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**Genesee County Master Gardener Newsletter
DOWN TO EARTH**

**HAPPY
MARCH!**

2016

VOLUME 14

3



FEATURE ARTICLE

Lead concerns for home gardeners: Mitigating risk

by Abiya (Abi) Saeed, Michigan State University Extension

Lead naturally occurs in small quantities in the soil. Additional factors such as pollutants and lead contaminated products can increase the concentration of this highly toxic metal to levels that can be hazardous. Irrigation with lead-contaminated Flint, Michigan water did not show a significant increase in soil lead levels, but the lead already present in soils can persist for long periods of time. It is important to consider previous land use in your gardening plans. If you are not sure what was on or near your garden site previously, Michigan State University Extension recommends getting your soil tested. Residential areas with historic lead paint use, industrial areas and high-traffic roadsides potentially have increased soil lead levels. In undisturbed soils, concentrations are generally highest in the top 3 inches of the soil surface. This risk is not only present with vegetable gardening in high-lead soils, but is also a concern to gardeners with landscape beds.

The concern with lead-contaminated gardens is primarily about contact and inhalation of the soils. The risk is greater in areas with higher lead concentrations, so it is important to get your soil tested to have a better understanding of the lead levels in your garden. Children have a much higher risk of being affected by lead, and the neurological effects can sometimes be severe. So regardless of whether you are growing a food garden, an ornamental garden, planting trees or working on the soil, the right precautions should be taken to reduce your risk of exposure.

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If you are a gardener and lead contamination is a concern in your area, you can minimize the risk of exposure to you and your family by taking the following precautions.



General precautions

Get your soil tested. If you purchase MSU Extension's convenient soil test kit through the MSU Extension Bookstore, be sure to specifically state you need a lead test for your soil since this is not a standard component of the basic test.

- Increasing your soil pH to a level between 6.5 and 7.5 can minimize the availability of lead to plants.

Organic matter is particularly good at holding on to lead, so as you increase soil organic matter, you decrease the amount of "available" lead in your soil. This also reduces the likelihood of fine soil particles carrying lead that can easily be trapped on clothing, skin or inhaled.

- Mulch any bare soil to prevent lead contaminated soil dust from drifting onto other plants and garden surfaces.
- When gardening, make sure to wear gloves.

If lead inhalation from soils is a concern, wear a mask to protect yourself and your children while gardening.

For a food garden

Depending on your results, choose suitable items to grow.

Vegetables do not readily uptake lead, but exposure to lead contaminated soil on the surface of leafy and root vegetables is the primary concern in high lead soils.

Remove soil particles and dust from vegetables. Make sure to peel your root vegetables, remove the outer layers of leafy vegetables and wash any fruit and vegetables thoroughly in clean, filtered water.

- Do not grow edible produce if soil lead levels exceed the recommended guidelines. Cover up the soil and create a raised bed with fresh uncontaminated soil for produce, especially root vegetables and leafy greens.

Although uncommon, plants grown in high-lead soils have the potential to accumulate lead in their roots. Avoid composting root crops that have been grown in high lead conditions with poor soil quality. This can contaminate your compost pile.

For an ornamental yard and garden

If lead levels in your soil are above the EPA's recommended 300 ppm, prevent children from playing or gardening in that soil, and do not leave bare soil accessible.

- Allocate a specific play area for children with a sand box or covered substrate to minimize exposure to soil. Keep this area away from old painted buildings.
- Use a dense layer of sod in your yard and keep kid's play areas away from bare soil.
- Avoid tracking soil into your home.

Unless you dilute your soil or amend it, there is very little you can do to reduce the concentration of lead in your soil. Therefore, it is important to take the appropriate measures to protect yourself and your children from the risks associated with lead exposure.



COOKS CORNER

IRISH TACOS

Recipe by:PacNWCook

INGREDIENTS

2 cups plain yogurt
1/2 cup mayonnaise
1 lime, juiced
2 T. chopped fresh cilantro
1 pinch cayenne pepper, or to taste
Salt to taste
1 1/2 cups shredded corned beef
1 pound prepared coleslaw
8 (10 inch) flour tortillas



DIRECTIONS

Mix together the yogurt, mayonnaise, lime juice, cilantro, cayenne pepper and salt in a bowl until smooth.

Place the corned beef in a saucepan over medium-low heat just until hot. Place a tortilla into a heavy skillet over medium heat until hot and just beginning to show brown spots, about 30 seconds per side. To assemble, arrange about 2 tablespoons of coleslaw on a tortilla; follow with 3 tablespoons of corned beef. Drizzle with 2 tablespoons of the yogurt sauce, roll up to serve.

AM LEONARD TOOL SALE

We now have an account with AM Leonard Tools and Dick Moldenhauer is taking orders. Catalogues are available in the office and will be available at our monthly meetings. Please place and pay for your orders by April 21, 2016 as the first order will be sent in by May 1, 2016. Members may order tools for projects or personal use.

Each month a new discount is offered so it will not be like our account in the past where we received a discount off the entire order.

Please add \$3.00 to your order for shipping and handling. Make checks payable to MGAGCM and mail to MGAGCM, PO Box 34, Flushing, Mi 48433.

Any questions or concerns please contact Dick Moldenhauer at : rnmold105@aol.com or 810-695-2649.

HOME GROWN 828

I was out walking by the big walnut tree that is in my yard. I saw quite a few white, fuzzy caterpillars around and on the tree trunk. They really showed up because they were white. I have never, ever seen these before. I need to know what to do to stop them before they kill my tree. I have got to fix this fast.

Relax; the world and your tree are safe. But I'm a bit worried about you. What you are seeing is a Hickory Tussock Moth or *Lophocampa caryae*. Older books call them a hickory tiger moth. They belong to a large family called, ironically enough, tiger moths. All tiger moth larvae or caterpillars are densely hairy and are often conspicuously colored. The hairs are called setae. Usually, the setae have numerous tiny barbs on the ends. If people, especially children with tender skin, handle the larvae or drop them down their shirts, they often get a contact rash. If you look at your caterpillar very closely, you will see that they are not completely white. On the back, there will be eight small black tufts along the center of the back. There will be four tufts of longer black hairs called subdorsal black lashes. Two are in front, like black antennae and two are almost to the rear. I suspect those are like those parallel parking feeler guides so you knew where the curb was when parking your car in the 1950's. The hickory tussock moth has a varied diet. Let's start with the favorite foods first: hickories and walnuts. But they will feed on almost any tree or shrub. There is one generation a year and you have met the feeding stage. Adult moths do not feed. The adult moth has upper wing markings that are golden tan and white. The underwing is a very pale tan. The adults do not feed and the kiddies are almost never a problem. The good news is that you can go back indoors and enjoy a nice, cold adult beverage because your tree is just fine.

I have this terrible weed, called bindweed, growing in my yard. It was here in a few places when I moved into this house ten years ago and now it is all over. Every year, I pull or cut them off in the spring but by the time that fall comes, they all back. It's a very clever weed. It grows under my raspberries and climbs the stems and hides from me so I can't find it. Now that I know the name of this plant, what kind of weed killer can I spray to kill it and not hurt my other plants? I am desperate for help.

Plants cannot think for themselves. Very simply, there is no brain controlling the bindweed, so it cannot be clever nor have witty thoughts of outsmarting you. This is not a bindweed problem but rather a management problem. Bindweed is a perennial plant and if you do not pull the roots out of the ground, it will regrow. For at least a decade, bindweed has flowered and gone to seed in your yard. That means even if the plants are removed, there is a mega-storehouse of seeds waiting to germinate. There is no bindweed spray. There are three categories of plant killers. There are weed killers can kill almost everything that is green or kill grasses and leave broadleaf plants or kill broadleaf plants and leave grasses, depending on what you buy. That is as exact as the herbicide world is currently. That means you can spray a nonselective herbicide and kill everything that it hits or use a broadleaf weed killer that is used on lawns and lets the grass live. Pulling weeds once or twice a season will not get rid of them. You need to be looking and pulling once a week. Or use mulch in garden beds and under the raspberries. Apply and keep three inches of woodchips on bare soil. This keeps the seeds from getting sunlight so they cannot germinate. Immediately pull any bindweed that might emerge. Mulch will not kill plants with existing root systems. Instead of wishing for a good outcome, you need to work for it.



Master Gardeners Genesee County Presents



BACKYARD FRUIT TREE PRUNING WORKSHOP

When:

Saturday morning

March 26, 2016

9:30 a.m.-12:00 noon

Where:

9217 Timberline Dr
Grand Blanc, Mi

Who: Bob Tritten, MSUE District Fruit Educator

This is an outdoor demonstration workshop at a few backyard fruit tree plantings in Grand Blanc Twp. Participants will learn the basic methods of pruning young and bearing fruit trees. We will also cover the pruning of older fruit trees.

Pre-registration required by 3/23/16.

Workshop to be held rain or shine, warm or cold.

Questions? Contact Jim Harrow joker108@sbcglobal.net or Ruth Simon simonru@msue.edu at 810-244-8548

Cost per person: \$20.00 Make check payable to MGAGCM

Mail to: MSUE Extension, 605 N. Saginaw Street, Suite 1A, Flint, Mi 48502
www.msue.msu.edu/genesee



Registration for "Backyard Fruit Tree Pruning Workshop" on 3/26/16

Name: _____ Phone: _____

Address: _____ Zip: _____

Email: _____

2016 ANNUAL EDUCATIONAL MGAGCM BUS TRIP

Come join us on our fantastic annual bus trip 2016. For only \$45, the bus driver will chauffeur us from Flint to Four Star Proven Winners Display Gardens in Carleton, MI. There we will see hundreds of Proven Winner plants in a multitude of settings sure to leave a gardener in awe. After a morning of gardener bliss, we will travel to the quaint historic town of Tucum-seh to enjoy lunch at a restaurant of your choice. You will be on your own for lunch, but that will give you some time to visit an antique store, quilt store, or a wine and cheese shop before leaving for the last destination. A short distance away, we will travel to the 755 acre botanical gardens at Hidden Lakes in Tipton, MI. Make sure that you bring your camera because you will want to relive the day over and over again. It is a long day starting at 7:30 in the morning and arriving back home by 6 PM, but it is well worth it. Sabrina VanDyke has out done herself again in planning this exciting and relaxing trip. Save the date Thursday, July 21, 2016. The deadline for Registration is June 1. The bus only holds 50 people. So don't procrastinate because you won't want to miss this opportunity. A downloadable registration form is on the website GeneseeCountyMG.org., or you can fill out the form below.

Kay McCullough MG(09)

MAIL COMPLETED FORM TO:

MGAGCM
PO Box 34
Flushing, MI 48433

Names: _____

Address _____

Cell Phone # _____

No of Amount
People _____ enclosed \$ _____

Email _____

Emergency contact _____

COTTAGE GARDENS



Michelle Manetti Huffington Post

ANNUAL AWARD BANQUET

The date: **April 21, 2016** for our annual Award Banquet. It will be held at Crossroads Village, 6140 Bray Road, Flint, Michigan. There will be door prizes and drawings as well as a color review of what the Genesee County Master Gardeners have accomplished this past year as well as a delicious dinner. The price is \$20 per person. Master Gardeners and their guests are welcome. Registration forms for this event will be available on our website, at meetings, at the MSUE office and there will also be a mailing to all members. The signup deadline: **April 11, 2016**.

Our featured speaker this year is Lisa Steinkopf. You may have read Lisa's articles in the Michigan Gardener. Lisa's website is www.thehouseplantguru.com if you would like to learn more about her. It is very colorful and informative. You can also follow Lisa on Facebook (Facebook.com/HouseplantGuru).

Randy will be there with his assortment of bulbs for sale. To find out who our "Distinguished" and "Outstanding" master gardeners are for 2015 (a closely guarded secret), please attend and enjoy a celebration with these award winners as well as the accomplishments of all of our members. Abi Saeed will be the MC for the awards portion of the program. Hope to see you there.

2016 MASTER GARDENER DIRECTORY

I am in the process of creating a new 2016 directory of our Genesee County Master Gardeners, so please update your contact information on the VMS under "EDIT YOUR PROFILE". The information I use to create the directory will come from that information. If there is any information you do not want to be published in the directory, which will be available to all local Master Gardeners, please let me know and I will leave that information out of the directory. Information that will be in the directory: NAME, PHYSICAL ADDRESS, EMAIL ADDRESS, HOME PHONE, CELL PHONE, STATUS (MGV, AMGV, EMERITUS, MGIT) and CLASS DATE.

Please update your information and let me know if there is anything you do not want to be published in the directory.

Ruth Simon

ANNUAL SPRING BULB SALE

Our annual bulb sale will begin on March 17, 2016 at our MGAGCM monthly meeting . Randy Tatro will have the bulbs on display for you to purchase. After the meeting the bulbs will be available at the hotline during hotline hours , from 8:30 am-1:00 pm, on Fridays only.

Starting on April 1, 2016 the hotline will begin summers hours and will be open Monday, Wednesday and Fridays from 8:30 am –1:00 pm. Feel free to stop in and check out the many varieties of bulbs and plan your next garden project.

MASTER GARDNER ASSOCIATION

MEETING OF FEBRUARY 18, 2016

Call to Order: The meeting was called to order by President Vicki Laurin at 7:22 pm.

Review of Minutes: Motion and 2nd by Randy Tatro and Helen Mitts to accept the January 21, 2016 meeting minutes as presented. Passed.

Treasurer's Report: Dick Moldenhauer reviewed the Treasurer's reports for January 2016. The beginning balance was \$33,663.99 and the ending balance was \$33,626.56 In addition there is \$10.01 in the Square One account.

Projects Reports:

Funded Projects

Desert Oasis

Alicia Ellis (acting)- grasses will be cut on March 15, 2016.
Can use some help.

Genesee County Fair

Vicki Perkins-no report (NR)

Grow Lab

Carol Groat-NR

Jr. Master Gardeners

Vicki Perkins-NR

Early Childhood Center

Tom Lyman-NR

Non-Funded Projects

Ask A Master Gardener

Alan Grove / Michelle Chockley-NR

Butterfly Garden (Clio)

Cheri Johnston-NR

Carriage Town

Marilyn Nichols- workdays still to be determined. Concerned w/ lead contamination of the produce from gardens there.
Renovations at Family Center will impact the Children's Garden.

(tbd)

Clio Veterans Memorial

Crossroads Village (Monarch Way Station) Joanie Snyder-NR

Easter Seals

Carol Groat / Betty Draper-NR

Farmers Market – Davison

Alan Grove-NR

Farmers Market – Flint

Joyce Bellaire-NR

Farmers Market – Grand Blanc

Beth Fromholz-Davies/Alan Grove-Grand Blanc FM starts the 2nd Sunday in May, then the 1st Sunday each month from 9:30 am – 3:30 pm

Flushing River Trail

Sylvia Hansen- plan to cut grasses on April 13 at 9 am. They usually meet on Wednesdays. Give your email to Sylvia and she will send you notices of when they plan to work.

GCCARD Gardens

Pat Seals-NR

Humane Society

Maggie Gregg- They will start the last week of April on Thursday 10 am -12 noon.

Library Gardens

Baker Park (Burton)

Diana Callison-NR

Burton Memorial (Burton)

Mary Faith Down-NR

Genesee District (Pasadena)

Sasi Vemuri-NR

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 9)

Flint Public	Sasi Vemuri-NR
Jennings Memorial (Montrose)	Lois Henderson-NR
Johnson Memorial (Genesee)	Carol Bobb-NR
<u>Rest Stop Projects</u>	
I-69	Brenda Monty-NR
I-75	Ruth Sutton-NR
US-23	Loretta Elwood-work will start mid-May. Mulch and plants are being ordered. Needs to be planted by Memorial Day. There is lots of work to do!

Standing Committee Reports:

Banquet (Spring/Awards) Loretta Ellwood / Carolyn Maloski- The banquet is April 21. The speaker is Lois Steinkoph, an expert on houseplants. There will be door prizes (from businesses) instead of a silent auction. Carolyn Maloski will be coordinating donor requests so contact her before asking a business for a donation

Bulb Sale Randy Tatro-expecting bulbs for our March meeting.

Bus Trip (Educational) Sabrina VanDyke-The trip will be July 21, 2016. Cost will be \$45 + lunch. They will be visiting Hidden Lakes Gardens and Proven Winner Trial Gardens. Have reserved a 2nd bus due to strong demand. Signup and pay to reserve your seat.

Clothing Vicki Laurin / Katie Van Patten-looking for a digital copy of our old MGAGCM logo. See Katie if you have a copy of it.

DTE Vicki Laurin / George Rappold-NR

Fall Into Spring Loretta Ellwood-The date of October 1, 2016 has been confirmed by Mott. George P. will be one of our speakers.

Garden Stones/Compost Dick Moldenhauer-NR

Garden Tour Kay McCullough-The date is Sunday June 26, 2016. It will be a good garden tour this year!

Holiday Party (Open)

Hospitality Gloria Roudebush-A card was sent to Betty Butcher.

Public Relations Mel Kennedy-Mel will be going to MSUE to purchase the Pollinator booklet. Order and pay Mel in advance. He will pick them up in March.

Tool and Garden Supplies Dick Moldenhauer-We now have an account w/ AM Leonard. Catalogues are in the office. Place and pay for orders by April 21, 2016. The first order will be sent in by the 1st of May. Members may order tools for project or personal use. Go to www.amleo.com to view tools online.

VMS Ambassadors Ruth Simon / Jim Harrow-MG recertification window is closed. We will know how many by March 26, 2016.

Website Kay McCullough-The website is getting 20-80 hits/day. Give Kay any suggestions for additions to the website.

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 11)

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Old Business:

Project chairs are still needed for: Holiday Party

New Business:

Ruth Simon's son-in-law passed. We extend our condolences to Ruth and her family at this time.

The SOP committee has been having weekly meetings and will be able to present some updated SOPs next month.

Moved and 2nd by Jim Harrow and Juanita Coleman to sign a contract with DM Burr Security for a security officer to be present for 4 hours (before, during and after our MGAGCM meeting) at GCCARD at a cost of \$59.80 (\$14.95/hr) for 6 meetings in 2016. Passed with one abstention. Because this motion to pay a security officer at GCCARD passed we will cease to investigate alternate meeting venues.

There is a fruit tree pruning workshop by Bob Tritten on March 26, 2016 in the Grand Blanc area. Cost: \$20.00. Openings are limited, contact and pay Jim Harrow if interested.

Juanita Coleman informed the membership of a free basket weaving class in Lennon on Saturday March 12, 2016.

Katie VanPatten informed us of the ReLeaf Michigan 26th annual tree sale. Brochures were available for pickup. Order deadline in April 18, 2016. Pickup orders April 30, 2016 at ForMar. Order online at www.ReLeafMichigan.org

President Laurin asked that members send her information to be included on the agenda before the meeting so the meeting will run smoother.

Close of Meeting: Moved and 2nd by Maggi Gregg and Helen Mitts to adjourn the meeting at 8:09 PM. Passed.

Respectfully submitted: Dick Moldenhauer, MGAGCM secretary

Get the best container drainage

Skip adding gravel to the bottom of a container. Soil scientists have proven that water doesn't move easily between the fine particles in potting mix and coarser material, like stones. It actually causes water to drain more slowly and the potting mix can stay saturated — the opposite of the intended effect.

However, it is all right to cover the hole with something that lets water drain but prevents soil from washing out, although you don't need to. A square cut from a plastic mesh bag is very effective, or shard of broken terra-cotta, piece of landscape fabric or coffee filter will all do the trick.

Projects for 2016

As our busy times are approaching we are asking that chairperson send a schedule of your activities to Kay McCullough : birdyball@aol.com and to George Rappold: grappocp@att.net and Vicki Laurin: laurinvicki@gmail.com so the schedules will be posted for these activities on our MGAGCM webswite at: Genesee County MG.org and our monthly DTE.

Desert Oasis will be cutting grass on Tuesday, March 15, 2016 at 9 AM-12 PM. For questions contact Alicia Ellis at 810-659-8164 or cactusinmichigan@sbcglobal.net.

Flint Children's Museum is looking to hire a Master Gardener by mid April to work 12-16 hours a week in our outside play and educational garden area , called Sproutside, from mid April through the end of September, maybe longer depending on the weather. We grow vegetables, herbs, plants, flowers, etc. This is a paid position, but master gardener volunteers are welcome to earn volunteer hours here also. For further information contact : Amber M. Racki, Associate Director Flint Children's Museum at 810-767-5437

DAYLIGHT SAVINGS TIME

**Begins on Sunday, March 13, 2016.
Don't forget to turn your clocks
forward on this date.**



DATES TO REMEMBER

Our monthly MGAGCM meeting will be held on March 17th at the GCCARD building at 605 N. Saginaw St, Flint. Social hour begins at 5:30 p.m. and at 6:00 our speaker, DNR Forest Technician Phillip Kurzeaja will be speaking to us about Oak Wilt, how it is spreading and where it is now. He will have some fun samples of dead red oak and will show us how to look for spores and open them to smell Oak Wilt's unique scent. After a 10 minute break our business meeting will begin.

Also, we need volunteers to sign up to bring a snack for one of our monthly meetings.

April's meeting is our Annual Awards Banquet and it will be held at Crossroads Village.

HOME AND GARDEN SHOW AT DORT FEDERAL EVENT CENTER (former Perani Arena) APRIL 2 & 3.

We will need volunteers for four (4) hour shifts for both days. Times tentatively set for 10:00 AM thru 4 or 5 PM

SPRING EXPO BORDINE GARDEN CENTER TORREY RD. APRIL 16 & 17.

Again, we will need volunteers for four (4) hour shifts for both days. Times tentatively set for 11:00 AM to 5:00 PM.

Please contact Jim Harrow at 810-244-8548 or joker108@sbcglobal.net to volunteer. If you leave a message please leave a phone number and email address for return information. There will be a lax at times so you'll be able to wander around and see the rest of the exhibits as well as our own booth.

MGAGCM OFFICERS (2015)

President 810-744-0725	Vicki Laurin laurinvicki@gmail.com
Vice President 810-635-9341	Kay McCullough birdieball@aol.com
Secretary 810-695-2649	Dick Moldenhauer rnmold1050@aol.com
Treasurer 810-659-8014	Michelle Chockley chockleym@gmail.com

OUR CONDOLENCES GO OUT TO

Ruth Simon and her family for the loss of her son-in-law, Charles Ford, who passed away on February 10, 2016. A memorial service was held at Great Lakes Veterans Cemetery on February 18, 2016.

Carol Groat's mother, Margaret Jean Strouse, passed away February 18, 2016. Funeral services were in Saginaw, Mich. February 23, 2016.

Vicki Perkin's mother, Blanche V. Perkins of Fenton, passed away on February 23, 2016. Funeral services were held on February 28, 2016 at O'Guinn Funeral Home, Clio, Mi.

Please remember these families in thoughts and prayers at this difficult time.



THIS NEWSLETTER PREPARED BY:

Vicki Laurin, laurinvicki@gmail.com. George Rappold, grappocp@att.net, of counsel Ruth Simon .

CHECK OUT OUR WEBSITES

MMGA Inc Website at:
www.michiganmastergardener.org

MMGA Inc Facebook Page at:
www.facebook.comMichiganMG

MGAGCM Website at: Genesee County MG.org

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

Plant & Pest Hotline:
(810) 244-8548
Hours: Friday from 8:30 am-1:00pm

geneseeplantpest@anr.msu.edu

Public Office Hours:
8 am - 1 pm Monday through Friday.

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