

# MASTER GARDENER QUEST CRUSH

An educational/interactive feature for membership to learn how to access and enjoy all the benefits of the Volunteer Management System (VMS)

Volunteer Management System, hmmm, what does that really mean? VMS, even more cryptic. We have all heard of it and we know this is where we record our hours. But just what is this website all about?

Perhaps it should be called Garden Crush, or Treasure Trove, or maybe even Adventure Gardens. It would certainly stir curiosity to check it out. This month's feature article is written in the hope of presenting the Volunteer Management System in a different light and make the VMS a portal to a little adventure and interest to all of our Master Gardeners.

With any good adventure, treasure hunt or game there is a map. VMS offers just that, a map that will offer direction to destinations, education, and provide answers to our most perplexing gardening questions. To begin, let's call this the Master Gardener Crush Quest. Your mission, if you choose to accept it, is to locate the "portals" that take you to the "hint" and from there to the discovery of each quest. Are you ready for some fun?

What follows is an interactive game. For each Quest you are prompted to locate information within the VMS to answer a question. Write down your answers as you go.

After you answer all the questions you can email your answers to Kit at [all\\_4\\_adventure@hotmail.com](mailto:all_4_adventure@hotmail.com).

Like any good adventure there are prizes! The first submission, with all the correct answers will receive the Grand Prize and the first ten submissions will receive a participation gift.

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## MGAGCM Mission Statement

The Master Gardener Association of Genesee County is 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 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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## Feature Article Continued from page 1

Pests, plants, butterflies, soil, water, are all topics located within the site; but, if you are looking for education, the first portal that we will investigate will offer a plethora of information for you to learn and explore - all for free! If you have been unable to complete all of your education hours this is the golden nugget for you. You can acquire all your education hours for the year! If you are researching a topic of interest this is a wonderful resource to turn to. If you are looking for something interesting to read, check out this site. To locate this “portal” – “link” – you will travel to the VMS Homepage by signing in to the site as you do for adding your hours. Next, look to the right side banner - the blue boxes. The first blue box lists your personal stats, hours and miles. Under that is the “State Links.” In this list there is the portal/link to “2018 Free Online Education Webinar List.” Take a moment to complete this quest and find something out about pests. Click on this link and scroll down until you locate the webinar: All Bugs Good and Bad Webinar Series: Alien Invasions, Zombies Under Foot, and .... Project: Environmental Stewardship: IPM – General. You then click on the link that is provided and your browser will take you right to the webinar. It does take a minute to load, and this particular one is an audio only. To complete the First Quest challenge, fill in the remainder of the title for this webinar.

State Links
<a href="#">2018 - Finding Accurate Internet Info</a>
<a href="#">2018 - Free Online Education Webinar List</a>
<a href="#">2018 - State Project Categories &amp; Definitions</a>
<a href="#">2018 Ext. Master Gardener Trainings</a>
<a href="#">Frequently Asked Questions - FAQ</a>
<a href="#">Master Gardener Program Web Site</a>
<a href="#">Michigan Master Gardener Association (MMGA)</a>
<a href="#">MSU Extension Bookstore</a>
<a href="#">Smart Gardening - MSUE Gardening in Michigan Website</a>
<a href="#">VMS - User Guide</a>
<a href="#">VMS Ambassador List - 2018</a>

## RECORD YOUR ANSWER TO QUEST I

When the VMS System was launched in 2013, the intention was to offer webinars that provided resources focused on sound, science-based horticultural education. The system was designed for volunteers to record their hours, provide educational resources and serve as a communications tool for Master Gardeners. The plan incorporated trained “Ambassadors” of the system who could help the MG’s navigate the system as well as manage the data contained in the site. Our VMS Ambassador is Michelle Chockley, and along with the Ambassador Buddies, they are available to answer your questions. Their names and contact information is listed in the lower center section of the homepage. Quest II: Provide the name of one of the Buddy Ambassadors that are listed:

## RECORD YOUR ANSWER TO QUEST II

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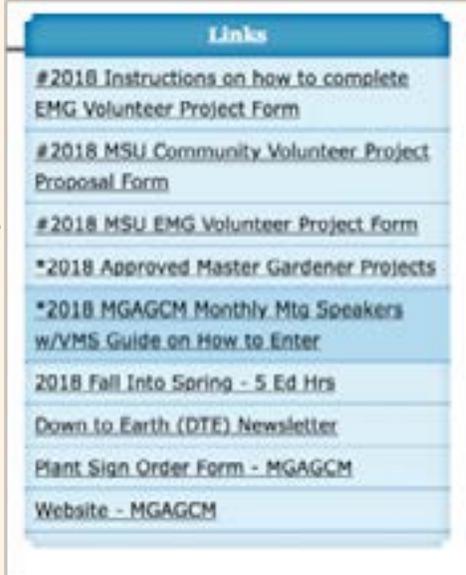
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If you are looking for quick and direct answers to common gardening questions you can find answers by choosing the “Smart Gardening” portal/link again, located on the right hand side of the homepage under the “State Links” blue panel section. This will transport you to the MSUE Master Gardener website and directly to the Smart Gardening Homepage. Quest III: For this quest scroll down to Smart Vegetable; click on the “Learn how to plant a smart vegetable garden” portal/link. From the webpage you are transported to choose a topic of your interest and submit as your answer to Quest III.

## RECORD YOUR ANSWER TO QUEST III

Now that you have had a little fun discovering ways you can broaden your own knowledge, lets take a minute to discover some tools. Have you ever wondered how to find information about conferences, how to order plant stakes or how to list the speaker of the month for educational hours. All can be found right here in the next blue section under the title “Links.” Let’s take a visit to the Speaker of the month 2018 list. After clicking on the link find the speaker of the month for May - Rebecca Finneran. Quest IV: What is listed as the correct way to identify this speaker for reporting educational hours?

## RECORD YOUR ANSWER TO QUEST VI



Links
<a href="#">#2018 Instructions on how to complete EMG Volunteer Project Form</a>
<a href="#">#2018 MSU Community Volunteer Project Proposal Form</a>
<a href="#">#2018 MSU EMG Volunteer Project Form</a>
<a href="#">*2018 Approved Master Gardener Projects</a>
<a href="#">*2018 MGAGCM Monthly Mta Speakers w/VMS Guide on How to Enter</a>
<a href="#">2018 Fall Into Spring - 5 Ed Hrs</a>
<a href="#">Down to Earth (DTE) Newsletter</a>
<a href="#">Plant Sign Order Form - MGAGCM</a>
<a href="#">Website - MGAGCM</a>

Quest V – Discover the MGAGCM web page. The link is at the last item listed in this box. Yes, our Association has its own website. Perhaps you thought that VMS was our webpage. While VMS has extensive information for the Master Gardener, the MGAGCM website has more specific information related to our Association. For instance this is where you can find the project sites along with photos. You will want to spend a little more time here to enjoy the pictures and visit the various portals/links however, for the moment, lets move on to Quest V - what three things are listed that you can order from the site?

## RECORD YOUR ANSWER TO QUEST V

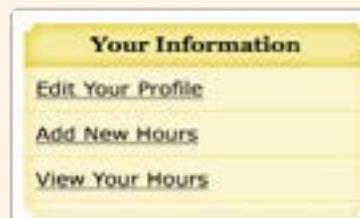
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Whew! You may be feeling a little overwhelmed by now with all this information and moving back and forth. Take a deep breath! All good adventures are challenging, but also exciting and bringing you new insights. This is such an adventure. After a brief pause return to the VMS homepage.

One of the most important sections of the VMS is all about you! Yes, you read that correctly. This is your profile. You completed your profile for the first time near the end of your Master Gardener training. You may not have gone back to this profile since that day. To explain the importance of this information, begin by thinking of it as a navigation tool. It is like the navigation you use on your car or phone to get from one place to another. When you choose areas of interest you are creating a link to be notified when important information is shared regarding that interest. For example, if you are interested in Garden Design and you have selected this on your profile, you would be notified if a class or conference were being offered on garden design.



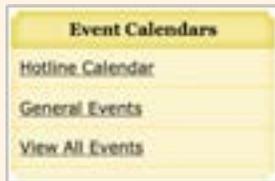
For this reason, all Master Gardeners are asked to choose MGAGCM as an interest. This will help navigate all notifications to you regarding our organization. If this is not selected, you may miss important notices on meetings, hours, events and statewide announcements. So now, let's take a stroll onto your profile page. Click the homepage and the first item in the upper left corner is "Edit your Profile". When you click on this you will access your profile information. Next review your current information and confirm that it is up-to-date. Next, scroll down through the list of interests selecting appropriate interests; and, at the very least select MGAGCM. Next, scroll to the bottom of the page and select "Save Information". Before leaving this page please take a moment to read the note on confidentiality. For Quest VI fill in the missing word in this sentence: "If you want to keep this information hidden from \_\_\_\_\_, please check the "Private" box."

**RECORD YOUR ANSWER TO QUEST VI**

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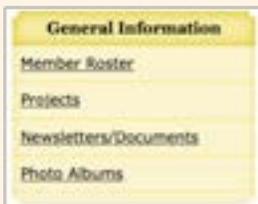
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This left side banner of the VMS homepage is probably most familiar to you since it is the side you travel to when recording your hours. You may have even clicked on some of these links. But, for those who may not have visited here, note that this is where the calendars are located - the Hotline Schedule and the MGAGCM calendar. If you are wondering when and where the Master Gardener Picnic is - what you need to know is right here. While we continue our adventure here is a question to answer about last years picnic. Click on the "General Calendar," locate the July 22, 2018 date. You can find the July calendar by clicking on the back arrow for the month. Now, for the real fun, click on the words "Master Gardener Annual Picnic", this will take you to the details on the picnic. Continuing our interactive portion of this article here is Quest VII: What does your name badge give you when attending the picnic?

## RECORD YOUR ANSWER TO QUEST VII



And, in case you are wondering, the All Events calendar is simply a combination of the Hotline and General Calendar.



The adventure continues with even more exciting discoveries! The "Member Roster!" This is a great tool for finding one of your friends from your project site, along with finding an email or phone number so you can reach out to them. After clicking the "Member Roster" link you will see two additional options; "View Member Interests" and "Email Members." This is where the information you added to your profile comes into the picture. Member interests, is just that, and useful when identifying others that might be interested in a particular project site, or if you are trying to locate a gardener who is working on a particular project site. The email option is what was mentioned earlier and is how to contact a group - especially helpful if you are a project chair. For our next interactive activity, begin by clicking on the "Email Members" tab. At the top of the new page it will say "Email Volunteers" and under that it will say "View Email History". Click on the "View Email History" and you will see a list of all the emails that have been sent. If you have not chosen any interests and in particular the MGAGCM interest you may notice some emails you have not received. Now for our continuing quest, find the email sent on November 9th from Diane Brady subject: Time is running out to report your completed EMG hours!

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**Quest VIII - Who do you need to contact if you have questions about your hours?**

## RECORD YOUR ANSWER TO QUEST VIII

Hope you had fun on this Master Gardener Quest and have found some new resources, tools and information. As for all those Quests - now you have an opportunity to acquire a little treasure! By submitting all your answers in an email to Kit Puroll @ all\_4\_adventure@hotmail.com to qualify for a small Quest gift. The first MG to submit all the correct answers will receive the Grand Treasure!

VMS quests are based on current data at the time of the composition of this article. The calendars and data information may have been updated at the time of your viewing.

Written, design and concept, by Kit Puroll, December, 2018

## RECERTIFICATION PROCESS

**January 8, 2019 2019 Recertification Period Opens - EMGs will need to:**

Log into the Volunteer Management System [VMS] at <https://michigan.volunteersystem.org>

Click on the "Complete Agreement Now" notice at the top of the VMS Home Screen

Complete the three step process [including payment of \$20 re-certification fee]

**On January 25, 2019 the 2019 Recertification Period Closes**

**Then on January 26, 2019 2019 Late Recertification Period Opens - EMGs will need to:**

Log into the VMS at <https://michigan.volunteersystem.org>

Click on the "Complete Agreement Now" notice at the top of the VMS Home Screen

Complete the three step process [including payment of \$30 re-certification fee]

**On February 8, 2019 2019 Late Recertification Period Closes**

**If you are applying for a 2019 individual membership to MMGA please follow this information. Deadline is March 1, 2019.**

The MMGA membership dues submission form for individual members can be downloaded, completed and returned to MMGA with your check for \$5.00. The address for sending in your dues is listed on the form along with mailing instructions. If you have questions about your dues submission please email us at [mmgainc1@gmail.com](mailto:mmgainc1@gmail.com). Click here to download and print the membership form. Please note: All submissions will be applied to 2019 Member Dues.

For additional information visit the [MMGA website](#).

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## Capital Area Master Gardeners Annual Winter Symposium

If you're already weary of the monotonous cloudy winter days, think of spring and sunny times by attending the Capital Area Master Gardeners' Annual Winter Symposium—It's All About...The Ins & Outs of Gardening.

The four topics with the speakers are:

Perennial Plant Geek – Top Picks for the Michigan Garden – Bethany Troy, Perennial Garden Manager, MSU Horticulture Gardens.

Smart Planning for Your Vegetable Garden – Rebecca Kranz, MSU Extension.

The Top 10 Things Affecting Trees – David L. Roberts, Ph.D., Senior Academic Specialist, College of Agriculture and Natural Resources, MSU

Toxic Plants and Their Friends – Peter H. Carrington, Ph.D., Assistant Curator, W.J. Beal Botanical Garden, MSU.

Where: Plant and Soil Sciences Building on MSU's Campus in East Lansing

When: Saturday, January 26, 2019

Earn: 5 Master Gardener education hours

Cost: \$40.00 for CAMG members / \$50.00 for non-member Active, Certified MGVs / \$55.00 all others

A link to the association web site can be found at: [Capital Area Master Gardeners](#)

There you will find a link to the brochure, information about hotel rooms, vendors who will be at the conference (there are several new ones this year), a link to directions, etc.

Questions? Email: [mga.cac@gmail.com](mailto:mga.cac@gmail.com)



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## 2019 MGAGCM Association Meetings Speakers Scheduled 6:00 – 7:00 pm – 1 educational hour

**JANUARY:** 1/17/19 – EVENT DESCRIPTION: MGAGCM association meeting speaker, Dr. Chris Wright, PH.D on “Mushrooms” **PROJECT SELECTION:** Food: General Gardens

**FEBRUARY:** 2/21/19 – EVENT DESCRIPTION: MGAGCM association meeting speaker, Gary Eichorn, Certified Arborist, on “Insects and Diseases Homeowners often miss”  
**PROJECT SELECTION:** Environmental Stewardship: IPM General

**MARCH:** 1/21/19: EVENT DESCRIPTION: MGAGCM association meeting speaker, Diane Brown Rutlewski, Ingham Co MG Coordinator on “Hops”  
**PROJECT SELECTION:** Food: General Gardens

**APRIL:** 4/18/19: No speaker – Awards Banquet at Crossroads Village

**MAY:** 5/16/19 – EVENT DESCRIPTION: MGAGCM association meeting speaker, Angela Nelson, Horticulturist on “Native Plants” **PROJECT SELECTION:** Environmental Stewardship: Native Plants

**JUNE:** 6/20/19 – TBA

**JULY:** No Meeting – Annual picnic – Date TBA

**AUGUST:** 8/8/19 – EVENT DESCRIPTION: MGAGCM association meeting speaker, Ben Cohen, Educator & Owner of Small House LLC on “Local Herbs and Usage”  
**PROJECT SELECTION:** Food: General Gardens

**SEPTEMBER:** 9/19/19 – EVENT DESCRIPTION: MGAGCM association meeting speaker, Karen Golden, Owner of Variations Horticultural Services on “How to Improve Bounties of your Garden” **PROJECT SELECTION:** Food: General Gardens

**OCTOBER:** 10/17/19 – EVENT DESCRIPTION: MGAGCM association speaker, Loretta Ellwood, Advanced Master Gardener on “Flower Gardens of New Zealand and Australia”  
**PROJECT SELECTION:** Community: Beautification – Public Areas

**NOVEMBER:** 11/21/19 – No speaker scheduled for this meeting

**DECEMBER:** No meeting or speaker

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## In Memoriam to Jim Harrow

By Vicki Laurin

Jim Harrow was my mentor, friend, confidant and my “partner”, as he liked to call me. Things won't be the same without seeing Jim sitting at the Hotline desk, but my life, and others, have been enriched by this man. His faithful dedication, wisdom and love of the Master Gardener program helped make the hotline one of the best in the State of Michigan. It was not uncommon to have other counties call Jim to diagnose a problem they couldn't solve. Jim was proud to own Harrow Scapes, a landscaping business he founded and ran for ten years after his retirement from GM. Carrying on his love of gardening, he designed and landscaped (with a team of Master Gardeners) the gardens at Genesee County Library on Pasadena.



Whether young or old, Jim found a common interest with everyone he met, never meeting a stranger. He loved to be in social settings and was always willing to be the mischievous person in the group. His wit, and sometimes embarrassing sense of humor, will not be forgotten. He loved to share his knowledge on anything from garden questions, fine dining, wine tasting, archeology . . . the list goes on and on. I don't think there was anything this man didn't know something about. So, Jim, as we say goodbye, it's only until we meet again.

Jim Harrow passed away at Genesys Hospital at the age of 81 on December 13th. He leaves behind a brother and sister-in-law in Montrose and a sister in Florida. Honoring his wishes, cremation has taken place. A memorial service will be held at a later date. Memorial contributions may be made to the Master Gardeners of Flint (MGAGCM).

## In Memoriam to Alicia Ellis

By Kay McCollough & Vicki Laurin



We are saddened to announce the recent passing of Alicia Ellis. As a Genesee County Master Gardener for almost thirty years, Alicia had accumulated over 10,000 hours, receiving a special recognition at Master Gardener College last September. Alicia also served as a past Board President, taught gardening classes, and mentored new master gardeners. Alicia loved gardening as well as the many birds attracted to her creations, especially hummingbirds. Her pride and joy was developing the cactus and succulent garden, which originated on MSU campus in the mid 1990's, and was later moved to its current location on the hill at Easter Seals located on University Avenue in Flint. Alicia

continued to be active at the gardens through the years.

In addition, Alicia also devoted thousands of volunteer hours to the scouts, church, St. Robert's Elementary, Powers Catholic High School, and many community projects.

Alicia was born in Beckley, West Virginia and is survived by her loving husband of 49 years, David and her children. She will be missed dearly.

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First -- please Rest in Peace Mr. Jim Harrow--arguably one of the best diagnosticians in the State of Michigan. Many of us were honored to be better gardeners under his direction! Below are some of the winter inquiries we've recently fielded on the Hotline.

### **How often should I water my Poinsettia plant?**



These colorful holiday plants need the soil checked before watering. Insert your finger down two inches into soil. If it's dry, it's time to water (wish I'd known this for the past two decades...). Read on here for more on Poinsettias: [University of Illinois Extension](#)

### **What is the viability of vegetable seeds that are old but still germinate?**

Yes, old veggie seeds are still viable if they are stored in a cool dry place (preferably marked jars). With older seeds, keep the batches organized by the package expiration dates so you can test for germination of each batch. Look here for more details: [MSUE Improve your Garden With Proper Seed Storage and Planning](#).



**A man approached the Hotline counter and asked if we have been getting questions about Christmas trees. I did not see any logs addressing this, but why not pretend so since 'tis the season!** Choosing and caring for a Christmas tree should be a memorable and stress-free activity for the whole family if you follow a few simple steps. Whether you purchase a pre-cut tree or choose and cut your own, there's nothing that welcomes the holidays more than that fresh pine scent in your living space. Warning: your cat doesn't care to distinguish between an outdoor tree and an indoor tree so be ready!!

Read more here on selection and care of your tree: [MSUE Buying your First Farm Grown Christmas Tree](#)



## RECIPES & MORE

### PRALINE APPLE BREAD

Esse Blackburn of Bellaire won the 2001 Apple Baking Contest sponsored by Zehender's of Frankenmuth, Michigan Living, Pioneer Sugar and the Michigan Apple Committee.

Her Praline Apple Bread topped more than 350 recipes submitted from around the state in an annual competition.

## Ingredients

1 cup sugar  
2 eggs  
8oz. sour cream  
2 tsp vanilla  
½ tsp salt  
2tsp baking powder  
½ tsp baking soda  
¼ cup butter  
2 cups flour  
¼ cup brown sugar  
1 1/4 cups tart apples, peeled and cored  
1 cup chopped pecans

## Directions

*Oven: 350 degrees  
9x5x3 inch loaf pan*

In a large mixing bowl, beat together sugar, sour cream, eggs and vanilla at low speed with an electric mixer until combined. Then beat on medium speed for two minutes. Stir together flour, baking powder, soda, and salt. Add to sour cream mixture, beat at low speed until combined. Stir in the apple and ½ of the pecans. Turn into a greased 9x5x3 inch loaf pan. Sprinkle with the remaining chopped pecans and press lightly into the batter. Bake at 350 degrees for 55 to 60 minutes (test with toothpick). Cool in pan on rack for 10 minutes. In a small pan, combine butter and brown sugar. Cook and stir until mixture comes to a boil. Reduce heat and boil gently for one minute. Remove bread from pan and drizzle top with brown sugar mixture. Cool. Makes one loaf

*Tea bread recipe using Michigan apples.  
submitted by Sharon Noteboom*

## Dates to Remember

Happy New Year MGAGCM members. Our next monthly meeting will be held at the GGCARD building on January 17, 2019. Social hour will begin at 5:30 with snacks provided by Susan Biron, Maggie Gregg, Joanne Gensel and Alan Grove. Our speaker will be Dr. Chris Wright, Ph.D. who is a microbiologist from Michigan State University. His topic will be on Michigan mushrooms. He is regarded as being a very good presenter and educator. He has spoken before to many groups including other Master Gardener Organizations on this subject.

As usual, we will have our 50-50 raffle at the end of the business meeting. You must be present to win. In addition, we will be raffling off two donated gift certificates from the Flint Farmers' Market and the Davison Farmers' Market. Again, you must be present to win.

## Words from the President

I want to take this opportunity to wish each member a healthy and Happy New Year. I am looking forward to a new year and new beginnings for our association as we are looking forward to a MSUE Volunteer Training class later in 2019. We had a successful year in 2018 and ended with a balanced budget, a beautiful garden tour, and a spectacular "Spring into Fall" Conference - which brought in over \$2,400 profit. This was in addition to many outreach projects, bulb and tree sales, and new projects along the way. With all the hopes of another successful year I want to remember our beloved members, Thomas Regimbal, Pat Seitz, Sandra Johnson, Jim Harrow, George Mynsberge and Alicia Ellis that we have lost this year. Each of these members were instrumental in making our association the best it could be and each loved the membership by volunteering in their own favorite projects. As we bring in the new year lets carry on the legacy that our dear friends left us.

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## MGAGCM OFFICERS (2018)

President	Vicki Laurin
810-744-0725	laurinvicki@gmail.com
1st Vice President	Mel Kennedy
810-275-8822	mkennedy60@charter.com
2nd Vice President	Alan Grove
810-922-8776	plantdoc049@outlook.com
Secretary	Dick Moldenhauer
810-695-2649	rnmold1050@aol.com
Treasurer	Bobbi Parkhill
630-408-1710	bpark141@gmail.com

## SAVE THE DATE DECEMBER 2018

Date	Event Name
Tue, Jan 01, 2019	<u>Registration begins for "Plants of Distinction"</u>
Mon, Jan 07, 2019	<u>Master Gardener MGAGCM Board Meeting</u>
Thu, Jan 17, 2019	<u>Membership meeting</u>
Sat, Jan 26, 2019	<u>Capital Area Master Gardeners Winter Symposium "The Ins &amp; Outs of Gardening"</u>

**HAPPY  
NEW YEAR  
2019**

## THIS NEWSLETTER PREPARED BY

Vicki Laurin, laurinvicki@gmail.com.  
Kit Puroll, all\_4\_adventure@hotmail.com  
Edited by Sylvia Hansen

## CHECK OUT OUR WEBSITES

MMGA Inc Website  
MMGA Inc Facebook Page  
MGAGCM Website  
MGAGCM Facebook Page

## LEAD VMS AMBASSADOR

**Michelle Chockley**  
810-210-6685 (cell)  
chockleym@gmail.com

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

## **Plant & Pest Hotline**

(810) 244-8548  
Hours: Hotline winter hours are: Friday,  
9:00 am to 12:00 pm.  
geneseeplantpest@anr.msu.edu

## **Public Office Hours:**

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

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MSU EXTENSION-GENESEE COUNTY

605 N. Saginaw St.

Suite 1A

FLINT, MI 48502

[www.msue.msu.edu/genesee](http://www.msue.msu.edu/genesee)

**AN AFFIRMATIVE ACTION/EQUAL OPPORTUNITY EMPLOYER**

**January 2019 MGAGCM Speaker**

**Dr. Chris Wright, PH. D.**

**a micro-biologist from MSU**

**Dr. Wright will be speaking on Michigan mushrooms**

**Let's give Dr. Wright a warm welcome on January 17, 2019**

**MGAGCM DOWN TO EARTH NEWSLETTER**

