

TWIGS

The Garden Club of Greater Lansing



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PRESIDENTS MESSAGE

Our speaker this month, Carolyn Miller from MSU Beal Botanical Gardens was very enthusiastic and full of energy. Carolyn removed the grass in her front yard to a no mow area. Then the transformation with perennials took place. She identified plants that can transform your yard. Throughout the process Carolyn has found some plants needed to be moved, others she needed to remove. Carolyn continues to trial her plants in the yard. She also reminded us that a perennial garden still requires work but, these plants are good for the soil, erosion control, provide water filtration and on the upside beauty.

Carolyn's knowledge of plants and the role she plays at the University is identifying and mapping plants and trees on the campus. Carolyn is also involved in care for the ephemerals in the wooded areas of campus. It is amazing what is happening on campus and the care that is taken to identify and preserve the green of MSU.

The team for the Landscape Design School has been phenomenal to work with. The school is now live and you can register for this course. April 17th & 18th is Course 1. Course 2 is later this year – Sept 25th & 26th. It is recommended to purchase the following book: Stewards of the Land, which is required for the Landscape Design School. Click on the link and

you will be able to access the book for the upcoming school. <https://gardenclub.org/store/stewards-land?category=84>



(If you saved a few of these in your yard last fall you will feed the bees this spring)

HORTICULTURE

Whether we call it El Nino or Climate Change, or just an anomaly, "winter" 2023-24 has been unusual. My grass has stayed green, my driveway has been plowed only three times this entire season – and that for no more than 3 inches of snow, daffodils are pushing up through the mulch, and my Star Magnolia has thick buds ready to open. As I write

this it's the middle of February and in Michigan. Somehow this feels like a dichotomy.

Of course, we have no way to know whether this unusual winter will be followed by more years with a similar pattern. We also can't accurately predict how our plants will react. I suggest that as perennials emerge, and shrubs start to leaf out, we keep notes about any unexpected changes. That can help in future years if our winters continue to change.



(Picture from Ronalee)

Many shrubs and perennials need the cold winter months to have a period of rest and dormancy before they return to grow, leaf out, and blossom. I'm not a climate expert, but this year it seems like our plants may face some challenges. In turn, as gardeners, we may also notice some unexpected issues. Be sure to check on your plants throughout the season. Remember to stay on garden paths to keep from packing down the soil around plant roots as you visit your gardens.

This warm winter can cause special problems. First, we all know that root rot can occur if roots are too wet with inadequate drainage. Be sure that roots have good drainage, and that water is not collecting under mulch or in lower lying areas. Dig a small trench or add soil or more mulch to drain or absorb excess water.

Second, be very careful to watch for early insect damage. With this warmer weather insects may become active earlier than usual. Insects have various methods for surviving cold weather, but most don't venture very far from where they will live

during the warmer months. In other words, they are out there waiting for your plants to emerge!!

Watch for plant diseases. They tend to thrive if plants are weakened or depending on growing conditions. We really don't know how this winter will affect the strength of our plants. Watch for signs of disease as plants emerge. Either plants or diseases may be impacted by fewer cold days which then lead to a longer growing season.

When we put our gardens to bed last fall, we added mulch around shrubs and around or over bulbs and perennials. Loosen the mulch to check for root drainage and as plants start to grow, however I still suggest keeping beds covered lightly at least through mid-April. Warming weather does not mean that we will be free from possible frost (or more snow) for several more weeks.

Weeds always seem to grow before other plants. Begin weeding as early as you can so that the weeds don't smother your prize plants. My early season nemesis every year is hairy bittercress. It invades both my gardens and the lawn and spreads very quickly. Remove it as fast as possible before the small (barely visible) seeds blow and spread rapidly in the wind. As you are weeding, be sure to use your notes and plant markings from last summer to be sure that you protect last year's new plants that might look like weeds as they emerge.



(Picture by Ronalee)

One positive note is that we may see less animal damage this year. Deer, rabbits and other wildlife have had plenty of green grass this winter so they

may not be as tempted to attack gardens in search of food.

Let's learn together as we watch how our gardens are affected by our warm winter. A longer gardening season would be wonderful. Barb Amundsen

SHOUT OUT THANK YOU

John McCarthy completed the Master Gardeners Course. Jean Veile reached 200 hours of volunteerism and Sue Kesti reached 500 hours of volunteerism. This is wonderful news. I am excited for these individuals.

Barb Amundsen is also a MG. She assists with the newsletter and puts in many ours. Joan is working towards her 200 hours and hopes to have them next year.

MEMBER UPDATES

Please update your books with this information. The new books will not be available until this summer.

(Content Redacted)

TREASURER

Deposits have been made for membership. In the last year we have added four new members. This is exciting news.

BOARD MTG

Mon 4th Zoom mtg @ 10:00 am

CLUB MTG

Mon Mar 11th @ 9:30 @ the church. This is a salad and casserole luncheon. Renee is the luncheon chair. Review page 46 for information on the day and responsibilities.

GARDENS

It is not to early to start thinking about Scott Sunken Garden and the Blue Star Memorial. At this time the parking lot of Scott is storing equipment used for construction and BWL. I have been told that by mid-April there should be relief on that site.

A problem has arisen with the Frances Park Rose Garden. The rededication is on hold indefinitely. The roses have a severe fungus. This is a fungus that is transmitted via the root system. They will be treated this spring and see how well they perform. It is believed that eventually all will die and need to be replaced. I asked about mitigation of the soil as well. The department has three plans they will be working off of depending on the response to treatment. These roses were brand new. Let's hope for the best. This means our tea will need another site.

Renee and Andrea attended the Designers group. Renee made an arrangement with the theme of transparency. Andrea said she learned a lot and was enthusiastic regarding the Designers.

Linda Sue has already registered for the LDS. She is also interested in planting a tree in her front yard. I have provided her with the information from the city.

The City of Lansing has created a program over the past few years to increase the tree canopy. If you are a resident / tax payer for the city you are eligible for a tree. They are being planted in the curb area but if your curb area is small (as Mine is), you can put in the front yard. The caveat is you must water and maintain it for the first year of growth. Interested contact the City of Lansing Forestry Department.



(Arrangement by Renee)

FUTURE MEETING & REGIONAL INFORMATION

Our April meeting is a presentation on Ikebana. Start thinking about vessels and kenzans (frogs). We are looking into what supplies we might need to have on hand for members. Please let us know at the March mtg if you will be present for this opportunity to make an arrangement. We are going to purchase supplies and MUST have an accurate count.

Flower Show School is being held in Ann Arbor on April 4-6. Registration is open. Ann Schoals is attending. This is a tough school and Ann has passed the first course. The symposium is Aug 6 & 7.

The Landscape Design School is now up on the website of MGC to enroll. Members of this club have done an outstanding job of arranging speakers, publicity, meals and all other logistics. Hurry and register. This school has generated a lot of BUZZ.

The first course is April 17th & 18th at Trinity Church here in Lansing.

2024 MGC Annual Conference "Smitten with The Mitten Shore to Shore". June 10-11, 2024 Doubletree Hotel on the Riverfront Bay City MI. More information to follow.

Central Michigan Seed Swap Saturday, February 24, 11am-4pm, 1420 S Badour Rd, Midland, MI 48640. Speakers and times: 11:30 am-12:30 pm - Living an Organic Life w/ Karen Golden, 1-2 pm - Growing Gourmet Mushrooms in Your Garden w/ Erin Hamilton, 2:30-3:30 pm - *Keynote* Lost Treasures & Rare Plants: The Ark of Taste in the Midwest w/ David Shields. This meeting and presentation are free. MG's may want to consider attending.

The 2B District will hold a fall meeting. It is being developed by the Mason Sycamore Creek Club. The meeting will be Tue Oct 22nd in Mason at the Extensions Building on M36 / W Michigan Ave., next door to Raynor Park. They are planning a great meeting.

UPCOMING FLOWER SHOWS

May 7-10 Victorian Garden Armory, Holland.

May 16th Celebrations of Spring, St Clair Shores.

July 18-20 The Garden Olympics, Spring Lake.

Check www.migardenclubs.org for details.

WEBSITES

I would like you to review our District 2B and MGC State websites. Please look to see if it is easy to navigate? Does it give you the information you need? Can you find information? What is missing? Do you like the format? I hope to receive your input at our next meeting.

Michigan Garden Clubs <https://migardenclubs.org/>
District 2B <https://mgcdistrict2b.weebly.com/>