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Genesee County Master Gardener Newsletter
DOWN TO EARTH

JANUARY

2016

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1



FEATURE ARTICLE

A Holiday Tree for the Birds

One of my holiday traditions is to decorate a Christmas tree with beautiful ceramic bird ornaments collected over many years. As a gardener, I always find something appealing in the sights and smells of a freshly cut evergreen decorated with tiny twinkling lights and glittering birds. Last year, however, my annual Christmas ritual took a different twist. I decided to recycle my Christmas tree outdoors as a festive tree for wild birds.

The idea of giving the Christmas tree back to Mother Nature just seemed to make sense. My back yard is always a hive of activity for birds and other wildlife. The outdoor feeders are filled year-round. In early spring, robins arrive to eat the dried fruit from the old crab apple tree nearby. In summer, finches, song sparrows and wrens nest and raise their young. In winter, woodpeckers, blue jays, cardinals and black-capped chickadees are constant visitors.

So, on Christmas Day, with Handel's *Messiah* playing in the background and the gifts unwrapped, I went to work in the kitchen. My goal was to create homemade decorations that would provide healthy winter food for my feathered friends.

Earlier, I purchased three 10-ounce packages of suet, a bag of black sunflower seeds and a large bag of a high-quality mixed blend with shelled sunflower seeds, millet and peanuts. During fall walks with the dog, I had gathered fallen pine cones and twigs.

The first project was to coat the pine cones using a mixture of one package of suet with equal portions of natural peanut butter and the mixed blend. I put these three ingredients into a large mixing bowl and combined them easily enough using a fork. Jute twine was tied around each pinecone and knotted to make a loop. I spread the pine cones with the gooey mixture, placed them on a parchment-lined cookie sheet and put them in the freezer.

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Next up were the holiday suet decorations. I used metal cookie cutters, usually reserved for shortbread cookies and gingerbread. I mixed the second package of suet with two cups of the sunflower seeds. With a tablespoon, I pressed the seedy suet mixture into the shapes of angels, stars, hearts, a Christmas tree, gingerbread men and, dare I say, even a cat. Wooden skewers – the kind used to barbecue in the summertime – were broken and stuck through the middle of each one, intended as miniature bird perches after being strung with twine. Some were decorated with dried cranberries. I froze the cookie cutters filled with this suet mixture in a plastic bag. The suet decorations popped out of the shapes easily enough the next morning

Before cooking Christmas dinner, I had time for two more recipes. I mixed the last package of suet with two cups of the mixed blend. Again, I used a fork to mix the two ingredients in a large mixing bowl. First, I made miniature suet cupcakes, filling a cupcake tin with the mixture and adding a short, sturdy twig to each hanging it.

With the remaining sunflower I stuffed empty orange halves and shells that were leftovers from fast. But first, I used a wooden four holes in the fruit cups twine was knotted at the base and the top to hang. Again, I popped freezer.

It was an unusually warm Christmas 4°C (39°F) outside. Soon after, the plunged. By New Year's, it was During the following week, the snow-covered. The weatherman with wind. It was a good time to Christmas decorations and lights It was also an ideal time to move back deck to be reborn as an out-

We cleared off the snow and made Christmas tree so that it was visible from inside.

(Decals designed specifically to prevent birds from crashing into windows would lessen the chance of injuries near the patio doors.) In winter gear, we popped the naked tree back into the Christmas tree stand and used twine to tie it to the banister to protect it from crashing down in icy winds

I pulled out all the suet seed decorations from the downstairs freezer, tied them with red burlap ribbon or twine and attached them to the tree. Leftovers were put in an outside cooler for later. The final step was to head back inside to cut slices of fresh oranges and chunks of apple to hang with twine. I also pulled out an old darning needle and some butcher's cotton thread to string leftover cranberries into garlands.

Next, I decided to put out some dried cornhusks and peanuts at the base of the tree for the squirrels and other wildlife. Chances are, they'd be back for more delectable goodies later, but



one to use when seed suet mixture, pomegranate Christmas break-skewer to create through which tied together at these into the

mas Day, a balmy temperature below 0°C (32°F). landscape became cited -29°C (-20°F) put away the for another year. the tree to the side holiday tree.

space for the ble from inside. prevent birds

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HOME GROWN 896

I have something odd happening in my front yard. There are scattered piles of soil that are probably four inches tall and six inches wide. The soil appears to come from nowhere and is finely ground up. What is causing this and what do I do about this? I can't believe it is falling from the sky.

Your soil pusher is actually working from the other direction. A Star-nosed Mole is pushing soil upwards from below the surface, creating an air vent for the tunnel below. The soil looks finely ground because the mole has used its huge paddle-shaped front feet with long claws to dig the soil loose. It would be like you digging with a couple of big forks. This is the work of one of the two moles that are in Michigan. The Eastern Mole tunnels directly below the soil and raises a tunnel as it travels around feeding. You can walk on its tunnel as it winds through the yard. The Star-nosed Mole's tunnels are often much deeper in the soil than the Eastern Mole. Tunnels could be six inches to one foot below the surface. But they will cruise higher. For both kinds of moles, their diet is mainly earthworms. Eighty percent are earthworms and the other twenty percent are soil insects and grubs. The presence of moles does not mean you have grubs. So spending money on grub control products are not necessary. The Star-nosed mole prefers damp to wet soil and often digs near a pond or other water source. They also have the ability to swim and have been known to swim in winter ponds below the ice. But the best part of all of this is that there is basically nothing to do about the piles of soil. The one thing you can do is to rake the piles of soil out into the surrounding grass so the grass blades are not buried. If the grass is covered by soil, it dies. Dig it out with a rake and the grass goes on happily. Do this once a week or more often so the grass is visible. In their own strange way, moles loosen soil and can improve drainage in many areas.

What is going on? I was looking around my yard today and I have all these red insects in groups or piles on some of my tree trunks and on rocks. Some are little and all cherry red, some slightly bigger ones have red and a bit of black but then there are bigger ones that have black and red in almost equal amounts. Some are reminiscent of boxelder bugs but what are these and how do I control this crazy invasion? What are they damaging because I can't tell?

They look like Boxelder Bugs because they are Boxelder Bugs. You just happen to be seeing several generations all clustered together. There are multiple generations of boxelder bugs born each growing season and these overlap. Boxelder Bugs belong to a family called true bugs or Hemiptera. They feed by sucking nutrients out of various seeds, flowers or plants. But the good news is that you can't find any damage because it is very minute. As the season closes out, these guys have to spend the winter as adults in an area that does not freeze. You have identified adults as being black or very dark gray or brown with red chevron-like markings on the back. All the rest are kids that are immature. Kids cannot store enough food or energy to live through the winter so much of your heaps are doomed to die. Only the adults could survive. The adults will not continue to sit on tree trunks or rocks. They will eventually migrate to buildings and look for loose siding or cracks to squeeze into. The goal is to find that spot where the temperatures stay between 40 and 50 degrees, which is the wall void. That's between the outside and inside wall. Then, the only choice is on which side of the insulation you sleep. They want to hibernate but not freeze. In the spring, they go back out to the new leaves to frolic and reproduce. Some end up indoors and you can suck them up with a vacuum cleaner. If you swat them, they could leave a red stain. But that's your doing, not theirs. Nature is about to solve your problem with cold weather.

Gretchen Voyle, MSU Extension-Livingston County Horticulture Educator 517/546-3950



COOKS CORNER

Toffee Biscuit Bread Pudding

Christin Mahrlig

INGREDIENTS

6 day old biscuits, cut into ½-inch pieces

2 eggs, lightly beaten

1½ cups milk

½ cup heavy cream

⅔ cup packed dark brown sugar

1 teaspoon vanilla

½ teaspoon cinnamon

¾ cup toffee bits (Heath Bar)

⅓ cup chocolate chips

TOFFEE SAUCE

4 tablespoons butter

½ cup packed dark brown sugar

¼ cup heavy cream

½ teaspoon vanilla

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Place biscuit **pieces** in a greased 8-inch baking dish.
2. In a medium bowl, whisk together eggs, milk, heavy cream, dark brown sugar, vanilla and cinnamon.
3. Pour mixture over biscuits. Sprinkle toffee bits and chocolate chips on top.
4. Use a wooden spoon to press biscuits down into liquid. You want the top pieces to soak up liquid or they will bake up dry. Let sit 20 minutes.
5. Bake in a 350 degree oven for 45 minutes.

In a small saucepan, bring butter, ½ cup dark browned sugar, ¼ cup heavy cream, and ½ teaspoon vanilla to a simmer. Whisk for 3 to 5 minutes, or until thickened. Let cool slightly before drizzling on bread pudding.

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this would deter them for now.

The final step was to tie a sheaf of wheat from the top of the tree. It's an old Scandinavian tradition for Nordic families to feed wild birds with sheaves of wheat, nuts or bread as an omen of good luck on Christmas Day. That seems like a good Christmas tradition, as is my new one of making a feast for wild birds using our leftover Christmas tree.

Text and photos by Julianne Labreche



Growing and Caring for Amaryllis

Amaryllis (*Hippeastrum* species) are popular for their 6 to 10 inch trumpet shaped flowers that are born on 1 to 2 foot stalks (scapes). Although red and scarlet are the most popular colors, the flowers may be pink, white, salmon, apricot, rose, bicolor or picotee (petals with a different edge color) and in both single and double forms. Because they can produce flowers in mid-winter, they are prized for the color they add to indoor landscapes. Amaryllis may be purchased as bulbs or plants, in or near bloom. Blooming plants are often given and received as gifts. Amaryllis plants should be kept out of direct sunlight while they are in flower to prolong the life of the flowers.

Selecting and planting bulbs

When growing amaryllis from bulbs, careful selection of the bulbs is important because the plant's performance is influenced by both the size and condition of the bulb. It is best to select the largest bulbs available as they will produce more stalks and blooms the first year. The bulbs should be firm and dry with no signs of mold, decay or injury.

Select a container that is deep enough to allow adequate room for good root development and has provisions for drainage. The diameter of the pot should be about ONE inch larger than that of the bulb. Although this may seem small, amaryllis bulbs prefer a smaller container. Select a potting medium that has a high organic matter, but drains well. The bulb should be positioned so that at least one-third, preferably one-half, of the bulb is above the surface of the potting medium. Firm the potting medium around the bulb, water it thoroughly and place the container in a warm, sunny spot. Do not fertilize the bulb until it begins to grow. After growth appears, it is essential to fertilize the plants regularly with a fertilizer that has high phosphorus content. Move the plant out of direct sunlight when the flower buds have begun to show color.

After-flowering care

The secret to successfully growing amaryllis is to keep the plants actively growing after they have finished blooming. After the flowers have faded, cut them off to prevent seed formation. Do not remove the flower stalk until it has turned yellow; it will help manufacture food that will be stored in the bulb. If the bulb does not produce a flowering stalk the next blooming period, it has not stored enough nutrients during the post-blooming period. It is important that amaryllis receive plenty of bright sunlight after they have finished blooming so place it in the brightest possible location indoors. Water the plant from the top of the container thoroughly whenever the top 2 inches of the soil is dry to the touch. Empty any excess water that drains from the pot as wet soil will promote root and bulb rot. Continue to fertilize the plant regularly.

When all danger of frost is past, acclimate the plant to the outdoors by first placing it in shade or indirect light. Gradually move it to a bright garden or bed where it will receive full sun for at least 6 hours daily. Sink the pot into the soil and fertilize with a balanced houseplant fertilizer monthly to build up nutrients for flower production the next year. Amaryllis plants should be brought indoors before the first frost in the fall. Amaryllis do not require a resting period and will bloom if kept evergreen. However, blooming time can be controlled by allowing the bulb to go through a resting period. After bringing the potted plants indoors, store them in a dark place like a basement or cool closet (above freezing) and do not water. Do not remove the foliage until it has become dry and shriveled. The bulbs can be forced into bloom again after resting for 8 to 12 weeks. Inspect the bulbs periodically and bring them into light if new growth appears. If no new growth appears, they can be forced to bloom by bringing them into bright light and

2017 Master Gardener Calendar

January 1 – June 30

Date	Event name	Time	Speaker(s)	Topic	Location
Mon., Jan. 9	Board meeting	2 pm			GCCARD Bldg.
Thurs, Jan 19	M G Training Course begins https://events.anr.msu.edu/event.cfm?eventID=A5FD20E1F6937969	9 am-1 pm Every Thurs through April 27	Multiple	Multiple	GCCARD Bldg.
Thurs., Jan 19	Membership meeting	5:30 pm social 6 pm speaker 7 pm meeting	Daren Bagley, MSU Extension Educator/4H Youth Development	The Art of Composting	GCCARD Bldg.
Sat., Jan 28	2017 Winter Symposium https://mgacac.wordpress.com/events/	8:15 am – 4 pm	Jan Bills, Rosann Kovalcik, Cheryl English, Chuck Martin	It's all about Seasons	MSU Plant & Soil Sciences Bldg. E. Lansing
Mon, Feb. 6	Board meeting	2 pm			GCCARD Bldg.
Thurs., Feb. 16	Membership meeting	5:30 pm social 6 pm speaker 7 pm meeting	Roxanne Gabriel, Wojo's Perennials Manager	Landscaping	GCCARD Bldg.
Mon., Mar. 6	Board meeting	2 pm			GCCARD Bldg.
Sat., Mar. 4	Smart Gardening Conference		Multiple	TBD	Grand Rapids
Thurs., March 18	Membership meeting	5:30 pm social 6 pm speaker 7 pm meeting	Jim Withers, Bee specialist	Honey Bees	GCCARD Bldg.
Mon. Apr. 3	Board meeting	2 pm			GCCARD Bldg.

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TBD April	Bee Symposium	TBD	TBD	Bees	MCC
Thurs., Apr 20	Awards Banquet	5:30 pm social 6 pm dinner 7 pm awards	No speaker		Crossroads Village*
Thurs., April 27	MG course ends	9 am – 1 pm	Multiple	Multiple	GCCARD Bldg
Mon., May 1	Board meeting	2 pm			GCCARD Bldg.
Thurs., May 18	Membership meeting	5:30 pm social 6 pm speaker 7 pm meeting	Erin Caudill, Owner, Grocery Farmer, MSU educator/speaker	Hoop Houses	GCCARD Bldg.
Mon., June 5	Board meeting	2 pm			GCCARD Bldg.
June 23 & 24	Master Gardener College		Multiple	Multiple	MSU Campus, East Lansing
Thurs., June 15	Membership meeting	5:30 pm social 6 pm speaker 7 pm meeting	TBD	TBD	Wojo's Garden Center, Davison *
Sun., June 25	Garden Tour	10 am-4 pm			Flushing/Flint Twp. area

* Please note: Different locations for April and June meetings

Purple Passion

First things first – there is no such thing as a black flower or leaf among herbaceous or woody plants; however, there are some that come close. The so-called black plants produce flowers or leaves that are so dark in color, they appear black. Close inspection, however, usually reveals a hint of another color such as deep purple, burgundy, maroon, dark red or brown. Among dark-colored trees and shrubs, one color is more common and stronger than other subtle undertones – purple. It is definitely the predominant color among the dark-colored flowers and foliage of woody plants.

Most of those plants need a sunny location to prevent them from becoming lost in dark corners. Full sun is often a must, as many purple-leaved plants turn bronzed green if growing in shade. Dark-colored trees and shrubs should also be placed against a lighter backdrop to

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stand out effectively. This is particularly important in the case of shrubs and trees, the visual impact of which is strong due to their sheer size.

Dark Blooms

Unlike herbaceous plants, the list of dark-blooming woodies is relatively short. It opens with the deciduous sweetshrub (*Calycanthus floridus*); its fragrant, reddish-brown flowers stand out against glossy leaves. Another late-spring bloomer, the mountain laurel (*Kalmia latifolia*), offers several cultivars with dark-colored flowers such as 'Minuet', 'Olympic Wedding', 'Black Label' and 'Tad'. They all feature light-centered flowers with richly colored dark bands. The cultivar 'Mitternacht' (syn. 'Midnight'), with a dark burgundy-red ring, is regarded as the darkest-blooming kalmia registered so far. Another dark-flower producer belongs to the clematis family (*Clematis* spp.). Cultivars such as 'Romantika' and 'Black Madonna' produce dark-purple flowers, while 'Black Prince', a truly exceptional cultivar, produces flowers that are initially almost black and later fade to deep purple.



There are also some dark red and purple roses, although a true black rose is still elusive. Options include the popular 'Black Jade', deep-purple 'Midnight Blue™', dark-red 'Black Pearl', plum-purple 'Nigrette' and likely the darkest, 'Black Baccara'. Dark-blooming rhododendrons have unusually deep-red flowers. Cultivars include 'Black Magic' and 'Black Sport', while the flowers of 'Black Widow' are a deep-maroon color.

Dark Foliage

Dark-toned foliage is better represented than dark blooms. Among trees, the most spectacular looking are purple-leaved cultivars of the Norway maple (*Acer platanoides*), such as the popular 'Crimson King', pyramidal 'Crimson Sentry' and 'Faassen's Black', which is regarded as the darkest. As Norway maples' shallow roots and dense canopy inhibit understory growth, a better option is their smaller Japanese cousins. Particularly popular is a relatively hardy cultivar of Japanese maple (*Acer palmatum*) called 'Bloodgood', with dark-crimson, incised leaves that turn flaming red in the fall. Other attractive, dark-colored Japanese maples belong to the threadleaf group (*A. palmatum* var. *dissectum*), with cultivars such as 'Crimson Queen', 'Dissectum Nigrum', 'Hessei' or 'Ever Red'. Although smaller and somewhat tender, they are valued for their ornamental, lacy, deeply divided foliage.

The European beech (*Fagus sylvatica*) offers another dark purple toned group of trees. There are many cultivars of various sizes and forms, such as the diminutive 'Purpurea Nana', pyramidal 'Dawyck Purple' or weeping 'Black Swan'; and 'Purpurea Pendula'. The old cultivar 'Riversii'; features exceptionally dark-purple-blackish leaves. Eastern redbuds (*Cercis canadensis*) are valued for their attractive, medium-green, heart-shaped leaves, but the cultivar 'Forest Pansy' has the leaves of the deepest dark-red purple; in some forms they appear brownish-bronze. Another similar tree with attractive purple foliage is the katsura 'Red Fox' (*Cercidiphyllum japonicum*), the round leaves of which appear almost black from a dis-

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For residents of warmer zones, there is another purple option called 'Summer Chocolate', the cultivar of purple silk tree (*Albizia julibrissin*), also known as mimosa. Its stunningly beautiful, deep-chocolate-purple foliage is cut into lacy leaflets. 'Chocolate Fountain' is an equally splendid weeping form.

Another interesting group of woodies with dark foliage is cherries. The most common are purple-leaved cherry plum (*Prunus cerasifera*) and the purple-leaf chokecherry 'Schubert' (*P. virginiana*). Its foliage emerges green in spring and gradually matures to dark purple by early summer. Cherry also has an interesting shrub offering in the purple-leaf sand cherry (*P. x cistena*), with its reddish-purple foliage. Another purple-leaved option for large gardens is the purple smoke bush (*Cotinus coggygria*). Among the half dozen cultivars to choose from, 'Royal Purple' and 'Velvet Cloak' are the best choices.

Relatively the same size but somewhat coarser is another dark shrub, the ninebark (*Physocarpus opulifolius*). The most known cultivar 'Diablo' features a deep-burgundy color on its currant-like foliage. Identical in color but more compact are newly introduced cultivars 'Little Devil' and 'Summer Wine'.

Black elderberry (*Sambucus nigra*) offers the true-to-its-name cultivar 'Black Beauty', with very dark almost black foliage. Its cousin 'Black Lace' is similarly dark colored but its leaves are deeply cut, giving it a lacy appearance. The ferny foliage is offset in midsummer by pinkish-white flowers.

The list of purple-leaved shrubs wouldn't be complete without barberry (*Berberis thunbergii* and *B. x ottawensis*), which offers about a dozen cultivars. All feature shiny, deep-purple foliage and some, such as 'Rose Glow', have leaves in a rich-purple color with pinkish-white variegation.

If you are looking for more purple, try the weigela shrub (*Weigela florida*), with its shiny, burgundy-purple foliage that deepens with summer heat. Two cultivars – upright rounded 'Wine & Roses®' and low-mounding dwarf 'Midnight Wine®' – are particularly valued.



"Black Lace" elderberry is an attractive in full bloom

Dark Fruit

Unlike blooms and foliage, truly black fruit does exist. If produced in abundance, it can be a great contribution to a dark theme. Profuse black berries are produced by some trees, such as pagoda dogwood (*Cornus alternifolia*) and nannyberry (*Viburnum lentago*). Both feature clusters of black berries on red stalks. If space is limited, try Japanese holly (*Ilex crenata*), the females of which offer pitch-black berries, or the hedge cotoneaster (*Cotoneaster lucidus*).

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A shady corner can be occupied by the low-growing evergreen sweet boxwood (*Sarcococca* spp.). However, the hands-down winner for attractive black fruit is black chokeberry (*Aronia melanocarpa*). The cultivar 'Autumn Brilliance' has the largest and most plentiful berries, as well as spectacular fall foliage. Unfortunately, black shiny berries usually don't stay long on mother plants. As soon as they ripen, they are relished by feathered and furred garden visitors.

Color in the garden doesn't come from plants alone. Inanimate objects also contribute to our garden color palette. Fences, screens, patios and patio furniture, containers and house walls (your own or your neighbors') can be valuable minor or major contributors. Although black houses are a rarity, black driveways and roofs are abundant.

As every season brings more dark shrubs and trees to the market, the above list is far from complete. Black or dark purple generally have a negative connotation in horticulture, as they are usually a signal that all is not well with a plant. Rather than cast gloom, however, dark-colored purple shrubs and trees can add mystery, drama, depth and sophistication to any garden, including yours. Is your garden ready for a touch of purple passion?

Text and photos by Gina Dobrodzicka

ITEMS AVAILABLE FOR MG FOR EVENTS

The Genesee County Master Gardener Association has property that may be borrowed by Master Gardeners for Master Gardeners Events only. The property includes but is not limited to the following: tables, chairs, tents, projector, lap top computer, signs and books.

To borrow you must come to the G-Card Bldg and sign out said property which will include your signature and apx. date you will return the item. When returning you will sign and date the day of return. All property must be returned promptly after use so that it is available for others. If property is damaged in any way you must contact either Alan Grove or Vicki Laurin. Thank you and if you should have any questions please contact Alan or Vicki.

Poinsettia Care



To keep your poinsettia plant looking good remove the plastic wrap around the pot, keep the plant in a brightly lit, cool (65F) room, water only when dry, and rotate the plant every few days so it grows straight.

UNKNOWN

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watering the soil thoroughly. Usually one or more flower stalks appear first, but occasionally they are preceded by leaves. Flowers usually develop in about 4-6 weeks from dormant bulbs, so they can be timed to flower at Christmas or for Valentine's Day.

Amaryllis plants bloom best when they are potbound so they will require repotting only every 3 or 4 years. The best time to repot them is after they have gone through a dormant period, and you are bringing them up from the basement to reflower. Follow the same potting procedure as with a newly purchased bulb.



Pests and disease

Although there are several insects, mites and disease organisms that may attack amaryllis plants under greenhouse conditions, they are not as prevalent on amaryllis grown in homes. Careful inspection when purchasing bulbs accompanied by proper watering and good sanitation practices will prevent most insect infestations as well as the development of diseases.

The narcissus bulb fly (*Merodon spp.*) may lay its eggs in the bulbs of amaryllis plants that are placed outdoors for the summer. The maggot larvae begin to feed in the outer scales of the bulb and eventually work their way into the interior of the bulb. The foliage of infested plants may become wilted, yellow and distorted and the plant

will eventually die. The exterior of the bulb may appear normal, but will reveal rotting tissue when pressed. Because control is difficult, it is best to destroy any infested bulbs as soon as the pest is identified. Use of insecticides is generally ineffective.

Red blotch (*Stagonospora curtissi*) is a fungus disease that may affect both the appearance and the health of amaryllis plants. Red spots or blotches that develop into elongated cankers with red borders may develop on the base of the flower stalks and emerging leaves. The disease is often difficult to diagnose because small red or pink patches may appear on the outside of healthy bulbs. These marks should, however, be superficial with the fleshy layers beneath white and free of markings of any kind. Although the leaves may become distorted and the flower stalks may break easily making the plants unsightly, the disease is usually not fatal to the plant. Careful inspection of bulbs and the use of sterile potting mixtures will serve as preventative measures. If the disease persists even with good cultural and sanitation practices, the bulbs can be treated with a systemic fungicide.

Amaryllis require some care and attention throughout the year, but those beautiful trumpet shaped flowers are a great reward in the long months of winter.



REGISTRATION NOW OPEN FOR THE WINTER 2017 MASTER GARDENER CLASS.

There is still time to enroll in this class. Call Abi Saeed for any questions, 810-244-8531 or go to the website: <https://events.anr.msu.edu/event.cfm?eventID=A5FD20E1F6937969>. Please tell your friends or family that might be interested.

DTE MONTHLY SUBSCRIPTION

You still have the opportunity to subscribe to the monthly DTE. If you enjoy getting a hardcopy of the DTE you can subscribe by mailing a \$10.00 check made out to MGAGCM and mail to PO Box 34, Flushing, Mi. 48433 by January 15, 2017.

MGAGCM CLOTHING ORDER

deadline is February 28, 2017. Please check out our clothing website at geneseecountymg.org/shirt-order for a peek at some new items. As in the past your payment needs to reach us before the deadline. Send your payment to PO Box 34, Flushing, Mi. 48433

2017 MGAGCM CALENDAR

On pages 6 & 7 of this newsletter you will notice a 6 month calendar that is also located in the VMS. Thanks to Sylvia Hansen for doing this great job of entering events regarding our membership so it is easy for you to access. Please check out all the information that is available on the VMS.

DATES TO REMEMBER

January 19, 2017 will be our next MGAGCM meeting which will be held at the GCCARD building at 605 N. Saginaw St. We will be meeting at 5:30 pm for social hour and our speaker Darren Bagley, who will be speaking on Composting, will begin at 6:00 pm. After a short break we will begin our business meeting.

February Speaker will be Roxanne Gabriel speaking on landscaping.

2017 RE-CERTIFICATION

Re-certification Timeline:

January 9 - January 27, 2017: Re-certification will be open (Log into the VMS anytime during that period to complete the 3-step re-certification process)

January 28 - February 10, 2017: Late Re-certification opens for EMG who did not re-certify in January (\$10 late fee applied).

February 10, 2017: Re-certification will close at midnight for 2017 and will not re-open until January 2018.

If you need help recertifying for 2017 please call Michelle Chockley at 810-659-8014 or Ruth Simon at 810-639-7565.



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**CHECK OUT OUR WEBSITES****MMGA Inc Website at:****www.michiganmastergardener.org****MMGA Inc Facebook Page at:****www.facebook.com/MichiganMG****MGAGCM Website at: Genesee
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8 am - 1 pm Monday through Friday.



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