

Michigan Master Gardener Association

Quarterly newsletter
ISSUE 04 Winter 2016



Welcome to the MMGA, Inc. Newsletter

Welcome! Thank you for taking the time to read our quarterly newsletter. The Michigan Master Gardener Association is a non-profit corporation with an all-volunteer board. We invite you to become involved as a volunteer and a member. Membership is open to every Master Gardener volunteer in good standing, which includes recertified Master Gardeners and volunteers in training. The cost is just \$5.00! It's less than the cost of going to a movie or out to lunch, yet that \$5.00 individual membership fee helps pay for the critical liability insurance coverage that none of us can afford to be without. Your commitment to our association will help keep this insurance affordable for everyone.

Visit www.michiganmastergardener.org to join.

In this edition

(click to jump to section)

- [2016 Recertification](#)
- [Travel Opportunity](#)
- [Spotlight: Upper Peninsula](#)
- [2016 Master Gardner College](#)
- [Call for Posters](#)
- [Interview with Merry Kim Meyers: MCC & MSU Partnership](#)
- [A Fond Farewell](#)
- [Int'l Master Gardener Conference](#)
- [Events: Plants of Distinction](#)

2016 Recertification Information

By now you should have received several emails containing information about the recertification process for 2016. The VMS closed on January 1st and will reopen on February 13th. In the meantime, here's a summary of what you need to do to make sure you are recertified.

January 11, 2016: Recertification period opens

- Log into the Volunteer Management System (VMS) at <https://michigan.volunteersystem.org>
- Click on "Complete Agreement Now" at the top of the VMS Home Screen
- Complete 3-step process (including payment of \$20 recertification fee)

January 29, 2016: Recertification period closes

January 30, 2016: Late recertification period opens (late fee applied)

- Log into the Volunteer Management System (VMS) at <https://michigan.volunteersystem.org>
- Click on "Complete Agreement Now" at the top of the VMS Home Screen
- Complete 3-step process (including payment of \$30 recertification fee)

February 12, 2016: Late recertification period closes

February 13, 2016: Resume using VMS to log hours

Important: MMGA membership is a separate process from recertification. Once you are recertified, you will receive an email with information about becoming an MMGA member. If you have questions about MMGA membership, please go to the [membership section of the MMGA website](#).

Exciting travel opportunity!

Join MSUE Horticulturists Mary Wilson and Rebecca Finneran on an exclusive tour of English gardens and castles! [Click here](#) for registration information. Hurry—spots must be reserved by February 19, 2016!

Spotlight: Master Gardeners in the UP

Peter White Library Gardens, Marquette

Recently awarded the 2015 Phil Niemisto Volunteer Award by the Marquette Beautification and Restoration Committee, advanced Master Gardener Carol Fitzgerald continues to expand community beautification and gardening education opportunities to the visitors of the Peter White Library in Marquette, Michigan.

In 2007, Fitzgerald initiated and created the educational gardens that now surround the Peter White Library as her volunteer project after completing the educational component of the Michigan State University Extension Master Gardener program. The gardens are a welcoming addition to the historic building where visitors now enjoy sitting on benches beneath shade trees, taking a stroll through the concrete paths lining the gardens and using the gardens as beautiful backdrops for wedding photos.

To learn more about the gardens at the Peter White Library, [click here](#).

Serenity Garden, Escanaba

Michigan State University Extension Master Gardener Sue Wanic has been a Master Gardener since 2002. In order to fulfill the certification requirement of her 40-hour volunteer garden project, she envisioned and then developed "The Serenity Garden" on the grounds of St. Francis Hospital in Escanaba, Michigan. Visitors are freely allowed to come and go within this garden where they can enjoy the beauty of various plants, listen to the waterfall, stop to pray for a loved one or enjoy a rest on one of the benches.

The Serenity Garden has been a featured stop in the annual garden tour. There are also groups that use it as a teaching garden, and Wanic comments, "I would like to see it used more for this purpose." Another educational resource includes plant identification labels for people wanting to know what kinds of plants are grown there.

To learn more about the Serenity Garden, [click here](#).

Michigan Advanced Master Gardener Sue Wanic (left) works with MGs Greta Arntzen, Sue Shepich and Debbie Stearns, within The Serenity Garden. Photo by Rebecca Krans, MSU Extension



Have an idea for
our "Spotlight"
section? Fill out
our [form online!](#)

Dig It! Plant It! Grow It!

Master Gardener College 2016

Grand Rapids, MI

June 17-18, 2016

Mark your calendars! The weather may have barely turned cold, but it's already time to start thinking about summer plans, and you don't want to miss this year's Master Gardener College! The two-day event will once again be held at the Prince Conference Center on East Beltline. There will be bus tours, workshops, a keynote speaker, social events, and more! Details and registration information are available at the [**MSUE Master Gardener College website**](#). We hope to see you there!



Master Gardener College 2016 NEW RECOGNITION PROGRAM: Search for Extraordinary Projects!

Do you have an extraordinary Extension Master Gardener project that you work on? Would you like to share this with other Extension Master Gardeners across the State?

For 2016 at Master Gardener College, we are accepting applications for unique Extension Master Gardener projects across Michigan, and will be awarding prizes for the top projects.

These projects will be submitted in the form of a poster, and entered in a competition among posters of Extension Master Gardener projects across the State. The top 10 posters chosen will be displayed at the 2016 Master Gardener College, and voting will take place to choose the top 3 projects and the Peer Preferred Project.

All posters must show that significant learning took place, whether by the Extension Master Gardener or the general public with whom they were involved. This competition is designed to recognize outstanding group projects, in an effort to share ideas with EMGs across Michigan.

Stay tuned for details about the application process and submission!

Questions? Contact Abi Saeed at (810) 244-8531 or saeedabi@anr.msu.edu to learn how to apply by May 1, 2016.

Montcalm Community College & Michigan State University Partnership: An Interview with Merry Kim Meyers



Merry Kim Meyers

Merry Kim Meyers is the MSU Regional Planning Coordinator at Montcalm Community College – working with students who are interested in agricultural careers.

The program she works with is one of seven offered throughout the state at regional colleges. In addition to the one at Montcalm Community College, there are programs at Southwestern Michigan College in Dowagiac, Grand Rapids Community College, Muskegon Community College, Northwestern Michigan College in Traverse City, Delta College in Saginaw and Glen Oaks Community College in Centreville.

“This creates a wonderful network of agriculture institute programs for students who are interested in an agricultural career,” says Meyers. “We’re seeing a huge jump of trained people in agriculture – and it’s no longer the old plows, cows and sows only but a wide variety of jobs that involve agriculture including landscaping, turf management, farms business management, precision agriculture and environmental jobs.”

“Many wonderful students in rural areas have the passion to study an area of agriculture, but the idea of going to a university the size of MSU may be daunting when you’ve grown up in a rural area and gone to a small school. It can also be financially out of reach,” says Meyers.

Instead, MSU partners with community colleges through the Institute of Ag Technology to offer an Associate in Applied Science Degree. Their curriculum includes college basics like English, math and social science, paired with agriculture education. In addition, the programs provide students opportunities to network with educators and agriculture professionals in their area.

Classes are provided in three different ways:

1. In person, working with a professional
2. Using interactive TV in the classroom (this is done remotely and the teacher may be at MSU’s campus, at Traverse City or another location). Students can talk to the professor – much like Facetime – and interact with other students in the class.
3. Online, which is the typical way students who are coming into the career world now are used to learning. Online learning today is different than reading and taking a test and includes interactive chats, labs and group meetings.

“We’ve learned that people learn best when they have the technology, the information, and the right people to teach that course,” says Meyers. “We attract students from age 19 to those who are preparing for retirement.”

Story continued on next page.

**There really is a place in agriculture for everyone.
What's needed is the right education, the skills,
and the enthusiasm to do it.**

-Merry Kim Meyers

Continued from previous page.

Programs offered include:

- Ag Operations, which focuses on basic agriculture techniques and the basics of managing a farm.
- Applied Horse Science, which is strictly an equine curriculum
- Fruit and Vegetable Crop Management, which Meyers says is much needed in Michigan because of the diversity of what is raised here (Michigan is second to California in the diversity of crops raised).
- Landscape management, which focuses on landscape plants and lawns.
- Viticulture, which is taught at Northwestern Michigan College and Southwestern Michigan College.

"It's a great way to reinvent yourself in two years," she adds. "There really is a place in agriculture for everyone. What's needed is the right education, the skills, and the enthusiasm to do it."

Key to the program's success is the affordability. Many students are able to complete two years while living at home, which eliminates the expense of living on campus and makes it possible for students to keep their local job while getting not just a horticulture education but a general studies education.

Another key to success is the program requirement of an internship where students learn to apply what they've learned and build a network of people to turn to at the next step in life. That's one of the places where Meyers' counseling of students comes in – helping students expand their vision for an internship. "It's possible to have an internship at Disney or study abroad and do part of your education there. When I'm talking to students about their options I often think of the Oliver Wendell Holmes, Jr. quote that 'A mind that is stretched by a new experience can never go back to its old dimensions.' That's what I'm trying to help students experience."

While the program Meyers works with is similar to the MSU Ag Institute of the past, today's classes coordinate with the University itself. Those students who decide they want to go on for a four year degree can apply to MSU and, as long as they have a 3.0 or better in their MSU courses, they will get a preferential admission.

It's a win-win-win.

To view this story on the MMGA website, [click here](#).

A Fond Farewell

With regret, we bid farewell to Elizabeth (Betsy) Lindsley who resigned as secretary of the Michigan Master Gardener Association in December. Betsy joined the MMGA board in June 2013 and was selected as vice president. She became president later that year when Linda Whitlock resigned for personal reasons. Following her term as president, Betsy was elected board secretary in 2015. We will miss her energy and we appreciate everything she has done for MMGA and the Master Gardener Program.



Highlights From the 2015 International Master Gardener Conference

Helping to end hunger... working with various community projects... garden photography. All those subjects and more – as well as a warm, Midwestern welcome – were part of the education and experience that Mary Wilson, the State Coordinator of the MSU Extension Master Gardener Program, enjoyed at the 2015 International Master Gardener Conference.

The September conference was held in Council Bluffs, Iowa, which is the town furthest west in Iowa and just across the river from Omaha, Nebraska. Over 800 Extension Master Gardeners (EMGs) attended, representing 39 states, two Canadian provinces, and South Korea - host of the 2014 Korean International Master Gardener Conference.

Mary describes the biennial conference as a "real enriching experience." To find out more about the conference and the sessions Mary attended, [click here](#).



Photo of Oakland County EMG Margaret Lavere with her sister from Kansas and a brother from Nebraska at the conference. All are enthusiastic Master Gardeners.

2016 Plants of Distinction

New plants are the life-blood of the landscape and gardening economy. Plant research and global exploration influences the number and types of plants available. However, we all know that "new" is not always "best" for our landscapes. With consumers turning their attention to sustainability and green practices, the question arises "how much maintenance do these plants require?" MSU Extension has developed a portfolio of renowned plant experts to present this annual seminar. Speakers will enrich your knowledge of widely sought-after plant material while remembering the foundational messages of "right plant right place." Please join us for an invigorating day of plant exploration that will fill out every niche of your garden!!

For more information, [click here](#).

Sold out!

Want to know about more events? Check out the MMGA events calendar [here](#).

Have an event you want to include on the calendar? Click [here](#) to fill out a request form.



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Affiliate Chapters

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[Master Gardener Association of Genesee County](#)

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Committee**

