

over the picket fence



Spring, 2019 March, April, May

**The Mason County Garden Club
Quarterly Newsletter**
(Since 1926-our 93rd year)

www.masoncountygardenclub.org

Member: Michigan Garden Clubs, Inc
Central Region and National Garden Clubs, Inc
Club No. 140 – District V





It's been a long, cold and snowy winter and we all survived the "polar vortex." Finally, Spring is right around the corner and our garden club activities are about to begin. We don't know about you, but for those of us who braved the Winter in our little corner of Michigan, we are sooo ready for Spring. As you turn the calendar to March, a new year of Garden Club activities is about to begin. When you receive your new YearBook, be sure to take time and read through it. A lot of hard work goes into this publication to make it available for you to have all the activities, events and the important data that helps the MCGC be the great organization it is. Our president, Dawn Rollenhagen, will open the first meeting of 2019 for the MCGC on Thursday, March 28 at 1:00 pm, United Methodist Church, 5810 Bryant Rd., Ludington with a "welcome" and potluck. Now get ready to find the gardening gloves, shovels, pruners and rakes and "start your gardening."

Dear Garden Club Friends:

I love you ladies! I love the connections and friendships we make when working with a group on a project. We have fun, do something good and we get to know each other. Think of a project you helped with and I'll bet you remember somebody you met or got to know better. Consider working on an additional project this year, who knows what friendships may develop! One way would be to work with the youth—through reading a book or taking seeds in to plant in a classroom, or working with a 4-H group or Girl Scout troop. Consider being an officer and/or traveling to places to do things together—that's the times that I've gotten to know members a lot better.

I know I've gained a of knowledge from the speakers at our meetings and at district and state meetings, but the knowledge I get from talking to our members is often better! They know which plants grow well here and where to plant them! Isn't it a great feeling when we visit a greenhouse or a garden and everyone around you is also interested in the plants? You don't have to hurry through because they are as interested as you are! Such fun!

*This year we have lots of ways to make connections-- as we visit Gustafson's Greenhouse and a winery, make a terrarium, plant and weed in any of the **six** gardens we take care of (and that's counting WPV as only one garden, and I know it's a lot of gardens,) make people happy by doing Cups of Cheer and Garden Therapy and work on our projects like the flower show, plant sales, garden walk and Fall District. From all the connections we make, friendships form. Take the time to get to know more members. I have been enriched by all the ladies I've gotten to know better this year, and I'm looking forward to getting to know more of you better! Thank You for allowing me this opportunity*

Making friends through gardening,

Dawn



President, Dawn Rollenhagen; 1st VP, Judy Olson, Director, Sandi Luxford; Treasurer, Sue Ann Hanson; Director, Jackie Christensen; Co-2nd VP's, Terry Baldwin and Gail Burkhart; Secretary, Diane Davis; Director, Joan Nelson



Our featured member for this first 2019 issue of “[over the picket fence](#)” is Roxanne (Roxy) Antczak. Roxanne came to her first Garden Club meeting with friend, Garden Club member Liz Donakowski, was impressed by the club and joined in September, 2018. Thinking back on her love of gardening, she said it has come from her mother, calling her "a true soil sister". Her flower gardens inspired Roxanne and has brought her to our Garden Club.

Roxy grew up in Lake Orion and graduated from high school there. She is married to Jim and they have two children. Their son is employed as an auditor for the State of Michigan in Lansing and a daughter works as a Trauma Physicians Assistant in Royal Oak. After many years living in Farmington Hills, as a mom, as well as being self employed, she and Jim moved to Ludington in 2008. She and Jim are members of both St Simons Catholic Church in Ludington and St Mary's Catholic Church in Custer, enjoying the diversity of both parishes. They are also members of the Ludington Boat Club and can often be found working the fish fries. Roxanne has agreed to chair the Leveaux Park Committee for the 2019 year, as well as taking part in Cups of Cheer, Petunia Parade and the Membership Committee. Welcome Roxanne and thank you for your involvement in support of the Garden Club.



March

3 Judy Olson
7 Violet Buss
10 Julie Tews
20 Kristy Okker
25 Mary Quillan
30 Jackie Lane

April

3 Melanie Bettinger
3 Carol Christoffersen
3 Dianne Miler
3 Betty Orton-Cochran
4 Sherry Barnard
8 Mary Ann Ferguson
10 Gail Burkhart
19 Maureen Meyers
29 Gloria Merchant
30 Peaches Throckmorton

May

2 Ester Genter
9 Deb Gundersen
24 Joanne Krone



Spring Flowering Branches

As you see flower buds swelling on spring-blooming trees and shrubs such as redbud, forsythia, quince, crabapple, lilac and spirea, cut a few branches. Once you find the right flowering branch to snip, treat it carefully to protect the tree/shrubs and prolong the beauty of the branch indoors.

- Select branches that are ripe with flower buds not yet in full bloom and make sure removal of the branch will not deform the shape of the tree.
- Using sharp pruning shears or snips, cut the branch where it meets the adjoining branch. Make the cut flush with that branch.
- Once indoors, use a sharp knife to cut a 1 to 2" slit in the bottom of each stem. Next, smash the ends with a hammer to allow water up the stem to prevent resin buildup.
- Before arranging the branches in a vase, soak them in lukewarm water for a few hours to let them acclimate to the indoors. Remove any lower buds and keep flowers above the water line.
- Transfer the branches into a favorite vase with at least 6' of luke water.
- Keep the branches away from direct sunlight. Change the water every other day. Most branches will last a few weeks with proper care.

WEEDS

I confess I'm not much of a gardener,
but I'd like to work more at the trade,
So the first thing I want to have answered
is "Why are so many weeds made?"

I go out to view all my flowers
and what is the first thing I see?

A bunch of big weeds just a'sitting
and laughing at poor little me.

I go to my vegetable garden
and what do my eyes there behold?

Weeds and more weeds just a'thriving
and growing more flagrant and bold.

They say if my flowers are to prosper
I've got to dispose of the weeds,
For my garden would surely be ruined
if all of those weeds went to seeds.

So out by the roots I must pull them,
a job that takes hours and hours,
But somehow this process of weeding
is good for my plants and my flowers.

It loosens the dirt all around them,
and gives them more sunshine and air;
Perhaps if the weeds weren't growing
we wouldn't give our gardens such care.

Just so in our spiritual garden,
by pulling out troublesome weeds,
We better the ground for the growing
of Christian-like thoughts and good deeds.

For Satan is also a gardener;
his specialty's mighty fine weeds.
And oh, how we have to keep hoeing
to keep them from going to seeds!

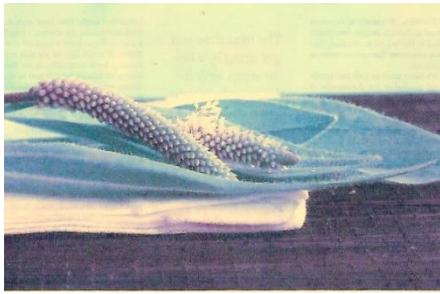


Saving Forests \$68 At A Time

At every meeting Rhonda Hildebrandt is seen walking among the members seeking your change for the Penny Pines project our club has supported for many years. Rhonda has been the originator of this project in our club and has collected nearly \$700.

NGC and the USDA Forest Service are proud to have formed a partnership sustaining our national and urban forests through this reforestation/forest education program. Our Garden Club is participating in this meaningful and practical conservation project by contributing \$68.00 to a Penny Pines plantation as part of the costs of replanting replacement trees indigenous to a particular damaged area. Whether by fire or by other natural catastrophe, pine trees and other trees are replaced. We can designate a specific state benefit from this contribution and we have designated Michigan. Under a conservation agreement, the forest service will do the planting, using our donation together with federal funds, and will provide to the plantation the same protection from fires, insects, and disease given other forested areas. The plantations are a part of the regular national forest reforestation program planted on burned-over and brush-covered areas which are potentially productive timberlands. Planting sites are selected by the supervisor of each national forest. These plantations provide soil protection, watershed protection, soil stabilization, future harvestable timber, as well as beauty and shade for recreation. States, regions, districts, clubs, and/or individuals may participate in this program by donating in multiples of \$68. A \$68 donation may be made in honor or in memory of ONE individual, organization, or theme.





The next time you get stung by a bee or wasp, look for the remedy in your own back yard. I wouldn't hesitate to try the crushed leaves on stinging nettle pain, also.

Recognized far and wide as a weed of roadsides, fields and gardens, Ribwort plantain has some benefits, such as treating against bee stings. A helpful hindrance, Ribwort plantain is a weed with some redeeming qualities.

Ribwort plantain grows in a wide range of conditions from Iceland to southern Asia. Although its not native to the western hemisphere, today it grows throughout the Americas. It's about a common a weed as there is. Native American's called it the white man's foot, because wherever Europeans went, it sprang up. Its been used as folk and traditional medicine for thousands of years. "Fresh leaves are effective in inflammation or irritation of the skin caused by insect stings" To use, crush the leaves and rub the juice over the bite/bites.

The European Medicines Agency survey reports that it has been used internally as well as externally...for example: for diseases of the respiratory tract; for diseases of the urinary, bladder and gastrointestinal tract, including Crohn's disease; to staunch bleeding; as an anti-inflammatory; as an antioxidant; as an antibacterial; as an antiviral; as a stimulant for the immune system. Besides its medicinal uses, people have used it for food over the centuries. It is rich in magnesium and vitamins A, C, K and B1. Its tender young leaves have been used as a potherb. Women who are pregnant or lactating are advised not to use it, and it shouldn't be used by diabetics or for children three or younger, mostly because scientific studies haven't tested its safety for these people. Some people are allergic to its pollen during hayfever season.

As always, consult a doctor if you have a medical condition: if you'd like to try this traditional herb internally, share that idea with him or her. **Submitted by Sharon Morman**





Calendar of Events

March 8, 2019 Tree Planting and Care Workshop

Mason-Lake Conservation District and MSU will host a public workshop on tree planting and care for fruit trees and native trees and shrubs to be held March 8th at the Lake County Historical Society, 915 N. Michigan Ave, Baldwin. RSVP March 1st (231) 757-3707.

March 1 - March 29, 2019 Celebrating Women in the Arts

Contact the Ludington Arts Center <http://www.ludingtonartscenter.org>

April 13, 2019 Earth Day Party

An Earth Day Celebration will be hosted by AFFEW at the United Methodist Church in Ludington. Watch your local news outlets for further information.

April 9-10, 2019 NGC Environmental School Course I

This class will be held in Midland. Contact Judy Page at dahliadame@centurytel.net

April 22 -23, 2019 NGC Landscape Design School Course I

This class will be held in Grand Haven. Contact Andrea Anderson at ghres@msn.com

April 26-27, 2019 Mason-Lake Conservation District Annual Tree Seedling Sale

This event will be held at the Mason County Fairgrounds. Deadline to pre-order is March 29. For additional information contact 231-7575-3707

April 29 - May 2, 2019 2019 NGC National Convention

This annual event will be held at the Beau Rivage Resort and Casino in Biloxi, MS. Check the National Garden Club website for additional information

May 4, 2019 Historic White Pine Village

This is opening day for the 2019 season.

May 18, 2019 Ludington Petunia Parade 2019 Planting Day

Hundreds of volunteers gather along Ludington Avenue, the downtown boulevards and the marina to plant 30,000 red, white and blue petunias, grown by Gustafson's Greenhouse in Ludington. Additional information will be provided at our meetings. Extra hands are always appreciated by our Petunia Planting Committee.

May 25, 2019 Annual Spring Plant Sale

This event is sponsored by the Pentwater Garden Club and is held at Bell Park next to the Pentwater Village Office.

June 1, 2019 – Spring Plant Exchange and White Elephant Sale

While working in your perennial gardens and deciding which ones need to be divided or moved, remember the Spring Plant Exchange from 11:00 – 1:00 at Leveaux Park.



12 Subtle & Unexpected Benefits of Tending a Garden

There are a great many reasons to get to work in the garden, and, for the most part, these are fairly straightforward and obvious: gardening can be a source of fresh food, it greens up your outdoor space with beautiful blooms, it gets you outside and in view of nature, and ultimately, it is so satisfying to nurture and care for plant life.

This last point is important since it drives at the heart of why we do it in the first place – to feel a connection to other living things. **Biophilia** is the name given to the instinctive bond that humans have with the rich tapestry of life, an innate attraction to the natural world. Green environments are a cure for what ails us on so many different levels, and actively engaging with that space, as in the garden, is eminently good for the mind and for the body.

The deeper benefits of gardening are less evident at first glance. Read on to discover the hidden ways gardening is an elixir for good living.

1. Homegrown Food is Tastier & More Nutritious

Food that is grown in your own backyard or in a community garden is about as fresh as it gets. And fresher equals tastier, especially when it is ripened on the vine. There is nothing quite like biting into the first plump and juicy tomato of the season or the fragrant sweetness of a just-plucked strawberry.

By harvesting food at the time of peak ripeness, fruits and vegetables picked by the home gardener are teeming with more vitamins, antioxidants, fiber, minerals, and trace elements than those that have traveled far and wide. Typically, store-bought produce is harvested before the food reaches maturity and this spells **a loss of vital nutrients**.

Industrial agricultural practices have changed remarkably over the past 50 years. From prizing aesthetics over function, newer storage and ripening techniques, and the use of chemical fertilizers, purchased produce is less nutritious than it once was. Take this startling example: an adult woman in 1951 could eat just two peaches to meet her vitamin A needs; today, she would have to consume nearly 53 peaches to achieve the same effect!

2. Food Gardeners Eat More Fruits & Vegetables

Among the more pleasurable ways to prevent chronic disease is **to eat more fruits and vegetables**. And yet, only 1 in 10 Americans are getting the recommended 5 to 9 servings per day. Meeting the daily requirement is difficult for some, but **less so for gardeners** who consume 40% more fruits and veggies each day than non-gardeners and are 3.5 times more likely to meet (and exceed) the dietary guidelines.

And then there's that daily ritual of parents everywhere to cajole, demand, or plead with their children to eat their greens. But it turns out that, just like adults, **kids who grow their own food** eat more fruits and vegetables on average. What's more, kids who help out in the garden have improved attitudes toward produce and a willingness to taste new things. Gardening habits that are developed in childhood often form a **lifelong appreciation of nature and horticulture** and kids who eat their greens are much more likely to consume more fruits and vegetables as adults.

3. Gardening Burns 200 – 600 Calories per Hour

All the assorted tasks that go hand in hand with gardening – digging, tilling, **mixing soil**, weeding, pruning, watering, turning the **compost**, transplanting seedlings, applying **fertilizers**, and harvesting – together these and other gardening activities add up to a good amount of physical activity.

Ranging from moderate to low intensity exercise that works the upper and lower body, one **study** found that three hours of gardening is the equivalent of an intense one-hour workout at the gym. Depending on your weight, the activity, and its intensity, gardening has been **clocked** at burning anywhere between 200 to 400 calories per hour for light gardening tasks (planting and weeding) and 400 to 600 calories per hour for heavy yard work (landscaping and hauling soil).

Best of all, gardening is goal-oriented. Running on a treadmill can make you feel like a hamster in a wheel, but expending energy in the garden is purposeful and productive. It confers a tangible sense of achievement that usually only comes from seeing the results of your work.

4. Gardeners Maintain Healthy Body Weights

Perhaps it's because gardening is physically demanding or maybe it's a result of eating more fruits and vegetables, but studies have **shown** that the body mass index (BMI) of gardeners is significantly lower than those of their non-gardening peers.

Researchers compared BMIs from each of the 198 gardeners in the study with three control groups: neighbors, siblings, and spouses. They found that on average, gardeners measured two BMI points lower than non-gardeners, which translates to a weight difference of 11 to 16 pounds.

5. Gardeners Get Vitamin D

While the nation struggles to get enough **vitamin D**, gardeners are getting it the old fashioned way: by simply spending time in the sun. Just 10 to 15 minutes of sun exposure between the hours of 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. a few times a week will give you your vitamin D fix. A vitamin D deficiency has been linked to a slew of **illnesses** like heart disease, cancer, dementia, multiple sclerosis, and depression.

But vitamin D isn't all about prevention. This steroid hormone strengthens bones, regulates insulin levels, boosts the immune system, and promotes good cardiovascular health.

6. Gardening Prolongs Life

Gardening and other do-it-yourself activities can increase longevity according to **research** published in 2013. The study, performed in Sweden on 4,000 sixty year olds, recorded daily activities, assessed cardiovascular health, and measured blood sugars, insulin levels, and blood clotting factors over the course of 12 ½ years.

Of the study's participants who were most physically active on a daily basis, researchers noted a 27% decrease in the risk of heart attack or stroke. Overall, there was a 30% reduced risk for death from all causes for those who engaged in routine activities, like gardening.

7. Gardening Keeps Hands Strong

Hand strength is one of those abilities that is easy to take for granted when you have it. Range of motion, forearm muscles, and grip and pinch strength tend to weaken as we get older, and scientists are now using hand strength as a metric to **gauge** a person's "true age". Specifically, low grip strength has been associated with premature mortality, the development of a **disability**, and an increased risk of complications after surgery.

If nothing else, working in the garden is extremely hands-on. Researchers at Kansas State University found that older adults who garden have better hand strength than their non-gardening counterparts. Pinching deadheads, squeezing pruning shears, and gripping a spade are among the tasks that helps keep those hands nimble and dexterous.

8. Gardeners Come in Regular Contact with Good Bacteria

Humans did not evolve in a vacuum. For millennia, we have lived alongside the microorganisms that inhabit our bodies, forging a mutually-beneficial relationship whereby we provide them a place to live and they keep us healthy. Of the 100 trillion cells in the human body, only 1 in 10 a purely human – the rest are bacteria, viruses, and other microbes.

In our age of cleanliness and hyper-sanitization, many of these "old friends" have been beaten back, which has in turn has caused a rise in autoimmune and chronic inflammatory diseases like asthma, arthritis, diabetes, multiple sclerosis, depression, and cancer.

One of the good guys, *Mycobacterium vaccae*, is a benign bacterium that is readily found in soil. You breathe it in when you spend time in nature and ingest it when you eat food grown in it. It thrives especially in dirt that has been enriched with organic matter, like a garden.

M. vaccae strengthens the immune system by stimulating immune cells in the body. In effect, it makes the body less susceptible to inflammation. Not only that, but *M. vaccae* has been **found** to elevate mood and reduce anxiety by triggering a release of serotonin – a brain chemical responsible for mood regulation. And because serotonin is associated with learning, tending a garden could **even make you smarter**.

9. Gardening Relieves Stress

The theory of **restorative environments** put forth by Stephen Kaplan informs us that being in the presence of green spaces allows our minds to rest. The idea is that much of our lives are taken up by focused concentration (which takes effort) and this prolonged attention eventually becomes fatigued, leading to stress and irritability. Being in nature, however, offers respite from this "directed attention" by engaging our minds with an effortless form of attention he calls "fascination".

The sounds, smells, sights, and other stimuli of being outside allow us a personal escape from our hectic lives and provides an opportunity for quiet reflection.

Putting this theory to the test, researchers found that gardening offers powerful stress relief and is far more effective in alleviating anxiety than other leisure activities. In **the study**, participants performed a stressful task and afterward were randomly assigned to 30-minutes of outdoor gardening or indoor reading. Measuring the stress hormone cortisol, the researchers noted that, while both groups had decreases in cortisol levels during the recovery period, the gardening group's stress levels were much lower than the reading group. When asked how they felt, the gardeners reported a complete return to positive mood while the reading group stated that their mood had actually worsened.

10. Gardeners are Happier

Spending just one session in the garden is enough to dramatically boost self-esteem and mood, according to a case study published in the *Journal of Public Health*. Regardless of how often you garden or how much time you devote to gardening, the curative effects were clear: gardeners reported better health, experienced less depression and fatigue, and had more vigor and vitality.

The use of therapeutic horticulture as a treatment for depression has shown a lot of promise too. Based on the self-reports of clinically depressed subjects, researchers **found** the severity of depression declined during a 12-week gardening program and its curative effects persisted for up to three months after the program's completion. The researchers noted that this treatment was most effective for individuals who felt immersed in the gardening tasks, which helped keep their attention in the present and prevented rumination and negative thoughts.

11. Gardening Stimulates the Mind

More and more, horticulture therapies are being employed by hospitals and out-patient clinics as an effective treatment for traumatic illnesses, such as strokes and brain injuries, when patients experience cognitive deficits. It improves memory, concentration, attention span, language skills, and helps people regain lost abilities and learn new things.

While gardening can help rehabilitate, it also can help prevent the onset of debilitating brain diseases like dementia and Alzheimer's. Affecting **47.5** million people worldwide, the risk of developing dementia doubles every five years after the age of 65.

In an attempt to identify lifestyle choices that reduce that risk, researchers followed 2,805 men and women aged 60 or older for 16 years and **found** that daily gardening reduced the risk of developing dementia by 36%. These results were replicated in another **study** which identified traveling, knitting, and gardening as invaluable ways to keep the mind active and ward off cognitive decline.

12. Gardening Fosters Empathy

The type of environment we immerse ourselves in truly affects us in subtle, unseen ways. Spending time around plants not only benefits our physical and mental health, but it also improves our relationship with others as well.

Immersion in natural environments predicated greater feelings of compassion, empathy, generosity, and a deeper bond with the community, according to a **study** published in 2009. By contrast, those who viewed man-made structures, like buildings and roads, placed a higher value on extrinsic, self-seeking things like wealth and fame and were less considerate and charitable with others.

And surely, this world could stand to be a kinder, gentler place.





Recipes Submitted By Members

Vegetable Salad

Drain the following 4 ingredients
1 can French cut green beans
1 can Shoe Peg corn or bean sprouts
1 large can peas
1 small jar diced pimento
1 cup diced celery
1 cup diced onion
1 cup diced green pepper

Dressing

1 cup sugar
3/4 cup white vinegar
1/2 cup vegetable oil
1 Tablespoon water
1 teaspoon salt
Stir until sugar is dissolved
Mix together with vegetables
Chill 24 hours before serving
Keeps for 2 weeks in the refrigerator

Mary Margaret Scanlon

Key Lime Pie (Minis)

3-4 pkgs. of filo pastry shells (15)
1 14 oz. can sweetened condensed milk
3 egg yolks
1/2 cup Nellie & Joe's Key lime juice
Combine all ingredients and blend until smooth
Fill pastry shells 2/3 full
Bake on cookie sheet at 350 for 15 min.
Let cool completely and top with whipped cream
and garnish with lime zest.

Linda Starr

Pasta Tuna Salad

Creamettes, tuna, celery onions
mayo, a splash of lemon juice and a
dash of celery salt. Blend together.

Gail Burkhart

Vanilla Popcorn

1 bag OkeDoke white popcorn
1 cup sugar
1/2 cup butter
1/4 cup light corn syrup
1/4 teaspoon baking soda
1/2 teaspoon vanilla

Place popcorn in large bowl or pan that has been
buttered or sprayed. In saucepan, combine sugar,
butter, syrup and baking soda. Bring to a boil
over medium heat. Boil and stir until mixture is golden
about 2 minutes. Remove from heat and stir in vanilla.
Pour over popcorn and toss to coat. Turn out onto wax
Paper, cool slightly and break apart.

Gwen Jackson

Look for more recipes in the next Newsletter...if you have any favorite recipes you would like to share, please send them to either Gwen or Diane.

Those of us who braved the Winter and "polar vortex" in our little corner of Michigan, met at the Jolly Plate and Scottys for lunch in January and February.



Hope you have enjoyed the first edition of the 2019 “over the picket fence.” Ideas and suggestions are always welcome for the newsletter. Don’t hesitate to contact Gwen or Diane with your thoughts.

See you at the meeting...Gwen Jackson and Diane Davis

Club Collect

Keep us, O God, ever mindful of nature’s generous bounty. May we always bear in mind it is ours in trust, to protect, to nurture, and to enjoy.

Mrs. C.C. Caswell

