

## Anna Russian, Dr. Wyche and a Coyote

A Tomato by Any Other Name Might Not Taste as Good

Spring is quickly unfolding into summer and this means a trip to the nursery garden to choose our tomato plants. Everyone has a favorite and the choice is simple, right? Heirlooms or hybrids? Slicing or saucing? If you are looking at those heirlooms and just wondering, "Is this something I want to try?" You may ask yourself, "What is the difference?"

"A hybrid is created by crossing two closely related plants", describes MSUE Educator, Gretchen Voyle. "Neither Mom nor Pop was fantastic, but the cross gives a plant with exceptional qualities that the parents did not possess. The problem is that the seeds from the hybrid revert back to one of the parents or are a scramble of genetic material that is most likely not going to be desirable. The chance of having a plant as good as the one you currently have is remote." 1

Hybrids offer a lot of variety but is the higher cost worth it? Barbara Larson with the University of Illinois Extension explains that there are advantages, "They possess wider adaptability to environmental stress and are more uniform from plant to plant than non-hybrids." Additional benefits might be "earlier flowers, higher yields, improved disease resistance or other characteristics. Many hybrids are better, more consistent garden performers." 2

Unfortunately, if you wish to save the seeds and cultivate this same variety next year, you most likely will be disappointed. Due to the crossing of two cultivars, they may not produce the same results. The plant may be less vigorous, have different characteristics, or not produce at all.

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### MGAGCM Mission Statement

The Master Gardener Association of Genesee County organized exclusively for charitable, educational and scientific purposes, specifically to instruct adults and youth in horticulture science, to educate communities about environmentally sound practices through horticulture-based activities, to promote food security and to improve the esthetic of our community. This Chapter is to be organized and operated exclusively for charitable purposes and consistent with the purposes and mission of the Michigan Master Gardener Association, Inc. (MMGA)

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### HISTORY OF THE TOMATO

The story of the tomato reads like a good novel - love, travel, intrigue, abandonment, shunning, fear, love again and adventure.

It all began way, way, way back in time, to 700 AD, in an ancient Incan city high, in the Andes Mountains, when the first tomato made its public appearance. The Incas cultivated the tomatoes; and, must have made a good impression on the neighbors of Mexico, who took the seeds with them when they traveled the mountains and made their way to the Aztec villages. But it was the Conquistadors of Spain in the 16<sup>th</sup> century that brought these little love apples to the European Continent. With the seeds safely tucked into their bags, these world explorers, navigating the Atlantic waters, brought this interesting fruit home to their family and friends. While the Spanish eagerly incorporated this into their cuisine, Northern Europeans feared the nightshade plant seeing it as a potential lethal plant, enjoying it only as a curiosity to behold.

To make matters worse for this beauty of a fruit, when it was just gathering interest as a taste to savor, the Aristocrats of Europe, dining with their fine pewter plates were dropping off like flies. The acidity from the tomato would leach the lead out of the pewter, poisoning the unsuspecting diner. With lack of knowledge about the toxicity of lead, the tomato was shunned again, fearing it was the fruit itself that was poisonous.

The tomato gradually made its way to America around the 1820's, and while it did appear in magazines and periodicals, the seed catalogs would only add it to its list as a courtesy, offering just one variety. (Squash and cucumbers meanwhile were much more popular with several varieties listed.) But then all that changed in the 1880s when the pizza was introduced in Italy. Pizza was a hit and the outcast tomato was back in the limelight, now holding its own beside all the other garden vegetables.

Heirlooms are exactly that, gifts from our ancestors. You may have a plant that belonged to your Grandma that you protect and nurture, proudly displaying it in your gardens - that is an heirloom. Some of you may have your own heirloom seeds, brought by your great-grandparents from their homeland of Poland, Italy or Peru that you cultivate each year - *making you a seed steward.*

Open-pollinated cultivars are field-grown and are either self-pollinated or rely on the pollinator and wind. The tomatoes that we ate growing up were most often from seeds that were propagated from this method. The tomatoes were similar in shape and flavor and were dependable. As the consumer began to expect the most eye-appealing tomato - or any produce for that matter - hybrids were introduced to offer a fruit that was pleasing to the consumer and grower, consistently producing the same results.

Where did all these varieties come from? Craig LeHoullier, author of *Epic Tomatoes for Your Garden*, in explaining this progression, describes open-pollination as, "The bees buzzing between plants and creating mutations." Then in 1975, the Wheatlys, Diane and Kent, began a grassroots plan to preserve and share the seeds of time, we now know as heirlooms. It all started when Diane's Grandpa Ott entrusted them with his "German Pink" tomato. Having brought this with him when he immigrated to Iowa from Bavaria in the 1870's. "In the beginning, it was a way to share seeds with everybody." Craig continues. "Their efforts expanded creating a network of gardeners who shared the same vision and today is known as the [Seed Savers Exchange](#). Boasting 13,000 members and 20,000 plant varieties "It has become the source of many of the broad heirloom varieties we are seeing today in the farmers market." 3

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## Feature Article Continued

Craig is the tomato advisor for Seed Savers Exchange and has trialed more than 3000 tomato varieties and introduced more than 200 varieties to the trade. At the recent *Gardening and All that Jazz Conference* Craig shared stories of gardeners who wrote letters to him along with seeds for him to identify - such was the story of Mr. JD Green. "Mr. Green got these seeds from a neighbor who got them from a friend who got them from a Cherokee Native American 100 years prior. We grew these nameless seeds and grew a tomato that we had never seen before - a large size fruit with a beautiful, deep, dusky purple-pink color, and a superb sweet flavor."

From there Craig sent the seeds to Jeff McCormick from the Seed Exchange. Jeff was a little hesitant to add to his inventory saying, "That is an ugly tomato and I don't think it will ever sell. It does taste pretty good so I will put it in my catalog and see." Craig named it *Cherokee Purple* and today it sells worldwide and is a favorite of many.

One of the reasons gardeners choose heirlooms is because of the many choices in flavor. It is easy to think of the tomato connoisseur as an aficionado, sampling the palate for character - is it sweet or tart? Considering its texture - meaty or juicy? Appreciating the bouquet, light and fruity or mellow. Judging its presentation, shape and color, is it gnarled or smooth? If you are not quite a connoisseur yet, your own preferences for canning, cooking, or serving fresh will help you when making your choices.

If you want to create a garden of interest and story, the heirloom offers you just that. It can become a walk through history. Whether your seed comes from an heirloom seed catalog or from your neighbor's great-grandfather, there is a story to share. When looking at an heirloom seed catalog you can read the story right along with the description of the tomato. Here is a sampling:

**Anna Russian** Seeds came from Brenda Hillenius of Corvallis, Oregon, her grandfather received the seeds years' prior from Russian immigrants. An ox heart shaped fruit in clusters of 2 or 3 on wispy plants. The flavor is sweet, texture meaty and fruit is quite early. Color ranges from dark pink to red.

**Dr. John Wyche**, Dr. Wyche's friend used to own Carson & Barnes Circus which overwintered in Hugo, OK. He fertilized his terraced mountaintop gardens with the elephant manure and scattered lion and tiger waste to keep out deer and rabbits. Heavy yields of one-pound golden-yellow tomatoes. Meaty flesh and rich flavor.

**Coyote** is an ivory, translucent yellow color cherry tomato that Craig LeHoullier acquired from Maye Clement during a Pennsylvania Horticultural Society Harvest Fair show. She indicated that it grew wild in her home country of Mexico.

**Mamie's Brown Pink**. Donated to SSE in 1995 by Alicia Brown-Matthes of Iowa. This variety was a favorite of Alicia's grandmother, Mamie Brown, who grew it in her West Virginia garden. Large, pink beefsteak type with a perfect sweet/acid flavor balance. Indeterminate, 80-90 days from transplant.

Craig shares another letter with the audience at the conference from Walt Swoka who lived in Connecticut - "I have a tomato that my grandmother brought over from Italy and I would love to know if you know anything about it." Seeds from Mr. Swoka produced a "monstrous plant with floppy foliage.

## Feature Article Continued

Finally, If you are curious about the health benefits of tomatoes, the horticulturists of Ohio State University Extension share; “One medium-sized tomato has only 35 calories. The tomato is rich in vitamins C and A, and contains small amounts of the B vitamins and potassium. Tomatoes are also very well known for their high carotenoid content. Nine different carotenoids have been identified in tomatoes, two of them are beta-carotene and lycopene. Carotenoids are thought to have a number of health benefits, such as reducing the risk of developing cancer, cardiovascular disease, and macular degeneration.”<sup>4</sup>

Before you visit your local nursery, research the various tomato plant choices and create a list of what best compliments your interest. Nurseries will not carry all varieties and may not have everything on your list so it is always good to go with a several varieties in mind.

Wishing you garden fun in the sun and the beginning of a long relationship with the love apple.

“Home grown tomatoes, home grown tomatoes, what would life be life without homegrown tomatoes. Only two things, that money can’t buy, that’s true love and home grown tomatoes.”

John Denver

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<sup>1</sup> [MSUE; Saving Plant Seeds For Next Season](#); Gretchen Voyle, MSU Extension; October 9, 2014

<sup>2</sup> Home Hort Hints; Barbara Larson; Unit Educator, Horticulture Boone & Winnebago Counties; University of Illinois Extension; February-March, 2001

<sup>3</sup> Craig LeHoullier; Epic Tomatoes for Your Garden; Gardening and All That Jazz 2018 Educational Conference; April 28, 2018. Craig achieved his PhD in chemistry at Dartmouth College, which resulted in a 25-year career in pharmaceuticals that ended in 2008.

<sup>4</sup> [Ohio Line](#); Growing Tomatoes in the Garden; Gary Gao, Associate Professor and Extension Specialist, Ohio State University Extension; Brad Bergefurd, Extension Educator, OSU South Centers, Ohio State University Extension; Bob Precheur, Associate Professor Emeritus, Department of Horticulture and Crop Science, The Ohio State University; January 26, 2017

Researched and written by Kit Puroll; May, 2018

*“Those who really want to learn usually do  
but not without the desire and work that quality education demands”*

## Board Member Spotlight – Melville Kennedy

When you meet Mel Kennedy you quickly discover that he is a person who knows a lot about horticulture. If you talk to him for a long while, you soon learn he is educated in many areas. It is easy to understand that, Mel holds high value in education and shares, “I have learned a lot, but you can always learn more things.”

You would never know that his young life started out with a struggle to learn. It wasn't until his parents decided he needed a more structured environment to learn; and, enlisted him in the Castle Heights Military School in Tennessee, that he discovered the key to learning in how to study. From struggling to learn he quickly advanced, attaining a status of third in his class the first year to graduating in the top 10% of his class - Mel was on his way to a lifetime of learning.

It was a natural next step to enlist in the Navy following high school and in 1972 his first enlistment was to the USS Ranger Aircraft Carrier in the South Pacific. As Second Class Petty Officer he managed the inventory for the ship day-to-day operations. At the end of his tour he re-enlisted and was stationed stateside with Colorado being his last duty station and retired in 1991.



Mel, would not spend his 21-years of enlistment without continuing his education, “You really want to get that stuff behind you”, he shares, “you don't want to be in the civilian workforce without it.” In 1991, he attained a dual bachelors degree in computer science and business. This led him on to his continued career as a Data Analyst with EDS and the Areotech – which in turn, brought him to live in Genesee County and becoming a Master Gardener.

It would be a broad leap to go from analytics to growing plants that even Mel admits; “I never thought when I retired from the Navy that I was going to be working in horticulture. It would have been the last thing on my mind back then” Interestingly enough, it was not really gardening itself that peaked his interest in the Master Gardener Program but the education and opportunity to learn something new. When his sister-in-law shared with him that she was going to start the Master Gardener program in Oakland County, he said; “If you can do this thing, I can do it!” I had no gardening background at all - I just did it to see what it was like.”

## Mel Kennedy Continued

In 2006, after retiring, Mel took the Master Gardener program in Genesee and jumped right in with both “hands”, completing his volunteer hours within the first couple of months; and, before the years end had accumulated 300 volunteer hours. His first project was at Bryant’s Hospice in Davison followed by time volunteered at the Genesee County Fair; MSU extension gardens, local schools, and vegetable gardens around Flint. But, it was the Keep Genesee Beautiful Community Gateway projects that contributed to most of his hours, working all thirteen sites, Mel made a significant impact in the County, while also making an impression on the organization that recognized him with the Community Hero Award.



If you have not met “Melville Kennedy”, you might recognize his name, appearing in your FaceBook feed almost every day. As the website administrator for the Genesee County Master Gardeners FaceBook page, Mel keeps the Master Gardeners updated regularly with events, conferences, local environmental information and horticultural science-based research as reported by the MSUE department. If you are not currently a follower this would be a good addition to your daily feed. When we are sleeping Mel is busy gathering up the latest news that will keep us best informed on what is happening in the world of plants, nature and the environment. Mel, refers to himself as a “nighthawk”, a person who can’t sleep at night and uses the time productively. He is so passionate about what he

does that the Genesee site is just one of his website administrator projects, adding that he also administers the pages for the *Michigan Master Gardeners Association*, *Mid-Michigan Beekeepers Association* and the *Wild Ones North Oakland*. He notes, “I post items specific to each of the sites interest groups that includes not just Master Gardeners but “organic” followers”, that is, general Facebook viewers.

With no shortage of energy, Mel, also spends his days as Orchard and IPM Assistant for Applewood Estates. Shortly after completing his MG certification Mel was hired as a seasonal staff for the estate grounds. Within a year he saw the opportunity to learn more and took the Pesticide Application Certification training and tested through the MDARD, (Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development). Certification for general licensing is a set of CORE requirements, additional categories can be added as required by the business, or of interest to the individual. Mel choose to include several categories including (3A) turf grass, (3B) ornamentals, (1C) fruits, and (6) right-of-way in order to be able to have all the requirements to enhance his ability to meet the needs of the estate grounds. This is not to be taken lightly – each of these requires a separate test and continuing education. For each license to be renewed, a total of eight hours of continuing education, is required within a three-year period. (40 hours total for the CORE and four additional categories) “I try to get the majority of my credits done in the first year and a half.” Mel shares. “I don’t wait until the last year, instead, I look for conferences and webinars throughout the period and plan my time out.”

Interview and Article written by Kit Puroll, May, 2018

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## BEYOND YOUR COMFORT ZONE

Many of you probably recognize Mel from the MG monthly meetings in his role as the First Vice President, serving as point person for the project sites. Being a board member is not a new position for Mel either – having held positions of President and Second Vice President over the past years. With his experience in these positions and as a MG he shares with new members some heartfelt thoughts on their role in the organization. “Try to attain your Advanced MG early on and don’t be afraid to try new projects – diversify. Look at your volunteer time as an investment on the time you put into acquiring your certification – the five hours a day for fourteen weeks you were taking classes. Try to reach beyond your comfort zone, seek new things to learn and experience. The organization offers a wide scope of projects to choose from. Try the hotline, working the research gardens, helping with a school program, join a committee, write articles for the newsletter or perhaps join the leadership team as a board member.”

## Mel Kennedy Continued

Meanwhile, Mel plans to continue his education and acquire his diagnostics certification, so he can “know where to go to find the answers to questions people have.” For a person who began his young life struggling with his education, he has certainly become a role model for others. Attaining over 3100 hours in education as a MG, he is a light for others to follow and stands as a testimony to the quote made by the 1967 Adjutant of Castle Heights Military School, “*A boy comes to Castle Heights to learn. And, those who really want to learn usually do, but not without the desire and work that quality education demands.*”

MSU Extension—Genesee County is an educational agency funded jointly through the Board of Commissioners, by the state through Michigan State University and federally through the United States Department of Agriculture.

MSU is an affirmative-action, equal opportunity employer. Michigan State University Extension programs and materials are open to all without regard to race, color, national origin, gender, gender identity, religion, age, height, weight, disability, political beliefs, sexual orientation, marital status, family status or veteran status.

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## JAPANESE MAPLE TREE SALE And Bulb Sale

If you haven't bought a Japanese Maple tree yet, there is still time to choose either Blood Good or Red Select cultivars. These trees are being sold on a "First come first serve" basis until supply's are gone. If interested in purchasing a Japanese Maple tree give Randy Tatro a call at: 810-232-2018. Trees are \$10.00 plus tax. Thanks to everyone for a successful spring Bulb Sale!

## 2018 MGAGCM BUS TRIP

Join your fellow Master Gardeners for a fun-filled bus trip on Saturday, June 30, 2018. We will be visiting Lavender Hill Farms and Fernwood Botanical Garden. Lunch at Fernwood Botanical Gardens, as well water and snacks on the bus, are included in the \$65 cost. **THE DEADLINE FOR REGISTRATION IS JUNE 4**, or until the bus is filled. Any registrations received after June 4 (or whenever the first bus is filled) will not be confirmed until we determine if there are enough participants to fill a second bus.

**ABSOLUTELY NO REGISTRATIONS WILL BE ACCEPTED AFTER JUNE 8TH  
SO PLEASE SIGN UP EARLY**



### Vintage in the Village

"With an early rain, followed by sun, gardeners and visitors enjoyed the feeling of Spring. Master Gardeners offered an educational component to their "She Shed" with container planting that will be displayed in the Village."

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## Recipes & More

### SPRING ASPARAGUS RECIPE

#### Ingredients

- 1-1/2 pounds fresh asparagus, trimmed and cut into 2-inch pieces
- 2 small tomatoes, cut into wedges
- 3 tablespoons cider vinegar
- 3/4 teaspoon Worcestershire sauce
- 1/3 cup sugar
- 1 tablespoon grated onion
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1/2 teaspoon paprika
- 1/3 cup canola oil
- 1/3 cup sliced almonds, toasted
- 1/3 cup crumbled blue cheese, optional

#### Directions

In a large saucepan, bring 1 cup water to a boil. Add asparagus; cook, covered, until crisp-tender, 3-5 minutes. Drain; place in a large bowl. Add tomatoes; cover and keep warm.

Place vinegar, Worcestershire sauce, sugar, onion, salt and paprika in a blender; cover and process until smooth. While processing, gradually add oil in a steady stream. Toss with asparagus mixture. Top with almonds and, if desired, cheese. **Yield:** 8 servings.

To toast nuts, bake in a shallow pan in a 350° oven for 5-10 minutes or cook in a skillet over low heat until lightly browned, stirring occasionally.

#### NUTRITIONAL FACTS

3/4 cup: 154 calories, 11g fat (1g saturated fat), 0 cholesterol, 159mg sodium, 12g carbohydrate (10g sugars, 1g fiber), 2g protein. **Diabetic Exchanges:** 2 fat, 1 vegetable, 1/2 starch.

Recipe taken from Taste of Home

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Each year those who have gone above and beyond are recognized for their many contributions, the following are this year's recipients :

### **Outstanding Gardener of the Year**

Sylvia Hansen; Flushing River Trail Project; Board Member; SOP Committee

Randy Tatro; Outreach at Grand Blanc Schools; US-23 Rest Area; Signage Comm., and bulb sales.

### **Outstanding New Master Gardener of the Year**

Scott Murray; Crossroads; Carrington Ministries; I-69 Rest Area

Dale Darron; Mt Morris Senior Greenhouse; Hotline; DTE articles; Class Volunteer

### **Most Distinguished Master Gardener of the Year**

Loretta Ellwood; US-23 Rest Area; Clio Butterfly Garden; Garden Tour; Crossroads

Michelle Chockley; VMS Ambassador; Clio Butterfly Garden; Crossroads; Treasurer.

## **30<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL AWARDS AND RECOGNITION BANQUET**

The 30<sup>th</sup> Annual Awards and Recognition Banquet was a beautiful event and a testament to all the great work being done by the 257 Genesee County Master Gardeners.

As one of the first Master Gardeners program in the State of Michigan, beginning in 1978, it is no wonder that the list of honorees is so impressive. Eleven volunteers were recognized for attaining 250 hours; eight for attaining 500 hours, six for attaining 1000 hours, three for attaining 1500 hours; three for attaining 2000 hours; and two for 2500 hours.

It is only fitting to recognize these mile-markers personally: Margaret Gregg was recognized for attaining 3000 hours; Jim Harrow and Melville Kennedy recognized for 4000 hours; Vicki Laurin recognized for 4500 hours and David Groat was recognized for 6000 hours.

If that is not impressive enough, Emeritus Master Gardener, Alicia Ellis holds the Statewide honor of attaining 10,000 hours. What a generous gift of time and love Alicia has given to our states gardens and environment.

Congratulations to all the volunteers who give their time, talent and treasure to the many project sites. Your name may not be listed here but your contributions are great and are an important component to the Master Gardener Association of Genesee County. It is the collective hours of 16,369 in 2017 that put this County's program on the map for the State of Michigan. Each of your personal contributions is invaluable, the time you take out of your week to work on your project; the personal touch you lend; and, the conscientious thought you put into what you do are immeasurable and appreciated by all that visit our beautiful gardens. God Bless you!



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## 2018 MGAGCM GARDEN TOUR

The Garden Tour is just round the corner, Sunday, June 24 from 10 AM to 5 PM. The focus area for this self-guided tour is Grand Blanc. This year we have seven homes with only ten miles from beginning to end. . Passionate gardeners will be showing off their beautiful gardens for visitors to “Ooh” and “Aah.” Visitors will be inspired as they walk away with new ideas for their own gardens. All garden tours are not created equal. We are heavily increasing the educational component with a bees, butterflies and native garden focus. Each site will have Genesee Master Gardeners who will share scientifically based information related to each garden. Each garden will have one or two educational focuses. We will also have several interactive posters at some sites. Our committee is currently working on identifying appropriate topics for each garden. We will work at providing additional information or links for the master gardeners to brush up. We will have the educational scavenger like year. The guests really enjoyed discussing the garden questions in the car and then finding the answer at the next site. Instead of a quilt raffled off like last year, we will have a sturdy garden bag to raffle. The good news is that by doing this, the master gardeners who visit the sites on the tour date will be able to earn one-half educational hour for each site. They will not earn educational hours by attending other garden tours. Master gardeners may receive volunteer hours for helping the home owners at the sites or MG may volunteer the day of the tour. Sign up early to volunteer by contacting Maggie Gregg by calling 810-655-6357 or e-mailing [MaggieKG424@comcast.net](mailto:MaggieKG424@comcast.net). This is a fund raiser for our organization. We hope that you are able to attend. We have updated our Genesee County Garden Tour web page ([GCgardentour.weebly.com](http://GCgardentour.weebly.com)).

Kay McCullough

Garden Tour Chair

## UPCOMING MILLAGE

Michigan State University Extension programs in Genesee County are supported by a millage. The 0.04 millage is up for renewal on August 7, 2018. This cost about \$2 for the average household in Genesee County.

Programs including Master Gardener, 4-H, urban agriculture, food and nutrition, and traditional agriculture are all supported by Michigan State University Extension. MSU Extension is a 3-way partnership between the federal, state, and county government. If the county does not contribute to the partnership, Genesee County residents lose access to state and federal resources that are supported with their tax dollars.

MSU Extension was started in Genesee County in 1912 with our first agricultural agent, and continues through today. The idea behind Extension is to share the knowledge of the university and with people to help them in their everyday lives, and to take the questions from the community and work with the university to find answers. The idea behind Extension is to empower people with education.

One recent example of community questions that needed answers is around the Flint water crisis. MSU Extension staff worked with campus experts to help understand what can be done with diet and behavior changes to mitigate the effects of lead. MSUE also put together resources about how lead can affect gardening.

In the health and nutrition area, we teach people about what they can do on their own to improve their quality of life. We don't provide food subsidies, but we teach folks how to make the most out of their limited food dollar. We teach folks how to safely prepare and preserve food around their home. We teach folks how to manage their own health through nutrition and behavior.

We work with community partners to help the community have a system of providing fresh healthy food for their families. We partner strongly with edible Flint to turn vacant lots into a wonderful community resource which provides food and beauty to neighborhoods.

All these programs are made possible through the Genesee County taxpayers by their payment of a millage. The 0.04 millage is up for renewal on August 7, 2018; this is not an increase, but will maintain funding at its current level.

People take the Master Gardener program thinking they are going to improve knowledge to help their own home gardens, but the program does so much more than that. Master Gardeners are not certified until they do service in the community that is educational. We want the investment in the Master Gardener volunteers to be doubled and re-doubled as they improve the community and teach others how to do the same.

4-H empowers young people to work on projects of their own design. Unlike K-12 education, where youth are learning specific things for a standardized test, 4-H works with young people to seek out their own knowledge, be critical thinkers, and develop life skills. We want to empower youth to adapt to any situation they encounter through skills in project areas, whether that be animals, the arts, science, or politics.

All these programs are made possible through the Genesee County taxpayers by their payment of a millage. The 0.04 millage is up for renewal on August 7, 2018; this is not an increase, but will maintain funding at its current level.

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## **2018 SUMMER GARDEN TOUR**

**Sunday, July 15<sup>th</sup>, 10 am – 5 pm**

The Fenton Open Gate Garden Club 21<sup>st</sup> annual Summer Garden Tour will be held on Sunday, July 15<sup>th</sup>, from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Seven beautiful gardens from Fenton and the surrounding area will be featured. Reflecting the unique style of the gardener from rolling wooded acres to cozy backyards, each garden is a work of art.

Highlights include:

- serene woodland acres
- a magnificent koi pond
- a "rescued" farm property
- a traditional city lot
- charming fairy gardens
- unique varieties of plants

Both gardeners and nature lovers alike will enjoy spending the day strolling through these lovely creations, absorbing their beauty and taking away an idea or two.

In addition, admission will include:

- maps and garden guides
- many plants labeled at each garden
- a master gardener table at one of the gardens
- home owners on hand to answer questions
- merchant discounts
- light refreshments at one of the gardens
- raffle entry to win a beautiful garden bench

On Tour Day, July 15<sup>th</sup>, tickets may be purchased for \$10 each at the A.J. Phillips Fenton Museum, 310 S. Leroy St, Fenton. Proceeds support the Open Gate Garden Club speaker series and generous donations to community projects.

Advance sale tickets for \$8 (**children 12 & under FREE**) are available from all Open Gate Garden Club members and at these fine merchants:

Bordine Nursery, 9100  
Torrey Rd, Grand  
Blanc

Gerych's Distinctive  
Flowers and Gifts,  
713 Silver Lake Rd,  
Fenton

Heavenly Scent Herb  
Farm, 13730 White  
Lake Rd, Fenton

Holly Township Li-  
brary, 1116 N. Sagi-  
naw Rd, Holly

Sweet Variations,  
14280 Fenton Rd,  
Fenton

Weed Lady, 9225 Fen-  
ton Rd, Grand Blanc

For additional information about the tour and the Fenton Open Gate Garden Club, please go to OGGC website -

[www.opengategardenclubgardentour.com](http://www.opengategardenclubgardentour.com).

## WORDS FROM THE PRESIDENT

We have started our busy time of the year with maintaining our garden projects, volunteering at outreach projects and volunteering at the three Farmers Markets. I want to add that when you make the commitment to volunteer at any project it is very important to let the Chairperson of that project know if you are not able to keep that commitment. A late phone call is better than a "no show". Please be respectful to everyone involved.

I appreciate everyone's efforts as there is a lot of behind the scenes work that goes on and nobody knows the work that is being done. I appreciate everyone's time and dedication to this association.

## SILENT AUCTION

Thank you to everyone who donated items for the Silent Auction we held at our May meeting. It was a successful evening with a total of \$204.00 from the Silent Auction, \$34.00 from the 50/50 Raffle, \$18.29 from coffee sales and \$11.00 from popcorn .

A big thank you goes out to Pam Marlow-Isham, Kay McCullough and their volunteers for their help with the silent auction and of course to Alan Grove, the Certified Popcorn Popper!!!

Thanks to our members for making the purchases and supporting our association.

## MGAGCM JUNE MEMBERSHIP MEETING

We will be meeting at WoJo's Garden Splendor, 7360 E Court St., Davison, Mi. 48423, June 21 at 5:30 for our June general membership meeting. Roxanne Gabriel will be representing WoJo's as our speaker. So come early and shop as WoJo's is graciously giving all Master Gardeners 10% off on every purchase they make that night. By mentioning you are a Master Gardener. We are excited to have Terry McLean present this night to give a short talk on the millage approaching in August. Don't forget your lawn chairs and maybe an umbrella. We will begin our business meeting after a short break after the speaker. Snacks will be provided by Master Gardeners and there will be three \$25.00 gift cards raffled after the business meeting.

## LAWN AND GARDEN HOTLINE HOURS

The MSU Extension Office hours are 8:00 am to 12:00 noon and 1:00 pm to 4:00. The office is closed 12:00 -1:00. The Lawn and Garden Hotline will close at 12:00 noon instead of 1:00 pm to respect the closed lunch hour period. The Hotline volunteers can use the final hour to return phone calls, get mailings together and take any calls that may come in during the noon hour.

Please keep these hours in mind when visiting the Hotline or the MSUE Office.

# MGAGCM DOWN TO EARTH NEWSLETTER

## MGAGCM OFFICERS (2018)

President	<b>Vicki Laurin</b>
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## SAVE THE DATE

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## THIS NEWSLETTER PREPARED BY

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and of counsel Ruth Simon.

## CHECK OUT OUR WEBSITES

[MMGA Inc Website](#)

[MMGA Inc Facebook Page](#)

[MGAGCM Website](#)

[MGAGCM Facebook Page](#)

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## MSU Extension-Genesee

605 N. Saginaw St. Suite 1A  
Flint, MI 48502  
(810) 244-8500

## Plant & Pest Hotline

(810) 244-8548

Hours: Hotline summer hours are:  
Monday, Wednesday and Friday, 8:30  
am to 1:00 pm.

[geneseeplantpest@anr.msu.edu](mailto:geneseeplantpest@anr.msu.edu)

## Public Office Hours:

8 am - 12:00 and 1:00 pm-4:00 pm  
Monday through Friday.

**RETURN TO FRONT PAGE**

**Caller just planted grass seed. Wants to know how to control clover in the area.**

You should not use a pre-emergent to control clover as it will also inhibit the grass growth. Once turf is established, broadleaf weeds can be controlled best in the fall while they are storing their energy for winter. For additional tips see this link: <http://msue.anr.msu.edu/news/control-broadleaf-weeds-in-the-lawn-is-best-done-in-october>.

**Numerous callers need help identifying an insect plant, plant discoloration, evidence of something eating plants, and other visual issues.**

Many callers do not realize the volume of closely related (or seemingly identical) plants, insects, diseases etc. that nature presents us.



Greetings from the MGAGCM Plant and Pest Hotline. Callers and visitors are back outdoors for the season and the phone lines are again very busy!

Volunteers love working the Hotline because they learn so much through finding answers for callers! A reminder that Hotline is open Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays 9:00 a.m.-1 p.m. and the call-in number is (810) 244-8548. Since last issue, here are some of the questions that the hotline volunteers have fielded:

**Because of the volume of calls regarding soil testing we will repeat this reminder occasionally.**

Gardeners should have their soil tested every 3-4 years as soil properties can change due to many factors. MSU Extension provides soil testing for a fee and it is suggested you consider taking this action early before the rush to avoid a longer waiting period. See this link for more details: [http://msue.anr.msu.edu/news/soil\\_testing](http://msue.anr.msu.edu/news/soil_testing)

**Is it OK to prune my Locust tree?**

Wait until the tree blossoms, then prune. Readers please know that pruning times depend on the type of tree you have. For general tips on pruning, visit: <http://msue.anr.msu.edu/news/tips-on-tree-and-shrub-pruning>

**How do I make my garden better?**

Although this is a vague question, Most garden quality issues can be remedied by a) Getting a soil test and b) using compost.

**Several callers inquire about recommendations on where to hire services/make purchases (pest removal, lawn service, tree cutting, equipment purchases etc.**

MSU Plant and Pest Hotline workers cannot give recommendations on where to buy goods and services. They may refer a caller to “any big box lawn and garden center” or if there are only a few places in the county (example- Grain Elevator stores), callers may be told where they are located.

MSU EXTENSION-GENESEE COUNTY  
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AN AFFIRMATIVE ACTION/EQUAL OPPORTUNITY EMPLOYER

**June Membership Meeting will be held at  
WoJo's Garden Splendor, Davison, 7360 Court St.  
Meeting will begin at 5:30 pm with Roxanne Gabriel as  
guest speaker from WoJo's and business meeting follow-  
ing after a short break. There will be three \$25.00 gift  
cards raffled and don't forget your lawn chair!  
Terry McLane will also be present to give a short talk on  
the upcoming millage.**



**MGAGCM DOWN TO EARTH NEWSLETTER**