

TWIGS

The Garden Club of Greater Lansing Newsletter

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

It is with a heavy heart that I announce the Annual Meeting on May 11th is canceled. The board is working on rescheduling the annual meeting and installation of officers. We will keep an eye on the recommendations of the health experts and public health professionals while keeping the safety and health of our members a priority. Thank you to the board and other members for recommendations in the decision making process for future meetings!

I hope everyone has remained safe and keeping in touch with friends and family while observing distancing guidelines. Everyone is missing our usual way of life, being social, having freedom to go where and when we want, giving a hug, but at the same time we recognize how close we still remain even in our physical distancing. We also recognize the joys and appreciations that we may have taken for granted before COVID-19 arrived.

Modern technology has enabled us to be in contact with friends and family by means other than a phone call. Visiting with great grandchildren in other states via FaceTime keeps me smiling for days. We are doing that more. I was recently introduced to "zoom". Many book clubs and groups of friends can interact, see each and hear each other similar to being in the same room. We laughed together and that memory lasts for days. U-tube has tutored me with making face masks for family. Google search has helped me try new recipes with what I have on hand and

saved me from making an extra trip to the grocery store. I have heard many of you are ordering seeds on line too! We have so many technology and tools available in this great age. Which ones are you exploring and using?



(Daffodils Sue Kesti)

Blessings and joys have been revealed to me by exiting the house, seeing what nature brings forth everyday: New blossoms, birds coming to feeders, sunshine, even the occasional rain or snow shower! Neighbors spread joy by displaying chalk art on the sidewalks, leaving painted rocks to be discovered through the neighborhood and putting signs in windows and front lawns thanking health care providers, delivery people and mail carriers.

Friends give joy with a phone call, mailing a card, sending a text, some offer prayers. What was a new joy for you today? Sue Kesti



(Design from March Garden Show)

HORTICULTURE

Over the years my family had large vegetable gardens with produce that we enjoyed, preserved, and shared. Now that I live alone and use a walker my veggies are primarily grown in containers on the patio where I can easily maintain and access them. This year I'm planning for tomatoes, cucumbers, bell peppers, and zucchini. I use a few herbs (parsley, cilantro, thyme) as fillers in the pots both for texture and to help keep weeds under control. For me all of these plants have multiple uses and cannot be duplicated by grocery store products. The closest and definitely the best alternatives are in the many wonderful farmers markets but my patio is just outside the door.

As with other plants, container-grown vegetables need sufficient warmth, sunlight, moisture, air flow and nutrients. Most veggies need at least six hours of direct sunlight a day. It's best not to use metal containers, dark-colored plastics or ceramics because they can become especially hot and can cook roots in extremely hot weather. Many vegetables don't like cold soil either; vegetable container gardens grow best when the soil is at least 60 degrees Fahrenheit. (Note: You can check the temperature of your soil with a meat thermometer.) Mulch on the surface helps to control the temperature of soil and plants.

All vegetable plants need water, however the soil

needs to be kept moist but not soaking wet. Most containers need to be watered every day; to check stick your finger into the soil about an inch, or up to the first knuckle. If the soil feels dry, it's time to water. If not, wait until later in the day and check again. In hot summer many pots, especially the smaller ones, need to be watered more than once a day. Be sure that the container has good drainage so that plant roots don't develop root rot or drown in accumulated water. Each container should have one large hole or several smaller holes in the bottom for adequate drainage. Be careful that there is enough space between the container and the surface below it so that the holes aren't stopped from draining.

Containers can be about anything that will hold soil, has good drainage, is safe for food and is large enough for the plant(s). The larger the container the easier it is to maintain and the more it will keep the soil moist. For larger vegetables and/or vines, such as tomatoes and cucumbers, it is helpful to use a trellis or a tomato cage in the container to support the plant and the fruit as needed.

Good quality potting soil is important for vegetables. Organic soil has more nutrients than regular potting mixtures, however either will work. Don't use garden soil in containers because that tends to be more compact in containers and also is likely to carry weed seeds. Add a granular fertilizer to the container and mix well before planting vegetables. Every couple of weeks add a liquid or water soluble fertilizer, following package directions. Don't over-fertilize as the plants will grow too quickly and that may affect stem strength and the flavor of the veggies.

Plants in containers often are not as susceptible to disease as those grown in the garden. However it is still important to watch for any problems. Be sure to remove or treat any leaves that show damage before the problem spreads to an entire plant or other plants. If necessary destroy entire plants to keep disease or insects from causing further damage.

Containers take a little work, but they are so

rewarding to enjoy. My veggie containers have the dual role of adding visual interest and supporting my culinary attempts. They are a rewarding way to enjoy spring and summer each year. Barb Amundsen



(Helleborus Sue Kesti)

GARDEN HUMOR

I told my brother that I was going to work on the newsletter. He said, are you plotting it out? I said, after tilling through my thoughts and articles I could plant the seeds in our newsletter. He replied, don't forget to weed anything out that needs to go because your seeds need to grow. Mark and Joan Lenhard

GARDEN STORY

It started a little over 2.5 years ago when I came across a picture of a garden. I can not remember the garden but the designer was Piet Oudolf. I was fascinated by what I saw. I needed to learn more. That brings us to today.

On a very cold bitter January night, temps at zero

or below with blowing snow led me to believe it was not the night to be out driving. Piet Oudolf's movie Five Seasons was playing at the Detroit Institute of Art. I was going to miss it. This did not deter me from seeking out more on this man and his designs.

As my thirst for his works grew I looked at his gardens online and throughout the seasons. I have looked at pictures of the High Line Battery Park in NYC. I have seen the Lurie Garden in Millennium Park Chicago and the Botanical Gardens in Toronto. But at the time of these visits I did not know he was the designer.

Piet is the designer for the project on Belle Isle. This time a garden closer to home and one I can visit in all seasons once completed. The planting was delayed a year ago due to the extensive flooding and erosion on the Isle. I wonder if that problem will still be in existence this year? The delay this year most likely will be C-19. Will these glorious gardens come to be, and when?

I am not sure whether the Master Gardener program ever approved this site as a learning and education site for volunteer hours. I inquired a few times. I hope they see the wisdom in getting many people on board planting this garden. I would learn about combinations, species and cultivars, color, texture, layout, care and maintenance. My head is spinning.

I have read *A New Perspective*: by Oudolf and Kingsbury last year. With the library being closed I have had over 8 weeks to let my mind wonder what if with his latest book, *Planting the Natural Garden*, by Piet Oudolf and Henk Gerritsen and edited by Noel Kingsbury. I have read through the book 2 or 3 times. I have reviewed chapters and pictures 5 or 6 times. I have looked at his planting lists countless times. Yes, I am a bit obsessed. I keep wondering how I can plant and design a garden like one of his. It will be on a very small scale but the challenge that lays ahead is one that I think I must try. Well I am going to sign off. I have a garden book to peruse and wonder what my garden will look like sometime in the future.

Joan Lenhard

BUDGET / MEMBERSHIP

Barb Lowes worked on and revised our budget for the upcoming fiscal year. The board was presented the budget via email and approved.

Barb reached out to folks who have been previous members and asked if they were renewing? I for one forgot to send in my membership. Glad I was prompted. Joan Lenhard

ANNUAL MEETING

Stay tuned this event has been canceled. I know this is disappointing but your health is of great concern. Barbara Spottek-co chair.

MAY BIRTHDAYS

Sue Kesti
Lorane DeYoung
Temp Petovello

MGC STATE ANNUAL MEETING JUNE 2020

No definitive answers on this event. Stay tuned.

WEBSITES

Websites/Calendars to check for gardening events
Capital Area Master Gardeners –
www.mgacac.wordpress.com

Michigan Master Gardener Association –
www.michiganmastergardener.org

Let's Garden Lansing - letsgardenlansing.org
Allen Neighborhood Center –
www.allenneighborhoodcenter.org/exchange/

Michigan State University Horticulture Gardens -
https://www.canr.msu.edu/hrt/our_gardens/

Michigan Volunteer Management System –
www.michigan.volunteersystem.org



(Design from March Garden Show)

Four additional pictures were inserted from our March Garden Show. One earlier in newsletter. Hope you enjoy.



(Design by Luke full of games)



(Design by Luke full of games)