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Broadcaster

"Helping Each Other Grow!"

Michiana Master Gardeners Association

September 2011

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LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DESK

Dear Master Gardener Friends,

I have enjoyed a bit of self-expression in writing to you & hope to have piqued a new idea or two from the "Thoughts" & "Quotes" offered.

In my stash, I ran across some cartoons clipped awhile back from The Elkhart Truth, one called "Marvin". It is generally about a rather bratty toddler & what he is thinking.

This series was his mom who was shopping for plants. She is purported to have black thumbs, not green. The particular one that struck me was Marvin in the shopping cart, Mom trying to decide which flowers to buy, holding out her hands & saying, "It is frightening...I have the power to decide which of these flowers lives or dies!"

It took me back to a moment in my life that was revealing, rather stressful to me. I was a young mother with a family of four, working nights, having financial stresses, always tired & full of worry. I noticed this one day how it had started out cheerful & upbeat, but my grumpy, critical attitude had changed the whole atmosphere. All of a sudden, no one was happy any more.

It dawned on me the power I had. I don't know how much it changed me, but at least I was aware of what I was doing.... It was an insight that no one wants to have of oneself, an insight a person would feel better suppressing. Nevertheless, there it was, in all its ugliness. It was as if my attitude had the power of whose happiness lived or died that day...The Scottish poet Robbie Burns said something about it being a gift to be able to see ourselves as others see us. Sometimes that is not a welcome gift, but a needed one.

Some anonymous thoughts:

If you don't like something, change it.
If you can't change it, change your attitude.
Change the way you look at things,
And the things you look at will change....

Our 2011 MG year has already reached September. The Homeowners meeting was a great success with beautiful tables, tasty food and a comprehensive, entertaining program. Nothing was missed. Attendance, too, was outstanding. Thanks, again, to each person involved. You made us all proud! Now we must get on with the planning for 2012, but our year continues with upcoming quality MMGA meeting programs. Stay involved for instruction on the AED and later on the introduction to the 2011 Master Gardener class. There is a lot yet to come; let's see you at the next meeting!

Looking forward in friendship

Marilyn Horvath





*Day Minder . . .
Watch Us Grow*



12	Mon.	Garden Tour Committee Meeting- Extension Office Conference Room	6:30 PM
19	Mon.	Board Meeting—Extension Office Con- ference Room Lunch at 12 PM	12:30 PM
19	Mon.	Spring Celebration Committee Meet- ing—Panera Bread (Dinner 6:00)	6:30 PM
27	Tues.	Member Meeting—Ag Hall: Aaron Kingsley, Forester for City of Goshen	7:00 PM
30	Fri.	Last Day for MG Hotline	



10	Mon.	Garden Tour Committee Meeting- Extension Office Conference Room	6:30 PM
17	Mon..	Board Meeting—Extension Office Con- ference Room Lunch at 12 PM	12:30 PM
17	Mon.	Spring Celebration Committee Meet- ing—Panera Bread, (Dinner 6:00)	6:30 PM
25	Tues.	Member Meeting—Ag Hall: Sarah Heeter, Parks of Chicago	7:00 PM

Upcoming Meeting Dates

April 1st to October 1st - Master Gardener Hotline call 533-0554

November 14th - Garden Tour Committee Meeting

November 14th - Board Meeting

November 21st - Spring Celebration Meeting

November 29th - Member Meeting—6:30 PM **Thanks-for-Giving Carry In and Board Member Elections**

DECEMBER—HAPPY HOLIDAYS, NO MEETINGS

January 9th - Garden Tour Committee Meeting

January 16th - Board Meeting

January 16th - Spring Celebration Meeting

January 24th - Member Meeting—TBA

February 13th - Garden Tour Committee Meeting

February 20th - Board Meeting

February 20th - Spring Celebration Meeting

February 28th - Member Meeting—TBA

March 12th - Garden Tour Committee Meeting

March 19th - Board Meeting

March 27th - Member Meeting—TBA

April 9th - Garden Tour Committee Meeting

April 16th - Board Meeting

April 24th - Member Meeting—TBA

NEW:

May 14, 2012—Garden Tour Committee Meeting

June 11, 2012—Garden Tour Committee Meeting

July 9, 2012—Garden Tour Committee Meeting

July 14, 2012—GARDEN TOUR 2012 (10 am to 4 pm)

July 19, 2012—Garden Tour Wrap Meeting

News Release for Week of September 12th, 2011
By Jeff Burbrink, Extension Educator Elkhart County

Composting vs. Burning Leaves

In just a few weeks, leaves will begin dropping off trees in our annual fall tradition. Unfortunately, another fall tradition is the burning of the leaves. The choking smoke in parts of Elkhart County is unbelievable at times. Composting leaves may provide you with another alternative to burning.

In addition to being illegal in many areas, leaf burning leads to air pollution and is a health and fire hazard. The smoke from burning leaves contains a number of toxic and/or irritating particles and gases. Tiny particles contained in smoke from burning leaves can accumulate in the lungs and stay there for years. These particles can increase the risk of respiratory infection, as well as reduce the amount of air reaching the lungs. For those who already suffer from asthma and other breathing disorders, leaf burning can be extremely hazardous.

Moist leaves, which burn slowly, give off more smoke than do dry leaves. These moist leaves are more likely to also give off chemicals called hydrocarbons, which irritate the eyes, nose, throat and lungs. Some of these hydrocarbons are known to be carcinogenic.

Carbon monoxide is an invisible gas that results from incomplete burning, such as with smoldering leaf piles. After inhaling carbon monoxide gas, it is absorbed into the blood, where it reduces the amount of oxygen that the red blood cells can carry.



Children, seniors, smokers and people suffering from chronic lung and heart disease are more susceptible than healthy adults to carbon monoxide effects.

Composting is a good alternative to burning. Dry leaves by themselves will break down slowly over time, but you can speed that process by mixing the leaves with green plant materials, such as grass clippings, garden discards and produce scraps. Or you could add a source of nitrogen, such as livestock manure or commercial fertilizer. A good rule of thumb is to mix one part green material to 3 parts brown, let the pile heat up, and turn it when it begins to cool.

At my home, I have a lot of brown leaves, but not a lot of green grass clippings. I mix leaves with lawn fertilizer as I collect them. The nitrogen in the fertilizer helps the pile break down quickly. I stir the pile once a year, and by the following spring, the leaves are composted.

Mixing or turning the pile occasionally is important to keep a good supply of air in the compost. A good-sized compost pile should be a minimum of 3 cubic feet. It is also important to have the pile be moist (not soaking wet), about the same consistency as a good chocolate cake. Water allows heat to distribute through the pile and aids the organisms breaking down the pile.

For some more information take a look at Purdue's composting publication at <http://www.hort.purdue.edu/ext/ID-182.pdf>



Splinters from the Board -- August 18th, 2011

President Marilyn Horvath called the meeting to order with Board members Betty Foltz, Linda Harkleroad, Barb Heeter, Marilyn Horvath, Jerry Martin, Ruth Middleton, Stan Palmer, Kate Rink Linda Sinon, and treasurer Jim Bare present.

Marilyn stated MMGA needs to make a concerted effort to promote our community service efforts more openly. Projects such as the quilt garden, PAR garden, contribution to the State Fair Sale of Champions, Spring Celebration public seminar, and speakers' bureau need to be showcased more publically.

Treasurer Jim Bare presented a listing of income and expenses for the month with most expenses and income involving the fair. Income for the month totaled \$195.33 (\$170 from the sale of the hanging baskets), and expenses totaled \$1105.67. This leaves a current balance of \$34,656.46.

In reference to the large balance in the treasury, Educator Jeff Burbrink stated that a rainy day fund (one year's budget amount in reserve) is the most prudent method of insuring the health of an organization. It is also nice to have a cushion that allows for impromptu purchases/donations such as the new trellis for the fair, donation to the Sale of Champions, the AED, and Doug Tallamy's visit.

A speaker (Tracy DiSabato-Aust) and location (Greencroft) has been selected for the Spring Celebration.

Fair liaison Jerry Martin requested that the horticulture committee hold a silent auction for the wishing well located at Ag Hall. Jerry will send out an email to the membership with a photo and information about the well and announce the details of the auction. The winner will be announced at the September MMGA membership meeting, and the proceeds will go to the horticulture committee.

The Garden Tour committee for 2012 has met, and 3 changes in the timeline have been made: gardens will be selected in September, not October; the tour hours will run from 10 to 4 instead of 10-5; and the site of the tour will be chosen 18 months in advance. The site of the 2013 tour will be Pheasant Ridge.

The AED has arrived and Barb Heeter demonstrated its use to the Board. After the representative's presentation to the membership, Barb will place the device in the MG room in the Extension Office and a member of the set-up committee will bring it to membership meetings.

Gwen Ferland sent a proposal for an MG Family Reunion. She hopes to have the event September 17th from 1-3 at McNaughton Park.

Mary Davis made two proposals to the Board. The first was a request that MMGA sponsor a brick paver at the Wellfield Botanic Gardens at the cost of \$500. The Board voted to recommend the purchase of the memorial stone to the membership at the August meeting.

Mary's other proposal involved the participation of MMGA in Envirofest 2012. The date coincides with the Friday of Garden Tour set-up; however, the membership is large enough to support two events in one day. Board members approved Mary's request to form a committee to investigate sponsoring a booth.

Marilyn reminded liaisons that all committees need to submit budget requests in September.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 2:15

Respectfully submitted, Linda Harkleroad, Secretary

***MMGA MEMBERSHIP MEETING—AUGUST 2011
HOMEOWNER APPRECIATION DINNER***

Sixty-three members and nine 2011 Garden Tour homeowners enjoyed a meal catered by Dana J's and Dan's Pies for the August 30th MMGA membership meeting. A special thank you was extended to the homeowners who graciously opened their gardens for the 2011 tour.

President Marilyn Horvath called the brief business meeting to order at 7:10 PM. Thank You's were extended to the 2011 Garden Tour committee and August Appreciation Dinner committee.

All agenda items were delayed until the September meeting with the exception of one recommendation from the Board. Acting on a suggestion from an MMGA member, the Board proposed to the membership that \$500 be spent to purchase a large paver for the walkway at the Wellfield Botanic Gardens. Marilyn pointed out that the primary benefit from such a purchase would be the support of the Wellfield project that is proving to be a wonderful asset to the community. A secondary benefit would be to continue the organization's involvement in community programs. After a bit of discussion on what a paver actually is (a large landscape brick) and where the walkway is located, Mary Davis, with a second by J Witmer, moved that \$500 be spent to purchase the paver. The motion passed unanimously.

Educator Jeff Burbrink then reported that 18 members currently make up the 2011 Master Gardener class and all is going well. Jeff also announced a Natural Resources Enterprise Workshop will be held on September 7th for those with 5+ unused acres detailing how they can make that land more productive.

Marilyn then turned the meeting over to Vickie Estep for the evening's program. Using photographs taken by Loanne Harms, Mary Morgan, John Bloom, Tandy Stutzman, and Estep herself, Vickie had created a CD of the 2011 Garden Tour—from committee meetings, the plant ID process, and the Hospitality Center set-up and action, to the 7 beautiful gardens themselves. The CD presented a spectacular reminder of the Tour. CD's were available for purchase at the meeting. With a thank you to Vickie for all of her hard work, the meeting adjourned at 8:15 PM.

Respectfully submitted,
Linda Harkleroad, Secretary





INSIDE THE EXTENSION OFFICE Page 10
by Kate Rink

The first threat of frost was predicted for our area last night. But as morning came, we were lucky enough to have had cloud cover that we never reached that below 40 degree temperature. Plants and annuals may still have a bit longer to produce and show their stuff until the finality of the growing season comes to an end.

I heard someone say angrily in the store the other day, “I’m sick of summer, I can’t wait for winter.” I was sure he had lost all his senses in his comment. Did he totally forget about having to put on a jacket when he went out, scraping ice off his windshield, high utility bills, shivering, snowy boots, slippery roads, cold feet, short days, looking for that OTH-ER glove that somehow got lost, sunless, cloudy days? OK, I’ll stop. I don’t want to sound too depressing but I am definitely biased and not ready for winter!

On a happier note, we were able to help 45 people with their problems through the Master Gardener Hotline in August. Of that 45 calls there were 17 calls about bugs and pests. Quite often, the preferred recommendation was handled using an organic method of control specifically using an insecticidal soap, pyrethrums, or Neem. That was the case with red aphids on rudbeckia and squash bugs on zucchini.

I remember at our MG annual meeting, Tom Turpin, Purdue entomologist, said the very best way to attack and prevent squash bugs from destroying your plants is to get them EARLY. A faithful and timely application of spray each week after plants are established prevents them from laying their pretty little golden eggs on the undersides of the leaves. He was right. I tried it and it works but the key to it, and the hardest thing about its success is, being faithful to the application each week. We get busy and before you know it two weeks have passed without an additional application. Then something else comes up and you miss another application. Well, we’ve all seen the result of squash bugs. It looks fine one day and the next day you go out and the entire plant is wilted. That’s when you realize you weren’t faithful with prevention in the early weeks. Sorry, no squash for you.

A diligent spray schedule is also important to peaches to prevent brown rot. It is caused by a fungus that overwinters in infected twigs or in mummified fruit on the tree or on the ground which supplies spores for infection in the spring. Our client, being disappointed by not harvesting a crop each year, wanted information on what she could do. A combination of cultural and chemical controls was outlined for the homeowner.

Sanitation practices were explained in the way of cleaning up spoiled fruit off the ground and pruning weak and dead wood from branches. Also, beginning at bloom and continuing throughout the season a fungicide spray program is required for stone fruit which is commonly susceptible to brown rot. It may be too late for this year but with the information provided she may realize a crop next year if she puts these practices into play.

One of our own master gardeners wanted an identification of a shrub or tree-like plant that had palmate jagged leaves with purple flower clusters. She said it kind-of looked like hemp only with purple flowers.

The hotline volunteer was able to identify the plant as Chaste Tree (*Vitex agnus-castus*). Curious as to what this plant really was and looked like, I Goggled it and found a bunch of information on it. It is also known to have many names including Abraham's Balm, Chaste Lamb-Tree, Safe Tree and Monk's Pepper Tree. It has also been called Indian-Spice and Wild Pepper.

Chaste Tree was associated with ancient Greek festivals held in honor of Demeter of Thesmophoria. She was the Greek Goddess of Agriculture, fertility and marriage. During a festival, bows and twigs and leaves were strewn around Demeter's temple and women who remained "chaste" during the festival used Chaste tree blossoms for adornment.

It is considered hardy to Zone 7 which is interesting that it was found growing here in our zone. Chaste Tree fruits are used as a pepper substitute and also as a medicinal herb for women. The small round fruits (seeds), when smelled, have a pungent scent, and the flavor is reminiscent of black pepper. (Aaaachooo!)

A client called in wanting to prevent raccoons from destroying their sweet corn patch. If you have ever had that problem, you know exactly why she was distressed. While you are sleeping, they sneak into the field, pull the stalk down and have a feast on part of the ear. Then they move on to other stalks wasting ear after ear. Morning comes and you walk out to find there had been a party at your place over night and you have no sweet corn left. It's very frustrating.

This client had used a live trap baited with sweet corn without success which makes no sense at all. She wondered what would be a good bait to use. Our MG, having had the same problem, advised having success with using something unusual. Are you ready for this? Marshmallows! He also uses sunflower seeds. This seems logical. Using this approach has enticed the critters into its steel doom. What happens after the fact remains to be seen but its one less varmint in the seed corn patch.

August 24th must have been the day bees, hornets and wasps were causing a fuss because we had four calls on that one day! Purdue bulletin, E-44 about social bees and wasps, was sent to the homeowners. Additionally, a recommendation was made to call a professional dealing with this kind of stinging insect.

My space allotment is about used up so I may save some of the calls from August and September to talk about in October. There were still so many I didn't get to report on. So we'll just catch up next month. By then, I bet our growing season will be over.):

Enjoy the cooler, fall weather!

Kate



Information For Members



Program and Refreshment Committee

What a wonder full time we had in August for the Garden Tour Appreciation Dinner. We would like to thank Linda Harkleroad and Carol Swartzendruber for there work in organizing and putting on the dinner. The food was wonderful, the table decorations (from Judy Marquart's garden) were beautiful, and the fellowship very enjoyable. All of the garden owners were able to attend and it was a good time to thank them for allowing there gardens to be included in the tour. Vickie and her GREAT team of photographers did an outstanding job of showing off the gardens. A good time was had by all.

For the September 27 MMGA membership meeting we have a very interesting speaker. Aaron Kingsley will be speaking. Aaron is the Forrester for the City of Goshen. He will be giving us information about the public tree inventory in the city and also will talk about trees and their environmental aspects. I'm sure it will be a very interesting and informative program.

The program for the month of October will be change from originally planned. Several months ago we voted to purchase an Automated External Defibrillator and I am happy to inform you that it has arrived. I have it in my possession and will be taking it to all the events for MMGA for the time being . It is my feeling that we need to make sure all the members are familiar with the unit, how to use it, when to use it, where it will be kept and who will be responsible for taking it to the meetings. Having said all of this, the October program will consist of an introduction to the AED and presenting the information to the membership. I am hoping to give a demonstration of the AED use as well.

We will have a sign up sheet at the September meeting for the refreshments for the 2012 year so be thinking of what month you would like to bring refreshments.

Program/Refreshment Committee

Barbara Heeter Co chair

Garden Tour Merchandise Committee

A 'Parts' Workshop-We won't be making thing to sell, just parts for future projects. There's plenty to do and no special skills are required. Friday, October 21st from 1 to 5 PM at Loanne Harms' house. Come a little or a lot, but plan to have fun working toward Garden Tour 2012. (Those who took gourds for cleaning, please return them at the monthly meeting so we can arrange to have them painted.)

Garden Tour Merchandise Wish List II

There's a few things you might have that we can use for Garden Tour projects. If you have any of these items just bring them next month to the monthly meeting. Thanks in advance for your support and help.

Open-weave produce bags like oranges or potatoes sometimes come in

Flatware (also known as silverware, but need not be 'silver') especially forks, larger spoons and pie servers.

(These will be used for wind chimes so don't need to be good for eating!)

Dried lavender buds (for sachets)

Dried Lemon Balm or Verbena (for hot pads)

Acorns- small, clean, about 3 dozen (for pocket inspirational pieces)

Old, 6 to 8 oz. clear glass, narrow-mouthed bottles (for hummingbird feeders)

Loanne Harms,
Garden Tour Merchandise Committee Chair

*Please email articles for next month's Broadcaster to Sherrie Zou by **October 8th**. You may also mail them to Linda Kimple in the extension office or to Sherrie at the address in the directory. Thank you!*

MICHIANA MASTER GARDENERS ASSOCIATION
ELKHART COUNTY
Mission Statement



The Michiana Master Gardeners Association is a not-for-profit educational organization dedicated to the improvement of the community. Members of the Association have completed the requirements of the Master Gardener Volunteer Training Program, working in affiliation with the Purdue Extension Service of Elkhart County. Its specific aim is to improve the quality of life in the community by providing information and technical assistance in the area of home horticulture through the use of trained and certified volunteers.

*“By all these lovely tokens September
days are here, With summer’s best of
weather And autumn’s best of cheer.”*

~ Helen Hunt Jackson

(574) 533-0554
SEPTEMBER 2011