MASTER GARDENER
MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY EXTENSION

The Washtenaw Gardener

Volume 17, Number 8 October, 2009

http://www.ewashtenaw.org/government/departments/extension/

Washtenaw County Master Gardener Newsletter

Contents

Hot Times on the Old Hotline
Nancy Quay (MG 2009)

As I wrap up my hours volunteering on the Master Gardener Hotline this summer, I thought I'd share some of my remembrances as a 'newbie' for all my fellow new and experienced MGs. Here are three highlights from summer 2009:

Call in the Expert …Please

My first day on the hotline I arrived at the MSU Extension office nervous, but ready to go. The first call I ever received went like this:

Me: (very perky) "Good afternoon, Master Gardener Hotline, how may I help you?"
Caller: "Yeah, hi. I'm wondering where I can buy some Diflucaltralatolamine Hydroxide. I gotta spray the soybeans."
Me: (a little anxious) "Excuse me? I didn't quite hear that …could you please repeat that name?"
Caller: (louder and slower) "I-need-to-buy-some-Diflucaltrazolineamine-Hydrocloricmaximine! For-my-soybeans."
Me: (longer pause, perspiration gathering, feeling light-headed) "Sir, I'm writing this down so I can research it… could you please spell that for me?"

Long, thoughtful pause.

Caller: "Could I please speak to Bob?"

It's What you Can't See that Matters

A few weeks later, I felt more confident working the phones. I'd caught a few questions about tomatoes, like:
Caller: "When will I get some tomatoes to eat?"
Me: "When did you plant your garden?"
Caller: "A couple of weeks ago…"

So I wasn't feeling especially cocky, just more certain that if I didn't know the answer to something, I at least knew at this point where the answer could be found.

Oops. Too soon for that …

Me: "Good morning, Master Gardener Hotline, how may I help you?"
Caller: "Hi. I'm putting asparagus in for the first time and I'm wondering how to keep the weeds down between the rows."
Me: (happy and confident, having just planted my own asparagus plot the weekend before) "Well sir, you have lots of options …" (A few moments spent discussing various mulches, straw, garden cloth, etc.)
Caller: "Wow, that's gonna be really expensive. And a pain in the neck to put down. Isn't there something easier and cheaper?"
Me: (still exuding confidence and maybe just a wee bit MG-evangelistic) "Sure, it takes a lot of work to start the plot right, but you know, a little more effort now will pay dividends in the end when you have a garden full of strong plants."
Caller: "Yeah, but geeze! Do you have any idea how much that would cost?"
Me: (beginning to worry that I've misjudged the situation) "Well, sir, how much garden space would you be trying to cover?"
Caller: "We're planting 20 acres…."

Finally, In the "Zone"

Near the end of my MG hours for this year, I began to feel comfortable on the hotline. Not only could I sign into the phone AND computer without looking at the guide, but sometimes I even knew the

right answers right off the top of my head.
Me: "Good afternoon, Master Gardener Hotline. How may I help you?"
Caller: (very excited, talking fast) "There's a HUGE swarm of bees at my house! I've never seen anything like this in my 78 years!"
Me: "Isn't that amazing! Are the bees near the house?"
Caller: (breathing a little hard, maybe walking around talking on a cell phone) "Nope, they're in a bush on the lot next door."
Me: "Are they in an area where there are people or pets, or where they might endanger someone?"
Caller: "Nope, not at all. They're in this bush on the spare lot next door, just hanging there … it's the most incredible thing I've ever seen! What should I do?"
Me: (smiling into the phone) "Well, sir, I'm thinking you should go get your camera!"

Save Water, Save Time
Beverly Yelsik (MG 2007)

Years ago, I was visiting my brother in Utah. Just before we left the house for a few hours, he turned the faucet on the outside of the house. All at once we heard a soft sighing sound, much like a light rain. All down his driveway fine mists had began watering his flowers. As we drove out, I kept thinking what a time saver that was and how my brother always had the coolest things.

That Christmas, I received my very own "starter" set of drip irrigation supplies. My brother had rigged up a plastic milk crate with a heavy black bungee cord handle for my on-site irrigation kit. He filled it with everything I would need to begin my switch from sprinklers and hoses to a better, greener, more efficient method of watering. I was an immediate convert, and I have never gone back!

Drip/mist irrigation not only saves water and time, its cost is fairly inexpensive if you think your time is worth something. It's easy to set up, extremely flexible, very effective and good spring recreation (if you consider gardening a recreational activity!).

The system is as extensive as the gardener is creative: It can be buried and hidden, and everything can be repaired, replaced and moved if needed.

The original drip irrigation materials that wooed this gardener away from dragging hoses had Raindrip printed on the packaging. After repeatedly bugging my brother for more parts and accessories, I noticed a similar product available locally, under the name Mister Landscaper. With great excitement and absolutely no sales resistance, I bought as much as I could carry home and added it to my existing set-up.

The products were compatible and interchangeable, and with some creative planning I was able to irrigate everything in my large vegetable garden with a lift of the well-pump handle and some turning of small valves. Over the years, all of my various rock gardens, perennial gardens and even outdoor potted tomatoes have been put on the drip/mist system.

The micro-mist/drip systems I have been using consist of semi-rigid ½-inch and flexible ¼-inch poly tubing, plastic stake assemblies with interchangeable misters and various drip mechanisms that can be inserted into the ½-inch tube or attached to the ends of the ¼-inch tubes. There are adaptors with hose threads (or pipe threads), water pressure reducers for those of us with high pressure (you can run up to 50 stakes on 40 psi household water pressure) and even timers for very busy people.

A starter set that can water about 275 square feet will cost close to $50.00, but the best thing is that all the individual parts can be purchased separately, so those of us who like to design our own system can easily do so.

Using a hole punch tool (small, plastic and inexpensive – I have used mine about seven years), a hole is punched in the ½-inch tube, the barbed adaptor is inserted and ¼-inch tubing is attached and run wherever it is needed. At the other end, you can attach a mister that turns 360 degrees, 90 degrees, 165 degrees or 180 degrees. Depending on the misters, the watered area could be 3 to 5 feet across or 6 to 10 feet across. You also could use a bubbler or a dripper. There are on/off control switches and tee and elbow adaptors so you can tailor the system to fit your needs.

In addition to the drip irrigation supplies, I cut hoses and use hose adaptor ends for major runs, and I also use a couple of brass four-way hose connectors and the various hose shut-off valves that are available.

The entire watering system can be left in place for years. Many of mine have not been touched in five years. I have a long section of ½-inch tubing buried from the well across a mowed area that has been there four years. However, my vegetable garden has different water needs each year, so I store the tubing and parts for reconfiguring. There are plugs to fill in holes in the tube that are no longer needed, so changing the system each year is not difficult.

I have had very few problems with this watering system. When hard water eventually plugs up a micro-mister or dripper, it often can be removed with a needle or inexpensively replaced.

At the beginning of a new vegetable gardening season, as I tweak my system, sometimes the water pressure will blow a mister off a tube so I have to monitor it at first, which is easy since I am already in the garden!

Occasionally, while pruning my ivy, a deer will step on a stake assembly in the winter and it will have to be replaced, but that is the price of country living!

Any gardener interested in switching to a micro-watering system, can do an internet search for "home irrigation/Mister Landscaper". There is information on where to purchase products locally. Raindrip irrigation systems are available at www.wormsway.com. Another company, Drip Works, has parts that also may be purchased online.

The set-up and initial troubleshooting of the mister and drip irrigation system is admittedly a bit time consuming. It takes some tinkering and planning, as well as some old-fashioned engineering, but when July rolls around and everyone else is dragging hoses, filling watering cans or wasting valuable water with lawn sprinklers, you can turn a couple of faucets and do whatever you want with your time while your plants are perfectly watered.

How My Garden Grew:
Reflections on Summer 2009
Janet Fisher (MG 2006)

Let me say from the get-go that this review might get me kicked out of the Master Gardener program for questionable mastery of gardening practices.

Nonetheless, I will truthfully tell you about my 2009 outdoor gardening experience, good and bad, though there's surely not enough room here to tell it all.

I'm writing this on a beautiful September afternoon, sitting in the shade of one of my young peach trees (more on that later). From where I sit, I can see colors all around: chrysanthemums, sedum, asters, coneflowers, sunflowers and marigolds, along with orange, white and purple cosmos, stock, sweet alyssum, obedient plant, phlox, candytuft (second time blooming this year – that never happened before! Yeah!), Rudbeckia and roses. Other flowers are blooming beyond my field of view, so some things definitely went right this year.

On the other hand, where's the lush mass of heliotrope, started from seed in February, that was supposed to fill in the problem spot? What happened to the spikes of blue rocky mountain penstemon planted to add interest along the walkway?

Understand that I gave up planning my garden a long time ago. I maintain that planning is for gardeners in places like Oregon or North Carolina, where the weather is predictable, or for those who do not have dogs, children, husbands (make that singular) and snapping turtles who like to dig things up.

Instead, I throw seeds around and expect them to sprout. I never water. I let things come up where they choose and let young plants I don't recognize grow. Usually they turn into major weeds but you can always hope they'll turn out to be something precious.

I also do not plan is because plants do not do what they are supposed to do. Like heliotrope. I actually have some that are doing OK, but they are in the cool shade under a tree, not in the problem spot in the sun, where heliotrope are supposed to thrive.

Another case in point is that for years I have struggled to achieve variation in plant height. Books say this is essential to good garden design. But my stuff likes to grow to three feet tall no matter what it is, except for a few things like hollyhocks that do grow taller and then promptly fall over.

So this year, I ordered two types of tall dahlias. Double bonus! They would grow to five or six feet and also bloom in late summer, when my garden would benefit from the display of color. I planted them the same day I got them and dutifully followed the instructions that came with the tubers.

You were supposed to pinch them back after the second set of leaves emerged to promote bushiness. After pinching, one dahlia continued to grow at quite a good pace and flowered in July. The other one stopped growing entirely, just hanging out until about two weeks ago. It is now full of buds and all of 18 inches tall.

Sometimes I forget about all this and foolishly imagine that I, too, can plan a superior garden.

For example, I have always envied calendulas for their brightness that stays pretty much right up to frost. So this year, I planned ahead and planted calendula seeds, right among the rocky mountain penstemon. Neither came up, because that's where the turtles decided to lay their eggs and where my daughter—who's old enough to have outgrown such behavior - decided to further excavate to find one.

But let's get to the good stuff. This was the year of the peach, the pepper, and the toad.

Toads first. Gardening for me is about the animals as well as the plants, so the abundance of toads this summer has been interesting. I should have known something was up in May when I went to water my heliotrope, which were still under the fluorescent lights, and noticed two big toad eyes staring at me from the cell pack. I'm still speculating how that toad got there and how long it lived in the house with us.

The peaches also come with a story. One fall, I pulled up weed that had something that looked like an almond attached to the root. I put it in a pot for the winter and planted it outside in the spring. About three years later, it bloomed and produced peaches. I've since learned to recognize peach seedlings, which continue to appear in the compost here and there. I now have four fruiting trees. This year, the yield was so heavy we literally had peaches falling off the trees from mid-July through the end of August. I supplied the neighborhood, froze some for winter smoothies and even made peach jam, thanks to a tip from a Farmers' Market vendor who told me to use Ball™ brand pectin.

The peppers also have outdone themselves. Another Farmers' Market vendor told me peppers don't set fruit unless they get lots of water at the flowering stage, so perhaps the cold rainy weather earlier this summer is the reason for the fine harvest

now. Last year in my haste to pretend winter was almost over I started my peppers and tomatoes way too early. They looked leggy and miserable by the time it warmed up enough to put them out. So this year, I waited until late March with much better results.

I often buy "mix" seed packets to get variety because my garden is small. This has resulted in some adventures in the hot pepper department but worked well for the sweet peppers, as I can indeed tell the difference between green, red, orange and yellow. Other successes and pleasant surprises this year include:

Containers: I've never had much luck with pots but - this goes in the duh! category – this year I did water the containers and I added slow release fertilizer to the container mix. They all did really well, except for the zucchini. I can't grow it in the garden either. I must be the only person on the planet who fails at zucchini.

"Irish Eyes" Rudbeckia: Plants I started from seed last year have bloomed continuously since June. They are cheerful and tough.

Floating row cover: I saw it in catalogs but got mine at Downtown Home & Garden. They sell it by the foot, so you can buy exactly the amount you need. I used it on my lettuce and spinach to fend off bunnies.

Greens: Bumper crop. (See floating row cover, above.) I haven't had to buy salad stuff since May. Family is getting pretty sick of Swiss chard.

Yellowwood tree, 'Cladustris kentukea': I planted it in spring 2006 as a street tree to replace a green ash that succumbed to Emerald Ash Borer. It bloomed this year for the first time, with hanging plumes of incredibly beautiful and fragrant pure white blossoms streaked with yellow.

Benefits of Leaving Stuff Be: I wanted to finally get rid of the maroon-and-yellow irises here when we moved in. I never liked it, but never got around to digging it out. This year, I loved it! Similarly, I was determined to replace the Jeannie La Joie climbing rose that came so highly recommended but that I always thought looked like dried up toilet paper. So I cut it down to the ground to make it easier to remove, but then got busy and didn't take it out.

Wouldn't you know, it has been gorgeous. The prickly rose stems that grew back have also sheltered from groundhogs this year's mystery squash, which turned out to be a pumpkin (I always have at least one curcurbit that just comes up from the compost, like the peaches).

So, a fine year in the garden, all in all. The frustratingly cool spring and early summer made for a slow start. Zinnias didn't open until the first day of school - but the spring bulbs and flowering trees seemed to last forever. My watermelons had to be replanted twice, then completely succumbed to some kind of wilt, but there was enough rain to grow beautiful corn, which the raccoons enjoyed.

I religiously prowled for and pulled out bindweed shoots in May and June, and the bindweed did not completely overtake my native plant area this year. I'll call that success. But next year I need to keep after the bindweed all summer, I think.

Which leads to the to-do list for next year:

Pinch back the New England asters early in the season to see if I can prevent the bare-stemmed, spiky-topped Dr. Seuss look. Plant more evening stock. Try cactus in the sunny eternal problem area. Work on achieving variation in plant heights. Work on succession planting in the vegetable garden.

By the way, do you believe those people who say you can harvest your first crop of carrots at the end of June and start a new one to harvest in the fall? I don't.

For the time being, there's still stuff to do out there for this year's garden, and I do have one last word for those of us who don't want to believe the season is already over.

Each year, I insist on growing pineapple sage. It is a heat-loving and cold-intolerant plant that smells nice ... like pineapple.

Pineapple sage has become my indicator of the first frost date, because its stunning little scarlet flowers always appear the day before the night of the first hard frost. This causes the plant to freeze and die, of course. As of today, the pineapple sage is growing happily, but has no buds and shows no signs of being ready to bloom. So we just might have some season left after all.

Master Gardener Tote Bags

Master Gardener Canvas Tote bags are for sale at a cost of $15 each. The bag has the Master Gardener logo and "Master Gardener Volunteer" printed on one side. The bag, which has a zipper closure across the top, is large enough to hold the Master Gardener Manual. There is a bag on display at the MSU Office for viewing. Stop by the MSU office to order yours.

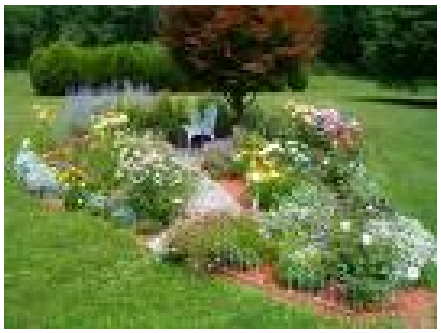
Master Gardening Clothes Available for Purchase

You now can order items from a line of Master Gardener Clothing, including T-shirts, sweatshirts, denim shirts, polo shirts, fleece vests and hoodies – both pullover and zip front. The clothing is offered in a variety of colors. Payment will need to be made at the time of the order. Prices range from $9.50 to around $35.00. We will have more items to show at the October meeting. Orders will be placed on a monthly basis. If you have questions, please contact Cindy at 734-222-3948.

Putting the Garden to Bed – Protecting the Microcritters in Your Soil
Janet Kavanagh (MG 2004)

Each spring, I imagine that if I had just done more end-of-season cleaning up last year, my April labors would be much easier.

Planting on time would be a breeze if I had removed all the vegetation and roots, tilled the soil, reformed beds and smoothed the bare soil surface.



While that may be a labor-saving plan, I was recently reminded that by being pro-active I may end up negatively impacting my soils' growing potential.

Soil does many things we are learning to appreciate. There can be a tendency to focus on the surface and visible elements, while forgetting the smaller contributors to soil life. An incredible diversity of organisms makes up the soil food web. They range in size from the tiny microorganisms of bacteria, algae, fungi and protozoa to the "animal life" of nematodes, micro-arthropods, earthworms, insects, small vertebrates - and of course the plants.

Almost all of these countless creatures are not only beneficial, but essential to the life-giving properties of soil.

My clean-up plan has the most potential to harm the microorganism colonies. Mycorrhizae is the general term for microorganisms that live in the soil and interact with plant roots. There are billions of soil microorganisms (SMO) in a handful of a typical garden soil. That handful can contain hundreds to thousands of different species of bacteria, fungi and protozoa.

On a global basis, soil microorganisms are thought to contain 1.5 percent of the carbon and 3 percent of the nitrogen stored in our terrestrial ecosystems. They function underground in an ecosystem that uses plant roots and litter as food sources.

The surface layers of soil contain the highest numbers and variety of SMOs, because this region has the largest amounts of potential food sources from plants and animals.

So what role do the microorganisms play? They contribute strongly to keeping soil healthy by decomposing organic matter and compounds, such as manure, plant residue, herbicides and pesticides, preventing them from polluting water systems. They replenish soil nutrients and increase the uptake of nutrients into plants. They slow the rate of nitrogen and other nutrients that enter groundwater, and they fix nitrogen from the atmosphere, making it available to plants. SMOs form humus, enhance soil aggregation and porosity, increase water infiltration and reduce runoff. They promote root growth, prey on crop pests and are food for above-ground animals. Sounds like a big job description!

The role of fungi is a specific example. Arbuscular fungi penetrate plant roots with a net of "fungus roots," or branched hyphae. They live off the carbohydrates produced by plants, and in return expand the plants' root systems, helping them access nutrients and moisture. These hyphae live for only a few days, and when they decompose, they feeds bacteria, protozoa and other microorganisms. The hyphae and spores of fungi also are coated with glomalin, a sticky substance that contributes greatly to a soil's tilth and retention of nutrients. The more glomalin, the happier and healthier the plants.

So how do we nurture and encourage our micro-organisms? Colonies thrive when they're undisturbed, since digging breaks up and kills the hyphal networks. So minimizing tillage and soil cultivation is recommended, especially in the fall. A mass hyphal die off creates a quick nutrient boost in your soil at a time when you don't want new tender growth that won't harden off before winter.

Most SMOs stop growing when it gets cold – they depend on the growth from summer and fall for their winter survival. Mass die-off in the fall means these colonies will have to rebuild from scratch in the spring.

What can we do to protect this invisible resource? For soil organisms to thrive in your garden soil, you need to provide food and a healthy environment. Some ways are:

Minimize soil compaction: Seventy five percent of soil organisms are found in the top 2 inches of soil. SMOs naturally exist in soil, but you can add starter colonies by adding carbon-based food, such as green manure, cover crops, animal manure, mulch or compost.

Maintain a moist habitat: Keep the soil oxygen content high with organic matter.

Don't have naked soil: Bare soil loses moisture and increases temperatures. It's disturbed by freeze-thaw cycles and lacks organic matter. Mulch over beds in

the fall.

Minimize soil disturbance: Use little or no tillage to minimize destruction of soil organisms and their environment. It's good to clean up dead plant material in the fall, but instead of pulling roots, cut off the stem at soil level and leave the roots intact. Save any necessary digging or tilling for when the soil warms in the spring.

Use organic fertilizers only: Apply fertilizer in small doses and only when the soil needs it.

Check the soil pH and modify it to keep in a range of 5 to 8.

Improve soils with poor drainage.

Rotate your garden crops or provide biodiversity with mixed species planting.

In general, adding compost or manure to your garden kickstarts your microorganism colonies, organic mulch keeps them going and reduced cultivation protects and prolongs them.

Remember to consider your soil's microorganisms as part of your complete garden ecosystem. Protect the nutrient reserves and nurture the hidden soil food web to make for great growing next year.

If you're interested in reading more about the soil microbiology, take a look at *"Soil Biology Primer" on the United States Department of Agriculture Natural Resources and Conservation Service Soil Website* www.soils.usda.gov/sqi/concepts/soil_biology/biology.html

Fact Sheet: H1N1 Flu

Washtenaw County Public Health Department

How is it spread? This H1N1 virus is thought to be spread in the same way as seasonal flu. Viruses spread mainly through coughing or sneezing by people with influenza. People may become infected by touching something with flu viruses on it and then touching their mouth or nose. You can not become infected by eating pork or pork products.

What are the symptoms? Symptoms are similar to regular seasonal human influenza and usually appear one to seven days after infection and may include fever (usually greater than 100 degrees), cough, sore throat, runny or stuffy nose, headache and muscle aches, extreme fatigue, vomiting and diarrhea.

Most cases seen in the United States to date are mild, but symptoms can be severe enough to require hospitalization.

Flu-related complications can occur at any age, however, the elderly, people with chronic health problems, pregnant women and young children are much more likely to develop serious complications after influenza infection.

What is the treatment? Get plenty of rest. Drink plenty of fluids - like water, juice and tea - to prevent dehydration. Take non-aspirin medication for fever and body aches.

Aspirin should not be used in children with viral illnesses, since there have been cases associated with the development of Reye 's syndrome and aspirin. Consult with your healthcare provider to determine if treatment with antiviral drugs is needed.

How is it prevented? Prevention measures include:

Stay home from work or school if you have a respiratory illness.

Avoid close contact with people who are coughing or otherwise appear ill.

When you cough or sneeze, cover your mouth and nose with a tissue or your sleeve or elbow. Dispose of the tissue promptly and carefully.

Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth.

Wash hands frequently with soap and water. Alcohol-based hand gels are also effective.

Contact your physician or health care provider if you are experiencing severe symptoms, including cough, fever, fatigue, sore throat, chills, headaches, body aches, possibly along with diarrhea and vomiting. According to the CDC, the seasonal flu vaccine is unlikely to provide protection against the H1N1 flu.

PLEASE PASS THE HONEY, HONEY!

Richard Mendel (MG 2009)

Since humans first began keeping bees, their principal aim has been the harvest of honey.

Currently, worldwide honey production is currently approximately 1.28 million tons annually. This quantity is provided by an estimated 50 million colonies kept by about 6.5 million beekeepers.

Ninety percent of the world's beekeepers live in Europe, Russia, Asia and Africa and produce 54 percent of the world's honey, while with the other 10 percent in Australia, North America and South America producing 46 percent of the world honey crop.

Under ideal conditions and depending on the plant species involved, a colony may produce 200 pounds or more honey. Bees would have to visit 2.5 to 500 million flowers for the nectar to make this much.

Normally, bees forage no more than 2.5 miles from their hives, covering up to 12,500 acres. On occasion, they may fly up to 10 miles at a speed of 12 to 15 miles per hour. (The top speed of a worker bee is about 18 miles per hour.)

The farther bees fly to forage for nectar, the more fuel they burn and the less efficient they are at producing a surplus of honey.

Honey is processed from the nectar of numerous plant species but may also be produced from honeydew excretions of aphids and scale insects.

Nectars vary considerably in quality and quantity, depending on the floral source.

Similarly, honeys vary. Some honey is nearly colorless with a light, pleasing aroma. Other honey may be as dark as crankcase oil with a heavy-bodied aroma.

Honey from most floral sources falls between these extremes with the light colors being of higher desirability.

Bees convert nectar to honey by drying it down to a moisture content of 15 to 20 percent and by adding a salivary enzyme that changes sucrose (long-chain sugar) into glucose and fructose (two short-chain

sugars).

Honey is composed of sugars, mainly fructose and glucose. It also contains trace amounts of minerals, enzymes, vitamins and colloids. Other biologically active constituents (such as hydrogen peroxide and gluconic acid) inhibit some microbial development, but will accelerate yeast growth if the water content is too high.

A limited number of plant sources yield nectar with toxic elements, but fortunately bees either recognize and avoid these or are able to nullify their effects.

Honey is primarily used as a sweetener (one part honey equals 1.67 parts sugar) in baking, baby foods, confectioneries, cosmetics, meat packing, pharmaceuticals and syrups, as well as for curing tobacco.

Honey can be found in liquid or granulated form, and in the comb. For bees, honey is the all purpose food, essential for stores of body fat, for flight and in the production of heat, humidity and wax.

Honey is one of the oldest foods in existence. It was found in the tomb of King Tut and was still edible, since honey never spoils.

It is a unique food and is considered to be nature's "energy booster," providing two stages of energy. The glucose in honey is absorbed by the body quickly and gives an immediate energy boost. The fructose is absorbed more slowly providing sustained energy.

Honey has vitamins and antioxidants, but is fat free, cholesterol free and sodium free.

If you don't like spinach, replace it with honey, it has similar levels of heart healthy antioxidants. One antioxidant called pinocembrin is found only in honey. As recently as the First World War, honey was being mixed with cod liver oil to dress wounds on the battlefield.

Honey is the only food that includes everything necessary to sustain life, including water. So Honey, I am asking you again; please pass the honey.

There has been a great deal of interest in Ann Arbor and the surrounding community in honey bees in general, their habitat, their survivability and how they fit into our community.

There has also been an interest in keeping bees, both as a hobby and a source of income.

Richard Mendel and Marin Perusek will be hosting a general "For the Interest of Bees" meeting at the University of Michigan Matthaei Botanical Garden in October.

The meeting will be a kickoff for what could be the a regular bee information forum at Matthaei on a monthly basis for anyone interested in bees and beekeeping.

Please contact Richard (rimendel@sbcglobal.net) or Marin (mperusek@ymail.com) for the exact location, time and date.

The Master Gardener Alumni Association of Washtenaw County needs your help!

Please take photos of your MG projects this summer. We will use them to create a slideshow to display at the Fall Awards Banquet. Please send photos or a website link if the photos are online, to mgaami@yahoo.com.

We are scheduling speakers for MGAAWC meetings for the 2009-2010 year (September through May). We're looking forward to providing another year of exciting and informative speakers. If you have a particular interest you'd like to learn more about or have speaker suggestions, please send them to mgaami@yahoo.com.

Thanks for your contributions!

Master Gardener Alumni Association of Washtenaw County News

The Master Gardener Alumni Association of Washtenaw County meetings are held on the third Tuesday of the month starting at 7 p.m. in the basement conference room of the County building at 705 N. Zeeb Road.

Please join us at 7 p.m. on Tuesday, October 20, to hear Roger Sutherland speak on "Insect and Flower Pollination Relationships - Flowers Really Know How to Get Things Done." Flowers, insects and other pollinators have had millions of years to develop amazing interrelationships to insure and improve each others survival. This program provides a close-up and better understanding of the flower and the pollinator. Some attention is given to the evolution and history of flowers plus the importance of the flower to humans.

Sutherland, Professor Emeritus at Schoolcraft College and president of the Michigan Beekeepers' Association, last spoke to us in March 2008, about beekeeping.

The MGAAWC membership "year" runs from September through the following May. Annual dues are $20 and may be paid at any meeting or mailed to the MGAAWC Membership chairperson. (See application form elsewhere in the newsletter.)

Members of the 2009 MG class are invited to attend for free until they become certified Master Gardeners, at which time they are eligible to become full members by paying the $20 dues. Other non-members may attend any meeting for $5.

MGAAWC meetings provide an excellent and easy way to obtain the educational credits needed to meet the requirements for MG re-certification. Another perk is that several nurseries in Washtenaw County give discounts to MGAAWC members!

Potato-Leek Soup
Adapted from "The Enchanted Broccoli Forest"
by Mollie Katzen
Contributed by Nancy Quay, MG 2009

3 medium-to-large potatoes
3 cups cleaned, sliced leeks
2 large carrots, sliced
4 tablespoons margarine or butter
¾ teaspoon salt
½ cup low-fat chicken or vegetable broth
3 cups milk
Optional: snippets of fresh herbs (thyme, basil, marjoram)

1. Scrub the potatoes and cut them into 1-inch chunks. Place them in a saucepan with the leeks, carrots and margarine or butter. Add salt. Cook the vegetables, stirring over medium heat until the margarine or butter is melted and all the pieces are coated (about 5 minutes).
2. Add the stock and bring to a boil. Cover and reduce heat to a simmer. Cook until the potatoes are soft (about 20-30 minutes). You may need to add a little stock (or water) if the level gets low.
3. When the potatoes are tender, remove from heat and puree the contents in a blender with the milk. You can do this in portions, a third of the vegetables to a third of the milk, pouring the smooth mixture into a pot after each blending session. When finished, the soup should be very smooth.
4. Add the optional herbs or grind in some black pepper if desired.
5. Heat the soup gently, covered, until just hot.

Pumpkin Bread Pudding
Janet Kavanagh (MG 2004)

This makes a great dessert at Thanksgiving.

1 29-ounce can of pumpkin or an equal amount of cooked, pureed and drained fresh pumpkin
1 cup sugar
½ quart half-and-half
6 eggs
½ teaspoon salt
1 teaspoon vanilla
½ teaspoon nutmeg
½ teaspoon cinnamon
1 large loaf day-old bread, cubed
¼ cup raisins (or use raisin bread or fruit bread)
½ jar caramel sauce or whipped cream for topping
Lightly beat eggs, add sugar and half-and-half, mixing between additions. Add vanilla, spices and salt. Evenly mix in pumpkin. Fold in bread cubes. Place in a greased 9-by-13–inch baking pan. Bake at 350 degrees for 45 minutes or until set in the center. Cut into squares and serve warm with caramel sauce or whipped cream.

Fantastic Cole Slaw
Adapted from "The Teachers' Cookbook"
Contributed by Nancy Quay, MG 2009

Slaw
1 medium cabbage, chopped
1 large carrot, grated
1 medium onion, chopped (optional)
1 teaspoon salt

Dressing
½ cup vinegar
¼ cup water
1 teaspoon celery seed
1 cup sugar

1. Mix cabbage and salt and let stand one hour. Squeeze out juice and mix with carrots (and onion if you're using it). (I use cheesecloth for this process.) Make the dressing while the cabbage is standing by doing the following:
1 Combine dressing ingredients and boil one minute.
2 Cool and pour over slaw mixture.
Store in plastic or glass container in refrigerator. May also be frozen.

Pumpkin Muffins or Bread
Janet Kavanagh (MG 2004)

'Tis the season for pumpkins! These taste very much like carrot cake, but without the grating. Makes two large loaves or 20 large muffins. If you'd like to be a little on the healthier side, I've found you can substitute up to half the flour with whole wheat, or substitute baking Splenda for the white sugar without making a huge difference in the taste.

3 ¼ cups flour
¾ cup rolled oats
2 teaspoons baking soda
½ teaspoon baking powder
½ teaspoon salt
1 teaspoon cinnamon (or more to taste)
¼ teaspoon each ginger, allspice and cardamom (or your choice of spices)
3 eggs
16 ounces cooked pureed pumpkin, measured after being drained of excess fluid (or canned pumpkin)
1 ½ cups brown sugar
1 ½ cups white sugar
¼ cup canola oil
½ cup unsweetened condensed milk or half-and-half
1 cup walnuts (optional)

Combine dry ingredients except sugars. In a large bowl, beat eggs. Mix in oil and milk until well blended. Lightly beat in sugars. Fold in dry ingredients until just combined. Add walnuts.

Bake at 350 degrees in greased pans. Twenty-five minutes for muffins or 65 minutes for loaves. As ovens vary, test centers with a toothpick for doneness.

October Calendar

Hidden Lake Gardens
Arboretum and Gardens
M-50, Tipton 517-431-2060
http://hiddenlakegardens.msu.edu/
Call for class fees and to register

Bluebirds on the Rise
Saturday, October 24
10:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.

Establishing & Maintaining Winter Interest in the Garden
Saturday, October 31
10:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.

Flip This Garden
Saturday, November 14
10:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.

Hidden Lake Gardens Events
Fall Foliage Festival
Saturday, October 3
10:00 a.m. - 4 p.m.

Matthaei Botanical Gardens & Nichols Arobretum
1800 Dixboro Road, Ann Arbor
734-647-7600
http://www.lsa.umich.edu/mbg/
Call for classes & to register

The Mushrooms of Michigan
Lectures:
Tuesdays, October 6, 7:15 - 9:15 pm
Field trips:
Saturdays, October 3 & 1, 9:00 am - Noon

Wednesday A.M. Hiker
Visit remote habitats to find edible plants, mushrooms and other interesting plants.
October 7, 14 9:00 am - noon

Arb Prairie Walk and Talk
Informative walk through the Arb's Dow Prairie
Sunday, October 4 1 to 3 pm

Indoor Bulb Forcing
Wednesday, October 21, 6:30-8:30
At Matthaei

Master Gardener Alumni Association of Washtenaw County
Membership Enrollment Sept. 2009 thru August 2010

(Please Print Clearly)

Name:_____ MG Year completion _____

Address:_____

City:_____State: MI Zip _____ - _____

Phone: (day) _____ (evening) _____

Email:_____

☐ Check this box if this is an email change

New items:

Gardening interests:

Please Circle: Yes / No to include personal information in Alumni Membership Directory

Mail enrollment with a check for $20 dues, payable to:

Master Gardener Alumni Association or MGAA
c/o Pat Belluci
5312 Fox Ridge Ct
Ann Arbor, MI 48103

6960

Michigan State University
Washtenaw County MSU Extension
705 N. Zeeb Rd.
P.O. Box 8645
Ann Arbor, MI 48107-8645

TIME SENSITIVE MATERIAL ENCLOSED
PLEASE DELIVER PROMPTLY

Office Hours: 8 a.m. — 6 p.m., Monday—Thursday, CLOSED Friday

Washtenaw County MSU Extension…… 734-997-1678
Fax…….. 734-222-3990
Bob Bricault, Horticulture Agent…….. 734-222-3826
Cindy Fischer, Master Gardener Coordinator …….. 734-222-3948
Garden Hotline……... 734-997-1819
E-mail:…….msuextension@ewashtenaw.org
County website:…….. www.eWashtenaw.org
State website:……web1.msue.msu.edu/mastergardener

Robert J. Bricault, Jr.

Robert J. Bricault, Jr.
Extension Educator,
Horticulture & Natural Resources

This newsletter is a publication of the Washtenaw County/MSU Extension Master Gardener program.