

The City Seedling

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

Greetings From the President of MGGD

By Cheryl M. English

As we start a new year, it seems an appropriate occasion to take a moment to reflect on what MGGD has accomplished on the past few months.

We did a thorough review of MGGD's bylaws, which were revised to more accurately reflect current and on-going certification requirements and the organization's actual procedures, changes which were authorized through acclamation at the May membership meeting.

The Board is currently evaluating and discussing the implementation of a strategic plan prepared by member Candyce Abbott, to further cement MGGD's goals in the community and the means of pursuing them. We want to maintain previously-determined goals for the organization, in terms of focus and size, while establishing MGGD as a visible and viable presence for the larger local community. We hope this strategic plan will help us to define those goals more effectively and pursue them successfully.

Sue Ann Hanson has been instrumental in working toward a viable web site – look for an announcement once the web site is up and fully operational. We plan to include membership information, programming information for our monthly meetings, electronic copies of our newsletter, *The City Seedling*, and volunteer opportunities, as well

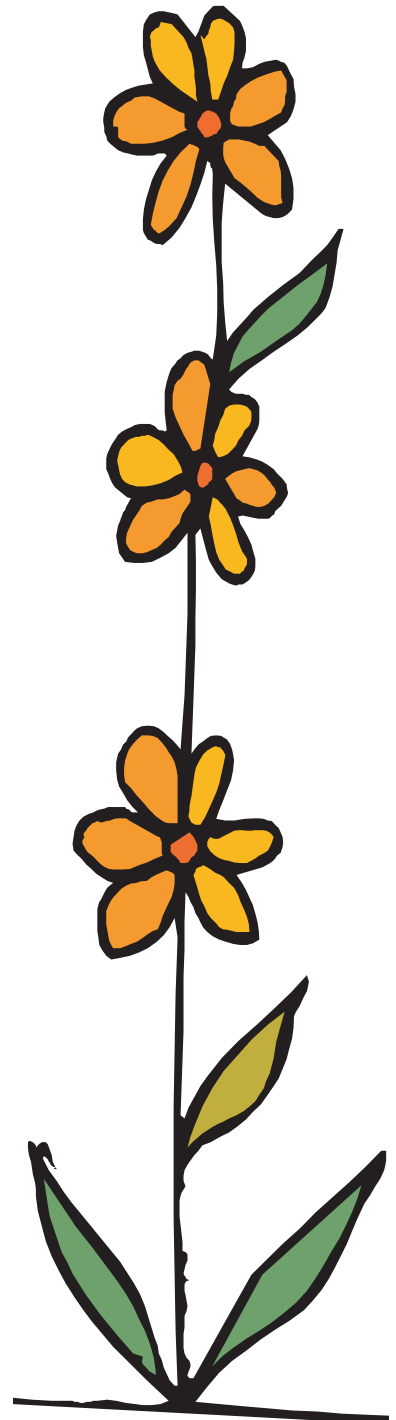
as links to other useful sites.

Despite the summer's drought-like conditions, MGGD continues to work toward establishing a conservatorship for the wildflower walk on Belle Isle. The restriction of Belle Isle's deer has had an unbelievably positive impact on native plant species. Our initial walk, led by an extremely well-versed Terri Light in early May, was a modest success, turning up a veritable multitude of spring ephemerals, including whole swathes of less-than-common white trout lilies. We hope to expand this program to three or four seasonal walks a year (weather permitting), as well as annual clean-up and conservation days for the walk to remove refuse and exotic invasives. We plan to install a sign at the trail-head, which will include MGGD's role in the trail's ongoing health.

MGGD is also looking for a volunteer to assist with development of a marketing program to improve our fundraising efforts in support of our membership and programs, as well as someone to track response to volunteer opportunities.

If you are interested in any of these initiatives, please contact a board member.

Enjoy these days of relative calm and reflection, a brief but necessary respite before the gardening madness starts again in a few short months!



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- 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.

How I became a member of the Master Gardeners of Greater Detroit (MGGD)

By Art Campbell

“Why should I join anything or anybody for that matter?” That’s what went through my head! For years I had heard “Dr. Dean” on radio station WJR (“760 on your AM dial”). Dr. Dean tried to solve gardening problems “on the air.” Also for years, I had seen people working in gardens in the Cass Corridor north of 640 Temple and south of Wayne State University. During this time I ran into Master Gardeners (MGs), wearing their MG shirts, usually at the Michigan State Fair and Detroit’s Eastern Market.

One day some MGs were recruiting and took my name and number, but I never heard from them. Some time passed and I ran into some other MGs at Eastern Market. I told them of my experience with the last group of MGs. They gave me the telephone for the Wayne County Cooperative Extension Service. So I called and an application for the MG class came in the next mail. I sent it in – but was not accepted!

Around this time, we had a neighborhood parade. A woman watching the parade was wearing a green MG sweatshirt. She told me she

had just come back from turf management class at Michigan State and all about the Soccer World Cup. I cut her off and told her of my application being rejected. She cut to the chase, asking “Why do you want to become an MG? Hon if you don’t want to educate others about gardening issues...” With this information in hand, I filled out a new application and was accepted for the MG Class.

After completing the course, I met some really great people from eastern and western Wayne County, but not many from the City itself. There was an undercurrent about forming a group for the City by some “renegades” who didn’t want to drive all the way across the County for a meeting. Master Gardeners of Greater Detroit started with about five diehards, many of whom have since moved on with the feeling their job was done and that the group will continue to be a Master Gardener presence in Detroit.

MGGD offers something to everyone. You don’t have to be a great biologist to participate and contribute. For the most part, there is satisfaction for all the volunteers. As with



all organizations, MGGD does have an agenda: educating people in eastern Wayne Country concerning gardening issues. So come on over, there is room for us to grow together. It takes a lot of different skills to do what we do. All of what we

does not involve a spade and a rake. Come on and have some fun. And meet some really cool people.



Member Focus – Barb Hayes

By Sue Ann Hanson

Barb Hayes: Most of us know her by sight, the rest of us at least by name. Not only is she a valuable member of the Master Gardeners of Greater Detroit, she is the Executive Director of our sister organization, the Detroit Garden Center (“DGC”). Aside from this immediate “family” of organizations, she is also involved in numerous environmental groups, including the Friends of the Detroit River and Earth Works Garden. Barb’s interest in gardening is focused on herb gardening and plants that support native wildlife – especially bugs, birds and butterflies! (OK, OK, butterflies are bugs, too, but they all start with Bs!) Without such consistent support for our native species, how would we maintain local biological diversity?

Barb took the first MSU Master Gardener class back in, hmmm, well, when was that, exactly? Many years ago! Shortly thereafter, she came on board as a part time employee at DGC and, subsequently, its Executive Director. But not before having had two other successful careers, one as a Parke-Davis tissue culture specialist and a second as a full-time mom. Barb met her husband, Mirv, at Parke-Davis when they both signed up for the company’s downhill ski club. To this day, they continue to share their love for the outdoors with a cottage in Canada, bird watching and hiking in the north woods.

Barb considers her 1978 decision to move DGC’s curriculum from “old lady activities” to a more diverse agenda, including a fully comprehensive Children’s Program, as one of

her greatest achievements. After all, if we don’t pass along our love for gardening to the next generation, who will keep gardening alive in the future? Starting with the Detroit Psychiatric Institute and carrying on with Alternatives for Girls, Barb and the DGC have kept a focus on the younger generation of today’s Detroit youth. And quite successfully, I might add!

Barb is a charter member of MGGD (dating back to when it was known as the “Master Gardener Association of Detroit”), helping lay the foundation for the group and offering meeting space at the DGC. When the DGC was forced to move from its location at the historical Moross House, word went out and many Master Gardeners helped with moving plants (including the expansive herb garden), as well as packing and moving the DGC’s 70-year-old historical collection of less organic materials. Barb was of course instrumental in accomplishing the heart-wrenching move.

In her role as Executive Director, Barb has organized 16 annual tours to gardens across the nation, plus assorted local tours sponsored by the DGC. Her most memorable annual tours include Philadelphia (a city of great hospitality) and Vancouver. She recalls the worst as being one was in Virginia, where nothing seemed to go as planned, including unremitting rain during the entire trip! A more local tour took an awkward “turn” when the bus driver realized he had made a wrong turn on way to the Meier gardens and ended up in a ditch, straddling the road! Barb hopes nothing



Above: Barb Hayes with author/gardener and DGC speaker Janet Macunovich.

like that ever happens again on one of the DGC tours!

Barb has also been instrumental in developing and maintaining the annual Winter Gardening Series, which traditionally occurs at the end of January (to give us all a welcome respite from our winter weather) at Historical Trinity Lutheran Church. She and Janet Macunovich just finished working on the 15th Annual Winter Gardening Series to help novices and experienced gardeners prepare for the upcoming gardening season.

More recently, she assisted in identifying the wildflowers at the Capuchin Earth Works Garden berm, which can now be mowed without risking destruction of this precious resource.

Barb is currently MGGD’s recording Secretary, but she brings much more to the organization’s Board than her clerical skills. Formerly MGGD’s Program Coordinator and through her long career with DGC, she continues to provide unparalleled input in developing and maintaining the ongoing quality of our programming.

Barb and Mirv now have a granddaughter in Ohio who they’d like to see more often. But she has no plans of retiring

from either the DGC or the MGGD Board. Seems like she will be forever planning activities around the herb and children’s gardening that she loves.

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English Gardening

By Cheryl M. English

Even though winter is not perhaps a high point of the gardener's year, that doesn't mean it isn't an opportunity to shine as a gardener, or simply as a lover of plants. In fact, there are a number of plants that are almost exclusively associated with this time of year, for reasons both ancient and modern. I'm going to share some ways you can enhance your home with plants to relieve what otherwise can seem to be a fairly bleak time of year here in southeastern Michigan.

Green, Green, Green

Maybe it's kind of ironic, the emphasis on green things that seems to go with this time of year, but perhaps it makes some sense as well. The Winter Solstice (December 21 in 2005) is the "turning of the year," when the days begin to lengthen. Green symbolizes the rebirth inherent in this special time of year.

Ivy

For a touch of green around your home this winter, consider ivies. These are primarily forms of *Hedera* species – the most common being *Hedera helix*, more commonly known as English Ivy. Ivies are vines, although they don't have plant parts (tendrils or leaf stems) especially designed to attach themselves to trellises. One hardy variety is often used as an

evergreen ground cover in this region, but be careful if you have any of this near your house: Ivies attach themselves to relatively porous surfaces with root-like appendages and, if they get on your brickwork, can wreak havoc on the mortar. (This particular variety, which is not native to our area, is considered a highly invasive plant and constitutes a serious threat to numerous native species.)

For the winter, you can pick up little four-inch pots of the numerous tropical varieties, variegated (leaves of more than one color) or non-variegated, with flat leaves or crinkled or curly leaves. Pot them up into nice pots – one to a smaller pot or three (always an odd number, just for aesthetics!) to a larger one, dress them up with some ribbon, and they make wonderful, green, living accents for your that will last throughout the winter. Ivies are prone to red spider mites, so you may want to dispose of them in the spring before they develop symptoms – by then, your garden will be waking up, anyway.

Bulbs for Forcing

If you just pick up one gardening catalog this winter, you are certain to see many examples of bulbs suitable for what is called "forcing." Among the most popular are amaryllis and narcissus (or paperwhites), although hyacinth, tulips and crocus



Above: Amaryllis

Below: Paperwhite *Narcissus*

Facing: Adding interest with ivy



English Gardening - *continued*

By Cheryl M. English

(among others) are also often available. Most bulbs must go through a cool or cold period in order to set blossom. Winter-hardy bulbs experience this naturally outside. "Forcing" refers to the practice of chilling bulbs artificially to encourage them to bloom.

Amaryllis

Amaryllis (*Hippeastrum*) is a tender flowering bulb originally from the Andes Mountains of Chile and Peru. It was discovered in 1828 by Eduard Frederich Poeppig, a young German physician on a planting hunting expedition. Since then, it has been heavily hybridized and occurs in a wide range of colors and forms.

The plants are fairly large, growing 18 to 24 inches, with blooms generally four to six inches wide. They can generally be brought to bloom from late fall until early spring, blooming usually six to eight weeks after planting. Given proper care, they can continue to bloom for several years, usually during winter.

Amaryllis are generally available during the winter, already sprouted and on their way to one of the most dramatic floral displays available. The plant usually sends out minimal foliage when it blooms, which then takes off after the flowers fade. If you want your *amaryllis* to bloom again next year, place it in a sunny, well-ventilated spot after blooming and feed it

regularly to promote that foliage. This will help the bulb regenerate after the strain of blooming. Once all danger of frost has passed, you can set the bulbs out in a semi-shaded location during the summer. Bring the pot back into the house in September when the leaves have died. Store in a cool (12 degrees C), dry spot out of direct light until signs of growth appear. Discontinue watering and feeding during this period to prevent rot. In about two months, the new growth should appear. At this time, you should gently remove and replenish the top one inch of potting mixture – but don't disturb the roots or damage the new shoots. Place the pot in a sunny spot, turning it regularly to keep the growth even, and you should see blooms again for the holidays. If the blooms are quite large and heavy, you may want to stake the stem.

Narcissus

For easier-care bulbs, you might want to try paperwhites, a type of *Narcissus*. Extremely aromatic (they can easily perfume an entire room – to the point of becoming almost overpowering), paperwhites originate in the Mediterranean and are also tender bulbs. They can be grown outside in Climatic Zones 8 to 11; otherwise, forced bulbs should be discarded. (We're in Zone 6A.) Some varieties have pure white flowers,

while others have white perianths (the petals on the narcissus) and yellow cups. I have seen both forms available at local garden centers, already prepared for forcing at home. There are two general techniques for forcing – in containers that do or do not have drainage holes.

If you are forcing your paperwhite bulbs in a pot with drainage, use a well-drained, pH 6 to 7, sterilized planting medium (your basic potting soil should be OK). You can use any size pot, depending on the number of bulbs you're going to force. However, make sure the pot is at least three to four inches deep, and plant the bulbs with their tips at or slightly below the rim of the pot. Water the pot well after planting and keep it moist. If planting in a decorative container that does not have drainage holes, place one to two inches of clean gravel, stones or glass gems in the bottom of a three- to four-inch deep container. Carefully place the bulbs (root end down, of course) on the gravel/stones/glass gems and place some of the gravel/stones/glass gems around the bulbs to hold them in place. Add just enough water to bring it to the base of the bulbs, maintaining it at this level. (If you keep it any higher, the bulbs will rot.) Don't worry – the roots will make their way down into the water.

Paperwhites will flower under just about any light conditions. To prolong the display of blooms, however, place the plants in the coolest area of the house, out of direct sunlight. Once the bulbs are spent, they should be composted – the effort of blooming under these conditions exhaust them completely and they are not hardy in our climate.

Here's a great idea: Give a dish garden of aromatic narcissus as a winter hostess gift. Pick up a nice glass or pottery bowl and provide all the other materials – glass gems and bulbs. Within a few weeks, a beautiful bouquet will bloom for your gift's recipient, with a perfume heady enough to fill a whole room. I have even, as a smaller, less elaborate gift, used a single glass candleholder to hold a single bulb, or used a number of these as a flexible flower arrangement. The recipient of your gift will still have a beautiful bowl to use to float candles or to create his or her own personalized garden another time.



2005 Annual Picnic a Resounding Success

By Cheryl M. English

Members of Master Gardeners of Greater Detroit ("MGGD") and the Detroit Garden Center ("DGC") had a fantastic opportunity to meet, greet, eat and win August 17 at the two groups' joint Annual Picnic. After a year's hiatus due to DGC's move to new quarters in the Vigliotti Building, the Annual Picnic made a big splash for its return at a new venue.

The Planning Committee had new challenges this year, with the loss of the event's traditional location at the Detroit Garden Center's former home, the Moross House. However, through the tireless efforts of Sue Ann Hanson, the Tompkins Center, located at Grosse Pointe Park's Windmill Pointe Park, debuted as a successful successor site. Participants had plenty of room to mingle with one another and check out both the buffet table and the raffle prizes in the spacious interior, or enjoy the tasty dishes shared by attendees on the patio outside. We hope to hold future Annual Picnics at the same location.

Through the fundraising efforts of Cheryl M. English, Hattie Killenberg and Terri Light, over 20 local businesses – ranging from St. Clair Shores and Eastpointe to downtown Detroit – (as well as private individuals) donated prizes for the raffle, including such stalwarts as Allemon's Landscape Center and the Nature Nook, as well as new donors such as Meldrum & Smith and Dish.

The food, as usual, was outstanding (my personal opinion). Everything was so tasty, and there were quite a few stand-outs, including Ed Krappman's vegetarian bake (created using

produce grown in his garden) and Hattie Killenberg's killer trifle. Ed has indicated a willingness to cater, if anyone is interested!

It is due to the indefatigable efforts of the following individuals that this year's event was such a success: Sue Ann Hanson, for discovering and reserving the Tompkins Center; to Kathryn Reed, for coordinating additional refreshments; and to Cheryl M. English, Hattie Killenberg and Terri Light, for their enthusiastic fundraising efforts.

Please e-mail your Board Members if you have any input on the 2005 Annual Picnic or would like to participate in planning next year's event – we'll be starting in February, so hop on board! We'd love to have help making next year's event even more successful. Even if you can't help out, be on the lookout for next year's Annual Picnic in August 2006!



The following independently-owned local businesses and individuals made donations in support of our fundraising effort for the 2005 Annual Picnic. Please make it a priority to patronize these businesses and, if you are able to do so, please let them know how much we appreciate their ongoing support. If you are interested in contact information for any of our benefactors, please phone the MGGD hotline.

Allemon's Landscape Center

Ariel's Enchanted Garden

Black Cat Pottery

Blumz by JR

Breadsmith

Cass Café

Charvat Florist

Children's Home of Detroit

Circare

Detroit Garden Center

Dish

Cheryl M. English

Michael Geibel

Healy's Health Hut

J.P.'s Hallmark

Hattie Killenberg

Jessica Killenberg

Mack Avenue Diner

Meaghan's

Meldrum & Smith

Moo Moo's Organic Bistro

Nature Nook

Semrau

Something Special

Souliere

Tree of Life

Werner's Hallmark

Wild Birds Unlimited

Thank You!
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Volunteer Opportunities:

Belle Isle Botanical Society (BIBS)

We have a **volunteer gardening** program every Saturday from April 22 through October 21 in the Lily Pond Garden starting at 11:00 AM and ending at 2:00 PM. We also have a **Plant Sale** on May 27 and need volunteers to help the day of the sale with sales, questions, etc. and prior to the sale in the greenhouses planting, pruning, and preparing perennials, annuals, herbs and other plant material. We will need volunteers on April 1 from 8:00 to

4:00 for **A Day in the Garden**, an educational workshop program in the greenhouses and Anna Scripps Whitcomb Conservatory on Belle Isle, near East Jefferson & East Grand Blvd. For more info: Adrienne Gregory, phone: 586-773-6186

Earth Works Garden/ Growing Healthy Kids

Jam Session-Monday, January 30th, 3pm-6pm

Growing Healthy Kids, Friday, February 3rd, 4:30pm-7:30pm (GHK will be a weekly

event, this year they're restructured the program so the kids are split into two groups of fifteen 5-10 year olds and five 11-16 year olds who will come in every other week. However, the format of the program will remain mostly the same)

Greenhouse, Tuesday, February 21st, 9am-12pm (this will be a weekly volunteer time until early to mid April, please email Br. Rick if you are interested in working in the greenhouse, so they know how many people to expect)

Selling value-added items

(handbalm, honey and jam) Tuesday, February 21st, they need help all day for 2 or 3 hour shifts between 11am-8pm at the Scared Heart Major Seminary We are also looking for donations of 8oz jam jars.

Please contact EWG/GHK if you would like to volunteer on greenhouse days and/or have questions by emailing Br. Rick (rsamyn@cskdetroit.org), Marcia (mlee@cskdetroit.org) or call Br. Rick at 313-579-2100 ext. 211 (the volunteer activities will also be on his answering machine).

A MESSAGE FROM KRISTINE HAHN

In case you haven't heard, I will be moving to a new permanent location on Tuesday, January 31, 2006. The purpose of this move is to increase accessibility to MSUE Horticulture programming in the western half of Wayne County. My new address is 5454 Venoy Road, Wayne, MI 48184, and my new phone number is 734-727-7234. My email address will be the same <hahnk@msu.edu>. I expect to be settled in by the week of February 6. Administrative Assistant Jasmin Crable will be working at the office on Venoy Road for two days per week to answer general MSU Extension questions, sell soil test kits and Pesticide Certification manuals.

The new Master Gardener Coordinator, Marcia Pilliciotti will remain at the downtown Detroit office at 640 Temple, 6th Floor, Detroit, MI 48201, and her phone number is 313.833.3412, and her new email address is <mpillici@co.wayne.mi.us>. However, Marcia's email will not be fully functional until the week of February 6, 2006, so please wait until then to send her your emails. All inquiries about the Master Gardener program should be directed to Marcia and to the Administrative Secretary, Kim DeLoach at 313.833.3417.





Master Gardeners of Greater Detroit

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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!