

Roots & Shoots



*Master Gardener
Society
of Oakland County*



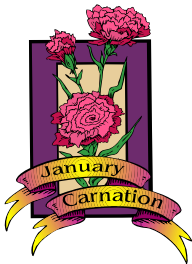
December/January 2006/2007



December 6th, 2006 @ 6:30 pm
MGSOOC Holiday Potluck

Charles Bower Farm - 1219 East Square Lake Road, Bloomfield Hills
Farm Activity Building

Entertainment: Barbershop Quartet called "Antique Roadshow"
Note: Please bring nonperishable items to donate to a local food bank.



January 3rd, 2007 @ 6:30 pm
MGSOOC Society Meeting & Location

General Meeting ~ 6:30 pm ~ Full Credit
MSU Extension Office, 1200 N. Telegraph Road,
Building 26 East, Lower Level Classroom

Speaker: Ms. Shelly Buckman
Education: Three Dimensional Gardening



February 7th, 2007 @ 6:30 pm
MGSOOC Society Meeting & Location

General Meeting ~ 6:30 pm ~ Full Credit
MSU Extension Office, 1200 N. Telegraph Road,
Building 26 East, Lower Level Classroom

Speaker: Deb Lane
Education: Prepare Yourself for Gardening

Deb, as a personal trainer and gardener, will instruct us on the proper stretching techniques associated with year round gardening.



Welcome new Master Gardeners! And a note to all new and returning Master Gardeners – the Master Gardening Society of Oakland County has both general meetings and board meetings that you can attend! Find out more about what's happening with your local Master Gardeners!

General meetings are the first Wednesday of every month at 6:30 p.m. Each month an outside speaker will present a new topic of interest to gardeners. Look for information here in Roots and Shoots. **MGSOOC general meetings are listed on page one (above)**, or contact MGSOOC. Here are a few of our Board Members:

President	John Humphrey	248-542-8213
Vice-President	Tom Hershberger	586-573-3954
Secretary	Ruth Vrbensky	248-969-6904
Treasurer	Jean Gramlich	810-714-2324
Team Administrator	Sherry D. Jones	248-442-9866

You can also attend board meetings, which are held on the third Monday evening of the month, six times per year: January, March, May, August, October and November.

Master Gardeners, please note- after you have finished your training class, you will continue your Master Gardening experience by volunteering and adding education hours, so that you can continue to learn more. General meetings with outside speakers are a great way to earn continuing education credits. Attending board meetings also count toward required hours for Master Gardening.

At the last board meeting, for example, the board discussed possible day trips in our area that might be of interest. I'm sure board members would like to get ideas from you, and could use volunteers for projects you may not be aware of.

Before you attend classes, MGSOOC meetings, etc.!

Attention! Very important!

Be sure to bring your Master Gardener ID badge!

Building personnel are not authorized to let you in the building unless you are identified as a Master Gardener!



Here is the schedule of classes for Master Gardeners! Welcome all new students!

**Winter Master Gardener Training Class
Tuesday, 6:00pm-10:00pm
January 9-April 10, 2007**

Oakland County Service Center, WEST Campus, IT Auditorium

January 9 th	Introduction (Carol Lenchek)/Native Plants (Ruth Urbensky)
January 16 th	Plant Science (Mary Wilson)
January 23 rd	Soils/Composting (Darren Bagley)
January 30 th	Household Pests (Gretchen Voyle)
February 6 th	Lawn Care (Kevin Frank)
February 13 th	Woody Ornamentals (Mary Wilson)
February 20 th	Flower Culture (Jenny Burrows)
February 27 th	Indoor Plants (Carol Lenchek)/Water Quality (Bindu Bhakta)
March 6 th	Tree Fruit (Bob Tritten)
March 13 th	Plant Health Care/Diagnostics/EAB (Terry McLean)
March 20 th	Small Fruit (Jim Lincoln)
March 27 th	Vegetable Culture (Gary Heileg)
April 3 rd	Volunteering (Carol Lenchek)
April 10 th	Make up Class, if needed





Carol's Corner

Now that the Farmers Market MGV Information Booths are a distant memory, please send a huge THANKYOU and round of applause to Master Scheduler and **2006 Master Gardener of the Year, Ruth Parulis**. Once again, she did a great job ensuring the 7 Farmers Markets were staffed throughout the long season. The market team leaders did a great job also. So thank you to **Carla Spradlin, Judy Jacques, Suzanne Huening, Kim Reeves** (our Roots & Shoots Editor wears many hats!), **Judy Roesser, Jay Shell, Laura Jury, and Mary Carole Haering**. We would not be able to take this large project on without the leadership they provide. So next time you see them, let them know how much you appreciate them! **I'd also like to thank all of you who staffed the information booths.**

I'm also very pleased to report that the Master Gardener Society of Oakland County will be purchasing canopies for the Markets that are held out in the open! This will make your experience much more pleasant in the rain or hot sun.

Master Gardeners - Remember your hours are due by Dec. 31.

Your volunteer and educational reports need to be in our database by the end of January for you to certify for 2006. **Please make sure you get them to the MSUE office by January 15 at the very latest.** Cathy needs time to enter all those last minute reports into the database. If you are still mailing in the paper copies and you have computer access, please try reporting your hours online. It's easy! Get in touch with Cathy for your login and password. She can be reached at morrisc@oakgov.com or call her at 248-858-1639.



Fall Bulb Fundraiser

Our 1st Fall Bulb Fundraiser was a big success! Thank you for your support. May your flowers bloom profusely next Spring! Since the Fall sale was such a success, we will also have a Spring Bulb Fundraiser. The bulb list will include Stargazer and Asiatic Lilies, Freesia, Glads, Liatris, Begonias, Cannas, and more. Look for more information in an upcoming issue of Roots & Shoots.



JUNIOR MASTER GARDENER VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES WILL BE COMING NEXT YEAR!

I'm sure that many of you would agree that working with kids is very rewarding and fun. Studies show that active children are less prone to obesity and depression. Children who understand basic plant and soil science are more likely to be respectful of our natural resources. With each passing year it becomes more important to teach our youth about gardening and connect them to the earth.

This winter we are going to initiate a formal Junior Master Gardener working group. Michele Dunham, a retired teacher and Advanced Master Gardener, is going to provide the leadership on this project. We will be training Master Gardeners to teach the classes and will then take the classes to different areas of the County. Once we set the training dates we will post them in the Oakland Gardener, so stay tuned...

DESTINATION....Brines Farm "hoop house"



Submitted by Martha Humphrey

Several weeks ago, the Detroit Free Press featured an article on high tunnels, an unheated greenhouse, also known as a hoop house. One of these, Brines Farm, in Dexter, Mi., held an open house on Nov. 19, 2006 from 1-4 pm. Their concept of growing vegetables directly in the ground, throughout the winter, unheated and without electricity, and for profit, intrigued me. So....myself and two other fellow Master Gardeners decided we would attend this open house to see it firsthand.

We parked along a dirt road and hiked the path back into a lovely, rolling, wooded area, past the parents' home and into a clearing. There stood the hoop house, 30 feet wide by 90 feet long and maybe 20 feet high at the peak. We ventured inside to a foggy veggie wonderland. (Can you tell I love growing vegetables?!) For the next hour, about thirty visitors fired their questions to the son about this enterprising and fascinating endeavor. The following are some of the answers.

The supporting structure is high grade steel pipe, covered with 2 layers of 7 ml plastic sheeting. Air between the layers helps to insulate. The ends of the hoop house, with wood doors and framed in wood, are removed in the summer and replaced with chicken wire to prevent deer from entering.



Despite the cold, cloudy day, the indoor temperatures were surprisingly mild and well lit by the natural sunlight. Row covers, laid on squared off wire supports and periodic horizontal steel pipe supports, help to hold the heat close to the ground. It was suggested that the addition of 1 ft. of mulch, 4-5 feet around the perimeter on the outside of the hoop house, would further insulate and moderate the temperatures towards the outer edges of the inside. Snow on the roof is not a problem since the sun quickly melts it and the steep slope allows it to quickly slide off.

Watering is accomplished with hand held watering cans, gently, so as not to disturb the tiny seedlings and soil. By limiting water supply during the winter months, the ground will contain less water that could potentially freeze the roots.

In the 15 months of operation, disease has not been a problem and pests have been limited to the occasional aphid infestation, easily remedied by a spray of the hose before going to market. Fertilizer, as such, is limited to compost and fish emulsion. If desired, the double digging method could also be applied.

Multiple, 2-3 feet wide rows, with 1 foot aisles, stretched to the opposite end, are filled with beautiful edible greens. The winter crops of kale, lettuce, endive, beets, turnips, carrots, parsley, oriental greens, arugula and spinach are sold at the Ann Arbor Farmer's Market and in the summer, cucumbers are grown on netted trellises and tomatoes can reach 6-8 feet tall. In a mere 10 months, the hoop house cost of \$8,000 turned a profit!

Future plans include venting and the addition of more hoop houses to the 10 acre property. From talking with the other visitors, the consensus appeared to be that this was a very interesting and satisfying outing and well worth the drive. On our way out we passed by another fellow Master Gardener. We told her she was in for a real treat. Kudos to this local, sustainable, safe and healthy small scale business!

Brines Farm has an informative website at www.brines.org





WEATHER GARDENING

Mark Torregrossa, Chief Meteorologist for WEYI NBC25 which serves the Flint/Saginaw/Bay City/Midland market, was our speaker in November. Mark is a Master Gardener and has had a garden every year since he was 10 years old. When Mark started out as a meteorologist in Cedar Rapids, Iowa, he created his first weather garden. Now at WEYI, headquartered just east of Birch Run, the weather garden is 45' x 70.' Two days a week he dons bib overalls and broadcasts his 5 and 6 p.m. weather segments from the garden. He takes questions and tips by e-mail and generally tries to make his audience aware of the weather as it relates to gardening.

After showing us slides of the weather garden, Mark gave us a primer on meteorology with special emphasis on the factors which affect Michigan weather. We have many different air masses in the United States and Michigan: cold and dry, cold and moist, hot and moist, and hot and dry. The interactions among these air masses create our weather. Mark explained the meaning of those H's and L's you see on weather maps. Air has weight, and in low pressure areas, the air is rising because the air is light. Low pressures lead to precipitation. In a high pressure area, the air is compressed and heavy and will sink toward the earth, warm up and dry out. We get our coldest weather when the high pressure area is right above us, and we may get a frost then. The interactions of high and low pressure areas create wind. The airflow in a high pressure area is clockwise, and the airflow in a low pressure area is counterclockwise.

A cold front can bring a rapid change in temperature and showers like our summer thunderstorms. Warm fronts bring long steady rains. The jet stream is the engine of storm systems. It is at 25,000-30,000 feet, and the winds are 100-200 miles per hour. The jet stream was discovered during World War II because it affected the speed of bombers.

In Michigan our weather is affected by the fact that we have large bodies of water around us. Water moderates temperatures in October/November and in March/April.

A new el nino is forming now and affects weather in the parts of the U.S. including Michigan. The hurricane season was not as bad as predicted this year because of el nino. El nino will probably bring us a colder fall (it certainly has been cold so far!) and a warmer winter. The winter may bring lots of precipitation, but because of warmer temperatures, we may have less than average snowfall.

Global warming is happening. Most scientists believe that without human activity, we would be entering a new ice age, but because of greenhouse gases the climate is actually warming instead. Mark predicted that Detroit's average temperature will increase by about 1 degree in the next year, making our climate more like that of Toledo. In 10 years our climate will be more like Columbus; in 20 years we will have temperatures like Cincinnati.

Jean Gramlich

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

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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 e-mail 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

Postal rates may be increasing 2007. With this in mind, 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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