Control Garden Weeds Organically

Most of the things we do in a garden also encourage weeds. Bare soil in any form is an invitation for weeds to grow because weeds are nature’s opportunists. Most weed plants grow faster than food crops, so weeds will shade or starve out your babies unless you protect them. In addition to basic organic weed-control methods, such as hand-weeding, shallow hoeing, and deep mulching, innovative techniques, such as creating “weed moats,” can help control common garden weeds such as Bermuda grass, puncture vine, and other troublesome plants.

Weed Control Basics

Weed prevention follows a predictable pattern in the vegetable garden. About 10 days after you plant a crop, the bed or row will need careful hand-weeding, followed by a second weeding session 10 days later. Slow-growing, upright crops, such as carrots and onions, may need a third or fourth weeding to subdue weeds, but they’re the exception. After a month of attentive weeding, most veggies will be large enough to shade out weedy competitors. Plus, you can use mulch to block the growth of weeds between widely spaced plants, such as tomatoes and peppers.

Weeding Tools to Topple Weed Trouble

At North Slope Farm in Lambertville, New Jersey, three scheduled weedicings — the first two with a scuffle hoe, and the third by hand — are part of the organic weed-prevention program developed by owner Michael Rassweiler. “We like to use a scuffle hoe to go up and down the rows right after germination and then again one to two weeks later, depending on the crop’s growth.” Rassweiler says that hand-weeding is usually needed after the second hoeing, but it’s quick — hoeing between the rows has already cleaned out most of the weeds.

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 2)
Scuffle hoes, which include stirrup and circle hoes, have blades with two opposing sharp edges that cut when pushed and pulled, and most gardeners with big plots consider them essential equipment. But when we asked Mother’s Facebook followers which weeding tool they couldn’t do without, the sturdy weeding knife, often called a hori-hori, was the clear winner. Weeding knives feature long, sharp edges that shave down weeds, and have a pointed end for prying out strong taproots, such as those found under dock weeds or dandelions. Many folks also consider hand-weeding, with follow-up mulching, effective and rewarding work.

Most organic gardeners depend heavily on mulch, particularly newspapers or cardboard covered with grass clippings, old leaves, or straw, to control even the most aggressive weeds. Be advised: Deep mulching too early can delay the warming of spring soil and encourage problems with slugs, so mulch after a thorough late spring or early summer weeding.

Surface mulches deprive weed seeds of light and increase their natural predation by providing habitat for crickets, ground beetles, and other seed-eaters. The cool, moist conditions under mulch will also cause many weed seeds to rot, so mulches that give good surface coverage can both prevent and cure seemingly overwhelming weed issues.

“Cardboard saves me a multitude of work,” says J.C. Siembida of Salem, Ohio. “I save cardboard all year and sort it into widths, and then use narrow pieces between peas, beans, and corn, while larger sheets are used between squash and pumpkin plants. Then, I put a layer of aged leaves on top.” In Seminole, Oklahoma, Robin Lambert at Red Sky Farm fills a high tunnel with vegetables mulched with cardboard topped by straw. Her earthworms love it, and she says the technique allows her to keep up with weeds.

**Control Runaway Summer Weeds**

Because a single healthy crabgrass plant can produce 150,000 seeds, or about 20,000 seeds per square foot, you may not be able to keep up. Redroot pigweed can shed a million seeds in a lucky season. This is why it’s crucial to clip, mow, weed-whack, or otherwise disable weeds before they mature enough to shed seeds. You usually can’t dig or pull almost-mature weeds growing among food plants without devastating your planting, so lopping off the weeds just above the soil line is a better intervention.

Let’s say the worst has happened, and robust weeds took over your garden and covered the ground with millions of seeds. In this case, the last thing you’ll want to do is cultivate, which would distribute the seeds deep into the soil, where they could remain dormant for years, waiting for sun and warmth to trigger germination. Instead, keep the weed seeds on the undisturbed surface, where you can do something about them. Begin by covering the space with mulch or small piles of dead plants to provide habitat for ground beetles, crickets, and other seed-eaters, and leave it covered all winter.

In early spring, remove the mulch, allow the bed to dry, and then use a stiff broom to sweep debris to the end of the bed, where you can gather it and dump it in a spot too shady for garden weeds to grow. Next, cover the bed with a row-cover tunnel to warm the soil and help coax weed seeds to life a few weeks ahead of schedule. When the weeds are 2 inches tall, use a sharp hoe to slice them down, but try not to cut more than 1 inch deep into the soil. Wait another two weeks for a second flush of weeds to grow, then hoe them down again. The weed seed load in the soil should now be back to normal. By keeping the weed seeds isolated at the
How soon can I put in some of my vegetable seeds? How soon can my transplants that I have been growing go in? My tomatoes are already so tall that they are falling over. How do I handle that one?

The usual time for planting seeds in gardens is mid to late May. It has to do with soil temperatures, not air temperatures. Sure, you can put some of the cool season vegetable seeds in earlier, but if the soil is cold, they don’t grow. They just sit. There is what’s called a minimum temperature and there is an optimum temperature. For cool season vegetables, the minimum is about 40 degrees. The optimum temperature at which they will germinate and grow is 70 to 85 degrees. Optimum means your seeds will grow instead of sit. For warm season vegetables, the minimum is 60 degrees but the optimum, or best temperature is 80 to 95 degrees. Since the air temperatures have not been that high all year, the soil temperature could not be either. To find out the soil temperature, use a thermometer and check the soil temperature first thing in the morning before the sun warms it up. This is the true temperature. Check at the depth the seeds need to be planted. You could use a soil thermometer or a kitchen probe thermometer that measures both hot and cold. For the floppy tomatoes, you either started them too early or they did not get enough strong light. You need to do what is called “hardening off” of tomatoes before they go into the garden. The plants are gradually introduced to sunlight outdoors. The plants are put under the shade of a tree for an hour and each day the time is increased a bit. You are looking for new leaves to form at the top of the plant that are darker green with possibly a reddish tint and are smaller and sturdy. These are sun leaves. The current shade leaves would burn to a crisp in just a day or two if put outside. When planting tall leggy tomatoes, do not plant the more deeply. Dig a shallow trench and lay the plant sideways and curve the top of the plant up. Tomatoes will grow roots all along the stem. But if you planted them deeply, the soil is too cold for them to do that successfully. Many transplants are warm season vegetables like pepper, eggplant, tomatoes and melons. Wait until the end of May for them to be happy and grow.

I have a raspberry patch that I put in about four years ago. It produced well the first and second year but now, I am getting more dead canes showing up each year. They just die after I pick the fruit. These are called Heritage and they produce in the early fall. I thought that raspberries just had to be planted and there would always be fruit. You know, just plant and forget. What’s wrong with them?

Nothing is plant and forget except a dead racoon. All plants require some management. Most raspberries have canes or stems that are good for two years. The first year the shoot is called a primocane and is just vegetative growth. The second year, it is a florican and it produces fruit. Then it dies. You currently have a big mix of old, dead canes and growing canes. Heritage produces in the fall and can grow enough in one season to produce fruit in one growing season. You have two choices. If you want fall fruit, cut all the canes down to an inch or two from the soil. Or you can leave the canes and as they begin to grow, take your pruners and cut the tip so the canes become bushier. In June, there will be a small crop and then remove just the fruiting canes and leave the others. Dead canes need to be removed because they could encourage disease problems and also make picking a nightmare because there are too many useless canes and your hand and arm have to fit in places to get fruit.

Gretchen Voyle, MSU Extension-Livingston County Horticulture Educator 517/546-3950
German Chocolate Brownie Cookies

**Ingredients**

**For Brownie Cookies:**
- 8 oz semisweet chocolate- chopped
- 2 tablespoons unsalted butter (room temperature)
- 2 eggs
- ½ cup + 2 Tbsp granulated sugar
- ½ teaspoon vanilla extract
- ½ cup all-purpose flour
- ¼ teaspoon baking powder

**For German Chocolate Topping:**
- 1 cup evaporated milk
- 1 cup sugar
- 3 egg yolks
- ½ cup butter-softened
- 1 tsp. vanilla
- 1¼ cup sweetened shredded coconut-toasted
- 11/4 cup chopped pecans-toasted
- 5 oz. melted chocolate- for drizzle

**Instructions**

Preheat the oven to 350°F and line two large baking sheets with parchment paper, set aside.

Melt the butter and 8 oz. semisweet chocolate in a heatproof bowl over a saucepan of barely simmering water, stirring occasionally until smooth.

Stir together the eggs, vanilla and granulated sugar in a medium bowl, set aside.

Whisk together the flour and baking powder.

Add cooled melted chocolate mixture to the egg mixture and stir to combine.

Slowly add dry ingredients and stir until it is well incorporated. If the batter is to thin to scoop out, leave it in the fridge until it’s firm enough to handle!

Scoop about 1½ tablespoons of batter onto prepared baking sheets, leave 2 inch apart because the cookies will flatten while baking.

Bake for 10 minutes or until they are firm on the outside, but do not overbake!

To make the topping:

Combine evaporated milk, sugar, egg yolks and butter in a large saucepan and cook on stovetop over medium heat, stirring until thickened (about 12 minutes). Once thickened remove from heat and stir in vanilla, toasted coconut and pecans, stir well!!!. Set aside to cool enough to spread on tops of the cookies.

Spread topping over the cooled cookies, let it set then drizzle with melted chocolate.

Store in the fridge in an airtight container.
surface, encouraging predation, and then inviting remaining seeds to germinate and grow, you can undo much of the damage done when a weed seed rain turns into a monsoon.

**Weed Moats to Prevent Aggressive Spreaders**

Cold-hardy perennials are some of the most difficult weeds to control, in part, because they propagate by producing seed and horizontal stems called stolons or runners. Every North American climate seems to host weeds with these unique talents: quackgrass and bindweed in cold winter climates; Bermuda grass where winters are mild; and sand burs, such as puncture vine, in the West.

When you must garden under pressure from insistent, spreading weeds, your best bet may be to surround your garden with an open strip that you turn every three weeks. Or, dig a trench around your garden and fill it with finely cut wood chips or sawdust to form a soft “moat” that’s easy to slice through with a sharp spade, manual lawn edger, or nimble weeding tool, such as the long-handled Cobrahead weeder, which has a nose for weeds trying to jump a mulched moat. In warm summer weather, you’ll need to chop or slice through your mulch-filled weed moat every two weeks to keep it working properly.

In similar fashion, you can let a chicken moat or a wide chicken run separate spreading weeds from your garden. Chicken activity will leave the surface bare except for weeds chickens avoid, which you’ll need to go after by hand. In general, chickens shun prickly plants, such as nettles, and they know better than to eat pokeweed, burdock, and pigweed, which can be poisonous if chickens eat enough of them. If your birds avoid dining on or digging in certain weeds, they likely have a good reason.

**Planting Cover Crops for Weed Control**

Planting cover crops can be another savvy strategy for organic weed control. The goal is to replace unmanageable weeds with manageable soil-building plants. Some cover crops can be handled without large equipment, so they’re easy to put to work in a backyard garden, choking out weeds and building soil fertility. In my garden, I use vigorous mustard greens to smother weeds in unoccupied beds in spring, and then switch to buckwheat or crowder peas in summer. Late summer is a great time to sow oats, which die in cold weather from Zone 7 northward. The dead oat foliage serves as winter mulch that’s easy to rake up and compost in spring.

Daikon radishes are another great self-composting cover crop with excellent weed-suppressing and soil-improving properties. Daikon radishes planted in late summer can grow to more than 2 feet long by the time cold weather kills the plants. The roots promptly rot, creating deep, open channels for air, earthworms, and water. Research shows that plots cover-cropped with daikon radishes dry out and warm up quickly in spring, and stay weed-free until April.

By employing a mix of the organic weed control techniques that work best for you and your garden, you can avoid harmful herbicides. Plus, shifting focus to weed prevention means you’ll ultimately spend less time on labor-intensive weeding — and more time enjoying the fruits of your labor.

Barbara Pleasant
Hard-Working Garden Hoes

From left; the collinear draw hoe is good for weeding in tight places; a swan-neck, half-moon draw hoe cuts only on the pull (or draw) action of the hoe; a circle draw hoe works especially well in close quarters; the Warren hoe is capable of tackling tough weeds; this sturdy, multi-purpose field hoe handles small and large weeds and excels at trenching or hilling dirt. Illustrations by Elayne Sears

Anthropologists often say that humankind went “from bow to hoe” when switching from hunting and gathering to growing food. Garden hoes were probably the first gardening tools, made from sticks, antlers, bone and stone. Then as now, hoes were indispensable for shaping soil and controlling weeds. Every gardener needs at least one good hoe, and most serious gardeners use several. Hoes vary in the types of work they are designed to do, so the challenge is to choose the best hoes for the tasks that await in your garden.

Sizing Up Handles
A hoe is comprised of a head — of which there are several major variations, discussed below — and a handle. The handle can be made of wood, metal or fiberglass. Although most handles are straight, push-pull scuffle hoes may include a second “pistol grip” (link to image gallery) on the handle for easier operation.

The length of a hoe’s handle should correspond to both the nature and duration of its use. If you have many rows to weed in a large garden, a long-handled hoe you can use in an upright position will save time and muscle strain. On the other hand, if your garden is a small collection of intensively managed raised beds, you may find you prefer the more detailed weeding job you can do with a short-handled hoe. Many of the hoe heads described here are available mounted on short- and long-handled hoes. Artisan toolmakers, such as leftyfriendly Red Pig tools in Oregon and Rogue Hoe in Missouri, make state-of-the-art hoes (and “hand plows”) with 12-inch handles. Among long-handled hoes, handle length ranges from 55 to 60 inches for hoes you’d use when bending over, to 74 inches for hoes you’d use while standing up. Tall people should opt for the longest handle available. For folks of average height, a 65-inch handle offers good balance and grip.

With hard-to-weed carrots, beets and onions, you can often do a better job using a short-handled tool than you can using a hoe with a long handle. Some diversity in the handle lengths of your hoes is obviously in order.

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 7)
High-Efficiency Scuffle Hoes

Ready to start talking heads and blades? For most gardeners, a sharp, ultralight scuffle hoe is a top tool for controlling young weeds up to 4 inches tall. Scuffle hoes cut when you push and again when you pull on the handle, which makes them more efficient than hoes that cut in just one direction. Many scuffle hoes can be operated from a near-standing position, usually by swinging the blade through weeds instead of chopping them, which can be hard on your back. Scuffle hoes come in two designs:

Diamond or triangle hoes slice through weeds on all sides, so they make excellent use of time and energy. Models include DeWit’s diamond hoe ($47), Rogue Hoe’s triangle hoe ($25), and Fisher Industries’ Winged Weeder (about $20), which looks like a swept-back diamond hoe. At retail stores, look for Ames’ floral scuffle hoe for about $40.

Keep in mind that diamond and triangle hoes are dangerously sharp, so they must be handled carefully and stored out of the reach of young children. Their efficiency depends on the sharpness of their blades, so you should start every serious weeding session by honing out any bumps or dull spots in blades with a hand file or whetstone. When you use one of these hoes, make small, controlled movements to avoid slicing down seedlings instead of weeds.

Stirrup hoes are a safer alternative because their outer edges are smooth rather than sharp, reducing danger to nearby plants. Both edges of a stirrup hoe’s cutting blade are sharp, so it cuts on the push and the pull as you scuffle it through the soil. Many gardeners consider stirrup hoes a step up from diamond and triangle hoes, and they switch to stirrups for weeds that have formed clumps or grown more than 4 inches high. Prices range from $20 for a small Hu-la Hoe or other American-made model to about $50 for stirrup hoes from esteemed European toolmakers.

Endearing Draw Hoes

What about the traditional American garden hoe, which you can buy for less than $15 at garden and hardware stores? Called a draw hoe because it cuts only on the pull (or draw), a well-sharpened American garden hoe will slice down weeds reasonably well, and you can use it to shape beds, chop and mix compost, or make planting furrows. I keep one around (you never know when you might need to mix up a batch of concrete), but several higher-quality draw hoes are much better suited to controlling garden weeds. Starting with the lightest, here are some draw hoes worth considering:

Collinear hoes have thin, sharp blades that shave down young weeds and are nimble enough to get between closely spaced plants. People who grow a lot of onions eventually fall in love with these $40, featherweight hoes. Like diamond and triangle hoes, collinear hoes are only for weeding.

The unique design of the circle hoe ($30) makes it safer than the collinear hoes for close work. Circle hoes work well when used up close to your crops, but don’t cover as much ground as quickly as other styles. Swan-neck hoes have curved necks to enable less bending on the part of their human operators, but the phrase “swan neck” describes the hoe’s mount, not its cutting blade. You can get a swan neck with a Warren hoe blade (which has a triangular, often slightly curved blade); a flat, half-moon (semicircle) blade; or a number of other blade designs. Japanese draw hoes usually have a half-moon (semicircle) shape, but without the swan-neck
MASTER GARDENER ASSOCIATION  
MEETING JUNE 16, 2015

Call to order: The meeting was called to order by President Vicki Laurin

Review of Minutes: Motion and second by to accept the May 19, 2016 meeting minutes as presented with the additional correction that 17 (not 47) people stopped by the Grand Blanc Farmers market. Passed.

Treasurer's Report: Abi Saeed presented the treasurer's report. Beginning Balance: $39,121.36; Income $404.24; Expenses $947.06; Ending balance $38,588.54 (includes $10.00 Square Up savings account).

Kay McCullough – Projects Reports

Funded Projects

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chairperson</th>
<th>Project</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alicia Ellis (acting)</td>
<td>Desert Oasis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Some of the new MG graduates have helped with compost. The garden needs Hens &amp; Chicks.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Non-Funded Projects

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chairperson</th>
<th>Project</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alan Grove/Michelle Chockley</td>
<td>Ask a Master Gardener</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>– There were a total of 29 MG volunteers who helped and earned a total of $1487.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marilyn Nichols</td>
<td>Carriage Town</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>– Needs more volunteers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joanie Snyder</td>
<td>Crossroads Village (Monarch Way Station)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>– Eight new MG trainees are volunteering at CRV. The plants are in. Putting down mulch on Tuesday.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carol Groat/Betty Draper</td>
<td>Easter Seals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>– work days on Tuesdays- they need help on Saturday from 10-2pm.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beth Fromholz/Davies/Alan Grove</td>
<td>Farmers Market – Grand Blanc</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>– They had 15 people stop by the market.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sylvia Hansen</td>
<td>Flushing River Trail</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>– Work days are Wednesdays. Several MG trainees have volunteered at the Trail.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maggie Gregg</td>
<td>Humane Society</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>– The gardens have been planted. Thirty six flats were planted by 40 volunteers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loretta Elwood</td>
<td>Library Gardens</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>All library gardens will be planted on 6/25/16, beginning at 8:30am.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Rest Stop Projects

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chairperson</th>
<th>Project</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Loretta Elwood</td>
<td>US-23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Plants are in.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Kay McCullough-Standing Committee Reports

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Committee</th>
<th>Chairperson</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Banquet(Spring/Awards)</td>
<td>Loretta/Carolyn Malaski-NR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bulb Sale</td>
<td>Randy Tatro</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>– The bulb and tree sale were good this year. The total sales were $1918.00, leaving a balance of $959.00 to the Master Gardeners. There may be a Fall bulb sale.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bus Trip (educational)</td>
<td>Sabrina VanDyke</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>– There are 83 people signed up for the trip. Still some seats available. There will be bag lunches available at lunch. Kay will put the menu’s on the website for those who would rather have lunch at the restaurant.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clothing</td>
<td>Vicki Lauren/Kay McCullough</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>– Have found a clothing company in Michigan who is excited to have our business. They are less expensive than our former vendor</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Continued on Page 9)
and will not charge shipping or taxes. They will offer us wholesale prices plus embroidering. There are samples available, some run on the small side. There is a link on the website for the clothing. Order deadline date is 6/30/16. There will be other order dates. All sales are final.

DTE

Vicki Lauren/George Rappold—articles and recipes are needed, the membership is asked to supply anything they feel is of interest.

Fall into Spring

Loretta Elwood—the 2nd meeting is scheduled for 6/29. Janet has agreed to be a speaker, as has Jan Bells.

Garden Stones/Compost

Dick Moldenhauer—NR

Garden Tour

Kay McCullough—Mel Kennedy is promoting the tour on Facebook. Please “share” it. There are tickets available.

Hospitality

Gloria Roudebush—a card was sent to Phil Cave

Public Relations

Mel Kennedy—The garden tour at MSU is the same day as Honey Festival, 8/6/16.

Old Business

SOP’s the Board has completed, will be reviewed at the August Meeting.

New Business

The Nominations and Election Committee consists of Pam K., Barb Pethers and Nettie. They will use the 2016 timeline for election of officers.

Introduction of the new Board Members

Alan Grove is now 2nd Vice President and Sylvia Hansen will fill the open Director position until the end of 2016.

Abi Saeed has reached her one year Anniversary with the Genesee master gardeners and was given a small gift of appreciation. Hugs all around for an amazing year!

The Crossroads Village picnic will be on 7/17/16. Joanie will have tickets available. Please wear your name tag and bring a dish to pass. There will be boat and train rides available. Joanie Snyder moved and Sabrina VanDyke 2nd’d to end the meeting. Meeting adjourned 7:52pm.

10 Tips for Growing with Perennials

Perennials are easy-to-grow, dependable and offer such a wealth of different colors, shapes, textures and sizes that they have become the backbone of many gardens. Unlike annuals, which need to be replanted each spring, perennials arrive each year with a zest of new growth and beauty!

Here are 10 tips to remember about Perennials....

1. Herbaceous perennials lack a persistent stem; they die back to the ground during winter and regrow from the roots the next year so don't panic if you don't see stems in early spring!

(Continued on Page 10)
CONTINUED FROM PAGE 9)

2. Most perennials should be *divided when they are dormant*. (Spring bloomers in the fall; fall bloomers in early spring.

3. Perennials from temperate regions, like asters, irises, lupines, wallflowers, peonies and primroses, *need a cold winter* to encourage new buds to grow in spring.

4. Many perennials *spread by sending out shoots* from their roots which develop into new stems, great for filling in a bed or sharing with friends.

5. Some perennials, such as *columbines and delphiniums*, are short-lived, lasting only three or four years.

6. An *upside to perennial plantings* is the amazing varieties of color, texture and sizes available. They do require some pruning and maintenance, but their longevity makes this well worth the effort.

7. Generally speaking, perennial flowers start off small in the first year then with each growing season, *produces bigger and more abundant blooms*. Once they get to be about three years old, you might have to think about *dividing them* to keep them healthy and looking their best.

8. A key to *designing with perennials* is making sure there is *continuing blooms and interest* which means more careful garden planning than when using annuals.

9. With so many to choose from, *books on perennials* are an invaluable resource. They provide photographs for identification (and inspiration!), cultural information, a description of growth habits, bloom time, color and characteristics of special cultivars.

10. Even though most retailers are diligent and aware, still beware of *invasive perennial plants*. The best advice is to check with your state's *Department of Natural Resources* to learn which plants your state has

*Diane Blazek* at National Garden Bureau.
PERENNIALS FOR SHADE

It’s hard to beat hostas for shade. But don’t limit yourself. Consider these shade-lovers, all rugged and carefree.

1. **Heuchera**: Like hostas, the foliage is the thing. Leaf colors include silver, burgundy, purple-black, chartreuse, salmon and rusty orange. Some even have showy flowers.

2. **Foamflower**: A froth of white blooms in spring, followed by ground-covering, patterned foliage. Some varieties have burgundy-red leaf veins.

3. **Lungwort**: Silvery foliage with pink and blue flowers in earliest spring Astilbe: Though they are best known for their colorful plumes, the fine-textured foliage adds contrast to other plants.

4. **Foxglove**: Most are biennials, but they’re good reseeders.

5. **Japanese forest grass**: A low mound (12”) that cascades in shades of green and gold

6. **Primrose**: Flowers in every color of the rainbow – and tolerant of moist sites

7. **Spurge**: Consider several varieties. Euphorbia polychroma (shown) is a dome of chrome-yellow in spring.

8. **Lady’s mantle**: Each leaf seems to capture and showcase a droplet of morning summer.

Author unknown

(COTINUED FROM PAGE 7)

Mount. Subtle differences between products are endless, as you will see by looking at the selection of hoes sold by Lee Valley Tools and Rogue Hoe. At $25 to $55, draw hoes, inspired by Japanese gardeners’ dedication to sharp edges, make great all-around garden hoes.

Field or grub hoes are noticeably heavier than many other hoes, but as weeds gain size, these chopping champs quickly emerge as the best tools for the job. If you want to attack deep-rooted dock, burdock or Canada thistle, this is the kind of hoe you need. Their weight also makes them a top choice if you need to cut weeds growing up through hay or bark mulches. Field hoes also are great tools for cutting irrigation trenches, hilling up soil, taking down spent crops, or breaking up chunks of almost-done compost.

**Lovin' Care for Your Best Hoes**

Given reasonable care, a good hoe will last a lifetime, and often longer. Chopping into soil, rocks and roots dulls a blade, so you should keep a small mill file handy for sharpening your hoe ($2 to $5 at any hardware store). I keep a file with my gardening gloves so it’s always ready to grab on my way out the door.

You can make an old hoe seem young again by spiffing up the blade with a sharp edge, and by sanding and oiling the handle (linseed oil is preferred, but canola will do in a pinch). Some stirrup and collinear hoes have replaceable blades, and there is no limit to how many times you can replace a hoe’s handle. After you discover how effective a high-quality hoe can be, you won’t mind spending a few minutes now and then keeping it in top condition — something smart gardeners have known for nearly 10,000 years.
2016 Annual Educational MGAGCM Bus Trip, Thursday, July 21, 2016

Thursday, July 21, 2016

There are still seats available and if you are interested in going you can download a registration form on our website at: geneseecountymg.org. This proves to be an excellent trip and for $45.00 you can’t beat the price.

CLOTHING ORDERS

Our first clothing order was a big success as we had over 46 orders. As with anything there will be glitches and we all will be learning as we go along. Thank you for being patient with us as we work on making this a very successful project. Our next order will be due on July 29th.

We will need a payment in full to reach our PO Box before we can send your order in so if you want to order something please make sure your check reaches our PO Box before the deadline of July 29th. When the orders come in you will be called and you may pick them up at the Extension office during hotline hours, M-W-F from 8:30 am-1:00pm ONLY. Also, we will bring the shirts to our membership meetings so you can pick them up at that time. Mail check to: PO Box 34, Flushing, Mi. 48433. Go to: geneseecountymg.org/shirt-order.html

DATES TO REMEMBER

Don’t miss our annual MGAGCM Picnic at Crossroads Village on July 17, 2016. Please wear your MG name tag and/or shirt for free admission. We ask that you bring a dish to pass and your own table utensils and drinks. Dinner will begin at 1:30 pm and after dinner you can stroll through the village and enjoy a river boat cruise on the “Belle” and also a train ride. This is always an enjoyable time and a wonderful way to spend a Sunday afternoon. There will be no business meeting this month.

HELP US SOLVE THE MYSTERY

Someone at our awards banquet won tickets for the bus trip. Whoever you are would you please notify Sabrina Van-Dyke or Michelle Chockley as we have two seats with no names.
WORDS FROM THE PRESIDENT

I would like to say a few words to our members and our new trainee’s. I am so overwhelmed by the efforts of everyone who are making such a positive impact this year in our MGAGCM membership. We have accomplished so many things already and I know we will continue to make great strides on Moving Forward. With having our first Master Gardener class in 5 years it has given us 48 new master gardeners who love making a difference and working with us to make our projects outstanding. We have a new engraver that will bring education to our projects and the SOP committee has worked very hard to complete all the SOPs to help make our organization run smoothly. We had a very successful bulb and tree sale as well as Ask a Master Gardener project this year. And I can’t leave out the beautiful gardens that were recently on our MG Garden Tour and our annual bus trip coming up as well as our new clothing order project. We have a total of 42 projects that are kept alive and going strong because we have people that take pride in our membership. So, remember the positives in our membership and thank you all so much for making Genesee County stand out.