Mary Wilson
January 22	Soils Science/Composting	Kristine Hahn
January 29	Woody Ornamentals	Mary Wilson
February 5	Water Quality Invasives	Bindu Bhakta Carol Lenchek
February 12	Household Pests	Gretchen Voyle
February 19	Vegetable Culture	Bill Pioch
February 26	Plant Health Care/Diagnostics	Terry McLean
March 5	Flower Culture	Jenny Burrows
March 12	Backyard Fruit	Jenny Burrows
March 19	Lawn Care	Kevin Frank
March 26	Indoor Plants/Propagation	Carol Lenchek
April 2	Volunteering/Potluck	Carol Lenchek

You can claim 2 (full credit) educational credits if you'd like to sit in on some of the classes. Please call Linda Smith at 858-0887 before you come to make sure we haven't changed the schedule.

Announcing Major Changes for the Master Gardener Society of Oakland County

The MGSOOC announces very important changes in venue and meeting dates for 2009. Please be sure to keep the following information for future reference.

In order to better accommodate our members, we are pleased to announce that our meetings for the coming year will be held at the Fellowship Hall of **Beautiful Savior Lutheran Church** located at **5631 North Adams Road** in Bloomfield Hills, Michigan. We have outgrown the space at the Extension Office and Bowers Farm. We have had a few meetings this year at this new location and have been very pleased with the facility. It is “just around the corner and down the street” from Bowers Farm and the site for the Holiday Potluck, December 9th, 2008.

The change in venue does have a consequence in that meetings will be held on the **first Tuesday of the month** except for the months of **February, May and December**. For those months the meetings will be held on the second Tuesday. The meeting time will not change and continues to be 6:30 p.m. We had hoped to only change location and not the day of the meeting but the facility is booked on Wednesdays. We hope that this does not adversely affect anyone’s attendance.

MGSOOC MEETING SCHEDULE FOR 2009

January 6	July 7
February 10*	August 4
March 3	September 8
April 7	October 6
May 12*	November 3
June 9	December 8*

***Denotes Second Tuesday of the month**

Green Roofs



John Scholten of LiveRoof LLC gave a history of green roofs and discussed the current technology used in our midwestern climate. Sod covered huts have been used for hundreds of years in Europe, and sod houses were nestled into the sides of hills in our Great Plains states. A green roof is defined as a contained green space on top of a structure. There are three basic systems currently in use: intensive with soil depth of 12” or more used on large buildings, extensive with soil depth of 6” generally used on houses, and semi-intensive with soil depths between 6 and 12 inches.

There are many advantages to having a green roof, including aesthetics. A garden just plain looks better than tar and shingles and allows for expanded use of the roof space on a flat roof.

Environmental factors are paramount in considering what kind of roof to put on a building. Storm water management is much improved by a green roof that can absorb an inch of rain in 24 hours. All that water does not run off the roof into the storm drain and overwhelm our wastewater management system. Green roofs do not radiate heat as do conventional roofs, and thus reduce the urban heat island effect. Green roofs also reduce noise and act as a fire retardant. Green roofs also create habitat.

Although green roofs cost more initially, in the long run they save money. Roof life is 40-60 years. In summer there is a 25-50% cooling cost reduction for the floor just below the roof; in winter the reduction of heating costs is 10-25%. Green roofs earn points for LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) certification, and renters may be willing to pay higher rents for LEED certified space.

There are various systems for installing a green roof. The conventional system involves putting on 7 layers and then planting plants that will then spread to full coverage in 3-5 years. In the mat system, the plants are grown off site and rolled onto the roof like sod (the Ford Rouge plant). In the modular system, plants are grown in a special soil medium in modules (2x4 or 2x2) in the field and then delivered to the roof. It takes 8-12 weeks to grow the plants from cuttings.

A roof is a very difficult growing environment for the plants, so very hardy drought-tolerant plants are used: the plants used can thrive on only 1” of rain per month. Various kinds of sedums, alliums and sempervivums are the plants of choice for our climate. There are many variations in foliage color, bloom time and color as well as winter interest. Native plants generally would not survive on a roof because they don’t usually store water well, rather they rely on deep root systems to survive drought.

A green roof is 30 pounds per square foot heavier than a normal roof. A 2” slope in 12” is easy; a steeper slope possibly requires some alteration to prevent slippage and may need more irrigation (rainwater will run off faster). Plants and installation of the plants cost about \$14-20 per square foot.

Websites with more information on green roofs: www.greenroofs.org and www.greenroofs.com.

—Submitted by Jean Gramlich

Master Gardener Society of Oakland County Board Meeting Minutes: August 18, 2008

Secretary Report: Minutes from previous board meeting were presented

- **Motion:** R. Vrbensky moved to accept minutes of May 19, 2008. S.T. McLarty support. Approved.
-

Treasurer Report: J. Gramlich presented.

- **Motion:** R. Vrbensky moved to approve the Treasurer’s report. S.T. McLarty support. Approved.

Hospitality: Chris Covell as the new Hospitality Team leader. Thank you to Pat Banaszek for a job well done

Bower’s Farm: 90 pounds of produce have been donated to Yad Ezra to date.

Corresponding Secretary: Margaret (Margy) Trusa is new Corresponding Secretary. Thank you to Diane Rix for a job well done

Adjourned: 9:17 pm.

🔗 All reports and submissions are available to every member, upon request, from the Secretary

Education: 0 hours

Meeting: 2.0 hours

Hummingbirds



Allen Chartier, Program Director of Great Lakes HummerNet, spoke to us about hummingbirds in Michigan for our November membership meeting. His research project started in 2001 with the aim of getting more information on the arrival and departure dates, nesting cycle, migration routes, longevity, returns, and population cycles as well as to document rarities.

The ruby-throated hummingbird is the only species that breeds in eastern North America, but their nesting cycle is not well known. They winter in southern Mexico, but we need more information about their migration routes. Some researchers estimate their population at about 7 million. Capturing and banding birds is the major way we are learning more about them. There are about 100 certified hummingbird banders in the U.S. Many observers also help by reporting arrivals and departures and estimating the numbers of birds at their feeders.

The earliest recorded arrival in Michigan is April 8, and the latest observation was on November 26. Research tells us that the mortality rate in the first year is 80%, and the average life span of adults is 3-4 years. The oldest recorded adult was 9 years old.

The females are bigger than the males and do not have the characteristic ruby throat. Males mate with as many females as possible and take no responsibility for caring for the babies. They nest on the edges of woods, and the nest is the size of a 50-cent piece. When the babies fledge, they are as big as adults (about 3 grams), and it can be difficult to differentiate males from females at this stage of development. Banders take careful measurements and try to determine the sex and age of the bird.

Nest predators include squirrels, raccoons, blue jays and grackles. Sharp-shinned hawks sometimes catch adults. Infrequent predators are praying mantises and large spiders.

Humans affect populations by habitat destruction and feeding. Feeders should be put out on April 15 and removed two weeks after the last bird is observed. Feeders should be placed at varying heights (no lower than waist high) and distances from the house. The formula for feeders is 4:1 water and plain white sugar with NO RED STUFF. Feeders should be cleaned frequently – up to every other day when the temperature is 90.

Gardeners can accommodate hummingbirds by planting flowers that will bloom all season, especially native plants. Recommended plants include lobelia, fuchsia, monkey flower, blue vervain, butterfly milkweed, horsemint, Indian paintbrush, obedient plant, turtlehead, wood betony, penstemon, columbine, Virginia bluebells, bee balm, jewel weed, trumpet vine, coral honeysuckle and hosta. Hummingbirds get their protein from insects, so it is important not to use pesticides.

Although ruby-throats are the only hummingbirds that breed in Michigan, other species are observed on rare occasions. Rufous hummingbirds are the most commonly observed, and sightings of them have increased since 2000. Broad-billed, green violet-ear, calliope, Anna's, black-chinned and Allen's hummingbirds have all been observed in Michigan.

Allen maintains a website www.amazilia.net/MIHummerNet, and he can be reached by email: amazilia1@comcast.net.

—Submitted by Jean Gramlich

Stranger In The Night

Over a year ago one of my neighbors, Lynn, who is a Master Gardener herself, told me that if I ever had a chance to go see her neighbor's very unusual plant, that I should do it, and that she would tell me, the following year, when would be a good time to go and see this plant. I asked her what was so special about this plant, and she said that telling me would spoil the mystery of it all, and so I forgot all about it.

It wasn't until the end of August that Lynn called me and said that I should contact her neighbor, John, right away, because this particular plant had a short and unusual life. Knowing that she would not steer me wrong, I proceeded to call John. He was very cordial, and said that I could come over to his house and see his plant anytime after 11:30 p.m.! What? Around midnight to see a plant? Now, this had captured my interest. I told John that my husband and I would be out to dinner that evening, but we would love to stop by on our way home. John said that he was looking forward to our visit.

In the dark, as my husband and I walked around the back of the house, a most delicate, fragrant aroma filled the air. So pungent but so beautiful. As we walked towards the patio area, a light was on and John came out to greet us. He took my husband and me over to two huge, ungainly, potted plants that were about four feet tall. They certainly were ugly-looking with all kinds of shoots going off in all directions and with big, thick elongated leaves. We certainly weren't impressed with these plants until John brought us closer and pointed to a pair of beautiful, white flowers. They were bursting with fragrance and stunning to see. What was amazing was that these flowers were in full bloom in the middle of the night! How odd. John went on to tell us that we were witnessing the blooming of the Night-Blooming Cereus which was a succulent plant belonging to the cactus family, and that it only flowers for one night and by morning wilts and is gone forever. Amazing! John said that with this plant you have to keep a constant vigilance, or it could bloom and die without you knowing it!

I learned so much that night from John about this oddity in our part of the country. The Night-Blooming Cereus starts out as a very small reddish bud. It takes formation by a leaf on a stem. Initially the stem and bud face downward, but over the course of several weeks, the elongated stem begins to grow upward and the bud begins to swell causing petals to develop. As an observer, one must be patient as it takes several weeks for the

actual blooming to occur. But when it does, the blooming is amazing. It will begin around 9 or 10 p.m. and take about one and a half hours for the flower to reach full bloom. The exquisite creamy-white flower is about 4” to 6” inches in diameter and the spiky petals can be 8” long. The flower’s perfumed fragrance is divine! But as time pushes forward into morning, the Night-Blooming Cereus begins to wilt and by daybreak, this magnificent flower is gone. The cycle of life in just a few hours.

Well, my husband and I certainly did enjoy seeing this lovely stranger in the night, and now we understood why it was such a spectacle to see... something in nature that not many people could say that they have witnessed. As we left, John gave me a start of the plant. He told me that since the Night-Blooming Cereus was a desert plant, all I would have to do was stick the stem in some dirt, water it and let it go. Well, I did and in two years you can all come over to my house to get a midnight view of my Queen of the Night.

If you are interested in learning more about this unique plant, I recommend that you Google search “Night-Blooming Cereus”, or *Peniocereus greggii* (*Cereus greggii*) as there is more information and also some great pictures and time-lapsed photography.

—Submitted by Sandra Debicki

The Big Tree Hunt



It was a glorious fall day—Indian Summer. There was a bright sky and the sun warmed our faces as we trekked through a Parkway parcel of land in Harrison Township, our steps as light as our hearts. Teri Landis, Jim Keehn, Herb Lorentz, Barb Bollin and myself were on the hunt for the big oak tree that had been patiently awaiting our arrival to be registered officially in the annals of history. As we walked, I thought about the circumstances that brought us here.

I had been contacted by Barb Bollin and Jim Keehn of the Harrison Township Environmental Committee and asked to help with their project. They were interested in having a large oak tree measured and recorded in the Michigan Big Tree Registry. A former member of the committee who was a retired DNR officer had estimated that the tree was 150 years old. This really piqued my interest as a Certified Arborist. How Fun!!!

After contacting the Michigan Forest Association and the Arborists Society of Michigan, I received the details about a contest that occurs every two years to register the elder statesmen of trees. Famous and historical trees of Michigan are sought out for their contributions in history, “Recording and preserving these wonderful living recorders of history is part of our culture and is important part of the heritage of Michigan,” according

to Kevin Sayers, coordinator of the DNR's Urban and Community Forestry Program. The program is a part of a national documentation effort that has been ongoing for many years.

The first sighting of the majestic tree was incredible. But we went right to work measuring the girth of the tree, making sure that the measurement was taken at breast height (4.5' above ground). It was a whopping 205" around. With 4 of the committee members being strategically placed at north, south, east and west on the compass, we then measured the spread of the crown which averaged 94'. In measuring the height, there were three measurements taken by two people with two different methods. The measurements were then averaged and the average height was determined to be 129'.



As you can see here, the tree did show signs of its age in loss and damage to limbs. A tree of this age and size also showed the type of growing conditions it had endured over the years. The committee members mentioned that the land had once been a farm. At that time, the tree probably enjoyed much less competition for light, water and nutrients than it has today.

We also gathered twigs and leaves (as they fell from the tree), as well as acorns. These were later used to positively identify the tree as a *Quercus macrocarpa* or Bur Oak. Back at the office I also found a method of estimating the age utilizing a chart with species of trees. Using the formula given, I calculated the tree age to be approximately 261 years old! Of course, there's no way to determine the accuracy of the formula or calculations without chopping down the tree—and we surely would NOT want to do that!!! It was truly a joy to be involved with this venture. Now I ask you—do you know of a tree that deserves to be registered? Contact me, please at karen@plantscapeconsultants.com. I hope to hear from you.

—Submitted by Karen Auch



Dandelions And Related Topics



If you weren't familiar with the dandelion, and someone described its uses and benefits – food, drink, medicine, and beauty – you would exclaim, “This is the queen of wildflowers. Let's cultivate lots of them”. And that's just what our ancestors did. This isn't a native American flower. European settlers brought it with them because they couldn't imagine living without it. Indeed, many – I would say most – of the wildflowers of our roadsides and pastures (but not woodlands) were brought from Europe for their culinary and medicinal value.

Dandelion wine is made from its petals. Making wine is one of those useful rural arts that we have almost entirely handed over to commerce. In the spring dandelions provide tender leaves for salads and later for vegetable greens. I read that the crowns of blanched leaf stalks, just above the root, make a fine salad. The roots, dried and roasted, are ground up into coffee. In the part of England where I come from (Lancashire), they make a popular drink out of the roots of dandelion and burdock. Dandelion honey is valued highly. The culinary uses are not second best to more familiar counterparts; dandelions are delicately flavored and full of minerals and vitamins. It goes without saying that any you collect for culinary use should not come from lawns that are treated with weed killers. Last year I noticed someone at the Bower's Farm community garden had grown dandelions, I suspect that they were “Italian dandelions”, which are available in seed catalogues. However these are really chicory (*Chichorium* sp.), not dandelions (*Taraxacum* sp.). The leaves of chicory and dandelion are very similar. That reminds me that the word dandelion refers to the shape of the edge of its leaf; it is a corruption of *dent-de-lion*, which-translates as tooth-of-lion.

Talking of names, the dandelion's botanical name is *Taraxacum officinale*. The word “officinale” in a plants name means that it's medicinal, part of their recognized Pharmacopoeia. And the genus name “*Taraxacum*” means “remedy disorder”, or much the same thing. Not surprisingly, the dandelion's medicinal uses are, or were, legion. A spring tonic is made from dandelion. Just the sight of a dandelion provides a tonic after a long winter. It's also a remedy for heartburn, urinary infections, and jaundice. And it's a diuretic ~ English schoolchildren call it piss-in-bed. Much of this comes from Pamela Jones's *Just Weeds'* (1991).

If you put aside a lawn cultivator's loathing for the dandelion for a moment, you must admit that it has a handsome flower. Its joyous sunburst appearance makes it the equal of any other spring flower. There are similar flowers – red-seeded dandelion, fall dandelion, and cats ear – but the common dandelion outshines them all. So why do we wage chemical warfare against this useful, beautiful wildflower, risking the health of children, pets, and many kinds of life in the soil? The root cause, of course, is that dandelions are supremely successful in lawns. They are not so happy elsewhere, but they do out compete

lawn grass, especially when we cut it short. And we, rugged individualists all, feel intense social pressure to stop our dandelions from invading our neighbors' yards.

What about ways of controlling dandelions without poisons? Digging out the roots is one way, especially if you try dandelion coffee and decide you like it. Another way is change the chemistry of the soil under your lawn. J.L McCaman, in *Weeds and Why They Grow* (1994), identifies the dandelion's preferences: (a) very low calcium, (b) very high potash, and (c) poor decay process. This suggests every fall you should apply calcium to your lawn and give it a top dressing of compost to help the decay process: Soft rock phosphate is a good calcium source, its pH is neutral. Removing potash is more difficult. First test the soil under your lawn to be sure the potash is high. If it is, then use gypsum as your calcium source. Gypsum is calcium sulfate; sulfur and sulfates help counteract excess potash, The ultimate solution is not to have a lawn. You might wish to think about native grasses (lawn grasses are European species, even Kentucky bluegrass). Tallgrass prairie grasses are native to Michigan. They include such elegant grasses as big bluestem, Indian grass, switch grass, bottlebrush, and little bluestem. Native grasses provide a great deal more interest than a lawn. Their deep roots improve infiltration of rainwater enormously and enhance the decay process, Native grasses and wildflowers don't need watering, they hate fertilizer, they thrive on poor soil – and dandelions wouldn't stand a chance.

—Submitted by Peter Bray



Notes from Nutcase Nursery



I've really come to appreciate autumn much more these past few years, even though its arrival is the hallmark of my malady, SADM (Sadly, Autumn Depresses Me) which is very similar to SAD, aka Seasonal Affective Disorder. I am learning to enjoy the fall more now because I see things with an eye completely altered from the one I use to view spring.

Spring is a mad dash. Spring into action. That must be the reason for the name of the season. The lists of chores are long and urgent. As in fighting crabgrass, if you miss a window of opportunity, you pretty much blow it for the entire season. But fall is different. Fall is the downhill. Fall is the time of the season when you can take a deep breath, taste the chill, look at your jobs list and laugh your fool head off because it's too late to worry about most of it. It's a very freeing feeling. You do what you can, when you can, per Scarlett O'Hara's philosophy --- "tomorrow is another day."

If the weather has been cooperating and Mother Nature sees to the watering politely, weeding is easily a most rewarding occupation. Every weed gone in the fall is one less needing to be pulled in the spring. And, it's a sincerely suitable concession to "The List" leftover from much earlier in the season since the job of weeding most surely was on it, eight or nine times. But the view is so different at this time of year. Whether on your knees, perched on a bucket or crate, yoga-style Buddha-butt-on-a-blanket, or bending illegally from the waist, you see things with an objective detachment, a surgical sobriety that allows you to evaluate your garden beds and landscape without all the exuberant cheerleading that effervesced from you in spring.

As you prune and deadhead, or collect seeds and take cuttings, every view is honest. Yes, this is exactly what things look like in a season. Who would have ever imagined that campanula was so capable at innocuously insinuating itself in an area? Easy enough to pull, but loves to fill in a space with its little lobed designs. I can pull quite a few without worrying that everything might die during the winter. I am an adult. In spring I am at best a pre-teen, unable to part with the volunteer plants as if they were stuffed animals overcrowding my bedroom.

And while I crawl around on my hands and knees weeding my way to Wyandotte, I have to wonder why any self-respecting fernleaf bleeding heart (*Dicentra eximia*) would set up a homestead underneath a yew and blossom into a beautifully formed, delicate yet thick specimen that likely never did bloom but obviously enjoyed its spot. I am fascinated at some of the locations in which plants set up residence. The beauty part of getting down and dirty at this time of year is that you have the wisdom of the previous months to process and evaluate the situation before you. Go back to the bleeding heart for a second. I know that the plant inside the yew was a child of the few in a bed two feet to the north. They lived in a part shade/shade world. But they never approached the size of the

specimen inside the yew. Their color was a little brighter but, other than that, no remarkable differences between the two. While I was eye-to-eye with the caged Dicentra, I realized that it had set up its home-stead in a place where it couldn't be bothered. For all practical purposes, the yew became a castle wall, protecting the light and airy fairy princess of a plant. The more I thought about it, the more I wondered if crowding in the first bed had anything to do with its demise there. After all, a vase-shaped plant needs a space that's very different from bottom to top. Its base takes up little area but as it grows upward it aims outward at roughly a 45 to 60 degree angle. Many a vase-shaped or fountain shaped plant or shrub cascades over itself in finale when it reaches the proscribed height.

But I digress, as usual. In fact, I digress in my chores as well.

While I was cleaning up the bed that the bleeding heart escaped from I found a piece of daylily sprawling on top of the soil underneath a peony that I had started cutting down. Leaving my tools, stool and weed bucket, I went off to find a spot to return the little piece of daylily to the soil. Big mistake. I wandered "the estate" from bed to bed, searching for a suitable site. Cruising past the vegetable garden, I noticed that there was broccoli in need of harvesting. I made a mental note to come back. Maybe I should just put the daylily in a pot and dig it in for the winter and deal with it next year. Okay, find a pot. Head to the potting bench and discover that those already planted were in need of watering. On to the rain barrel to fill the watering cans. Realizing that if the pots in the back needed watering, the ones on the porch probably did too. So I took off my gloves and set them on the back step, thinking I would surely remember where I left them. If not, I could count on the dog to find them except that she has been losing her vision. But of course, that didn't occur to me at the time because she is compensating very well. By this time I have no idea where I had left the piece of daylily. While I watered the pots in front, I remember that the half barrel with the fountain in the center of the strawberry box also needed topping off. So, I head back to that area which of course is almost the farthest point away from where I was. I fill the barrel to the brim and notice that there are plenty of weeds amongst the strawberry plants. Of course my gloves and tools are somewhere else. Back to the driveway bed. I grab my bucket and my garden knife but where were my gloves? The peony is still only half pruned but that doesn't bother me yet. What I don't like is the way I planted some little bluestems and a heuchera, next to the peony. It's backwards.

So I head to the tool rack to get the transplant shovel still keeping an eye out for my gloves. I pass the birdseed and decide the feeders need refilling. You might as well clean the dirty one before the refill. I can soak them in the sink for a while and fill them later. On the way in the back door I find my gloves. This is good. I take them inside and set them on the counter. While filling the sink I realize that the hummingbird feeders are still hanging out by the shed so I head back outside to retrieve them. They should never be put away for the winter dirty. So it's back to the poles where the hummingbird feeders are which happens to be very near the strawberry box. Here I am again. This time I am amazed at the number of rose campion seedlings in the heavily mulched path that meanders past the box. I start to pull a few out and they come out very easily but I decide

I could remove many at once with the garden fork. No time for that right now. Put in on the list. Take down the feeders, carry them to the house and put them in the sink. But they must be disassembled to be cleaned properly. Finally getting them apart everything is now soaking. What was I doing before I started this? That's right I was supposed rearrange the bluestems and coral bell. The shovel is still in the tool rack; gloves still on the kitchen counter. I finally collect what I need and finish the transplanting. What was I doing before that? Oh right, the weeds in the strawberry box. Perhaps I really do have Attention Deficit Disorder.

Not only are there weeds but also many, many volunteer corydalis, a few butterfly weeds, dill, forget-me-nots and a really nice variegated catmint. Just pull the weeds. No time to pot up the volunteers. Then I notice the zinnias growing in the raspberry patch at the back of the garden. I should make a bouquet for inside because these beauties are only going to last till the frost hits them. Of course I didn't bring my scissors because I didn't need them to weed. Back out front, get the scissors. Pleased with my zinnias, I wander around looking for more stuff for the arrangement.

The white Whirlwind anemones would look beautiful in the vase with the other flowers. There are at least eight daylily plants that need to be cut back in the same area and I am in possession of my scissors. Take the flowers to the house, put them in the vase on the back step, get a bucket and trim the daylilies. The sun is starting to set. I need to get back to my original cleanup job out front. This is doable before dark. So I return to the driveway bed where the peony is still half-standing and realize that there are a several irises that I dug out to make room for the bluestems and coral bell that needed to be replanted before winter. I don't have my knife because I left it in the strawberry box when I stopped weeding to cut the bouquet. Here I am again. Retrieve the knife and the bucket and head to the original job site.

Replant the iris. The bed edges really could use some trimming. Return the shovel to the tool rack and grab the weed whacker. Back to the bed. I fire up the whacker and bump it on the grass to feed some line out and the little devil spits out the last five inches of yellow line. Fantastic, the spool is empty. Back to the garage. Retrieve the line. I need to sit down. I take the spool off and wind new line on it and it won't bump and feed. Take it apart. Test it. No luck. Take it apart again. The bumper is sticking. Maybe it needs a lube. Back to the garage and get the WD-40. Give it a quick spray and re-assemble. Still no luck. Perhaps you should give it a better cleaning. I need tools for this. Finally after five attempts and more lube it decides to give in and work.

Well, at least it won't have to be done in the spring. By this time, I need a drink. I go back in the house and there are the birdfeeders in the sink. You need to finish that job before you can make dinner. So now the feeders are cleaned and dried. They really should be filled. I can do this.

Out to the garage for thistle feed. I fill the first feeder and go out to hang it up. As I round the corner, the bottom falls out and I lose all the seed. Turn around, get the broom and the dustpan. I salvage as much as I can and tell myself that whatever dirt I sweep up will

make good grit for the finches gizzards. The mice will eat what's left. As I fill the last feeder, I hear a car horn toot. He-who-fancies-himself-in-charge can't get up the driveway because my compost can is in the way. As the sun sets quickly in the west, I remove the can and check for anything else left in his path. The half cut peony is staring me in the face. I grab the clippers and my stool and quickly clip the remaining stems and stuff them in the can. Time to quit.

I still haven't figured out where that stupid piece of daylily is. And when Himself asks what I did all day all I could say was "You don't want to know."

I think I might be actually looking forward to winter.

Happy Holidays from Nutcase Nursery.

Attention Master Gardener Society of Oakland County Members!

Please check your personal data in the Society Directory so that we can provide the most accurate information for the 2009 edition.

If you have moved, changed your phone number or email address, please forward all corrections to Cathy Morris at the MSU Extension Office. Email Cathy at morrisc@oakgov.com or call (248) 858-1639.

If you have paid your dues and are not listed, please notify Cathy for record verification. As always, this information is not for distribution to anyone but Society members so your privacy is protected.

**Susan Tatus McLarty
MGSOOC Team Administrator**

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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.

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Roots & Shoots is a joint publication of MSU Extension-Oakland county and Master Gardener Society of Oakland County. Submit articles for publication by suggested deadlines below.

January 15 for February/March issue
May 15 for June/July issue
September 15 for October/November issue

March 15 for April/May issue
July 15 for August/September issue
November 15 for December/January issue

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