

# TWIGS

## The Garden Club of Greater Lansing Newsletter

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Distribution: Reba Torongo

### PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

What a summer we are entering! The GCGL has been getting busier every day. Thankful feedback from members as contacts have been by phone that all are healthy and keeping busy. In addition, the Garden Attack had an enthusiastic response and another opportunity to be in contact with membership. Thank you Deb Albert for getting us started!

It is a joy to see how we continue to be in touch and progress with the upcoming events and critical details of our club. Your board continues to keep us moving and staying in touch even during the stay at home restrictions. At this time I want to thank the two board members who will be stepping back from officer responsibilities.

Barbara Lowes has been a member since 2003. She served as treasurer for seven years. Part of that time, she also served as recording secretary for the board as well as membership. She motivated several garden club members to take a train trip to the Missouri Botanical Gardens and visit the headquarters of National Garden Club. She will be looking forward to many more travel adventures in the future.

Reba Torongo has been a member since 1988. She served as recording secretary for the board meetings this past year. If you have ever served as secretary for a club, you can surely appreciate the effort to record motions, discussions and decisions that occur. Many times, that can be a

challenge to sort through the details and sometimes many voices that all go on at the same times. In her usual fashion, she handled her duties with grace and humor. The board always knew we would get the minutes in timely fashion. Those that know Reba appreciate her sense of style and attention to detail. What a joy to see her fashionable outfit complete with matching scarf, tasteful jewelry complete with carefully applied make up and styled hair on her first zoom board meeting. Reba has been active in so many capacities in GCGL but the ones I am most familiar with are her beautiful dried flowers. She has created all our name badges and lead work shops on the use of dried flowers.

The GCGL continues to stay vibrant and involved through these changing times and I look forward to when we all can gather together again, in person. Sue Kesti

### HORTICULTURE

My experiences with ground covers have been mixed. I have a love/hate relationship with them. There are several in my yard that I really enjoy.

Although some gardens can use taller ground covers, in my garden all are very low. Mine also have few demands for care other than basic growing conditions. All add texture, color with flowers and/or leaves, help to control weeds, fill empty space, help to hold soil, control moisture, and in general enhance the appearance of an area. They work well as a border plant. In addition many

appear to have few issues with disease, deer, or other problems. So what's not to like????



(Kamchicum)

A ground cover is a plant that (as its name implies) will spread and cover the ground. While they are not invasive, some can be aggressive spreaders. This year we are fighting to control lamium, (or dead nettle). There are several varieties. Mine is about 4-5" high, has a dense mat of dark green leaves and prolific mauve flowers throughout the summer. The effect is lovely color that lasts for a long time. Mine has been growing around an old tree stump near my driveway and filling an area from the stump to a flagstone path. This year it spread across the path and traveled all the way down the south side of my house (about 25 feet).

I chose Vinca for its attractive purple flowers and green leaves with white edges. However, it is another that started around a tree and is traveling along a garden path. It's good that most ground covers have shallow roots and unwanted plants can come out easily.

I never had much luck with Ajuga despite several attempts. The bronze to burgundy leaves are so appealing, and I've been careful to keep it in shade, with sufficient water. For me. it still seems to grow very unevenly, with bare patches from missing (dead) plants. I'll just have to admire the effect in someone else's yard.

A number of sedums can be used as ground covers. I have a lovely old one called,

Kamchaticum. Mine actually came from my mother's home in Madison. It is a prolific grower, with bright green leaves and yellow flowers. Again, if anyone wants a start, I have extra.

Pachysandra is a wonderful ground cover that grows best in the shade. It minds its manners and still provides a dense base of leaves. While the flowers are relatively inconspicuous, the foliage contributes texture to any area. An additional advantage is that the leaves work well as a filler in flower arrangements.



(Lamium)

Creeping phlox blooms from spring to early summer. The blossoms are so dense during the growing season that you hardly notice the leaves. The color range keeps expanding and they are lovely. A consideration is that the plants cannot be stepped on without being damaged.

There are so many more great ground covers available. We just need to remember to give them some space to run, and then we should expect them (or control them) to stay in that space. Barb Amundsen

## GARDEN ATTACK NEWS

Garden Attack was shared with GCGL as an invitation to either be on an Attack Team spending an hour gardening for a member who needed help or as that person with the garden that needs a friend's help.

On May 31, 2020 we began and on 6/8/2020 we finished with Phase One of Garden Attack - those friends that needed help. Phase two and three

are designed to repeat the process, hopefully engaging more people and gardens and returning the favor.

Please jump on board if you are interested. This project has been very rewarding and very fun - a social recharge! The feedback has been positive and uplifting. Deb Albert

It felt so good to recently have a purpose – namely attacking obnoxious weeds in a fellow GCGL members garden, along with Joan Lenhard. It was reminiscent of working in Scott Sunken Garden where many hands made for easy work. If I hadn't moved from my house last summer, I would have been an attackee rather than an attacker. Barbara Lowes

The gardens need rain. Over at Tootsie's I was able to weed and get some work done. Visiting with Tootsie and Ann S was great. It is nice to see members and catch up. Linda Norwood.

Martha Brick was super excited about our challenge. First of all she wondered if she would remember how to drive on the highway. HAHA. She met one our newer members Daiva and had a wonderful experience visiting and helping out.

#### **MEMBER UPDATE**

Quarantine, social distancing and questionable spring weather didn't keep our members from gardening. Barb Church mentioned a new spicebush attracted a spicebush swallowtail butterfly, as advertised. Sandra Olsson with a little family help build two elevated garden beds and Suzanne Burger shared plants from her shade garden. I am still weeding.

We all seem to enjoy reading as much as gardening. Tempest is a mystery and crime buff. Especially, the Robert B Parker Spenser series. She loves getting TWIGS because it keeps her in touch with the members and she saves all of them and re-reads them. Thank you Joan Lenhard for the fine work you do. I am still weeding but now my daughter is helping.

Everyone I contacted loves the opportunity to bring our members up to date on what is happening in their lives.

Donna is busy as a bee. She has a new colony developing. She also mentioned if anyone wants her products she is still producing and will meet you somewhere to get you your remedies/honey.

Sharon D is busy in her garden and it has turned into great therapy. She is busy quilting and reading. She recommends the book *Educated*, by Tara Westover.

Phyllis is very grateful the help she received. She has been challenged recently and this was a gift.

Tootsie is happy that people came to her home and helped out with her garden. Right now she is loving all of her iris's.

Ann Lipkowitz is thankful that the golf courses are open. This is a way to get out have sunshine and fresh air. Ann Lenhard and Cherie Rogers

Former GCGL Member Peggy Bee passed away recently. Peggy was a member from 1987 till 2007 when she and husband Bob retired to Florida. Bob is still living, but has dementia. He will be moving back to MI so his daughter can care for him. Joanne Bauer

#### **HOMEMADE RECIPE**

Gardeners are you familiar with the home version of Round-up; in other words a glyphosate alternative:

- 1 - gallon white vinegar
- 2 - cups Epson salts
- 1/4 - cup Dawn Ultra

The challenge with this is two fold according to WJR Radio's Outdoor Guy

1. getting the Epson salt into solution
2. finding a sprayer that can discharge the resulting solution

Do we have among us a team that would/could find a spray bottle and also a larger sprayer that

can handle this? If we can find the source it would be marketable as Ways and Means and be right up there with our glove sales. Deb Albert

### GARDEN TOURS

Our original plan was to have an additional tour of **Sixteen Sprigs Lavender Farm** on Lansings' north side. West of Groesbeck Golf/north of Grand River. This has been canceled. *However*, the great news is you can make contact with them and set up a small group or individual time to tour. Check out the website links later in the TWIGS.

Our **July garden tour** will take place with the following caveats. Tour 1 is from 10:00-10:45 OR Tour 2 from 11:00-11:45. This is being done to accommodate parking, number of people and traffic flow at the garden. I am accepting phone calls starting July 1<sup>st</sup> for you to choose either one of the tour times. I can be reached at 484-4817. This is my home phone. Please leave a detailed message if you are setting up for yourself or multiple people. I will confirm with you to take a tour. I will give you the address with tour confirmation. It can be found by N. Genesee and Bartlett St., yellow house with wood fence. (1 curve to the right off of MLK going west on Genesee or 1 Block south of Saginaw on Bartlett St going east before MLK). Parking will be a challenge but very doable. Remember the streets in this community are narrow and trying to stay on one side of the road will be most kind to the neighbors.

### IIB GARDEN MEETING

A zoom meeting was held for members in leadership areas of IIB. The team members who attended the meeting were brought up to date about how the State & National Associations are still communicating and providing services to its members. The IIB leadership team has helped the State move forward in meetings, communications and the different educational schools offered. WE are very fortunate to have a great team of people so close by to help.

Discussions about how to proceed forward evolved in the meeting. The Fall meeting is

canceled but the team agreed to host a spring meeting 2021. Meetings are taking place via zoom. We have expertise in this area with members on this committee. Reach out and learn a new skill with the help of your fellow gardeners. Members of the team talked about how they are staying connected to their membership. This is very similar to what we are doing. We are all so much smarter than we think. Joan Lenhard

### JULY BIRTHDAYS

Margie Melville  
Barb Amundsen

Linda Brownell  
Cheryl Rogers

### GARDEN QUESTION & HELP



I was left with a barren wasteland after excavation to install water from well to house. The two pictures shows what is left. Looking for low grower to compliment *Chrysogonum virginianum*.



If anyone has some ideas about what could be planted to help shape up this area I would appreciate it. Deb Albert

## WEBSITES

Websites/Calendars to check for gardening events  
Capital Area Master Gardeners –  
[www.mgacac.wordpress.com](http://www.mgacac.wordpress.com)

Michigan Master Gardener Association –  
[www.michiganmastergardener.org](http://www.michiganmastergardener.org)  
Let's Garden Lansing - [lets gardenlansing.org](http://lets gardenlansing.org)  
Allen Neighborhood Center –  
[www.allenneighborhoodcenter.org/exchange/](http://www.allenneighborhoodcenter.org/exchange/)

Michigan State University Horticulture Gardens -  
[https://www.canr.msu.edu/hrt/our\\_gardens/](https://www.canr.msu.edu/hrt/our_gardens/)

Michigan Volunteer Management System –  
[www.michigan.volunteersystem.org](http://www.michigan.volunteersystem.org)

## Links from article

Sixteen Sprigs Lavender Farm call 803-3081  
<http://www.sixteensprigs.org>  
*Facebook Sixteen Sprigs Lavender Farm*

I will continue to show pics of my garden as it grows. I just wasn't sure what would come up and now I think I will have lots of produce.



In this picture you can see the trellis is being covered with beans, I hope cucamelons, zucchini. The tall plants are tomatillo. In this bed I have some peppers, tomatoes and carrots -if they ever make an appearance.

In the second picture is a view of the three beds. Tomatoes are in all three beds, peppers in two beds, carrots in two beds, squash up front, beets in the second bed, dill popping up in all three beds.

I am so glad to have had this summer to create this haven for me. I weed early in the morning. I try to be in by 9:00. If I am out later I am following the shade around my house and it must be a cooler day with less humidity. I can't wait to see what next month will look like. Joan Lenhard



## ELECTIONS

Congratulations to our board. The members were sent a slate of potential officers for our Club. We held this election via email. For the members who do not have an email address they were given a call and allowed to vote. With a great return rate this is the outcome of the election.

### 20-21 Garden Club of Greater Lansing Board

President Sue Kesti

Co-Vice President Ronalee Polad & Joan Lenhard

Treasurer Deb Albert

Recording Secretary Barb Amundsen

Corresponding Secretary Ann Lenhard