

# The City Seedling

*A Publication of Master Gardeners of Greater Detroit in conjunction with MSU Extension - Wayne County*

## The Tax Benefits of Volunteering

As Master Gardeners, we are (hopefully) well acquainted with the intangible benefits of our volunteer efforts – we help educate folks about the joys (and challenges) of gardening, get a chance to make the world a little more beautiful, and often get a good night's sleep simply because we are so exhausted. Although we cannot deduct the value of our time as volunteers, there are, however, more tangible benefits we can reap from our volunteer efforts.

Hopefully, we are all aware that we can deduct our mileage at a rate of \$0.14 per mile. This includes any trips including business on behalf of a charitable organization, from going to a volunteer opportunity to picking up materials to complete a

project. As long as it on behalf of a non-profit organization (as defined in Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code), those miles can be deducted from your taxes.

If you travel away from home in connection with your charitable work, you can deduct your costs if they are properly documented non-lobbying expenses, are reasonable in amount, and there is no significant degree of personal pleasure, recreation or vacation to the travel. Deductible expenses are similar to those that may be claimed by a taxpayer who makes a similar trip for business purposes, including out-of-pocket costs for lodging, meals, round-trip travel, taxi fares and other transportation costs. There is, however, one important excep-

tion: A volunteer traveling away from home overnight for charity is not subject to the 50% limit that applies to business meals, but may deduct 100% of meal costs.

For a lot more information than you probably want or need, you can always refer to IRS Publication 526 – Charitable Contributions, available on the Internet at [www.irs.gov](http://www.irs.gov) or via the following address:

Internal Revenue Service  
Individual Forms and  
Publications Branch  
SE:W:CAR:MP:TI  
1111 Constitution Avenue, NW  
Washington, D.C. 20224

Be sure to consult an accountant to maximize the tax benefit from your volunteer efforts.

### In This Issue:

- MSUE Wayne County Update
- MGGD Member Focus
- Local Classes & Garden Events

and more...

Call the MGGD  
Message Line:

313-438-6079

For the most up-to-date meeting info as well as new announcements.

## Greetings From the President of MGGD

*By Cheryl M. English*

We're looking at exciting times for Master Gardeners of Greater Detroit. The Executive Board has been looking at a number of projects, both in terms of internal "housekeeping" and community outreach and networking.

At the May 2005 membership meeting, revised bylaws more accurately reflecting the requirements, rights and responsibilities of membership as well as the functions of the standing and special committees were approved and ratified. In an effort to determine MGGD's direction, we are working with Candyce Abbatt, a Master Gardener volunteer from the Winter 2005 class, to develop a strategic plan for the group. Sue

Ann Hanson has been spearheading the effort to get an MGGD web-site up and running with the assistance of Bonnie Krueger. We are investigating a partnership with the Detroit Garden Center, Earth Works Garden and Friends School of Detroit which would provide MGGD with additional meeting and programming space, as well as the opportunity for community outreach in creating a garden for students. Finally, planning has started for the annual MGGD/DGC picnic in August – watch your mailbox for more information as the date draws near.

Terri Light's Spring Wildflower Walk on May 7 was a great success and was subsequently taped by Mil

Anthony for airing on Grosse Pointe Cable. Terri plans additional walks for Summer, Fall and Winter (weather conditions permitting), which Mil plans to air as well. We hope to grow this into an annual program, including the series of walks as well as conserving the area with annual "clean-up" days to remove any refuse and clear invasive species. Since the deer have been restricted, the wildflowers have taken off with, well, wild abandon, but can use our help. If you are interested in attending the walks or helping clean up (dates are yet to be determined for both), please contact Terri Light.

Enjoy the summer and we'll see you at the picnic in August!

# First MG Brunch Brings Out The Best In Us All

by Kathleen Peabody

The crowd was enthusiastic. The venue and food were comfortable and yummy. And the program was informative and entertaining. The event was the First Annual Master Gardener Spring Brunch for Wayne County MSU Extension, held at Dearborn's Fairlane Club on Saturday, April 30, 2005. If the success of this event is any indication, this first brunch will lead to many more enjoyable times.

The event's volunteer team, led by Master Gardener Coordinator Kristin Kendall-Holliday, combined frivolity with tribute and education. Team members included Ceclia Banotai-Brandmier, Belinda Burkett, Linda Chafin, Sheri Kelchner, Donna Martin, Barb Smith and Debra Vaught.

The day included table favors, more than 30 items in a silent auction and an enlightening presentation by Suzan Campbell, former Belle Isle Naturalist, about "Nurturing Nature on the Urban Lakeplain". Suzan gave strong recommendations for preserving natural areas in the urban landscape and, as always, educated us with ways to make positive changes.

**Award winners for 2005 were:**

- *Tiger Lily Award:* Anita Callender, who has been heavily involved with the Earth Works Garden and its "Growing Healthy Kids" program; ran the most successful Master

Gardener Greenhouse program and Plant Sale in 2004 as Greenhouse Volunteer Coordinator; and has done an exceptional job teaching the Seed Starting portion of the Master Gardener class for the past two years

- *Unsung Hero Award:* Bruce Forrest, for his constant support of Master Gardeners

- *Extension Volunteer of the Year:* Barb Smith, who has computerized the entire Wayne County Master Gardener volunteer and educational hours tracking system
- *Master Gardner of the Year:* Kathy Browne, for her dedicated horticultural and bureaucratic work at the State Fairgrounds gardens.

One of the event's highlights was George Hartley's appearance, following an automobile accident and rehabilitation, to receive the first *Master Gardener Lifetime Achievement Award* (with 5,000 lifetime volunteer hours – so far!) Future Lifetime Achievement Awards are – aptly – to be named for George.

Following brunch and the awards program, Barb Smith gave an informative demonstration of the on-line tracking system for Master Gardener volunteer and education hours.

Wayne County Horticulture Agent Kristine Hahn reminded participants to "find what your passion is" and follow it. She described Master Gardeners as "an awesome but unappreciated



Above: Wayne County Horticulture Agent Kristine Hahn (right) reminded participants to "find what your passion is" and follow it. She described Master Gardeners as "an awesome but unappreciated group of volunteers."

Left: The event's volunteer team, led by Master Gardener Coordinator Kristin Kendall-Holliday, combined frivolity with tribute and education at this Brunch.

group of volunteers." We all felt like royalty – at least briefly.

If you missed the event, be sure to mark your calendar for next year. A good time was had by all.



## Member Focus – Ed Krappman

By Sue Ann Hanson

“Tomato Man.” “The Germinator.” “Master Docent.” These epithets and others distinguish our spotlight for this month, Ed Krappman. Ed has been gardening for ages – or so it seems! As a youngster, he helped his father with the family’s vegetable patch in Detroit’s “alley gardens” – the alleyways that were never paved. Those garden vegetables helped feed the German immigrant family of eight at times when fresh vegetables were otherwise hard to come by. Another reason he started gardening was that old Mrs. Bertaninni from next door would scream when he presented her with night crawlers. “It was such great fun that I was hooked!” he recalls.

Ed shared his story in the backyard of the family home, which he has owned since 1996. Beneath a “Rosemary Willow” – which he pruned as we talked, Ed was quite at home with all the greenery surrounding him, including beautiful flowering climbing hydrangea, wisteria, clematis and trumpet vine.

Ed has numerous “firsts” in his gardening career: first to take the Master Gardener course (with Barb Hayes) in 1977; charter member of the Belle Isle Botanical Society (“BIBS”) in 1988; and charter member of MGGD (again with Barb Hayes). He’s also been a pioneer in recycling neighborhood cast-offs in his garden, from sculptures to containers, and refers to himself as an “RRS” – a Resource Recycling Specialist. He has created a unique water feature in his backyard made completely of recycled materials. Demonstrating the fullest

potential of recycling, he has “reused” the three vacant lots across the street from his home, expanding his vegetable gardens into the space, especially for his famous tomatoes.

Gardening has not been easy for Ed. In 1967, when he was only 22, he developed plantar fasciitis – a tissue inflammation, making it difficult to walk. Cutting the lawn was so painful, he turned his front yard into a magical space that sometimes blooms 365 days a year. (OK, he admits that some of those blossoms are a bit dried out in the winter, but they are there just the same!) Other physical ailments turned the simplest garden chores into a pain in the ol’ posterior, so – again – Ed made changes to how he gardened.

1990 was a watershed year for Ed, as he read an article on enabling gardens by Gene Rothert, a wheelchair-bound gardener. Ed says that Mr. Rothert “gave me the courage to continue gardening.” Ed was so energized by what he read that he began to apply some of Mr. Rothert’s techniques, not only in his own personal paradise but also for those in similar situations, including gardening at Saratoga Hospital. Ed learned to build and use raised beds – which are better for standing or wheelchair accessibility – and recycle carpet cast-offs as maneuverable garden paths, as well as numerous other adaptive gardening techniques.

So, how did Ed get his nicknames? Well, he’s the “Tomato Man” at BIBS because each year he raises over 1,000 tomato plants for their annual plant sale. He’s the “Germinator” because of his German heritage



Above: Ed Krappman refers to himself as an “RRS” – a Resource Recycling Specialist. He has created a unique water feature in his backyard made completely of recycled materials.

and his propensity for propagation. Finally, he’s the “Master Docent” because he is among the most knowledgeable and experienced docents with the Anna Scripps Whitcomb Conservatory on Belle Isle.

Even though Ed remains active and involved, he could use some help around his gardens. If MGGD starts a “Garden Help Day”, Ed would like us to keep him in mind. He’ll still do the pruning, thank you very much, but if we could help getting those invasive plants (i.e., weeds) under control, and maybe tidying up his tomato plots across the street, he’d be grateful.

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By the way, Ed turned 60 on May 11th. Happy Belated Birthday, Ed!



## Invasive Species

By Cheryl M. English

An invasive species is a species occurring, as a result of human activities, beyond its accepted normal distribution and which threatens valued environmental, agricultural or personal resources by the damage it causes. The operative phrase here is “threatens valued environmental, agricultural or personal resources by the damage it causes.” Invasives are generally exotic species, but not all exotic species are necessarily invasive. I love German Iris and Oriental poppies, both of which are exotic species in Southeastern Michigan; neither of them, however, constitute a threat to environmental, agricultural or personal resources – they reproduce slowly (if at all) in a manner that I, as a gardener, can easily control

Invasive species – viruses, bacteria, fungi, plants, and animals – may constitute the most insidious form of pollution humans have yet created and is, in fact, one of the earliest forms of habitat destruction in which we have participated. Whenever humans have moved from one part of the globe to another, they have carried – voluntarily and involuntarily – species with them, whether knowingly in the cargo section of their means of transport, or on their clothes or skin. It may also prove the most difficult form of pollution to master.

When a person litters, that

piece of trash does not multiply without human assistance. It may apparently multiply, but only because additional humans have taken the same action in the same location. By simply picking up the trash (or putting it where it belongs in the first place), the pollution can be limited or even eliminated. If we stop putting untreated effluent into our waters, the waters will eventually clear up – Lake Erie is a wonderful example of the environment’s resilience and powers of recovery when we simply leave it alone.

In the case of invasive species, we have released biologicals into the environment with all their means of reproduction intact, means over which we have no control. And they can and will – and do – reproduce. Introduction of invasive species may be the single form of pollution that constitutes a self-perpetuating engine, devoid of the need for any human agency once the initial introduction has occurred. The example of the European starling – flocks of literally millions of individuals wheeling through September skies throughout this country, all the progeny of a few pairs released in New York’s Central Park – is just one instance of the phenomenon.

What does this mean for us? This means that we must take not only an active stance toward the spread of invasives; we must



Above: Water hyacinth

Below: Tree of Heaven (*Ailanthus*)



# Invasive Species - *continued*

By Cheryl M. English



take an aggressive stance toward them.

Invasivespecies.gov is the gateway to Federal efforts concerning invasive species. On this site you can learn about the impacts of invasive species and the Federal government's response, as well as read select species profiles and find links to agencies and organizations dealing with invasive species issues. Invasivespecies.gov is also the Web site for the National Invasive Species Council, which coordinates Federal responses to the problem. You can also go to <http://www.great-lakes.net/envt/flora-fauna/invasive/invasive.html> the site for Michigan invasive species.

Counterclockwise from top: European starling; Garlic mustard; Purple loosestrife; Zebra mussels; Round goby



# Summer Picnic

MGGD and the Detroit Garden Center (“DGC”) are in the planning stages for our annual picnic.

This event was on hiatus last year in the midst of the DGC’s move from Moross House to the Vigliotti Building.

Well, we’re bringing it back, planning for either the third or fourth Wednesday in August (August 17 or 24).

We have need of volunteers in organizing the event, from soliciting donations for the flower-pot raffle to putting together the mailing about the event.

If you’re interested in helping make this event happen, please contact Cheryl M. English or Barb Hayes of the Detroit Garden Center ((313) 259-6363).



## Volunteer Opportunities:

### MSUE Horticulture Hotline

Now through August, day (Temple) and evening (Venoy) hours available. Contact Kristin Kendall-Holliday at [master-gardener@sbcglobal.net](mailto:master-gardener@sbcglobal.net)

### Award-Winning State Fair Grounds

Join Master Gardener of the Year, Kathy Brown, as gardens change and evolve at the State Fair Grounds. A new "Seabiscuit" garden is being developed with Girl Scouts assisting! Contact Kathy at [homeandgarden@core.com](mailto:homeandgarden@core.com)

### Earth Works/Growing Healthy Kids

Earth Works opportunities on Wednesdays and Saturdays, 9 a.m. - 12 noon. Growing Healthy Kids on Fridays, 5-7 p.m. Contact Br. Rick Samyn at 313-579-2100, ext 211.

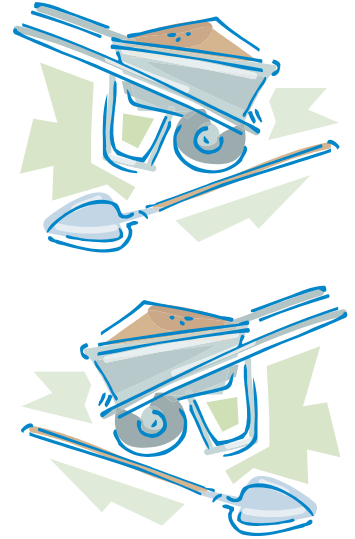
### MGGD

Help keep MGGD thriving by helping out with a committee or as a board member. Contact President Cheryl M. English at [cenglish@blackcatpottery.com](mailto:cenglish@blackcatpottery.com).

### Earth Works Wildflower Berm MGGD Project

Surrounding the Gleaners' part of the EarthWorks garden is a berm where we are trying to re-introduce native wildflowers, both for beauty and for Br. Rick's honey bees! We need to weed and identify and mark the plants that have survived the weed intrusion!

Contact Sue Hanson at [MGGDMail@comcast.net](mailto:MGGDMail@comcast.net) or Terri Light at [lightwavz@earthlink.net](mailto:lightwavz@earthlink.net). Saturdays, 9 a.m.-12 noon.



## REMEMBER THE BERM

The Wildflower Berm at Earth Works Garden ("EWG") could use your help! The project started ambitiously but has hit some bumps in maintaining momentum. Currently, work is focusing on the area around the sign, where native plants have been installed but need identifying, labeling and weeding. Since EWG received a citation when the plants along much of the berm were overgrown by weeds and grass, Gleaners Food Bank has volunteered to keep the area tidy with regular mowing until the wildflower area can be established and extended. If you're interested in lending a hand, please contact Sue Ann Hanson or Terri Light.





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### ***About Our Organization...***

Master Gardeners of Greater Detroit is comprised of members from the Metro Detroit area with a focus on the East Side communities. We are a non-profit organization and our mission is to improve the community as a whole through education and volunteer activities in the area of gardening and the environment for homeowners, individuals, metropolitan

neighborhood or community groups.

Our meetings are the fourth Wednesday of each month at the location stated within our calendar of events. Our President, Cheryl M. English, extends a personal invitation for you to attend and bring a friend. Call our hotline at 313-438-6079 for meeting details. Please join us!