

DOWN TO EARTH

MARCH

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3



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FEATURE ARTICLE

ORCHIDS 101 BASIC CULTURE



ABOVE: Two Cattleya plants grown under different lighting conditions. The plant on the left was grown in sufficient light to produce abundant flowers. The plant on the right was grown under too little light to flower. The dark green leaf color of the non-flowering plant indicates too little light.

Light

Without enough light, orchids may produce lush looking growths but no flowers. Not giving orchids enough light is the most common reason for failure to bloom. The old notion of orchids growing in dark jungles still persists and it couldn't be further from the truth. In reality, many have evolved as epiphytes to take advantage of brighter light available in the upper forest canopy.

How much light is enough? The answer to this seemingly simple question is "as much as they will take without burning." This means that the foliage should not be a lush, dark green. Orchids grown under sufficient light will have lighter, somewhat yellow-green foliage and strong upright growths. Figure 1 illustrates two cattleyas, one grown under optimum light conditions and the other under too little light to produce flowers.

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Air Orchids roots, and eventually the entire plant, will die if they do not get air and this is the reason that, with the exception of a few terrestrial varieties, orchids do not grow in soil. Orchid potting media should be open, with exceptionally good drainage, yet capable of holding sufficient moisture to support the plant's needs. Orchid plants are also intolerant of a stale, stagnant environment. You should strive for a buoyant atmosphere and gentle air movement must be provided at all times. For orchids grown in the home, this can be provided by an overhead paddle fan set on it's lowest setting or a portable oscillating fan directed AWAY from the plants.

Water Without question, more orchids are killed by incorrect watering than by any other reason. Proper watering consists of two separate components; quantity and frequency. Orchids should be watered just as they dry out. There's unfortunately no magic formula; i.e., water a plant in a 6" pot every 7 days and you'll be trouble free. This is because your growing area is different from anyone else's. Humidity, air movement, potting medium (type and age) and light levels all play a role. There are several ways to determine when a potted orchid is almost dry: 1) the surface of the potting mix will appear dry; 2) dry pots will feel lighter; 3) clay pots feel dry; 4) a wooden stake or skewer inserted into the potting mix will come out almost dry (Figure 2). If in doubt, a finger inserted into the potting mix is perhaps the best tool to determine the moisture content of the potting mix. It will cause no harm to the plant.

When orchids are watered, they should be watered copiously. Water should be provided until it runs freely from the drainage holes. Not only does this soak the potting medium but it also flushes salts that naturally accumulate. At a minimum, try to thoroughly water your plants at least once a month.

Watering frequency can be controlled by the choice of pot. For those who really like to water their plants or live in humid, rainy areas, clay pots, especially slotted pots are a good choice. Growers in drier climates or those who tend not to water often enough might want to use plastic pots to hold moisture longer.

Fertilizer Orchids will grow and flower, given that their other requirements are met, for fairly long periods without fertilizer but you'll get better results with some level of feeding (Figure 3). Typically plants are fertilized once a week during the summer and every two weeks in the fall and winter. Regardless of the fertilizer that you chose to use, most experienced growers use no more than $\frac{1}{2}$ the label-recommended strength. Oh, and by the way, it's best to water first to wet the potting medium before you fertilize.

Fertilizers used on orchids should contain little or no urea. This is because soil organisms must first convert the nitrogen in urea to a form useable by plants, and since orchids do not grow in soil, this conversion does not occur efficiently. The old conventional wisdom used to be that orchids grown in bark mixes needed to be fertilized with formulations high in nitrogen, i.e., 30-10-10. We now understand that these high nitrogen fertilizers aren't necessary.

Most experienced growers will agree that observation is the most important key to growing orchids well. Examining your plants on a regular basis will allow you to adjust and correct any problems before they become severe. In subsequent articles we will examine in more detail these four elements of culture and the orchid genera more commonly found in the marketplace.

HOME GROWN 804

I have a number of very old Norway spruces that are at least one hundred feet tall and I am sure 120 years old. Something bizarre has been going on with the trees. The very ends of the branches are falling off on the ground. The dozens of ends appear green and healthy. Others just pop off during heavy winds. I have done some research on this and can find another mysterious case of the same type in the Black Forest in Germany in 2009. There was no explanation for this one, either. Could be caused by air pollution or toxic gases? Why is no research being done for this unexplained problem? What is this problem?

The problem is wearing a squirrel suit; to be more specific, a red squirrel suit. During the winter or early spring, they chew the ends of the branches off and the tips drop to the ground. Not all their chewing is first rate, so some are just dangling until a strong wind or snow causes them to fall. Once the ends are on the ground, the hungry squirrel eats the buds. These are pointed and covered with brown bud scales. They always knock down way more than they can consume so many buds are not eaten. Look at the fallen branches and the new brown buds. Ones that have been eaten look like a daisy with an empty middle. Some bud scales remain around the perimeter and the center is missing. The severed twig shows uneven chewing but it is subtle. Squirrely hangs on an adjacent branch and gnaws off the twig end, needles and buds included. It falls and if there are several squirrels, the ground may be blanketed with spruce ends. This is a relatively common problem when there are spruces and red squirrels in the same place. You don't have to go to Germany to find it. Other evergreens do not seem to be affected. And not every year is the same. This is not a graph with a line that slants upwards. You may even forget about it for several years because not much is going on. But this will not kill the tree. It will cause side branches to grow because the tips is missing and may make the tree appear a little fuller in the coming years. There is not much you can do about it unless the red squirrels are not there. Air pollution or toxic gases would not make ends separate. The entire tree would be damaged. People would probably be more damaged.

I am going on vacation for about a month and I have six houseplants. How do I keep them watered? I have been advised to put them in a closet and they won't need water in the dark. I was also told to put a 16 ounce water bottle on each plant surface and to poke a hole in the bottom of it before I leave. The water comes out slowly. I don't know if I am supposed to take the cap off the bottle or not. I don't want to have people come into my house to water plants, so that is out. These are treasured plants that I have had for decades and I don't know what to do.

Don't follow the advice you have been given by The Plant Killers. Putting the plants in the dark will probably kill them before you get home. When there is no photosynthesis, the plant dies. The water bottle idea does not take into account how big the plant is or how fast the water comes out. With the cap on, eventually a vacuum develops and water doesn't drain. With cap off, the bottle is probably empty in a week. The only thing I have ever read about was putting the plants in the bathtub with two or three inches of water in the tub and shutting the shower curtain. This is providing that there is a window over the tub. This is more promising than the other ideas but plants could end up with root rots by marinating plant roots for a month. If the first ideas got a grade, it would be an "E." This one is about a "D." Try calling a couple of friends and see if they will babysit a plant or three. You must have done favors for someone of good character and common sense that could take care of your oldies.

WHAT TO SOW IN MARCH

Direct sow garden greens. If space is limited make small plantings and repeat every two weeks. For example sow one or two feet of spinach, spinach, beet and beets. Two weeks later make a second sowing. These are suggested planting dated for the Pacific Northwest. Our zone in Albany is 7B and our last frost date is April 15th. If your last freeze date is two weeks later or two weeks earlier than ours then adjust your planting dates accordingly.

March 1. Sow peas in 6" wide strips.

March 2. Order more seeds if necessary.

March 3. Prepare soil by weeding and clearing away debris.

March 4. Spread compost over weeded areas of the garden.

March 5. To keep unplanted areas free of weeds cover them with cardboard.

March 6. Covering soil with a polyspun blanket raises the temperature 3-4 degrees.

March 7. Start pepper seeds. Follow packet instructions.

March 8. Keep records of planting dates, weather, day of first flower.

March 9. Plant short rows of spinach, beets, turnips and radish. It may be a gamble.

March 10. Sow onions, kale, lettuce, spinach, when soil temperature is 40 degrees F.

March 11. Daylight savings time begins, time to enjoy the garden.

March 12. Apply fertilizer, acidic compost, ground bark, coffee grounds to blueberries.

March 13. Greatest cause of failure when growing from seeds is sowing too deeply.

March 14. Check for slugs & snails, the babies are voracious feeders apply Sluggo.

March 15. St Patrick's Day, traditional day for planting potatoes.

March 16. Plan your garden to attract bee, butterflies and beneficial.

March 17. Check containers and loosen potting mixture for the new season.

March 18. Sow celeriac and leek seeds for transplanting in April.

March 19. Direct sow dill and cilantro seeds.

March 20. Select bean and corn varieties.

March 21. First Day of Spring.

March 22. Plant Walla Walla Onion starts.

March 23. Sow more spinach, radish, spinach beet and turnips.

March 24. Direct sow arugula seed.

March 25. Are parsley or parsnip plants bolting? Leave a few to feed predatory insects.

EDITORIAL

HE Sorry you all missed last months column.

As this is being written if I sit up very tall and glance out the window I do believe that March is ever closer, just over the horizon. March to me is a mystical month a changing of the guard so to speak from the depths of winter to the edge of spring. Fallen snow has lost its beauty from a pristine covering of white to grungy patches with tones of gray and black scattered here and there.

Trees and vegetation stand barren and bare as we wait for foliage to appear. Look closely and the buds will reveal themselves a reassurance that the bloom will come. My favorite time to trim the burning bush (early in the month) reshaping form and retaining the miniature character that it is supposed to be. The payoff comes in mid summer with the fuller growth rendering a greener back ground for the contrasting flowers in the forefront.

The frozen earth giving way gradually at first thaw, with water draining every which way refreezing at night only to form standing water the next day. Foot prints where one walks quickly fill with liquid and yet we cannot help but investigate what old man winter's havoc had wrought to the gardens, beds and borders. Twigs, leaves and trash litter the lawn but we know now is not the time for raking. Be Patient.

SHE I had the opportunity to attend the 2 day Strategic Planning Retreat in DeWitt, representing our membership. I am going to be honest in saying that I was a little skeptical and really was not sure what to expect. After the end of the second day I was totally exhausted from the energy and brain power that was used and exercised in this time. Not only was I feeling the energy but the whole group was energized and feeling better about the critical issues that have been hanging over our heads for the last three years. I know it is going to take time, but I feel that our relationship between MSUE and MMGA are only going to improve. Many of our concerns were concerns of other memberships and it was good to be able to talk openly and sit down with members from all sides and put a plan into action that covered recognition, relationships, communication, equity, distance learning and funding. Now that the ground work has been laid, it is up to each of you to decide what choice you will make. My choice is to **MOVE FORWARD** and I hope all of you join me.

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March 26. Prune roses, fertilize and spread a handful of Epsom salts around the base.

March 27. Trim and shape perennial herbs, fertilize with liquid seaweed.

March 28. Continue preparing beds and sowing greens for salads and cooking.

March 29. Plant strawberries, fertilize, protect from slugs and snails.

March 30. Broccoli seeds may be sown 2 weeks before the last frost date.

March 31. Take a look around, things are shaping up. Take the day off.

This article was authored for another area of the country but has many useful ideas and with some adjustment it can prove to be very useful. I have had it for three years and the author is unknown to me. ED.



COOKS CORNER

Marian's Meatball Recipe

By Marian Bonavita
Makes 18-25 2" meatballs

INGREDIENTS

18 slices of store-bought white bread
2 cups milk
1 lb. EACH ground pork, ground beef, ground lamb
4-5 large cloves garlic, minced
2 eggs
1-2 tablespoons Kosher salt, to taste
Freshly ground pepper
¼ cup Pecorino Romano or Parmigiano-Reggiano cheese
3-4 tablespoons fresh chopped flat-leaf (Italian) parsley

Note: You can fry the meatballs or bake them. To test these, we baked them, but to fry, heat 1/2 an inch of vegetable oil in a cast-iron pan over medium-high heat, and cook until light-brown on each side.

DIRECTIONS

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Soak bread in milk for 5 minutes. Remove from milk, and squeeze out excess.

In a large bowl, combine meat, garlic, eggs, salt, pepper, bread, and cheese. Mix with hands; do not over-mix. Make loose meatballs a little bit bigger than a plum.

Place on baking sheet lined with parchment paper for about 40 minutes, until lightly browned. Allow to cool.

Allow to cool, and add to sauce to simmer for 20-30 minutes. Serve over pasta or in a sandwich.

Tomato Sauce

1 28-oz can of Italian plum tomatoes with basil leaf
1 large onion, diced
1 tablespoon olive oil
4 garlic cloves, minced
Fresh basil
Kosher salt
Freshly ground pepper
Pour whole tomatoes into large bowl and crush by hand or using a potato masher. Set aside.

Place heavy-bottomed pot over medium heat. Add olive oil. When oil is hot, add onion and garlic and cook, stirring frequently, until onions are translucent, about 3-4 minutes.

Add tomatoes, salt and pepper, to taste. Cook over medium heat until tomatoes are very soft. Allow to cool slightly, and use an immersion blender to blend until sauce is smooth. Season to taste.



THYMELY TIPS AND HELPFUL HINTS

Mini greenhouse. In northern zones, young transplants and seedlings are easy prey for spring and fall frosts. Protect them with their own personal greenhouse. Just cut the bottom off a gallon milk jug and, when a cold snap is in the forecast, place the jug over the plant. You can regulate the temperature somewhat by putting the cap on or taking it off. Just be sure to remove the cover on warm, sunny days to prevent turning your greenhouse into a sauna.

Seed flats. Starting your own seeds is the easiest way to cut your gardening costs to the bone. And it's the only way to get many of the newest varieties. To save space and bother, start seeds in shallow trays filled with potting soil, then transplant the strongest seedlings to pots later on. To make free seed flats, cut off the bottom three inches of a gallon milk jug and punch a few holes in the bottom with a nail. Fill with potting mix, and use a pencil to create two or three shallow furrows for sowing. Then plant your seeds according to the packet directions.

Flexible scoop. This simple scoop is fashioned from a half-gallon plastic milk jug. It's great for distributing fertilizer granules or potting soil in tight spaces. To craft it, make two horizontal cuts on the sides adjacent to the handle, and two forward-slanting diagonal cuts in the other sides.

Frost protection. A lightweight blanket, towel, or tablecloth (or blanket) can save your tender annuals from certain death when a frost is forecast. Covering works especially well on clear nights, when the open sky literally sucks heat out of unprotected leaves.

Cutworm collars. Protect young seedlings from night-crawling cutworms by surrounding them with a collar made by cutting the bottom off a yogurt container. Sink the container an inch or so into the ground, leaving 2 to 3 inches above ground. You can remove the collar, if you like, when the plant's stem hardens.

You can pay a lot for a high-quality pruner, but for most everyday trimming chores, get a \$1 pair of kitchen shears at the dollar store. That way, if you lose them or leave them out in the rain, you won't be kicking yourself.

Old dish pans. Fill with some potting soil or supplies and you have a portable potting bench that you can take anywhere.

Carpet scraps. Use old or leftover carpet to line paths in your vegetable garden. You'll keep weeds at bay, and give yourself clean footing even when the garden is wet. Small pieces of lightweight carpet are also useful for covering cold frames on chilly nights.

Jelly jars. Be on the lookout for attractive little containers for small bunches of cut flowers.

Coffee and tuna cans. Use these straight-sided containers to collect and measure rain and sprinkler water. That way, you can be sure that every part of your garden is getting an inch of water a week. All of the above from Better Homes and Gardens.

Once the vegetable garden is established sprinkle corn gluten meal and it will keep weed seeds from germinating and growing into plants. Bob Villa

Scald pesky weeds with boiling water. Perennials might take a second application. Bob Villa

MASTER GARDNER ASSOCIATION

REGULAR MEETING

January 15, 2015

The Master Gardener Regular Meeting was called to order at 6:30 p.m. by President Vicki Laurin.

President Laurin opened with a thank you to past Board members for a job well done and introduced the new and current Board members and officers.

Review of Minutes: The November 20, 2014 minutes were presented. A motion was made to accept the minutes by Dan Kah, seconded by Jim Harrow. The motion carried.

Treasurer's Report: The January beginning balance was \$32,203.85 with income of \$41.25, expenses of \$563.07. December's ending balance was \$31,682.03. Dan Kah made a motion to accept the Treasurer's report with Carol Jankowski seconding it. The motion carried. 64 days until Spring according to Google.

Randy Tatro gave a report on the audit committee's findings this past week. He commended Michelle on a job well done and being very organized. The audit was great.

Special Projects – Kay

Any and all reports are to be turned in to Kay, preferably by e-mail. She wants to put information, i.e. time and days of work, etc., on the website. She would like pictures of the various projects to put on the website. Kay hopes to visit some of the project sites and take pictures. Any events can be added to the website calendar, just let Kay know the information so she can do this.

Helen stated that Ask A Master Gardener will be sending out letters. She is contacting the various sites in order to schedule the times. This happens in March.

Joanie reported that Crossroads is currently asleep. The Monarch way station is working well. There a much larger number of butterflies seen last year. The Monarch organization likes the way it is going. Our contract with Parks and Rec is being renewed. She meets with Amy McMillen next week.

Dan Kah reports that the Davison Farmer's Market starts in March. He is keeping in touch with vendors at the site.

Beth Fromholz-Davies informed us the Grand Blanc Farmers Market starts the second week in May.

Sylvia says work on the Riverwalk will start in April. \$25 was found near the entrance to the walk by VG's. Keep looking folks.

Carol Groat states the grow labs are going to be planting peppers in February. She needs help as the children are small and require a lot of assistance for planting.

There is nothing going on at the Humane Society gardens as reported by Maggie Gregg. However, there is an event taking place at Perani Arena called "Paws for Pucks" February 26th. Bring your pets.

Alicia reported the Easter Seals project is open year round and the work day is Tuesday from 9-12. Help can always be used. Grasses are scheduled to be cut March 17th at the Desert Oasis Garden. She has a new succulent acquired last summer that started blooming in December. It is still blooming but fading. There is a show on PBS at 9 tonight called the "Queen's Garden".

Banquet planning is just starting. Some felt the ticket price was too high.

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Randy reported that he would be talking soon with our bulb sale supplier.

Sabrina announced that she is working the bus trip. Originally she planned a trip to Belle Isle to see the "World Cup of Gardens". This has been set over to 2016. She is currently looking at alternative sites to visit.

There will be more information regarding clothing sales forthcoming. Possibly it could be on the website, hotline office, meetings. This is still a work in progress.

Kay reported that there are currently 8-9 sites for the Garden Tour. Flyers and bookmarks will be out next month.

Gloria reported that hospitality did well until November then we lost 4 people: Mary Downs' husband, Mr. and Mrs. Vern Osgood, Debbie Clark's parents and Dave LaGraff. Loretta announced that she received a note from Dave LaGraff's niece is giving the MG garden stone back to us. The family was not allowed to place it at his gravesite. Jim Harrow informed us of the passing of Dick Lantry. He was a MG from 1981 to 2000. The service is 1/17 at 11:00 at the Flushing United Methodist Church.

Ruth, our VMS ambassador, announced that a survey was being sent by Diane Brady. The address for this is https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/MI_Master_Gardener_Assessment. Our input as members is important.

Katie announced that there is a signup sheet at the front table for monthly snacks. We need three individuals for each meeting.

Old and New Business

DTE is always looking for new articles. Committee/project chairs can e-mail dates and times of events, work time for their respective projects, etc., as well as special articles and tidbits. Please forward to Vicki Laurin or George Rappold.

Mel Kennedy reported on a proposal to start a memorial plaque in the office. He contacted A-Frame for prices. A 9" x 12" plaque with 12 plates would cost \$87 and a 12" x 14" plaque with 24 plants is also available. The cost for engraving each plate is \$4.00. Denny Nichols was the last one recognized. Nettie made a motion to purchase the larger plaque and it was seconded by Gloria. The plaques will hang in the office with the current ones.

Dick Moldenhauer thanked the Board for the purchase of the hand cart. There are 20-25 stones available. Only one of them is for an Advanced Master Gardener and it is spoken for. Rice's is now out of business and will no longer be making them. He has half of the molds. Nettie and Michelle watched the process with him and it is not easy. It was discussed purchasing the materials and making our own. A cost comparison will be made and other sources to buy them will be researched further. Gloria will call and check with a place near her home. Mel received a call from Kathy. Advanced stones are going 2 to 1. The Hosta Society sold 70 stones this past year. If a stone is wanted, contact Dick. There are two types available, regular and advanced, in several colors.

Carol Pittard thanked Ruth, Mel and Vicki for their assistance. She announced the 1/31 symposium occurring at MSU. She announced the topics and speakers which will take place in the Kiva area. There are 8 vendors and 5 education hours can be earned by attending.

Vicki announced that she would be attending a two day retreat in February hosted by MMGA. This retreat will be an opportunity to learn about what is going on at the State level and there will be discussions about how this will affect our local group.

Jim Harrow announced the reposting of the coordinator position. Over 8 hours were spent in the last process and ended up with two candidates. Unfortunately, we will have to go through the process again. One new parameter of the position, working with volunteer groups, will

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MASTER GARDNER ASSOCIATION

REGULAR MEETING

February 18, 2015

The Master Gardener Regular Meeting was called to order at 6:30 p.m. by Vice-President Kay McCullough.

President Laurin is out of town attending a MMGA retreat.

Review of Minutes: The January 15, 2015 minutes were presented. Two corrections were made: (1) VG'S should have been Bueche's and (2) the amount of found money should be \$45.00. A motion was made to accept the minutes as corrected by Dan Kah, seconded by Nettie Sparks. The motion was carried.

Treasurer's Report: The February beginning balance was #31,682.03 with the income of \$189.18, expenses of \$459.75. January's ending balance was \$31,411.46 plus \$10.00 from the Square Up account for a total of \$31,421.46. Alicia asked for a breakdown of expenses which is stamps, receipt book, January speaker, PO Box fee, handcart and flowers, a breakdown of income was DTE, stones, return of startup money by Alicia from the Cactus Garden budget. Cheryl Borkowski made a motion to accept the Treasurer's report with Anita Coleman seconding it. The motion carried.

Michelle announced roughly 149 members have recertified and 127 have filled out the \$5 application form. Two members have transferred in from other organizations.

Special Projects-Kay McCullough:

Alicia Ellis announced that the date of March 17th has been set aside for the cutting back of the ornamental grasses. This will take place in the morning. The more who volunteer, the quicker it will be done.

Helen stated that Ask-A-Master Gardener will be sending out letters in March.

Carol Groat states the grow labs are bout half done. Recent school closings have set things back somewhat. Pepper planting has or is taking place.

Katie Van Patten stopped by For-Mar and spoke with the Jr. MG contact there. She picked up a number of flyers that the members can distribute to various locations. She can be contacted to get more flyers if needed. The classes take place on two consecutive Saturday mornings: April 15th and May 9th this year.

Dan Kah is keeping in touch with vendors at the Davison Farmer's Market.

Beth Fromholz-Davies tells us the Grand Blanc Farmers Market starts May 17th at 9:00 am. They have a resource box and try to keep up with the newest bulletins. A discussion ensued about the source of bulletins. Beth said they buy them from MSUE. Katie said the Hotline staff does make copies of the bulletins for the office.

Sylvia Hansen informed us she is meeting with the River Walk committee next week. The Flushing City Manager will be attending. She will submit a report and sent it to Kay and Vicki.

Michelle announced that there are 29 days left until Spring. Yeah!

Standing Committees-Katie Van Patten:

Loretta informed the group that the date of April 16th has been reserved for the Award Banquet at Crossroads. Wendt's Catering will be doing the catering. The ticket price will be \$20 per person this year. Donations for the silent auction will be gladly accepted and can be dropped off at the Extension office. Cheryl English will be the speaker. Flyers will be available soon.

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Randy Tatro reported that the bulb supplier is currently shipping to the warmer states. He will be meeting with him *soon and will have more details by the next meeting.*

Kay reported that there are 7 confirmed sites for the Garden Tour. She is working on getting a couple more gardens. The date will be June 28th so as to not conflict with the Art Fair. The tour starts in Flint and goes towards Davison.

Sabrina Van Dyke announced that she is open to suggestions of sites to visit.. Dow Gardens, hidden Lakes and Meijer Gardens were some of several suggestions made by the membership.

Katie has a telephone appointment with the past supplier of clothing orders. Ruth suggested she also go to the website for more information. More on this project will come later.

Dick Moldenhauer informed us that he has events in March and April to attend with stones and compost. He has an appointment Saturday with a possible supplier and the prices appear to be reasonable. There are 9 regular stones left and no advanced stones.

Gloria Roudebush reported that three cards were sent out this past month. Linda Bedtelyon's mother passed, Debra Provost passed, and Cheryl Conlee's husband passed.

Mel Kennedy announced that a bee symposium will be held at the Mott Tech Center along with the native plant sale. They are trying to get a speaker. There is a planning meeting taking place at Applewood in the near future.

Jim Harrow, one of our VMS ambassadors, spoke about a tab at the bottom of the personal page that will take you to a place to put in projects you work on or are interested in working on,. Please check off your areas of interest. The VMS system correlates them. VMS is also being used for announcements, projects, etc.

A sign up sheet is at the front table for monthly snacks. There are still some vacant spots.

Old and New Business:

Alan Grove spoke about the work the Board is doing on the SOPs (Standards of Operating Procedures) . Michelle is assisting. To date, four have been completed. More will be reviewed at the next Board meeting. It is hoped that they can be completed by the next membership meeting. Ruth asked what the SOPs were. Pam Kvasnicka and Michelle explained they were required now that we are a registered non-profit entity. To date the ones finished pertain to discrimination, privacy, etc. As a group we can amend our Bylaws but SOPs are required by law.

Kay explained the suggestion box and said it will be available at all meetings with cards to write suggestions/ideas on. She made a copy of upcoming events that Mel has sent in chronological order with contact numbers/information. This will also be on the website. Just click the tab connected to each event to be sent to the event's website.

Carpooling was suggested for conferences and events. She can put this information on the website and it will be announced at the meetings.

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now be in the job description.

President Vicki Laurin announced the meeting closed at 7:40 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Loretta Ellwood

BANQUET NEWS

Thursday, April 16th, is the date for our annual banquet to be held at Crossroads Village. Please join us to thank and acknowledge our hardworking members and celebrate their accomplishments of the past year. This year we are having a speaker. Cheryl English, owner of Black Cat Pottery, a member of the Wildflower Association of Michigan and a contributing writer to Michigan Gardener Magazine, will be speaking on the topic, "Bringing Natives Home." This will also be a chance to earn an education hour credit. The ticket price this year will be \$20 per person which includes a delicious dinner catered by Wendt's. We will be having our annual silent auction and raffle. Donations to the silent auction are welcomed and can be dropped off at the extension office or brought to the next monthly meeting. Hope to see you there.

SPRING BULB SALE COMING SOON!!!!



DATES TO REMEMBER

MGAGCC monthly meeting is March 19, 2015. All meetings start at 6:00 pm (social time) 6:30 Business Meeting and 7:30 Program. Our speaker this month is Roxanne Gabriel from Wojo's. Her topic is perennial favorites and what's new for 2015.

Backyard Fruit Tree Pruning Workshop

With Bob Tritten, MSUE District Fruit Educator on Sat. March 28, 2015 10:00 am-12:30pm at Greater Holy Temple C.O.G.I.C. 6702 N. Dort Hwy. Flint, Mi. 48505. You can register online at www.edibleflint.org, mail to edible flint, MSUE Extension, 605 N. Saginaw St., Ste. 1A, Flint, Mi. 48502 or call Deb Hamilton at 810-244-8547. Cost is \$10.00 due by Wednesday, March 25, 2015.

Humane Society Genesee County Gardens G-3325 S. Dort Highway, Burton, Mi. Thursday workdays starting April 30 thru end of October from 9-11a.m. "Bring a Flat to Plant Day", planting day, will be on Sat., June 6th from 10 a.m.-noon. For more info please contact chairperson: MG Maggie Gregg at maggiiegkg424@comcast.net

Cutting down the ornamental grasses and spring cleanup of the Desert Oasis Garden Project will be 3/17/15 at 9:00 AM and will be done before noon. Bring favorite tools and dress appropriately for the weather. It's St. Patrick's Day, and if we have luck, maybe a Leprechaun will be there sharing his pot of gold. For more information contact Alicia Ellis by email at cactusinmichigan@sbcglobal.net or call 810-659-8164

MGAGCM OFFICERS (2015)

President	Vicki Laurin
810-744-0725	rhjm90@yahoo.com
Vice President	Kay McCullough
810-635-9341	birdieball@aol.com
Secretary	Loretta Ellwood
810-444-4549	ldellwood@aol.com
Treasurer	Michelle Chockley
810-659-8014	chockley@gmail.com

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Kay explained her suggestion of putting chair pictures along with project information. She can get 12 on a page and it can be put on the web page. Ruth informed us that anyone can put their picture on VMS with their information.

The cancellation policy for our organization was announced. If Mott College and UM-Flint are closed because of weather, that means there will be no meeting for membership.

Jim Harrow gave us an update on the coordinator position. Phone interviews will take place Monday of all the candidates then face to face meetings will take place. The committee will narrow down the candidates and they will present a 15 minute oral presentation as before.

Nettie Sparks said several people have signed up for the St. Clair symposium if anyone is interested in carpooling.

Gloria announced that the Hosta Society is having their garden tour in our area June 13th. Glen Case's, our speaker last month, home is on the tour.

Pam announced that the Lapeer Plant List came out this week and orders must be in by March 1st and picked up Memorial weekend.

Dick motioned that meeting be closed and it was seconded by Nettie Sparks. The meeting closed at 7:10

Respectfully submitted,

Loretta Ellwood
Secretary

THIS NEWSLETTER PREPARED BY:

Vicki Laurin, rhjm90@yahoo.com. George Rappold, grappocp@att.net, of counsel Ruth Simon .



CHECK OUT OUR WEBSITES

MMGA Inc Website at:
www.michiganmastergardener.org

MMGA Inc Facebook Page at:
www.facebook.com/MichiganMG

MGAGCM Website at: <http://gc-mga.lweebly.com/>

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