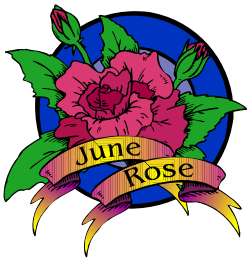
Roots & Shoots

Master Gardener Society of Oakland County

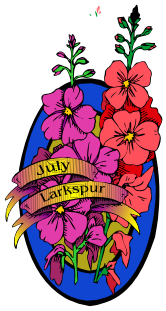
June / July 2008



June 4, 2008 @ 6:30pm
MGSOOC General Society Meeting & Location
Bowers Farm, Alternative School Building, 1219 E. Square Lake Rd.
http://mgsoc.org/Images/Bowers_streetMap.jpg

Speaker : **Bob Koenders**–Education: "Alliums"

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



July 9, 2008 @ 6:30pm
MGSOOC General Society Meeting & Location
Bowers Farm, Alternative School Building, 1219 E. Square Lake Rd.
http://mgsoc.org/Images/Bowers_streetMap.jpg

Speaker : **Anick Hivert-Carthew**–Education: "Emily Dickinson's Garden"

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

August 6, 2008 @ 6:30pm
MGSOOC General Society Meeting & Location
Bowers Farm, Alternative School Building, 1219 E. Square Lake Rd.
http://mgsoc.org/Images/Bowers_streetMap.jpg

Speaker : **Dennis & Susan Ashton**–Education: "Michigan Apples"

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

Carol's Corner

On May 22, 125 of us came together at White Lake Oaks Country Club to honor the Master Gardener Volunteers who earned awards this year. It's a treat to have so many of you in one room to say thank you too!

If you couldn't join us or you attended but were not receiving an award this year, I hope you realize that MSUE is grateful for each and every one of you. We could never have the impact we do without you. You work so hard at whatever volunteer task you take on rain or shine. You give yourself so freely with smiles on your faces. You make all you do seem easy. You inspire me as well as everyone you touch with your advice and/or hands-on help.

The theme for this years' event was ***"In the Merry Month of May".*** As we socialized during the Cocktail Reception we were treated to the wonderful piano music of Carol Tait. We then had a nice sit-down dinner in the elegant surroundings of the Country Club.

The Banquet Committee made whimsical Maypoles for both the table centerpieces and outdoor decorations. I shudder to think what this event would look like if it wasn't for Carla Spradlin, Ellie Ledbetter, Kay Kisell, John Olsen, Jan Stephens, and Marie Tuohey. They all deserve a very special thank you!

So many local stores and Master Gardener Volunteers donated wonderful door prizes we gave out through out the evening. Tellys, Wojo's, and Bogie Lake Greenhouse donated plants for our table centerpieces.

In addition to the Certification Awards and the Hours Pins, a few special awards were given. Beth Brown and Mary Sheipline were recognized for their role as Class Mentors for the winter MGV Training Class and Cherry Lee Baker was given an Appreciation Award for most hours volunteered in 2007 (681!!!) **The evening culminated with Barb Near being named Master Gardener of the Year!**

I know you'll agree with me that this is a very impressive list of honorees.

BASIC CERTIFICATIONS

Barbara Monahan Barrett, Sasha Bialock, Carole Cotter Bodner, Jerry G Branchick, Inge Brieger, Joseph A Carulli, Kathleen B Connolly, Marianne Cotter, Douglas M Crossman, RoseMary Curatolo, Annette Marie Dean, Joanne Marie Dymond, Julie Englender, Anneliese M Freeman, Carl M Fucinari, Mary Rose Griffin, Kathleen Sharon Gunning, Marlene M Haack, Mary Hrynik, Michael Shaye Huler, Kathleen D James, Teresa Ann Johnson, Linda S Keeler, Charles Edward Kemler, Amy Kennedy, Margaret Ann La Vere, Terese Libby, Beth J Lochrie, Don Mahalak, Timothy Mast, Cynthia McAdams, Lisa Lynn McAllister,
Janice McDavid, Andra Meyland, Michaeline T Mills, Paul Needle, Susanne Gail Nicholson, Lee Howard Osborn, Susan Marie Potter, Karen Price, Jeanette Raniszeski, Denise V Raveane, Bonita Ann Reiber, Lisa Rice, Molly Robinson, Susan Leah Rosenhauer, Deborah Schira,

Katherine Schmitt, Mary Schwark, Sally Stevens, Kathy Sweeney, Jackie Trimmer, Marilyn Diane Vala, Sandra Vukonich, Julie Waara, Margaret Wanat, Richard Wanat, Christine Wilder, Jennifer M Witkowski, Megan Ann Young, Priscilla Young

ADVANCED CERTIFICATIONS

Michael Alexander, Nancy Amberg, Jeanette Bak, Linda Becker, Stacey A Bozynski, Marion Cenci, Richard Chutorash, Bill Cichowski, Sue Flanagan, Victoria Gallinger, Nancy Gilboe, Kari Grady, Judith Graham, Catherine Green, Gerald Earl Gross, Dr. Steven Gustafson, Mary Hrynik, Dana Jelsch, Helen Kaiser, Betsy Keidan, Andi Kinor, Kathryn Kisell, Leo Kisell, Laura Leblanc, Susan Libertiny, Penelope Mason, Kerrie McMillen, Samuel Mebius, Martha Montgomery, Paul Needle, Karen J Ng, Ann North, Judith Olson, Stephanie Ann Patil, Karen Price, Susan Rosenhauer, Karen Sadovsky, Andrew Michael Savel, Laura Sheffer, Carol A Shepherd, Andrea Stromar, Rhea Ellen Thomas, Carolyn Lee Volk, Susan Work, Julie Zube

250 HOUR PINS

Pat Banaszek, Sally Bataran, Susan Blaquiere, Bethany Brown, Stacy Buatti, Bonna Cathey, MaryAnn Chupa, Marvin Copley, Jay Cravens, Connie Garbacik, Barbara Grinke, Gerald Gross, Nancy Harkins, Marlene Heimlich, Virginia Howcroft, Jeanne Hribal, Sue Janczarek, Sandra Johnstone, Sherry Jones, Victoria Lang, Beverly LaTurneau, Pamela Marin, Camilla McKinnon, Joan Morgan, Paul Needle, Stephanie Patil, Susan Pepper, Judy Poole, Cheryl Quinn, W Fair Radom, Sylvia Ritchie, Kris Rupprecht, Karen Sadovsky, Jay Shell, Mary Skiba, Carla Spradlin, Janet Stephens, Deborah Tosch, Mary Wente, Kevin Werner, Susan Work, Cathy Young

500 HOUR PINS

Bonna Cathey, Marilyn Citron, Barbara Donahue, Jean Gramlich, Robert Hannah, May Huerner, Judy Jacobs, Marty Krohner, Ann North, Mary Posey, Gary Rose, Fred Rosvold, Janet Schenk, Jackie Seitz, Mary Sheipline, Janice Wheelcok

1,000 HOUR PINS

John Humphrey, Gail Lutzky, Ruth Vrbensky, Janet Zemke

1,500 HOUR PINS

Peter Bray, Denise Jones, Clay Ottoni, Cynthia Reid, Sylvia Schult

2,000 HOUR PIN and 2,500 HOUR PIN

Cherry Lee Baker

Master Gardener of the Year

Barb Near was in the 2003 fall class. Newly (mostly) retired, she promptly put in 123 volunteer hours her first year, building up to 258 hours a year by 2007. Barb sampled a bit of everything from Farmers Markets to Ask a Master Gardener, to Tollgate, to judging at the Oakland County Fair. She is still heavily involved at Tollgate. She is a valued member of the Continuing Education Committee and is the club leader for the 4H Grow Club. Last year she became part of our volunteer diagnostics team on our office garden hotline. Barb is very involved in many of the projects that MSUE directly supports.

TULIPS

Jim Veldheer, owner of Veldheer Tulip Farm in Holland, Michigan was our April speaker. Basic facts about tulips: there are 5365 varieties (!) in 13 groups; bloom time for each variety is 4-14 days (blooms last longer when the weather is cool and moist); in the US the season lasts about 30 days (longer in Europe with its milder climate); height ranges from 4 to 36 inches; and there is a huge variety of colors, not including blue, black and green. Tulips are perennial despite the fact that lots of people rip them out after blooming is finished.

In planning a garden, including one involving tulips, you have to have a vision. Jim starts by thinking about things he hates (for him it's yellow) and automatically eliminating those from the plan. He measures out the plot carefully and places sticks that are the height of the plants he is planning to plant. He takes pictures of the plot. After all this, he "sits and drinks," in other words, contemplates the plot from a relaxing vantage point and corrects any errors. When planting bulbs, consideration needs to be given to how the garden will look after the bulbs have bloomed.

When picking bulbs, you have a choice among a "Yugo, Ford or Lexus." The best bulb is solid, heavy and big for its variety.

Don't skimp on soil preparation! Raised beds are best (but not necessary) because the soil is loose and lightweight and has good drainage. He uses 12-12-12 fertilizer with manure. In the fall, prepare the bed and rake it, then rake it 2 weeks later to prevent pockets that could collect water and rot the bulb. Plant bulbs 6" deep and 6" apart. If using an auger, it is safer to use it with the left hand because if you hit something, it flies away from you rather than up into your face.

In the spring fertilize again – granular fertilizer is ok as long as it does not get in the crotch of the plant; otherwise, liquid fertilizer is safer. Water 1-2" weekly. After blooming, remove the dead flowers so that the plant will put all its energy into the bulb. On the same day, plant annuals around the area and use liquid fertilizer once a week till the leaves turn brown (about 8 weeks). The liquid fertilizer will stimulate fast growth of the annuals, thus covering up the unsightly leaves of the tulips.

If you decide to dig the bulbs, they need to be dried enough to be pulled apart easily, cleaned and stored in a dry place with lots of air circulation. They can then be planted again in the fall.

Sometimes unstable varieties of tulips change color over the years and revert to their dominant parent. Color change can also be due to a foreign chemical in the soil or chemical imbalance.

Deer love tulips, and there is no deer-resistant variety. A spray made with cayenne pepper, Tabasco sauce, and jalapeno juice (ouch!) will deter them. Another cheap homemade deterrent is 6 beaten eggs in a gallon of water putrefied for a week or so in a warm place. It stinks to us briefly but really deters deer as long as it doesn't rain – they don't like the smell or the slimy mouth feel. This year I am going to try adding a commercial product designed to make it stick through rain.

—Submitted by Jean Gramlich

HYDRANGEAS

Joel Miller from Goldner Walsh Nursery gave our May talk on hydrangeas. He brought slides of the various species and cultivars, and the summer-deprived audience oohed and aahed.

Panicle hydrangeas (Hydrangea paniculata) are hardy to zone 3, drought tolerant, sturdy AND deer-resistant. How could anyone ask for more? Oh, they also can be grown in part shade or full sun, they grow fast, and some cultivars can reach 10 feet by 10 feet! The flowers are rounded to cone shaped, starting out white and often fading to blush pink after a long flowering period. They can be used as a cut flower or left on the plant all winter or dried using silica gel. The branch work is coarse as is the brown, ridged and furrowed bark. Green leaves turn butter yellow in fall. The plant should be pruned (up to 1/3 of the plant) in winter or early spring. In the retail trade, they are known as "no-brainer" plants because they are very hardy, long-lived and tough to kill. The most common cultivar is 'Pee Gee.'

Smooth hydrangeas (Hydrangea arborescens) are hardy to at least zone 4. The most familiar cultivar is 'Annabelle' which has huge gorgeous flower heads. Smooth hydrangeas have very herbaceous stem work and sucker freely from the base and grow 3-5' in height and width. If they are not maintained, they can cover a large area. He recommends pruning them down to 6-8" in fall or spring. Their leaves are mint green in spring, darkening in the summer with no real fall color interest. Plants are more compact in the sun but can be grown in the shade as well.

Climbing hydrangeas (Hydrangea anomala subs. Petiolaris) – the "queen of vines" - are hardy to zone 4, thrive in sun or shade and have root-like structures that can climb brick or stone walls, arbors and trees. Although slow to establish, climbing hydrangeas can grow up to 60 feet. Their peeling cinnamon bark and unique 3-D branching pattern give four seasons of interest. A related species that only grows 20-30' is the Japanese hydrangea vine. The flowers and branch work are flatter.

Oakleaf hydrangeas (Hydrangea quercifolia) are hardy to zone 5 and need protection from harsh winter conditions when young. The large, thick leaves are huge when grown in the shade and turn rich purple and burgundy in the fall. The plants are slow to medium growers and thrive in full sun to deep shade. The exfoliating bark of tan and cinnamon provides winter interest. Height and spread are generally 4-6', but there are smaller cultivars available. Unfortunately, deer think they are very tasty. 'Snowqueen' and 'Snowflake' are common cultivars that have large flower heads appearing in June and persisting for two months.

Bigleaf hydrangeas (Hydrangea macrophylla) are reliably hardy to zone 6. My 'Endless Summer' is hardy with protection, but it does die down almost to the ground. Bigleafs will thrive in partial sun to full shade, growing quickly and forming a rounded mound. The flowers are huge beginning in June or July, and color depends on the available aluminum in the soil. Pruning should be done during or just after bloom. 'Big Daddy' (flowers are 12" across!) and the 'City Line' collection are other cultivars.

Hydrangeas generally like acid soil, but many do well in our alkaline soils. If there is no bloom, the soil is too alkaline and can be amended with aluminum sulphate or epsom salts. The most common commercial fertilizer used on hydrangeas is largely made up of chicken manure.

Finding the right hydrangea for your conditions is not difficult, and they will reward you for many years to come. Happy hydrangeas! *— Submitted by Jean Gramlich*

Soil Erosion, The Issue Of The Century?

Climate change has been called "the Issue of the Century". Soil erosion is potentially a more serious problem. A 1995 global review reported that the world was losing 30 million acres of arable land annually because of soil degradation. Lester Brown, whose area of expertise is global food supply, predicts that we will run out of soil before we run out of oil. True or not, this brings us face to face with a more obvious truth. Although the US economy depends on cheap oil, we know that we can adjust to dwindling supplies because in earlier times we managed without oil altogether. Running out of soil, if it ever comes to that, would be a very different matter because we depend on soil for almost everything we eat. I have attended meetings about sustainability where food supply was never mentioned. This amazed me because there can't be sustainability without a sustainable food supply.

Is soil erosion a life-or-death problem? In the past civilizations have collapsed because their soil was denuded by agriculture. Wars for dwindling resources or climate change then led to rapid depopulation. There are examples in the Middle East (where agriculture began about 10,000 years ago), North Africa, Central America, and Polynesia. If the rate of soil erosion on cropland exceeds the rate of soil formation, then the arable soil will be removed – quite soon for shallow soils and much later for deep soils. Erosion might not be visible from year to year, but think of the next 10,000 years – fractions of inches become inches, and inches become feet.

So, to what extent, if any, does soil erosion on arable land exceed soil formation? A 1997 study determined that cultivated land in the US was losing an average 5.6 tons an acre per year. Michigan was losing 4.4 tons an acre a year – 2.0 tons from sheet and rill erosion and 2.4 tons from wind erosion. Losses from pasture and Conservation Reserve Program land in Michigan were an average 0.3 tons per acre. Numbers for rates of soil formation are impossible to obtain, so we have to come at them tangentially. The conventional wisdom for Michigan, based on our climate and soils, is one inch in 100 years -- equivalent to 1.5 tons an acre per year. As a check on the conventional wisdom, a study by Earl B. Alexander called *Rates of Soil Formation: Implications for Soil-Loss Tolerance* (1988) showed soil formation rates in 18 non-agricultural watersheds ranging from 0.1 to 0.9 tons per acre per year. Also, Charles Darwin observed, in *The Formation of Vegetable Mold through the Action of Worms* (1881), that the depth of Roman ruins in England suggested soil formation of one inch in 100 to 200 years or 0.75 to 1.5 tons per acre per year. So the conventional wisdom is in the right ball-park, which suggests that soil erosion from Michigan's cropland could be 3 times as much as the rate of soil formation. The numbers for the rest of the US and for the world at large are probably worse. This doesn't indicate a sustainable food supply for the long term, unless we become much more serious about soil erosion.

We can build soil by adding organic matter -- for a while. Farmers have achieved high rates of soil formation in this way when they restored degraded soil. But there's a limit; you can't keep building soil organic matter for ever -- soil that is 100% organic matter has no mineral content so it isn't soil. However, although increasing soil organic matter wouldn't increase long term soil formation, it would substantially reduce soil erosion because the soil would absorb more water. Much arable land in the US has organic matter as low as 1%. Soil organic matter of 1% will absorb a 1/3 inch rain. Therefore a 2 inch rain, say, would cause considerable run-off and soil erosion on arable land with any slope at all. Soil organic matter of 6% would permit a 2 inch rain to infiltrate with no run-off. Organic farms have soil organic matter of 5% or more because organic farming practice is to increase soil organic matter.

Part of the title of the study cited above is *Implications for Soil-Loss Tolerance.* This refers to the USDA's levels for tolerable soil erosion established for different types of soil in different climatic situations. These play into a conclusion reached in a *Washington Times* article by Julian Simon called

Digging Deeper into the Soil Erosion Scam. To quote from the article, "According to the USDA, only a tiny proportion of cropland – 3 percent – is so erosive that no management practices can help. Seventy-seven percent of cropland erodes at rates below 5 tons per acre per year, the equilibrium rate at which new soil is formed below the surface; that is, most cropland erodes less than the 'no net loss rate'". This is totally at variance with the soil formation data in the third paragraph (above). So what's up? The catch is that the USDA's soil-loss tolerance rates are "the maximum permissible rate of erosion at which soil fertility can be maintained for 20-25 years". This doesn't make much sense in the perspective of the next 10,000 years.

The issue of soil erosion is critical. It didn't concern our forefathers because they simply moved on when their soil wore out. They sailed to the New World or, later, went west. But there aren't many places to move anymore; such soil that isn't farmed already is erosion-prone because it is shallow or is on mountain foot-hill slopes. Until recently farmers slowed soil erosion by including pasture in their crop rotations, by heavy manuring, and by growing winter cover crops the keep bare soil at a minimum. These practices still recommend themselves today. They aren't followed because separating arable and livestock farming and artificial fertility and weed control appear to make economic sense – at present. The forthcoming oil shortage will alter these economics, which just shows that it's an ill wind that blows nobody some good.

One farming practice that is gaining ground is no-till cultivation. In no-till, seeds are placed directly into stubble with special planters. The organic matter at or near the soil surface protects the soil from rain and wind erosion. One problem is that no-till usually requires heavy weed-killer applications. This is because the weed control that would otherwise be accomplished by plowing is absent. But there are organic no-till techniques. The same effect in gardens can be provided by natural mulch. Cover crops are another way of keeping roots in the ground – nearly all year round – and holding soil in place. So it's doable. A research group at Cornell University estimated that it would cost about $6 billion to bring soil erosion rates on arable land in the US into line with soil formation and an additional $2 billion for pasture lands. These numbers appear to be very modest, they are less than the war is presently costing us each week. What's needed is more awareness. David Montgomery in *Dirt, The Erosion of Civilizations* (2007) has this final sentence: "As odd as it may sound, civilization's survival depends on treating soil as an investment, as a valuable inheritance rather than a commodity – as something other than dirt".

—Submitted by Peter Bray

Master Gardener Society of Oakland County
Board Meeting Minutes: March 17, 2008

Quorum present

- **Motion:** R. Vrbensky moved to accept minutes of January 28, 2008. S.T. McLarty support. Approved.
- **Motion:** S.T. McLarty moved to approve the Treasurer's report Jan 28-Mar 17, 2008. J. Gramlich support. Approved.

Old Business:

- **Used Book sale:** Diane Rix: The used book sale was a success. It raised $201.00. The money was applied to Project Support.

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

—Submitted by Ruth Vrbensky

Notes from Nutcase Nursery

Did you ever notice that the words “groan” and “grown” sound alike, have different meanings but are still somehow strangely related?

All through spring clean-up I thought I heard a weird little recording which played in the background during every weeding foray - - - “Oops. Sorry.” You get a kind of rhythm going as you tug out the undesirables and overly friendly self-sown seedlings. Weeding has the ability to produce a Zen-like state in which you might occasionally zone out and unearth something you never intended to. Oops. Sorry.

I was so anxious for the first signs of life in the soil that anything green was worshipped and adored. But the landscape changes daily; if you don’t walk the estate every day, you miss a lot of action. And for every action there must be a reaction from you. Especially after a day-long drizzle following a very dry spring.

Suddenly all the weeds have grown as large as the plants that are cherished. And because of the drought, these unwelcome flora have developed the tenacity of righteous empowerment after that welcomed day of rain. Instead of being mellowed by what should have been a day at the spa for them, the weeds were reanimated as ninja-like super heroes ready to not only stand their ground but increase, multiply and fill the earth.

So your reaction to their action must be relentless. The most important task is weeding. If not now, when? The weeds will take over and then you will have to dig up whole clumps of somebody, like daylilies, mums, daisies or heuchera, and spend time de-threading quackgrass, crownvetch or creeping Charley from the invaded root balls. Not one dancer in this twisted ballet will be happy. Not you, doing the de-tangling, not the plant needing the purge, and certainly not the noxious weed being dispatched, we hope. And there won’t be just one instance of this. You won’t have time to enjoy the garden. You will never get everything on the list done. (That will never happen anyway.)

Noted garden author Tracy DiSabato-Aust tells it like it is: “Ensuring that a bed is free of perennial weeds *before* planting is the first critical step toward weed control. If you are going to skip this step, surrender now! Try to keep up on the weeds or a relatively easy, methodical task can turn into a procrastinator’s nightmare.”

It has grown. You groan. It’s time for guerilla gardening.

While you are dispatching weeds, lift your eyes occasionally. You can get some deadheading done at the same time. For spring bloomers, the time is running short. Cut back iris flower stalks, especially Siberians, to avoid having them spend energy making seeds. If you don’t really need more of them, trim the columbine, especially if leaf miners have made their marks. If the foliage is clean, just cut down the flower stalk. If not, the foliage can be clipped back to a few inches and the plant will flush with new leaves and look much better in the landscape. The chances of a return of the leaf miner are slim because the miners’ time is over for the season. If the bleeding heart (Dicentra spectabile) is already starting to fade, make its demise as painless as possible.

Consider growing this plant in a more shaded, cooler area where it will last until much later in the season.

It's not easy to face maintenance with your head held high. In fact, it comes highly **unrecommended**. There are two very good reasons for this. One is if you hold your head high, you'll miss all the goings-on beneath your feet. The second has to do with flying birds and their ability to multi-task.

This is the time to stake and train, and clip and deadhead. The warmth accelerated many plants during Earth Week in April, The next week was just another bout of Michigan weather with temps in the 30s and 40s. May wasn't much better and the general lack of healing precipitation caused a lot of sulking, mostly by me. Late frosts clipped peonies, twisted echinaceas and generally defaced anything they chose. The traditional "planting of the garden" ritual was met with the equally traditional Memorial Mix --- warmer and warmer temperatures with potential for thunderbumpers. After all, this is Michigan.

Jokes have long been circulated poking fun at Michigan weather. "If your child's Halloween costume is designed to fit over a snowsuit, you probably trick or treat in Michigan." "If you've worn shorts and longjohns in the same day, you probably live in Michigan." "If the Fourth of July parade was postponed on account of frost, you might just live in Michigan." I'm sure there are other states with moody weather.

This year our area experienced a little-known weather phenomenon called "Indian Spring," in celebration of Earth Day no doubt. (The term may no longer be politically correct. I faithfully listened for the weathercasters last fall to use its opposite seasonal term, known as "Indian Summer," and there was hardly a mention of it.) At any rate, I know no other name for the type of weather that is described as a period of time, extending from three to seven days or more, having unseasonable warmth which lulls people into questionable activities. It originally described the behavior of the early settlers who became pixilated by warmer weather, most often after a lengthy and abominably dreary winter, and packed their wagons to head west too early in the season, only to be mercilessly trapped in the highlands by a late winter snowstorm and eaten by mountain lions. Or so I've been told.

While others may find our weather a source of amusement, I find it more fascinating than funny. We have it all. The seasons are distinctive and interesting. Where else can you fish year around in a variety of clothing? Where else can you change your gardening duds four times in a single day? Or rush out at 11:00 p.m. to cover the crops because of an unfair frost advisory and make sure they are uncovered first thing the next day to prevent overheating in the bright morning sun.

When Master Gardeners are invited to work days, we are usually advised to "dress for the weather." No further explanation required. We either arrive ready to garden in "the layered look" or pack a bag. Every gardener has a wardrobe. My favorite duds in the spring are short and long-sleeve shirts to couple with shorts and long pants. Mix and match, coordinated and comfortable, mostly institutional grey, and blessedly cotton.

While we can "dress for the weather," our gardens and beds cannot. Since we can't control the weather, we need to concentrate on dealing with its capriciousness. When foul is in the forecast, here are some suggestions for protecting your investments.

Keep your old cotton sheets to drape over frost susceptible specimens. You should only try plastic shower curtains if you are sure they won't touch what you're trying to protect. Plastic conducts

cold and your plants will be frostbitten anyway. Cardboard boxes are excellent plant covers as are the plastic pots you've collected from trips to the nurseries and markets. Brown paper bags are also very useful. If it's breezy, use some of your prunings as stakes to help secure them in place. Just make sure these are removed the next morning.

Newspaper tents secured by staples or creative folding work very well in emergencies. Use at least 3 sheets for sturdiness and protection. You can also recycle your gallon milk and juice jugs into hotcaps by cutting out the bottoms and keeping the caps. If you cut points at each corner they stick into the soil a little better. These are perfect for covering seedlings and transplants like cabbage and broccoli plants or annuals in jeopardy.

Walls of water are great for not only protecting plants like tomatoes and peppers but also providing season-long hothouse conditions that the plants adore. Heat lovers like tomatoes, peppers and eggplants grown in walls of water develop weeks ahead of plants that are naked. If you don't own wows, you can give these same heat lovers a similar boost by circling them with plastic wrap. If you use tomato cages, this is a fairly easy thing to accomplish when the plants are small. If you stake your plants you need to provide something for the plastic wrap to adhere to instead of the plant itself.

If you don't manage to cover things, there is one last trick you could try. It's not infallible but it's definitely worth the effort when it succeeds. Get out there early in the morning with a hose set on mist and water everything that's grey with frost and then some. The water will melt the frost before the sun hits the plants, which is when the death blow is actually dealt.

But of course as you read this, the season has become a perfect Michigan summer. You will no doubt have the opportunity to try these tools someday, probably about half past September.

Veni, vidi, vici. It has grown. I groan. I have grown. And still am growing.

To contact Nutcase Nursery, email nutcase_nursery@yahoo.com.

Some Information You Should Know

MGSOOC Board Members

President: Tom Hershberger ..... (586)573-3954
Vice President: John Grant.....(248)852-3758
Secretary: Ruth Vrbensky .....(248)969-6904
Treasurer: Jean Gramlich ..... (810)714-2343
Team Administrator: Susan McLarty ..... (248)673-8092

MSU Extension Oakland County Coordinator

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

Team Coordinators

Bowers Farm: Martha Humphrey
mlhgrows@ameritech.net
Project Support: Clay Ottoni ....(248)454-9800
Hospitality: Pat Banaszek ..... (586)677-2048
Membership: Tom Hershberger ..... (586)573-3954
Programs: John P. Humphrey .....(248)542-8213
Trips & Tours: Sandie Parrott .....(248)394-1532
Web Site: Becky Akers
akersrs@hotmail.com

Corresponding Secretary: Diane Rix calrix1@comcast.net

Web Site Address: www.mgsoc.org

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

Mission Statement

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

Michigan State University Extension- Oakland County

"Bringing Knowledge to Life"

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

Beverly Terry…248-858-0885
County Extension Director
Email: terryb@oakgov.com

Mary Wilson…248-858-0887
Extension Educator~Horticulture
Email: wilsonm1@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

Linda Smith…248-858-0887
Horticulture Office Assistant
Email: smithlin@oakgov.com

Cathy Morris…248-858-1639
Clerk & Contact for Certification of Volunteer & Education Hours
Email: morrisc@oakgov.com

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

Lois Thieleke…248-858-0888
Extension Educator~Food & Nutrition
Email: thielekel@oakgov.com

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

The Oakland Gardener only accepts submissions via e-mail. E-mail needs to include a description of request, contact person's name, phone number and email address. This info will be "cut and pasted" into this newsletter.

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 1	for February/March issue	March 1	for April/May issue
May 1	for June/July issue	July 1	for August/September issue
September 1	for October/November issue	November 1	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.