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Genesee County Master Gardener Newsletter
DOWN TO EARTH

December


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VOLUME 14

12



FEATURE ARTICLE

Rose: Bare Root or Potted Perennial Plant

How to Plant

Planting Bare Root Plants:

Choose a site with at least 8 hours of sun each day, where roots will not be in competition with the roots of other plants. Avoid areas where plants are not protected from harsh winds and cold. Plant climbers where they may be adequately supported. Roses grow well in rich, moisture-retentive soil.

Amend the soil 8-12 inches deep with well-rotted compost before planting.



Soak roots for several hours in lukewarm water. Trim off any broken or damaged roots.

Dig a hole 18 inches deep and 18 inches wide.

Build a cone of soil at the bottom of the hole to support and spread roots around before backfilling.

In cold winter zones, set the plant so that the base of the canes (bud union) is 4 inches below ground level. In warmer zones, the

bud union should be just above ground level.

Replace the soil, firming it well around the plant with your hands.

Water very well.

Apply 2-3 inches of organic mulch to keep the soil cool and moist.

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Planting Potted Plants:

Choose a site with at least 8 hours of sun each day, where roots will not be in competition with the roots of other plants. Avoid areas where plants are not protected from harsh winds and cold. Plant climbers where they may be adequately supported. Roses grow well in rich, moisture-retentive soil.

Amend the soil 8-12 inches deep with well-rotted compost before planting.

Dig a hole for each plant large enough to amply accommodate the root ball.

Place the top of the root ball even with the level of the surrounding soil. Fill with soil to the top of the root ball. Press soil down firmly with your hand.

Water deeply. The water will seal off any air pockets around the root ball.

After planting be sure to mark the plants with plant labels so you know where they are and what varieties they are.

Apply 2-3 inches of organic mulch to keep the soil cool and moist.

How to Grow

Keep weeds under control during the growing season. Weeds compete with plants for water, space and nutrients. Control them by either cultivating often or use a mulch to prevent their seeds from germinating.

Keep plants well-watered during the growing season, especially during dry spells. Plants need about 1-2 inches of rain per week during the growing season. It's best to water with a drip or trickle system that delivers water at low pressure at the soil level. If you water with overhead sprinklers, water early in the day so the foliage has time to dry off before evening, to minimize disease problems. Keep the soil moist but not saturated. Keep soil moisture steady when plants are in bloom. Water on bright sunny mornings to give foliage enough time to dry out.

Use a slow release fertilizer such as Rose-tone at the recommended rate. Repeat bloomers need a steady supply of nutrients through the season.

Deadhead spent blooms to increase repeat blooming and keep plants tidy. Cut back dead flowers to the first five leaflet leaf.

To protect plants from harsh winter cold, mound the base of stems with 8 inches of shredded bark once winter sets in. In areas with severe winters, provide waterproof cover over the top.

Prune as out dead, diseased or weakened stems at any time. Prune for shape, size or to improve air circulation in late winter after danger of a hard freeze. See pruning tips below.

Monitor for pests and diseases.

Growing Tips

Winter pruning of shrub roses: Prune when the season starts to warm up and the buds begin to swell. During the first year, prune plants only lightly, leaving two thirds of the plant.



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HOME GROWN 841

I was given some bulbs that bloom in the summer and was told I need to dig them because they will freeze. I have a dahlia, two cannas and some Mexican shell flowers. I can't remember what to do with them but I certainly refuse to store these in my refrigerator.

If you are a bunch of tropical flowers, being in a refrigerator for the winter is the last place you want to be except for the front porch. The bottom end of the dahlia is called a tuber, cannas are called rhizomes and the Mexican shell flowers are bulbs. How you handle them is pretty much the same. After a killing frost, the tops will die. How rapidly you remove them depends on how soon the ground freezes. Right now, you have a number of weeks. Locate the plants. Cut the tops off about three to six inches from the soil surface, depending on the size of the plants. This stem is going to serve as your "handle" for the plant and will be trimmed shorter later.

Carefully dig up the bottom of the plant. You should be doing this on a day when it is not freezing outdoors. Those cold temperatures can damage the bottoms when they are exposed to the icy air. Gently brush the soil off the bottom of the plant and place carefully in a bag, box or basket. You want to use your finger tips to or a very soft brush to remove soil. It is best not to wash them. The goal is to get these things to dry out or cure and water is not going to help.

Bring your dug bottoms into the house where it is heated and make a single layer on dry newspaper. The next couple of weeks will be for the skin on the outside of the bulbs, rhizomes and tubers to dry and toughen up. It's the same thing that happens to potatoes. During the next several weeks, turn the bottoms several times a week. When the stems get really dried out and shriveled, they can be cut shorter but not flush with the top of the bulb. Cutting too close can lead to various rots getting in at the open wound where the stem attached. If you cut the stem to an inch or so and the center of the stem is dry, it's time to containerize them for storage. Use a box or bag and layer the bulbs with a packing material like sphagnum moss or wood shavings. The moss is best because it is acidic and will stop any little rots rapidly. Put down packing material and a layer of bulbs that do not touch or overlap. When everything is packed, store where the temperature will stay between 45 and fifty degrees all winter. If it is too warm, they will start to grow and if it is too cold, they die.

I went to a yard sale and bought a bunch of flower pots. Some are clay and some are plastic and they are all really dirty with white and brown crusty material stuck to the inside walls. The woman selling them said to squirt dish-washing detergent on them and wash them. I am concerned about doing this to the clay pots because they are porous. She also said that I could use them with the deposits because the stuff stuck on the pots is all natural. What's really going on?

Your crusty crud on the pots is an accumulation of calcium, soluble salts and minerals from the water, fertilizer and possibly the soil that was in the pots. Of course it's natural but so is arsenic and poison ivy. But it is not desirable. Plants growing in these encrusted pots will be difficult to get out of the pots because the roots will adhere to the minerals and then to the pot wall. The soluble salts could also damage roots if there is enough of it in contact with roots. The plastic pots can be soaked in warm water and then pick at or scrape the residue. You can try with or without soap or detergent. As you realized, the clay pots are different. If you put soap or detergent, even dissolved in water on the pots, it will soak in and be there for a very long time. Every time the pot gets wet, it could have soap exiting on either side of the pot wall. Soap or detergent is not good for the plant roots in the pots. Soak the unglazed terracotta pots in very warm water and use knife or a single-edge razor blade and see how many minerals you can remove. You may be able to use sandpaper for small amounts still not wanting to give it up. To prevent this in the future, clean the pot immediately after the current plant occupant has moved on. It will never be as bad as the hardened concretions that were never cleaned.



COOKS CORNER

Roasted Chicken Provencal

Sam Sifton

Ingredients

4 chicken legs or 4 thighs or 2 attached leg/thigh, skin attached bone in

2 teaspoons kosher salt

1 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper

½ to ¾ cup all-purpose flour

3 tablespoons olive oil

2 tablespoons herbes de Provence

1 lemon, quartered

8 to 10 cloves garlic, peeled

4 to 6 medium-size shallots, peeled and halved

⅓ cup dry vermouth

4 sprigs of thyme, for serving

Preparation

Heat oven to 400 degrees. Season the chicken with salt and pepper. Put the flour in a shallow pan, and lightly dredge the chicken in it, shaking the pieces to remove excess flour.

Swirl the oil in a large roasting pan, and place the floured chicken in it. Season the chicken with the herbes de Provence. Arrange the lemon, garlic cloves and shallots around the chicken, and then add the vermouth to the pan.

Put the pan in the oven, and roast for 25 to 30 minutes, then baste it with the pan juices. Continue roasting for another 25 to 30 minutes or until the chicken is very crisp and the meat cooked through.

Serve in the pan or on a warmed platter, garnished with the thyme.

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Once the plants are established, prune to half their size into a rounded bush. Remove any diseased, dead or weak stems.

Summer pruning of shrub roses: Remove 18-24 inches of stem after flowering, leaving 2-3 leaves of the current season's growth. This helps keep the plant's height in check, especially in warmer areas where repeat bloomers tend to get taller during the season. Spent flowers left on the plant may develop attractive rose hips in autumn. Stop deadheading towards summer's end to prevent young, frost-sensitive shoots from developing.

Winter pruning of climbing roses: In winter prune the lateral branches that bloomed the previous season to 3 or 4 buds, or about 6 inches long. Tie up the long, strong main stems and do not cut these back unless they are old, weak or dead. With trellises and other supports, stems can be fanned out to encourage side shoots and more flowering.

Cut flowers in the morning. Cut stems back to a five leaflet leaf. Immediately plunge cut stems into water.

MASTER GARDENER ASSOCIATION

MEETING NOVEMBER 17, 2016

Call to Order: The meeting was called to order by President Vicki Laurin at 6:00 pm.

Because this was our Election night as well as our Holiday party there were no project reports tonight.

Review of Minutes: Motion and 2nd by Alan Grove & Loretta Elwood to accept the October 20, 2016 meeting minutes as presented. Passed.

Treasurer's Report: Michelle Chockley reviewed the Treasurer's report for October 2016. The beginning balance was \$33,102.70, income was \$2,509.64, expenses were \$2,426.06 and the ending balance was \$33,186.28

Old business: none

New Business:

1. Review and accept the 2017 Budget – There were no questions about the proposed 2017 budget from the membership. Motion and 2nd by Pam Malow-Isham and Kay McCullough to accept the proposed 2017

MGAGCM Budget as emailed out by the Treasurer. Passed

2. We need 3 volunteers for the January 2017 financial audit: Sandy Johnson, Susan Biron and Theresa Henderson volunteered. Thank you!

3. Thanks to Pam Kvasnicka, Barb Pethers and Nettie Sparks for serving on the 2016 Nomination & Election Committee.

4. Abi announced that a new (3rd) Master Gardener class will begin in January 2017. A summary of "Things Accomplished in 2016" was available as a handout at the meeting.

5. Election results (announced after the meal): President: Vicki Laurin, 1st Vice President: Mel Kennedy, 2nd Vice President: Alan Grove and Director: Sylvia Hansen.

A special thanks to Kay McCullough for serving as 1st Vice President for the past 2 years.

Close of Meeting:

The meeting was adjourned by President Vicki Laurin at 6:18 pm.

Respectfully submitted: Dick Moldenhauer, MGAGCM secretary

GOLD BADGE HONOREES

Mary Wilson, State Master Gardener Coordinator was at the Michigan Master Gardener Association, Genesee County Chapter Membership Meeting on Thursday, October 20, 2016 to present Gold Name Badges to 38 Members of our association. These members had over 1,000 hours of volunteer service. In particular she discussed, that the Extension Master Gardener (EMG) program was started in 1972 in King and Pierce counties in Washington state by local horticultural Extension agent David Gibby, Ph.D. This unique volunteer program has become internationally recognized and often duplicated as a model for other volunteer programs. Today, Extension Master Gardener programs exist in all 50 states and the District of Columbia. She also shared the 2015 EMG Genesee County statistical estimates: 150 Extension Master Gardener volunteers throughout the county; annually contributed 10,909.03 volunteer hours; drove 43,888 miles; had 2,014.45 continuing education hours; establish 40,589 contacts within the general public & their economic contribution was \$257,815.64!! For more information on the Extension Master Gardener Program in the United States go to this link: <http://articles.extension.org/pages/27285/becoming-an-extension-master-gardener>

Roxann Banks	Carol Groat	Christine Schwind
Joyce Bellaire	David Groat	Ruth Simon
Dorothy Boldue-peppin	Jim Harrow	Shirley Smela
Trudy Brewer	Daniel Kah	Joanie Snyder
Betty Butcher	Sandy Keirns	Netttie Sparks
Michelle Chockley	Melville Kennedy	Randy Tatro
Millie Daron	Pam Kvasnicka	Jo Thielen
Mary Faith Down	Vicki Laurin	Linda Vance
Phil Downs	Rosealie McCarthy	Sabrina Van Dyke
Betty Draper	Helen Mitts	Maggie Vance
Alicia Ellis	Vicki Perkins	
Loretta Ellwood	George Rappold	
Rebeca Gale-Gonzalez	Janet Redoutey	

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GOLD BADGES PRESENTED TO MEMEBRS AT THE MEETING

THE FLUSHING BOARDWALK

The Flushing boardwalk on the Flushing Riverview Trail has deteriorated to the point it needs replacement. The City of Flushing is trying to raise \$50,000 by Dec. 17 to cover half of the replacement cost, and if the goal is met the Michigan Economic Development Corps (MEDC) and the Michigan State Housing Development **Authority** (MSHDA) will match the funds. However, this is an all-or-nothing deal. The city will only receive funds if it reaches its goal by December 17, 2016 10:45 pm.

Please consider making a donation to this worthy cause. Master Gardener volunteers maintain gardens along the trail to the enjoyment of thousands of people who use the trail every year. Your gift will be greatly appreciated.

You can give as little as \$10 or as much as \$5,000. These donations are tax-deductible.

Go to the grant-funding link below to get further details on the campaign and to donate.

Donations may be made by using the Patronicity site

https://www.patronicity.com/project/flushings_boardwalk_build_up

or sending a check by mail or dropping directly to Flushing City Hall. Make it out to "City of Flushing" and mailing or dropping off the check to

Brad Barrett, Flushing City Hall, 725 E Main St. Flushing, MI 48433. Be sure to put "Boardwalk" in the memo line.

Give Old Potting Soil New Life

How to Recharge a Planter or Raised Bed

YES, you can use the old soil in your pots, planters and raised beds. Just start the season with a special boost that ensures good results. With a couple ingredients, you can transform depleted soil into fertile ground for whatever you want to plant.

Top it off: If the level of soil has dropped, add fresh planting mix also known as potting soil. Ideally, the soil comes to within an inch or so of the rim of the planter or raised bed. Use a fork or hand tool to blend the new soil into the old soil.



Recharge it: Measure the square footage of your raised bed or pot to figure out how much of the two "secret ingredients" you need for your bed.

All-Purpose Fertilizer: Use 1/4 cup per square foot. A slow-release, 5-5-5 granular organic fertilizer that gives plants balanced nutrients for vigorous root growth and improved water penetration all season long. Contains only naturally occurring minerals, peanut meal and animal or vegetable meal.

Container Booster Mix: Use 3 cups per square foot. *This is the secret sauce!* This potent, all-organic formula includes a complete diet of nutri-

ents and trace elements to keep plants lush and healthy: concentrated plant and manure compost, washed granite, black rock phosphate, and other natural ingredients.

Sprinkle the granular fertilizer and booster mix on the soil surface. Use a hoe or cultivating tool to incorporate the ingredients.

Plant, feed and repeat! Fill your planter or raised bed and stand back. Great results are sure to follow. During the season, keep your plants happy by feeding them regularly with water-soluble fertilizer, applied at the rate recommended on the package.

This article was taken from Gardeners Supply Company. The products used are sold by Gardeners and in no way should it be considered as an endorsement. The steps used in the article are meant as a general guide. As an example compost could be substituted for potting soil.
Editor



PLANTING, GROWING AND HARVESTING PUMPKINS

CONTINUED FROM THE NOVEMBER ISSUE

If your first flowers aren't forming fruits, that's normal. Both male and female blossoms need to open. Be patient.

Bees are essential for pollination, so be mindful when using insecticides to kill pests. If you must use, apply only in late afternoon or early evening when blossoms are closed for the day.

Pumpkin vines, though obstinate, are very delicate. Take care not to damage vines, which reduce the quality of fruit.

Pump Up Your Pumpkins!

Pumpkins are HEAVY feeders. Regular treatments of manure or compost mixed with water will sustain good growth.

Fertilize on a regular basis. Use a high nitrogen formula in early plant growth. Fertilize when plants are about one foot tall, just before vines begin to run. Switch over to a fertilizer high in phosphorous just before the blooming period.

Pinch off the fuzzy ends of each vine after a few pumpkins have formed. This will stop vine growth so that the plant's energies are focused on the fruit.

Pruning the vines may help with space as well as allow the plant's energy to be concentrated on the remaining vines and fruit.

Gardeners who are looking for a "prize for size" pumpkin might select the two or three prime candidates and remove all other fruit and vines.

As the fruit develops, they should be turned (with great care not to hurt the vine or stem) to encourage an even shape.

Slip a thin board or a piece of plastic mesh under the pumpkins.

PESTS/DISEASES

Squash bugs and **cucumber beetles** are common, especially later in summer. Contact your local County Extension for controls.

Aphids

Squash Vine Borer

Powdery Mildew

Anthracnose

Poor light, too much fertilizer, poor weather at bloom time, and reduced pollinating insect activity can reduce fruit set.

HARVEST/STORAGE

Your best bet is to harvest pumpkins when they are mature. They will keep best this way.

Do not pick pumpkins off the vine because they have reached your desired size. If you want small pumpkins, buy a small variety.

A pumpkin is ripening when its skin turns a deep, solid color (orange for most varieties).

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When you thump the pumpkin, the rind will feel hard and it will sound hollow. Press your nail into the pumpkin's skin; if it resists puncture, it is ripe.

To harvest the pumpkin, cut the fruit off the vine carefully with a sharp knife or pruners; do not tear. Be sure not to cut too close to the pumpkin; a liberal amount of stem (3 to 4 inches) will increase the pumpkin's keeping time.

Handle pumpkins very gently or they may bruise.

Pumpkins should be cured in the sun for about a week to toughen the skin and then stored in a cool, dry bedroom or cellar—anywhere around 55°F.

If you get a lot of vines and flowers but no pumpkins, you need more bees in your garden to pollinate the flowers. Grow some colorful flowers next to your pumpkin patch this year and you may get more bees and butterflies!

If you're saving seeds, they should last for 6 years.

RECOMMENDED VARIETIES

'Jack Be Little' miniature pumpkin variety, perfect for a holiday table. Vine variety. Days to maturity 90 to 100 days.

'Autumn Gold' great for carving, decorating. All-America Selection winner. Vine variety. Excellent for Jack-o-Lanterns. Days to maturity are generally 100 to 120 days.

'Sugar Treat' semi-bush hybrid. Ideal for cooking and baking. Days to maturity are generally 100 to 120 days.

'Dill's Atlantic Giant' jumbo variety can grow to 200 pounds. Great for those who want to grow a giant pumpkin. Vine will spread to 25 feet, so space is a must. Days to maturity are 130 to 160 days so plant early! Thin to the best one or two plants. Feed heavily but keep cultivation shallow. Remove first 2 or 3 female flowers after the plants start to bloom so that the plants grow larger with more leaf surface before setting fruit. Allow a single fruit to develop and pick off all female flowers that develop after this fruit has set on the plant. Take care that the vine doesn't root down near the joints to avoid breakage.



IT'S ALL ABOUT...SEASONS

The Capital Area Master Gardeners invite you to join them at their Annual Winter Symposium – *It's All About...Seasons*.

The four topics with the speakers are:

A Change in Thought – Jan Bills, Owner of Two Women and a Hoe

Berries, Bugs and Snags – Rosann Kovalcik, Michigan Audubon Society Board Member and owner of Wild Birds Unlimited in Grosse Pointe Woods

The Late Show – Cheryl English, Wildflower Association of Michigan Board Member and Adv. Master Gardener & owner of Black Cat Pottery

The Science and Art of Pruning – Chuck Martin, Senior Horticulturist at Dow Gardens

Who: Capital Area Master Gardeners

What: *It's All About...Seasons–A Winter Symposium*

Where: Plant and Soil Sciences Building on MSU's Campus

1066 Bogue Street

East Lansing, MI 48824

Sessions will be in MPS 1200 which is the new tiered classroom/auditorium

When: Saturday, January 28, 2017

Earn: 5 Master Gardener education hours

Cost: \$40.00 for CAMG members / \$50.00 for non-member Active, Certified EMGs / \$55.00 all others

This includes lunch, light morning snacks, a Garden Marketplace, and program materials plus a chance to win great door prizes!

All gardening enthusiasts are welcome!

[Link to the actual Symposium brochure](#)

A link to the association web site can be found at:

<http://mgacac.wordpress.com>

There you can find information about hotel rooms, vendors who will be at the conference (as they become available), a link to directions, etc.

If you have questions, you can email:

mga.cac@gmail.com

REGISTRATION NOW OPEN FOR THE WINTER 2017 MASTER GARDENER CLASS.

Location: MSUE Office, Time: 9:00 am-1:00 pm.

<https://events.anr.msu.edu/event.cfm?eventID=A5FD20E1F6937969>. Please tell your friends or family that might be interested.

DTE MONTHLY SUBSCRIPTION

If you enjoy getting a monthly hardcopy of the DTE you can subscribe by mailing a \$10.00 check made out to MGAGCM and mail to PO Box 34, Flushing, Mi. 48433 by January 15, 2017.

MGAGCM CLOTHING ORDER

deadline is February 28, 2017. Please check out our clothing website at geneseecountymg.org/shirt-order for a peek at some new items. As in the past you send your payment to PO Box 34, Flushing, Mi. 48433 before the deadline or your order won't be sent in.

DON'T FORGET to record your hours into VMS before December 31, 2016. If you need help entering your hours call Ruth Simon at 810-639-7565 or Michelle Chockley at 810-659-8014. Please don't wait until the last day to enter your hours.

DATES TO REMEMBER

January 19, 2017 will be our next MGAGCM meeting which will be held at the GCCARD building at 605 N. Saginaw St. We will be meeting at 5:30 pm for social hour and our speaker Darren Bagley, who will be speaking on Composting, will begin at 6:00 pm. After a short break we will begin our business meeting.

SPEAKERS FOR 2017

February 16th Roxanne Gabriel
Landscaping
March 16th Jim Withers
Bees
May 18th Erin Caldwell
Hoop Houses
August 17th Julia
Hip Houseplants
Sept 21st Tony Rexnicek
Chinese plants for Michigan gardens
Oct 19th Janet Macunovich
Favorite perennials old and new
A big thank you to our 2nd Vice President Alan Grove for scheduling our 2107 speakers

I would like to thank our Holiday Party Committee for the fantastic job of putting the Holiday Party together. We started out with 12 volunteers which grew into 20 which included some that had a part in the party in past years and some that this was their first year in helping out. It was great to see volunteers from our January class of 2016 jump in and help put on a great party that had delicious food, giveaways for everyone and best of all was the spirit of friendship. Thank you everyone for your help and I hope your Holidays are Happy and Bright.

Vicki

MGAGCM President

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**CHECK OUT OUR WEBSITES**

MMGA Inc Website at:

www.michiganmastergardener.org

MMGA Inc Facebook Page at:

www.facebook.com/MichiganMG

**MGAGCM Website at: Genesee
County MG.org**

MGAGCM Facebook Page at:

**[http://facebook.com/groups/2169046
232310/](http://facebook.com/groups/2169046232310/)**

Link to VMS: [https://](https://michigan.volunteersystem.org)

michigan.volunteersystem.org

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(810) 244-8548

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geneseeplantpest@anr.msu.edu

Public Office Hours:

8 am - 1 pm Monday through Friday.

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*Merry
Christmas*