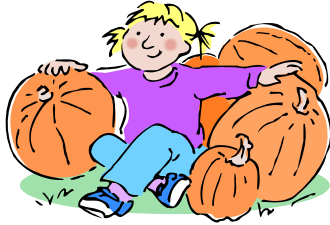


Roots & Shoots



Master Gardener
Society
of Oakland County



October / November 2007



October 3, 2007 @ 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 : **Steve Turner**—Education: “Michigan State African Violet Society”

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



November 7, 2007 @ 6:30pm

MGSOOC General Society Meeting & Location

MSU Extension Office, 1200 N. Telegraph Road, Pontiac,
Building 26 East, Lower Level Classroom

Speakers : **Vickie Hale & Ron Rudd**—Education: “Winter Sowing”

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



December 5, 2007 @ 6:30pm

MGSOOC General Society Meeting & Location

Location TBD; “Holiday Potluck”

Carol's Corner



Our Fall Master Gardener Training class started on August 16 with 36 eager trainees. The class schedule is posted, below, in this issue of Roots & Shoots. If you would like to sit in on any of the classes as a refresher to help you with your volunteer work, you will earn 2 full credit educational hours. The classes are held every Thursday from 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. in the IT Building (# 49 West), located behind the Pontiac Farmers Market.

The Fall Bulb Fundraiser I mentioned in the last issue is not going to take place this year. Due to unforeseen circumstances, the company we work with said their timing was off this year. Sorry for this inconvenience. I was looking forward to buying more Allium while supporting the Master Gardener Volunteer Program (MGVP).

Speaking of fundraisers...on August 5th, Michael Saint (class of winter 2006), opened up his garden to Master Gardeners for the second year in a row. A nominal fee was charged and all proceeds were given to our Master Gardener Program office. Mother Nature didn't get the message to turn on the sun that day, so it was a rainy morning and looked threatening the whole day. (Can't complain about rain, though it did put a damper on attendance.) It was really neat to see how his flower beds have changed in the past year and the see the new beds he is working on. Thanks Mike! May your future gardens grow well and your aching back feel better by now.

Fall Master Gardener Class Schedule

August 16	Native Plants	Vrbensky
August 23	Plant Science	Wilson
August 30	Soil Science/composting	Bagley
September 6	Indoor Plants/Propagation	Hahn
September 13	Lawn Care	Frank
September 20	Flower Culture	Burrows
September 27	Small Fruit Culture	Burrows
October 4	Household Pests	Voyle
October 11	Vegetable Culture	Morehouse
October 18	Woody Ornamentals	Wilson
October 25	Volunteering	Lenchek
November 1	Tree Fruit	Tritten
November 8	Diagnostics/Plant Health Care	McLean

Chicago Weekend Bus Trip



Our trip began with boarding the luxury bus at 5:30 a.m. (!) on July 20 outside the MSUE office in Pontiac. We loaded our luggage and picked up a bag breakfast for the beginning of the trip. All along the way, we had the option of playing various fun garden-related games arranged and presented by the game-master Kathy Click with lots of prizes (many new products on the market begged by Sandie Parrott and donated by generous suppliers) for the winners.

Our first stop was Fernwood Botanical Garden and Nature Preserve in Niles, Michigan. The area has a number of trails and gardens devoted to different kinds of plants. There is a nature center and a tropical greenhouse before Bauer Terrace that features perennials to attract butterflies and hummingbirds. As you walk along, paved paths meander through beds of sun-loving annuals and pass a water garden, pond and ornamental grass garden. The Discovery Garden is a hands-on children's garden. A Japanese garden features mounded plantings, boulders and gravel arranged to create a meditative setting symbolic of islands, water and wildlife. You can stroll along the St. Joseph River as it flows by the property. A highlight is a five-acre restored tall grass prairie. Ferns and other shade-loving plants are features of another garden. Herbs used for fragrance, teas, flavorings, repellents, medicine and dyes are grouped in a display bed around an English style stone dovecote.

The Round Barn Winery in Baroda, Michigan provided us with a delicious fried chicken buffet lunch in the top level of their round barn. After the meal, the owner gave us an interesting talk about how they grow their grapes and stories about ideas that didn't work and what they learned on the way to making their wine. Everyone got to taste wines of their choice and buy their favorites.

The next stop was Trudi Temple's private garden in Hinsdale, Illinois. This was an amazing garden, nobody wanted to leave. Her garden has been evolving over many years and culminated in a beautiful book that she autographed for all who bought a copy. Trudi was a delight and shared her gardening secrets with everyone including her special compost method and even invited us into her lovely eclectic home. The garden is situated in a suburban setting on a narrow, deep property. She is constantly digging up grass to put in new plants, and she clearly likes to keep up with the times by planting the newest cultivars with variegated foliage. Trudi has many exotic tropical plants outside in the summer and has specially built troughs in the house where she over winters them. The garden has a lovely water feature with Koi fish and an arch with a collection of favorite collected bells.

We arrived at the Margarita Inn, in a great location of Evanston, our home for 2 nights. It was a quiet old-fashioned bed and breakfast with old world charm reminding many of similar inns in Europe. Kathryn, our charming host woke up extra early to provide a continental breakfast each morning. Some may not have known, but her father made all the tiny bird statues throughout the parlor.

Saturday morning our first stop was the Morton Arboretum where we had a 5 mile bus tour showing the wonderful collections of stately trees, sometimes arranged by taxonomy, sometimes by geography – there is a very interesting section of trees from

Japan and China. After the tour there was time to explore the gardens including 90 rare and endangered species of plants and the winding and twisting maze. The hedge gardens were very special as was the children's garden. One of the most charming sights was Xanadu, a temporary show of a fanciful sculpture woven of tree saplings that twists and turns and made children and adults giggle.

Cantigny Garden was a most beautifully designed garden with breathtaking vistas and a nice rose garden. One of my special memories is the "Idea Garden" that had a Loch Ness monster topiary and other amusing plant creations like the "bed" of flowers with a side chair of sod. One garden showed all the AAS winners for the last 5 years. Another highlight was a shade tunnel with gourds hanging down.

Later in the afternoon the bus took us to Millennium Park in Chicago for time on our own to explore the park and city. The Lurie Garden was nice with raised beds of perennials and grasses. The big silver bean or what is named the Cloud Gate was fun to look at everyone's reflection inside and out. The Tower Fountain drew the children to play in the shallow water and marvel at two huge towers with people's faces moving, winking and occasionally spitting on the children!

The Chicago Botanical Garden was our Sunday morning destination that included 23 display gardens and 3 native habitats. Leaving the visitor center, you walk through a colorful pergola formed by vines and hanging pots and look over the railing at floating islands of flowers. The gardens include an aquatic garden, bonsai, dwarf conifers, an English walled garden as well as a lakeside garden. An extensive Japanese garden on three islands is a tribute to simple beauty and form. Special features include a samurai's retreat, a zigzag bridge, moss garden and dry raked garden. There are six different native prairie types. The sensory garden has lots of plants that smell like chocolate. A 45-foot waterfall cascades into a series of small landscaped pools with a lovely weeping pine draped over the water. We had time for a quick lunch out on the deck with a view of the gardens. There are so many gardens that my partner and I got lost and were happy to see the pergola when it was time for us to reboard the bus.

We wended our way back to Michigan for a final stop at Gee Farms in Stockbridge, the largest nursery in the state. Inspired by all our garden meandering, we bought lots of plants to totally stuff the cargo area of the bus (even a few trees). I fell in love with a multi-stemmed katsura tree (6 feet tall) and a Korean fir that I had seen in Trudi Temple's garden. The needles curl around to show their silvery blue-green undersides.

We returned to Pontiac with new knowledge, prizes, memories, photos, new friends and lots of plants!

If you have suggestions for next year's trip or just know of a cool garden within driving distance, email Sandie Parrott at RSBirdy@Comcast.net

—Submitted by Jean Gramlich

Tipton, Toledo and Artifacts Too



It was everything a Master Gardener could have wished for, including the rain.

As the luxury coach pulled out of the Extension parking lot, it began to sprinkle. By the time we reached I-696, it was definitely looking like an all day rain. But on our way to I-275 we were treated with a rainbow, the portent of good things to come.

We arrived at Hidden Lake Gardens in Tipton a few minutes before eight o'clock and as we waited for permission to enter we were given a rundown on what was ahead: three greenhouses, a bonsai garden on pedestals, and of course time to spend in the gift shop. It was no surprise that umbrellas were the most popular purchase of the day.

The grounds at Tipton are most famous for the wide range of conifers on display. Rolling hills of unusual evergreens, even though slightly damp, were pleasant and serene. This manicured acreage is known for housing one of, if not the most, premier conifer collections in the United States. Another major attraction at Hidden Lake Gardens is a place called Hosta Hill, just down the trail from the conservatory and gift shop. Hosta Hill has increased in size over the last few years and contains literally thousands of hosta. All the big names from Sum and Substance to the miniatures like Lemon Lime can be seen and enjoyed, each with its proper name on a marker. This is a wonderful library of sorts where you can browse and study, determining which cultivar you might want to own next.

After clearing out the gift shop, we were back on the bus headed for the Toledo Botanical Gardens and more adventure, including lunch in the basement of the children's learning center, the only place large enough to accommodate our crowd of fifty-two. Fortified by a nice boxed lunch, we headed off in every direction as fast as we finished our food.

Although it was raining, and by rain I mean every possible form of it from a gentle mist to a downpour, we managed to see a wide range of gardens. While most of the plants were labeled, there were puddles of MGs along the way trying to determine the identity of some of the flora. With limited staff, the Botanical Gardens depend on volunteers to keep things beautiful and of course our Oakland Master Gardeners pitched in. I saw more than a few pulling weeds out of habit and the desire to help.

The Art Cottages just happened to be open for our visit and when tired of the rain and the hike we willingly found plenty of wares to separate us from our wallets. There were jewelry exhibits, paintings, glass, clothing, sculptures and music to enjoy and stash on the bus for the trip home. A good day for an Art Show indoors.

Our final stop was Toledo Architectural Artifacts, not far from the gardens, a musty, wonderful museum full of things you never knew you needed from a thirty thousand dollar statue to a pink toilet, sconces, chandeliers - - - whatever a period renovator might need for authenticity. Our normally quiet driver made an announcement as we hopped

off the bus that there were two requirements for the return trip. He told us to buy anything we wanted as long as we could wrestle it to the bus ourselves and it fit in the storage underneath the chassis.

Thanks to Sandie Parrott for organizing a fine a day of road food, soothing gardens, stimulating art, tempting artifacts, and great games by Kathy Click complete with prizes, we arrived home at 6:30, mellow and moisturized. And ready to go again.

—Submitted by Susan Tatus McLarty

Wanted: Recipes, Recipes, Recipes!

The Project Team of the Master Gardener Society is still putting out the call to all Master Gardeners for recipes of potions, rubs, beverages, concoctions, soups, desserts, salads, preserves, herbals, vegetables, pickles, roasts - - - whatever your specialty is, please share it by allowing us to publish your recipe in the Master Gardener Cookbook.

Have you developed recipes to deal with an abundance of tomatoes or zucchini? Is your recipe for jam easy and delicious? Can no one resist your fudge, cookies, pancakes, or pies? Do your guests hover at the hors d'ouvres table instead of mingling? Let us in on your secrets, be they **recipes** or **home and garden tips**. We really want to publish a cookbook that celebrates the garden and the gardener.

Currently we are barely over halfway toward our goal of 500 recipes. We are especially in need of recipes in the categories listed below:

bread s	main dishes with beef, pork, seafood, turkey		
drinks	pet foods	herbs	vegetables
salad dressings	pickles & relishes	pastas	

There can't be a cookbook without YOU, so please send your tips and recipes to Clay Ottoni, at ceottoni@juno.com. Include the recipe title in the subject area of your email and be sure to put your name at the bottom of your recipe.

This is an official fundraising project under the auspices of the Master Gardener Society of Oakland County. Thank you for your support!

Plant Health Care



Joe Aiken, a certified arborist, spoke to us about Plant Health Care with particular emphasis on trees for our September meeting. He works for a company that is pioneering injected systemic insecticides to protect trees from emerald ash borer and pine bark beetle, among others.

He defines PHC as the next step in evolution after Integrated Pest Management, stating that we can't really manage insects by getting rid of them. Pesticides kill microorganisms in the soil that all plants need for good health because they are instrumental in making the macronutrients available to plants. As well, systemic soil treatment takes several months to get up into the tree. *[Editors Note: The definition for Integrated Pest Management is the same as the definition for Plant Health Care. Professionals have started using the terminology Plant Health Care because it is more understandable. Integrated Pest Management (or Plant Health Care) is a system that uses all the appropriate strategies to keep pests at acceptable levels with the least disruption to the environment. Strategies include using pest-resistant varieties, using natural, biological, mechanical, and selective chemical controls to manage pests.]*

Developers remove the topsoil, naturally about 10" deep, and replace only 4" at most. Landscapers then bore holes for trees, producing glazing on the sides of the holes. The roots of the trees can't get through this hard surface and girdle themselves causing gradual decline (long after the warranty has run out). Air spading can sometimes help to alleviate this situation. He recommends addition of mycorrhizae at the time of planting and says that staking is unnecessary if the tree is properly planted.

Joe contrasted a natural forest with an urban forest: In a natural forest there is a constant nutrient cycle with leaves and fallen wood recycled into the soil so that nothing is lost; in an urban forest we rake the leaves and debris, and trees decline and fail.

Composting is the biological process of reducing organic wastes into humus. The first reference to composting that we have found is on a set of clay tablets dating from 1000 years before the time of Moses. Joe recommends making compost tea and spraying it on the ground and the tree 3-5 times annually. Compost tea inoculates microbial life into the soil and onto the foliage of plants and adds soluble nutrients to the foliage and soil to feed the microorganisms and the plants. The benefits include protecting plant surfaces with beneficial organisms, improving nutrient retention in the soil, increasing nutrient availability in the soil, reducing the negative impacts of chemical-based pesticides, herbicides and fertilizers on beneficial microorganisms in the ecosystem, reducing water loss and improving water holding capacity of the soil, and improving tillage by building better soil structure. He uses water, compost, worm castings, humic acid and molasses and aerates this mixture for 12-24 hours. Interesting information on this topic is available at www.soilfoodweb.com. *[Editors Note: The information on compost tea in this article was presented as factual. While a number of universities are studying compost teas, they are highly variable in their microbial and nutrient content from batch to batch. This translates to high variation in data sets which leads to inconclusive results. Master Gardeners are volunteer educators who rely on science-based information. You should not be recommending a practice or product that lacks a legitimate scientific basis.]*

—Submitted by Jean Gramlich

In Praise Of Matt's Wild Cherry Tomato

Matt's Wild Cherry is one of the tastiest tomatoes I have ever eaten, and the vines are wildly prolific. Being wild it is – as you might guess – indeterminate and heirloom. The tomatoes are very small, $\frac{3}{4}$ " or less, and have an intense mixture of tastes all the way from sweet to acid. One doesn't prune cherry tomato vines, and this one grows into a large bush and keeps on growing and bearing until the first frost. Two vines are sufficient for the average family, and together they will produce a substantial thicket. The flowers and fruit are in bunches of eight. The catalog says 60 days, but I always take catalog times with a large grain of salt. My experience is that if I start seed indoors on about April 1, the first fruit will be ready by mid-to-late July, and the vines are bearing most prolifically around the last week in August.

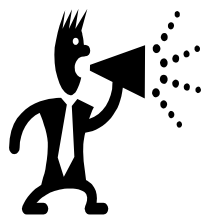
Saving seeds is a cinch: just squeeze out some seeds and place them in a jar of water. The jelly will ferment and separate off from the seed in a couple of days, leaving a gray film on the surface of the water. Drain off the water, wash the seeds in a sieve, place them – separated from each other – on paper to dry, somewhere in the shade. Put the seed in a small jar with a lid and keep in a cool, dry place.

Now the back story, which comes from Johnny's Selected Seeds catalog. Matt's Wild Cherry is a Johnny's exclusive. It originated in the state of Hidalgo in Eastern Mexico, where the domestication of tomatoes first began and these grow wild. The seeds were brought to Johnny's in Maine by a lady whose family lives in Hidalgo.

—Submitted by Peter Bray



The plan to hold general meetings in the IT building auditorium could not be realized. Until further notice, monthly Society meetings will continue to be held in the basement of the MSUE office building (North Office Building) commencing with the November 7 meeting.



Notes From the May 21, 2007, Board Meeting

Call to Order: 7:11 p.m.

In Attendance: John Humphrey, Jean Gramlich, Ruth Vrbensky, Sherry Jones, Carol Lenchek, Clay Ottoni, Martha Humphrey, Janie Grissom

Guests: Gail Novak-Phelps, Diane Rix, Susan Tatus McLarty, Dee Ann Bauer

Absent: Sandie Parrott, Pat Banaszek, Sheri Trout, Dick Wanat, Tom Hershberger,
Quorum present

Secretary Report: R. Vrbensky presented Board minutes from March 19 and May 2, 2007.

- **Motion:** R. Vrbensky moved to accept minutes as corrected. J. Gramlich 2nd.
Approved

Treasurer Report: J. Gramlich

Date of report May 2, 2007-May 23, 2007

Beg Bal: \$12,182.90

Income: \$ 150

Expenses: \$442.20

End Bal: \$11,890.70

- **Motion:** R. Vrbensky moved to approve the Treasurer report covering May 2 through May 23, 2007. S. Jones support. Approved. Reviewed and discussed 2007 budget.
- **Motion:** R. Vrbensky moved to approve the 2007 budget. J. Gramlich support.
Approved
-

Team Administrator: S. Jones asked we re-institute the Question and Answer portion of meeting prior to education/speaker. R. Vrbensky suggested a general meeting before education/speaker, to include members on board business. The Board decide to include both.

Master Gardener Coordinator: MSU audit is re-scheduled for June 14, 2007. They will be auditing July '06 thru Dec '06 and Jan '07 thru Apr '07. She needs the FEIN number. The canopies are working out well at the Farmer's markets. The roller bag to one was damaged and returned. The Banquet and silent auction were successful.

Programs: J. Humphrey reviewed the calendar.

Newsletter: Dick Wanat was absent w/o notice.

Bower's Farm: M. Humphrey reported that 500 people attended the open barn on June 2 and the gardens looked great. A fragrance garden will be installed and the vegetable garden is underway. Friends of the Farm meeting is the third Thursday of the month.

Membership: T. Hershberger absent. J. Gramlich reported 6-7 new members-all from the spring Master Gardener class.

Project Support: Gail submitted drawings to county authorities. They are processing designs. Dinner at general meetings has progressed from soup to salads. Bring unwanted gardening books to the June meeting. Diane Rix has volunteered to collect them and set up a table to sell them at the July meeting. S. Jones will assist in sales. Recipes for the cookbook are still being received and accepted. The team is considering a 2008 garden walk of MSUE-OC MG gardens as a fundraiser.

Trips and Tours: S. Parrott absent. The 3-day trip is sold out and the 1-day trip is selling but not as quickly.

Raffle Items: J. Grissom presented. She provided receipts and amounts for the budget. Janie will coordinate with Jean.

Old Business:

- Oct. 16, 2006: Updates to by-laws. Clay Ottoni stated he is in process of editing a draft. He will present draft to Board at Aug 20, 2007 meeting.
- Janie will be hosting a booth at the Milford Garden Club walk. She needs volunteers
- S. Jones to contact T. Hershberger to update and order MGSOC brochures. The application is to be left on brochure.
- Laptop and Projector Use policy: John Humphrey will ask Julie Bird to draft a copy in cooperation with Clay Ottoni.

New Business:

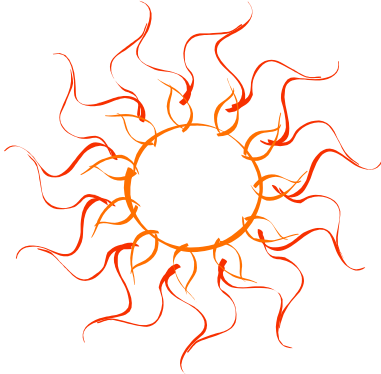
- Diane Rix pointed out the website has outdated Board minutes information and pictures. Ruth Vrbensky to investigate. J. Humphrey asked Diane to forward any concerns to Ruth Vrbensky or himself. John will ask Sheri Trout to archive the old photos. Susan McLarty will ask Sylvia Schult to assist.
- Motion: R. Vrbensky moved to adjourn. J. Gramlich support. Approved

Adjourned: 8:37 pm.

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

Education: 0 hours

Meeting: 1.50 hours



Another toasty summer. We were baked and cooked and hung out to dry. While most of us are able to suffer the heat out of the sun, our precious gardens had no where to go. This was the kind of season that might have made you wish you had more clay in your soil. Surely, improving your soil's moisture retentiveness is an admirable goal, but you should never act on the ideas you get in high temperature conditions. It's usually the heatstroke talking.

I had a feeling that the early heat was a peace offering to the poor souls with pools who, as I recall, felt terribly betrayed by the coolness of last year. Since Nutcase is not your basic neighborhood luxury nursery, I couldn't exactly feel the pool owners' pain. The closest we get to a pool around here is a half barrel which contains a solar powered fountain. To be fair, as long as we're compiling a list of "water features," the four birdbaths should also be included in the tally.

Actually, we had a pool, once. When we caught the new puppy swimming in the half barrel a few times and after the solar pump of the moment got "puppycized," we headed over to the local "Thrifty Acres" and picked up a kiddie pool. It turned out to be a great gardening tool for keeping the potted plants hydrated after the dog decided playing in a pool was beneath her. We eventually gave it away to a family of needy ducklings. But that's another story.

Sad to say, this season certainly taxed the area's gardens and gardeners. As surely as spring arrived, she dragged in some frosty nights to see if you were on your toes. In case of a frost emergency, you must first wake up before sunrise, decide how much of an investment you have in a) your gardens, and b) your mattress. Take a vote and either tromp outside in your jammies and turn on the hose, or hug your pillow a little tighter, pull up the covers and go back to sleep. Unless it was a freeze, as long as you spray the frostees before the sun hits them, they'll recover. Tulips and hyacinths were born to deal with an icy nip or two and go on with life and no permanent disfigurement.

The next ordeal was the spring "drought" when the perennials finally awakened but looked oddly shorter than normal (whatever normal is). When some goodly showers finally came to town, things started to look more like we thought they should. I am always awed by the difference between water from above and the water from below. Buoyed by the arrival of rain we planted the peas, lettuce, onions, potatoes and what happened? A load of hot air from the south cooked their greenery so instead of having to give up the crop because of bolting, we

didn't even have to blanch the peas before freezing them. They were cooked right on the vine.

After the cool crops croaked, the Pepper Anomalies were reported. Everyone wanted to know "What's going on with the peppers?" It seems that peppers were quite ill-behaved this year. The majority of the questions centered on the fact that they basically refused to grow. Nothing seemed to faze them. Even though they appreciate heat, the early hot weather didn't impress them. When actual rain appeared on the scene, they remained lethargic for what seemed an eternity. At almost the no-turning-back point, the peppers recovered and finally began growing more normally (again - - - whatever that is). I have to admit that seeing a ten-inch midget pepper plant trying like the dickens to give birth to a full-size pepper really does tug at my heartstrings. So many of the plants that I checked were busy blooming but all of the flowers were clustered at the tip of the plants, sitting ducks for temperature extremes. Basically there are just three reasons for offensive fruit failure in peppers:

- lack of moisture when blossoms should be developing;
- temps above 90 degrees or
- temps below 60 degrees at night.

So of course it got chilly at night and the pepper plants were required by law to abort their flowers. The next round of blossoms were melted by the heat. A blanket reason for crop failure, simply put, would just be "Michigan weather."

With the heat came insect damage because the filthy little critters get thirsty when there's no rain, so they have to suck the juice out of everything. We make sure we empty all water collectors to thwart the mosquito's promiscuity and then there's nothing left for the earwigs to play in. They retaliate by hiding in your favorite moist flower blossoms. Next thing you know, they're crawling around the counter top, freaking you out. On the positive side, the dry heat diminished a lot of mosquito activity (which of course rebounded as soon as we got a couple days of rain in early August).

And how about those Japanese beetles, eh? We here at Nutcase were unable to find any information about Dr. Dave Smitley's anti-Japanese beetle research project but we did find some helpful details about their habits which might assist you in fighting the good fight, even though the window of opportunity for this season will be gone before you read this.

Japanese beetle grubs are actively feeding on grass roots from April to the end of May and from August to November. Eggs are laid in late June through September on turf. The larvae hatch about 10 days later and begin feeding on the grass roots. If adequate moisture is available from rain or irrigation, the grubs will molt to second and then third instars by mid-September. The grubs dig deeper into the soil to avoid the frost as temperatures drop in the fall. The grubs

move back up to the grass roots in April and begin to feed again. The larvae pupate in early June. Adults emerge between late June and the middle of August. In a normal year (there's that word again), most of the adults emerge in early July. An application of Merit, Arena Mach II, GrubEx, or Bayer Season-Long Grub Control before August 15 is recommended by Dr. Dave Smitley. These products all work best when applied in July or early August. Using milky spore (*Bacillus popilliae*) is another tactic used to tackle those little copper cows but it's not recommended by some of our local experts. We tried it over twenty years ago here, but I'm not sure if it worked or not because an irrigated lawn can handle "some" beetle damage without succumbing to the scourge.

Japanese beetles spend ten months below the surface in grub form and most of their activity lasts just four to six weeks, but is an eternity for the gardener. The drought actually was a help in the battle with the beetle and there are a few other natural controls. Starlings, grackles, cardinals, catbirds and meadow-lark all find them as tasty as tater tots. Of five parasitic wasps imported to help in the fight, two have been found effective. Both overwinter in the beetles' cocoons, which is quite handy. The weather is also a big factor in beetle populations. If it's hot and extremely dry, the eggs and the grubs are killed. You may applaud but what if it's a setup? It's so circular a process it keeps me awake sometimes.

First, we keep the lawn watered so we're providing moisture that in turn pleases the Jb. It makes more of itself. Drought is noxious to the Jb but we can't not water because if the lawn is being munched, it needs water even more. We feed the lawn and amend the soil setting up a literal spa for the Jb. Then the spa becomes a salad bar for moles and skunks who help themselves and their families to all the grubs they can eat along with worms we attracted because we made our soil so nice.

And how do they show their appreciation? By feeding on more than 275 different plants.

Research indicates that they prefer feeding on flowers, leaves, and fruits growing in bright sun. They will descend on ripening fruit and feed till nothing is salvageable. Our corn crop this year was likely compromised with a double whammy. Feeding the birds makes them lazy. I had requested "He who feeds the birds" to cut back for the summer so that they would eat bugs and weed seeds. I never realized how much we depend on the sparrows and their partying in the corn tops. When the corn is tasseling, the pollen from the tassels is shaken down to the silks by our little feathered friends. And when the corn tassels, and the beetles have chowed down, there are no silks left to catch the pollen.

Maybe some of the following ideas can be put in your helpful bag of tricks. Plant larkspur. Some of the dumber beetles eat it and die. Plant geraniums around your roses. The odor is noxious to them. Neem oil products are effective on the Jbs. Or you can lure them with your own wine of sugar, water and pieces

of mashed fruit. Use a small amount of yeast to get the mixture going. Put it in a big jug and leave it out in the garden. Strain out the pests every night. Put traps out but put them in your neighbor's yard because traps attract, not repel. Grubs don't like a high soil pH; consider changing all your soil. And finally, new housing developments are especially attractive to Jbs and they will move in from afar to take control over pristine territory pretty much devoid of any natural enemies. So if you have chosen to live in a newly despoiled location, recently carved from nature, you will probably need to move.

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

Ask Mr. Green

Dear Mr. Green,

This year my gardens seem to be overrun by a chipmunk population explosion. Before this year, I don't recall any damage to my plants from chipmunks. Now they dig into potted plants and new plantings. What can I do to eliminate these invaders?

-- Feeling Homicidal in Holly

Dear Homicidal,

Mr. Green is somewhat soft-hearted when it comes to cute, furry little creatures, but he feels your pain. One means of thinning the herd that Mr. Green has heard of involves filling a tub or container with water to a depth of six inches or more and floating some sunflower seeds on the water surface. The chipmunk will go after the seeds and find himself in over his head. The proponents of this method invariably say, "Chipmunks can't swim" but they do. They will tread water until they become exhausted and then succumb. This method clearly does not seem very humane. A quicker and more selective method is to first trap them in a live trap and then drop the trap into a plastic tote filled with water. This is selective because you may find you have trapped a small squirrel or the neighbor's kitten which may be released unharmed. By all means avoid using poisons to prevent harming pets.

Send your thorny gardening questions to askmrgreen@comcast.net

Some Information You Should Know

MGSOOC Board Members

President: John P. Humphrey (248)542-8213
Vice President: Tom Hershberger (586)573-3954
Secretary: Ruth Vrbensky (248)969-6904
Treasurer: Jean Gramlich (810)714-2343
Team Administrator: Sherry Jones (248)442-9866

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: Sheri Trout (248)328-0557
sheri@oaklandweb.com

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”

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Office Hours:
Monday through Friday
8:30 a.m. to 12:00 noon and 1:00 to 5:00 p.m.

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Carol Lenchek...248-858-0900
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Mary Wilson...248-858-0887
Horticulture Educator
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Linda Smith...248-858-0887
Horticulture Secretary
E-Mail: smithlin@oakgov.com

Yard & Garden Hotline...248-858-0902
Charlene Molnar, *Horticulture Advisor*
Hours of operation vary with seasonal needs.

Cathy Morris...248-858-1639
*Clerk & Contact for Certification
Of Volunteer & Education Hours*
E-mail: morrisc@oakgov.com

Food Safety Hotline...248-858-0904
Robin Danto, *Extension Educator*

4-H Youth Programs...248-858-0905
Tom Schneider, *Extension Educator*

Water Quality Education...248-858-5198
Bindu Bhakta, *Extension Educator*

Lois Thieleke...248-858-0888
Extension Educator- Food & Nutrition

Children, Youth & Family...248-452-9726
Saneya Hamler, *Extension Educator*

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

Effective January 6, 2006, postal rates are increasing. 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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