



# Roots & Shoots

A Publication for Members of the MASTER GARDENER SOCIETY OF OAKLAND COUNTY, INC.

February 2017

## Reminder – February General Meeting

Tuesday, February 14, 2017

Beautiful Savior Lutheran Church

5631 North Adams Road, Bloomfield Hills

Please note special time – Dinner at 6 p.m.,

Business Meeting, Induction of Officers, Sylvia Schult

Award, Martha Humphrey Award at 6:15 p.m.,

Speaker 6:45 p.m.

**SPEAKER: Chris Wilson**

**Hosta Virus X (includes CD!)**

Free to MGSOC Members! Join us to meet and mingle your fellow Master Gardeners!

*Please wear your MG badge.* Visitors pay \$5.

Complimentary refreshments and desserts served.

Dinner of soup (winter) or salads (summer) may be purchased for \$3.

## DO YOU HAVE YOUR TICKET TO THE 2017 MASTER GARDENER EDUCATIONAL CONFERENCE????

The Master Gardener Society of Oakland County, Inc. Garden Conference Committee is selling tickets for our 5th Annual Educational Garden Conference *Gardening and All That Jazz – Instruments for Great Design*. The date is **Saturday, April 22, 2017** and this is an all-day seminar. Early bird tickets are \$70; **after March 14, 2017 the price increases to \$80**. The price includes continental breakfast, lunch, and all program materials. This outstanding educational conference will again be held at the **Oakland Schools Conference Center**, 2111 Pontiac Lake Road, in Waterford. [www.osevents.org](http://www.osevents.org). Those who are Master Gardeners will receive 5 educational hours for the day. **This year's speakers will be Shawna Coronado, Kelly D. Norris, Jessica Walliser and Paul Zammit.**

For details on the speakers and their websites, garden market, food choices, live jazz, and to register, please visit the home page of our website <http://www.mgsoc.org/index.php>. If you have questions, please direct them to **Laura Miehl** via e-mail: [Laura.Miehl@gmail.com](mailto:Laura.Miehl@gmail.com). But do it now ... don't miss out! ■

## Note From Your Editor

Since most Americans spend 90% of their time indoors, it is important to have good, quality air to breathe. Home cleaning products, upholstery, furnishings, carpets, paints, adhesives, electronics, textiles, wood products, and car exhaust fumes all contribute to poor, indoor air quality. These factors have been proven to cause headaches, nausea, eye, nose, and ear irritations, and dizziness. Adding houseplants is an easy and affordable way to increase air quality in your home and office. They take in carbon dioxide and release oxygen into the air, and the microorganisms in the potting soil have their own cleaning properties. An added bonus, plants just make you feel better by lowering stress levels, blood pressure, reducing mental fatigue, and increasing alertness.

Want to purify the air in your home? Then you will want to add these houseplants to boost the air quality in your home. To be effective, for every 100 square feet in your home, you should have two houseplants.

### 1. Aloe Vera (*Aloe vera* or *A. barbadensis*)

Not only is this plant low-maintenance, it has wound-healing, anti-inflammatory, and antibacterial properties. Its leaves contain a clear liquid packed with amino acids, enzymes, and vitamins.

### 2. Bamboo Palm (*Chamaedorea seifritzii*)

This palm is a superstar in purifying air, because it grows to a height of 4 to 12 feet. It thrives in bright light or full sun.

### 3. Boston Fern (*Nephrolepis exaltata* v. *Bostoniensis*)

Dating back to the Victorian era, this excellent air purifier is known for its curved fronds and feather-like leaves. Great for hanging baskets. It prefers moist soil, indirect light, high humidity, and a cool location by a window.

### 4. Dracaena (*Dracaena* spp.)

Don't let this slow-growing plant fool you, it can grow up to 15 feet. It resembles a palm with its long, wide leaves. Some of its 40 species are variegated with red, cream, and white. Water occasionally and place it in moderate light. Pet owners beware, they are toxic to cats and dogs.

### 5. English Ivy (*Hedera helix*)

Looking for a plant that thrives in dark rooms with little sunlight? Then this hearty, climbing vine is right for you.

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## SAYING GOODBYE – A NOTE FROM CAROL ...

Hi from sunny Florida! As I sit outside enjoying a gorgeous morning, I'm thinking of you and want to say a huge THANK YOU to all of you who were involved in the MGSOC retirement party for me.



It could not have been more perfect and it was so much fun! I was able to talk to everyone who came and enjoy the delicious hors d'oeuvres. Upon arriving, I was presented with a beautiful wrist corsage made with white sweetheart roses!

The program was funny and touching. Susan Tatus McLarty wrote and sang a song about me (I wondered why she was grilling me about my background and education in an email a few weeks earlier!). Margy Truza also serenaded us with her copyrighted version of *Happy Trails to You*. Both songs accompanied by a pianist! (I think it's time to officially resurrect the *Oakland County Master Gardener Society Not Quite Ready for Prime Time Choir!*) Guaranteed to make you feel good. Margy, Sally Bolle and Mary Wilson almost brought me to tears with their kind words and I was absolutely stunned by the very, very generous gift from the Society.

I want to thank the committee for their hard work on putting my retirement party together...Sally Bolle, Margy Truza, Betty Peters, Nancy Schmid, Sylvia Schult and Nora Melvin. I've always said that MGSOC really knows how to throw a party!

So, thank you. These two words don't quite seem like enough because you made the last 13 years of my job so exciting, so fun, and so challenging. I was incredibly lucky to get the MG coordinator position and to meet and work with you. In your volunteering you make a positive impact on all you serve, whether you realize it or not. You've also made a huge positive impact on my life and I'm grateful to all of you.

Again, thank you...

Hope to see you at the *All That Jazz* Conference in April,

Love, Carol ■

*Here are just a few of the photos going into a book for Carol ... photos courtesy of Margy Truza, Sylvia Schult and Sally Bolle.*





# INVASIVE PLANTS

By Jean Gramlich

**Laura Zigmanth**, who owns a landscaping company specializing in natives, gave us an informative lecture on invasive plants at our February 2016 meeting. There are six categories of invasives: uplands, marginal, wetlands/aquatic, vines, decorative, and “natives gone wild.”

Uplands invasives include honeysuckle, which forms thick dense shrubs that smother other plants. Like many other invasives, they produce lovely red berries that are attractive to birds, which helps the plants along by seeding it all over the place. Another plant we now see in our woodlands, probably due to propagation by birds, is barberry. It too can smother other plants, and it has nasty thorns to boot. Norway maples have long been used in our landscapes as a shade tree, but its wind-dispersed seeds have escaped and can form dense mats of seedlings. They also use lots of water and therefore deprives other plants around them. Burning bush is another plant that attracts birds, which disperses its seeds.

Autumn olive was planted everywhere before we discovered its invasiveness; now we have acres and acres of it. Again, birds spread its seeds, and it out-competes its neighbors by fixing nitrogen. It has nasty thorns; voice of experience talking! Another thorny nuisance is the multiflora rose, which forms a dense thicket where nothing else can grow. The flowers are white; the thorns are bent. Branches root where they touch the soil. Birds are attracted to the red hips. Garlic mustard grows in shady areas and forms dense mats. It is allelopathic and suppresses our lovely spring ephemerals in the woods. It may interfere with mycorrhizal relationships with tree roots.

Marginal invasives include buckthorn, which is also allelopathic and forms monocultures. The seeds are toxic to birds, which propagate them. They leaf out earlier than other native plants, thus shading them out. Reed canary grass is a running grass, which grows 4-5 feet tall. Purple loosestrife was brought in by the horticultural trade, because it has beautiful flowers. It crowds out native plants and reduces biodiversity. A beetle imported to control it seems to be working.

Wetland and aquatic invasive plants include one of the worst of all: phragmites. It is a running grass that grows 5-20 feet tall, forming dense areas of monoculture, which crowds out our native cattails and the biodiversity of the wetlands. It changes the hydrology of the area. Cutting and dabbing with a pesticide works in a small area, as does swiping from August 15 to frost. Yellow flag iris is sold in the trade as a pond plant. It can spread into a huge clump and easily escape by seed. Flowering rush is also sold by nurseries and crowds out natives. It spreads by bulblets and seeds; can be controlled with mechanical removal.

Oriental bittersweet is a destructive vine, which winds itself around trees. This causes girdling and destroys the tree by its weight. It crowds out native plants and depends on birds for seed dispersal. Black swallowwort is a member of the milkweed family with wind-dispersed seeds. It smothers other plants and is particularly pernicious. Monarch butterflies will lay their eggs on it, but the caterpillars cannot grow and thrive on it. Cutting and dabbing with pesticide works, but is very tedious. Myrtle, commonly used as a groundcover in landscaping, crowds out spring ephemerals. Its waxy leaves are resistant to pesticides.

Invasive plants that are decorative include Dame's rocket, which resembles phlox with showy flowers. One plant can produce 20,000 seeds! Baby's breath is another prolific seed-producer commonly used in perennial gardens. Spotted knapweed has a pretty, purple flower and grows in disturbed areas.

Some natives have become invasive, as well. Box elders are a kind of maple, which has become annoyingly ubiquitous. Grapevines are apparently becoming more vigorous due to climate change. The weight of

the vines can damage trees, and thick foliage can shade out the leaves of whatever they are growing on. Black locust is native to the southeastern U.S., and can attract all kinds of insects and diseases. It can send up sprouts from the roots and form a clonal population.

Other invasives that Laura touched on may be in your future: privet, tree of heaven (it forms clonal populations), Japanese honeysuckle vine, kudzu, mile-a-minute weed, giant hogweed, Japanese knotweed (a botanical wonder), giant reed, blue fescue, leafy spurge, Japanese stilt grass, narrow-leaf cattail, water lettuce, or hyacinth.

Monitoring is the first line of defense against invasives. Identify the plants, and if possible, get them while they are little. Methods of getting rid of invasives depend on the plant: hand pulling, spraying, digging out, hand swiping with pesticide, and cutting and dabbing with pesticide. Always wear protective clothing, use the right tools, and follow the law. If the job is too big, call a licensed, insured professional.

Plant the right plant in the right place, and in the right ecosystem to protect our wildlife and biodiversity! ■





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FOR 2017 SEASON  
**PART-TIME FLEXIBLE HOURS**  
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248-217-6459

*Note From Your Editor (continued)*

- 6. Ficus/Weeping Fig (*Ficus benjamina*)**  
This hardy, low-maintenance plant grows between 2 and 10 feet. It likes bright, indirect light. Make sure you let it dry out between waterings.
- 7. Garden Mum (*Chrysanthemum morifolium*)**  
These popular, inexpensive plants are champions of air purifiers, because they remove toxins, such as, benzene, formaldehyde, and ammonia.
- 8. Golden Pothos (*Epipremnum aureum*)**  
Is a fast-growing vine with dark green leaves. Its golden streaks with marbling makes it an attractive plant for both home and office. Place near an entryway to the garage to cut down on car exhaust fumes creeping into the house.
- 9. Lady Palm (*Rhapis excelsa*)**  
This tree-like species is slow-growing, but easy to grow. Its leaves are fan-like.
- 10. Peace Lily (*Spathiphyllum sp.*)**  
These easy to grow, fragrant plants will flower periodically for about a month. Keep the soil moist, but do not overwater. They thrive in low-light. Also, toxic to pets.
- 11. Snake Plant (*Sansevieria trifasciata*); also called mother-in-law's tongue**  
This sharp-leaf, hardy plant is one of the hardest to kill, as it prefers drier conditions and thrives in low-light. It lowers carbon dioxide levels at night by releasing oxygen.
- 12. Spider Plant (*Chlorophytum comosum* "Vittatum")**  
One of the easiest houseplants to grow. It reproduces quickly, sending out long, grassy shoots with flowers, called baby spider plants or spiderettes. Thrives in bright, indirect light.
- 13. Wax Begonia (*Begonia semperflorens*)**  
This semi-woody succulent loves sunlight. Its flower clusters of red, pink, and white bloom in summer.

*Happy Gardening, Marsha Beeman* ■

**FEBRUARY GARDEN TIP**

Want to de-stress after a long, hard day? Then think about growing the following soothing scents, which also have some medicinal properties. **Anise (*Pimpinella anisum*; Apiaceae family)** is very sweet and aromatic. **Basil (*Ocimum basilicum*; Lamiaceae family)**; also called great basil or Saint-Joseph's wort. Grow 'Genovese' for its wonderful aroma and 'Lemon' for its citrus scent. **Bay (*Laurus nobilis*, Lauraceae family)** has a distinctive flavor and fragrance. **Chamomile (*Asteraceae* family)** has many medicinal purposes. **Eucalyptus (*Myrtaceae*, myrtle family)** is also a cure for joint pain. **Lavender (*Lavandula*, mint family, Lamiaceae)** is very fragrant and is known for its anti-inflammatory, antiseptic, and sleep aide properties. **Peppermint (*Mentha piperita*, Lamiaceae)** is also good for muscle and nerve pain, irritable bowel syndrome, and heartburn. **Rose (*Rosa*, Rosaceae family)** hips provide a minor source of vitamin C. And, **Thyme (*Thymus*, mint family, Lamiaceae)** is also an antiseptic in hand sanitizers. ■

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