

Macomb County Master Gardener Association

Monthly Newsletter **March 2026**



Contact Information

Email address: macombcountymga@yahoo.com
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Macomb County MGA
P.O. Box 380463
Clinton Township, MI 48038

Board of Directors

Jean Persely—President (2025-2027)
Lisa Lane—Vice President (2025-2027)
Pam Voss—Director at Large (2025-2027)
Pam Horner—Secretary (2024-2026)
Darlene Davies-Warner —Treasurer
(2024-2026)

Upcoming MCMGA Education

To register for events, click on the link below:

[Upcoming Meetings \(macombcountymga.org\)](http://www.macombcountymga.org)

Please remember to wear your Master Gardener badge to all events.

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General Information

Follow us on Facebook:
**Macomb County Master Gardener
Association**

If there is anything you would like to
have included in the next newsletter,
please send an email to:

macombcountymga@yahoo.com

Letter from the Board

We'll be marching into spring before you know it. Until then, enjoy the last of winter!

March finds us wrapping up several big items for MCMGA:

Grants: be sure to get your app in by [March 15](#). MCMGA Grant Committee seeks 2-3 volunteers to review annual grant submissions. Time spent reviewing applications counts as EMG volunteer hours. If interested, contact Pam Voss at pamvoss@comcast.net.

Membership: renew before the month is up so we can turn in our roster to the state association.

Virtual Garden Walks: We're looking for folks who'd love to share their garden in our newsletter. Include several photos and a paragraph or two about your garden in an email to us at macombcountymga@yahoo.com.

Be sure to register for our [March 19th](#) program: [Let's Talk Tomatoes with Bevin Cohen](#)

We have started a social time from 6:00 – 6:30 for our education programs and meetings, however, [March 19th](#) the VITA (tax prep program) will likely

Remembering Dennis Beltz

"A gardener's work is never truly done; it lives on in the beauty they leave behind."

Dennis Beltz, MSU EMG, Macomb County and MCMGA BOD member

We were saddened to hear of Dennis's passing. He had been active with MCMGA, chairing the By-laws review and going on to serve on the MCMGA Board of Directors for two terms. He was the project leader for the Clinton Twp Senior Center vegetable garden for many years. Dennis was a great asset to the community and will be missed. This is a public post his daughter had made: <https://www.facebook.com/1369604877/posts/pfbid0hZM4JW2KPD8a58qMcCwN9jiGfGn3qPMfr7Qzz2V7o778epSbaK-bRvLeN3mKZi7AXI/?d=n>

Shared thoughts from one board member: "I worked with Dennis at the Garden of Life at the Clinton Township Senior Center for a few years to earn my volunteer hours to become a Master Gardener. Dennis supported the Master Gardener program and kept the program connected to the MSU program so we could earn volunteer hours. Dennis took the time to mentor me as a Master Gardener and learn about their organic gardening procedures. He encouraged me to join the Macomb County Master Gardener Association and also, later, to join the board. He shared his love of gardening along with his love of birds." Pam Horner

MCMGA BOARD MEETING MINUTES

Feb 3, 2026

Attendees: Pam Horner, Darlene Davies-Warner, Jean Persely, Pam Voss, and Lisa Lane.

Jean called the meeting to order at 6:31 p.m.

Last BOD minutes approval - Motion to approve by Lisa, and seconded by Jean. Motion carried.

Next BOD meeting date – Mar 3, 2026; 6:30 pm

MSUE report – no report.

Secretary report – no report

Treasurers report - January treasurer report was reviewed by the board. A motion was made by Pam V. to approve the January treasurer report, it was seconded by Lisa, and the motion carried. Darlene was working on cancelling 990 filing services (3rd party service) which cost \$54.99 annually - we can file the form ourselves. A total of 31 members with paid dues.

Education chair report - Speakers are confirmed through August. No charge for garden tour, would be good to do a donation. Recently got Wayne Pope and he is confirmed. Lily is no fee, consider a donation. Schedule Ron's talk on Tool Sharpening in November. Couple new leads from Shelby gardeners. One is about healthy lawn care for watershed protection. Do we have a record of anyone interested in education. Jean will send the updated list.

Rotation of speakers – keep David in rotation, make a list of potential rotation speakers.

Grant chair report – no report.

Old Business

Webmaster search, discussion – include 5 hours in the budget for the year for Mania Interactive.

Signup Genius or other - free with ads. Fees are included 5% and processing fees. The current set up doesn't include any fees. There is another one called Zeffe – free event registration. Accepts reminders, and credit cards, no cost for non-profits. But do take donations. Can also use google document to have them sign up.

Lisa suggested trying to use Signup Genius for the master gardeners and see if there are any fees. Pam V inquired about evite. Jean didn't like the process using evite.

Add apparel to fundraising; Jean will provide the vendor information to Pam V.

Open-enrollment, MCMGA – Feb

Square on-hand; member forms being printed by MSUE (Carolyn)

Download square app on phone

Everyone is updated

Kroger rewards update—Heard back from Joann – she will be working on switching it from her name to MCMGA –

Jean tried updating the website. An organization doesn't have a Kroger account to log into. Jean explained that officers change every year. We can send updates with new officers by email to Kroger.

Discuss fundraising options/goals; bring to quarterly membership meeting

Report back from Jan quarterly meeting – meeting was cancelled – add notes on cancellation to SOP.

Suggestion was made to have a fundraising and social event in early Dec with a silent auction– Jingle

Mingle; Lisa suggested starting now and asking for donations from retailers and individuals. Could ask a vendor to give a talk on decorating, create a holiday craft for the meeting, and possibly a raffle – need to apply for a license, probably won't be able to do that. Lisa will check with Carolyn on whether we can schedule a date for this event for Dec 2026.

New Business

Conference - A discussion was held to see if there was any interest in hosting an MCMGA conference in the future. We would need to have members step up and volunteer to put together. Discuss at next meeting.

Website (from Feb) – Jean inquired whether we need the blog on our website. Check with other organizations; disabled chat bot, do we have a need for private page.

Adjourn 8:25 pm

VIRTUAL GARDEN TOUR—MACOMB COUNTY MASTER GARDENERS

Do you have a garden that sparks joy, demonstrates innovative techniques, or simply showcases the beauty of your hard work as a Master Gardener? We want to feature YOU!

We're thrilled to announce an exciting new feature for our upcoming newsletters: "Virtual Garden Tours of the Master Gardeners"! We're inviting our dedicated Master Gardener Volunteers to share a virtual tour of their personal gardens with the rest of our association.

This is a wonderful opportunity to inspire fellow gardeners, showcase diverse garden styles, and share practical tips and beautiful visuals.

Why Participate? This virtual tour series aims to:

- Inspire & Educate: Give members a peek into the real-world application of Master Gardener principles.
- Showcase Diversity: Highlight the variety of garden types, plant choices, and design aesthetics within our volunteer ranks.
- Build Community: Foster connection and shared learning among our volunteers.
- Celebrate Your Hard Work: Provide a platform to proudly display your gardening achievements!

What We're Looking For— We're interested in all types of gardens, whether they are:

- A meticulously planned vegetable patch
- A vibrant pollinator haven buzzing with life
- A serene native plant landscape
- A charming container garden on a balcony
- A sustainable rain garden
- Or any space that reflects your passion for gardening!

How to Participate – It's Easy! If you're interested in sharing your garden, here's what we need:

1. A Few Photos: Select 5-10 high-quality photos that best represent your garden. Think about different angles, close-ups of interesting plants, or features you're particularly proud of.
2. Short Descriptions: For each photo, provide a brief caption (1-3 sentences) explaining what's shown, any challenges you overcame, or a helpful tip related to that area.
3. A Brief Narrative: Write a short introduction (100-200 words) about your garden. What's its history? What are your favorite aspects? What gardening philosophy guides you?

If you're excited to share your garden with our association please send your photos, descriptions, and narrative to our mailing address Macomb County MGA PO Box 380463 Clinton Township, MI 48038 or email Macombcountymga@yahoo.com We can't wait to virtually stroll through your beautiful gardens and be inspired by your dedication and creativity!



Macomb County Master Gardener Association

2026 Membership Form

Name			
Address			
City, State, ZIP			
Email			
Phone	Home		Cell

I am a:

- Certified Master Gardener
- Certified Advance Master Gardener
- Master Gardener Volunteer in Training
- Master Gardener Emeritus
- Master Gardener Alumni
- Foundations of Gardening Attendee/Graduate

I am interested in volunteering:

(Please select one or more)

- Education Committee
- Hospitality Committee
- Grant Committee
- Advertising
- Fundraising

Year Certified as EMG: _____

Speaker topics and/or name suggestions you'd like to see: _____

Signature

Date

Membership dues are \$20. Membership period is January thru December.

Office Use Only			
Application received _____		Dues Paid \$ _____	
Cash _____	Check _____	Check # _____	

MCMGA SEED LIBRARY

The MCMGA maintains a seed library for members, free of charge. The seed library is prepared by MCMGA members after collecting seed heads at the end of the season. Saving seeds properly assures purity in the next generation. A seed is a promise of future life. Learning how to avoid cross pollination, timing flower development, collecting the best of a species seeds assures healthy future plants. Many nature lovers want to preserve and protect plants. Our goal is to provide healthy seed to our members.

Proper storage, labeling and testing are done before the seeds are put into the library. First the seeds are stored in refrigeration for a minimum of six weeks to give them a dormancy period, which is required for germination. After the dormancy period is complete, the seeds are tested for viability via several methods to determine the percent that will sprout. The testing usually involves placing seeds in the dark in damp paper towels, some seeds can also be tested in water. Seeds that are viable are packaged up and labeled and added to our seed library.

Volunteers are working on the seed library now and the seed library will be available to the members at the regular monthly meetings in the late winter and early spring. An assortment of seeds will be available, both native and non-native flowers and vegetable plants.

If you would like to learn and participate, please let us know.

Linda Simpson

Seed Library Chair



MARCH 2026 MEETING

Date: March 19th, 2026

Time: 6:30 pm - 8:00 pm EST

Location: Robert A. Verkuilen Building, Entrance E

21885 Dunham Rd, Clinton Twp, MI 48036

Presenter: Bevin Cohen

Topic: Let's Talk Tomatoes!

Everybody loves tomatoes, but how much do you actually know about this tasty fruit's fascinating history? Author and seed saver Bevin Cohen will share exciting tales of how this South American fruit traveled around the world and back, influencing the cuisines and cultures of the many countries it encountered along its journey. Attendees will also discover tips and tricks to maximize their tomato harvest including mulching, pruning, proper fertilization and so much more!

[Register Here](#)

APRIL 2026 MEETING

Date: April 16th, 2026

Time: 6:30 pm - 8:00 pm EST

Location: Robert A. Verkuilen Building, Entrance E

21885 Dunham Rd, Clinton Twp, MI 48036

Presenter: Ed Blondin

Topic: Monastic Gardens, Begged Borrowed and Stolen!

Much of the western gardening tradition starts here 900 years before the black plague and owes its aesthetic to Ancient Persia. Throw aside all of your preconceived notions of the dark ages and explore a period of time that is steeped in eroticism, sensuality and strict religious dogma of which influenced the European agriculture economies.

[Register Here](#)

MCMGA Education Program and Meeting

Meeting Time/Location (except as otherwise noted)

Time: 6:30 pm - 8:00 pm EST

Location: Robert A. Verkuilen Building, Entrance E
21885 Dunham Rd, Clinton Twp, MI 48036

Date: March 19, 2026

Presenter: Bevin Cohen

Topic: Let's Talk Tomatoes!

Date: April 16, 2026 Quarterly Meeting

Presenter: Ed Blondin

Topic: Monastic Gardens: Begged Borrowed
And Stolen

Date: May 21, 2026

Presenter: Jennifer Ott

Topic: Weeds: The Wicked, Wild and Wonderful

Date: June 18, 2026

Presenter: Ron Horner

Topic: Tool Cleaning and Sharpening Workshop

Date: July 16, 2026 Quarterly Meeting

Presenter: Wayne Pope

Flower and Garden Photography by Smartphone

Date: August 22, 2026

Shadbrush Nature Center Garden Tour

Time: 10:00 am -12:00 pm

Location: Shadbrush Nature Center
4101 River Bends Dr., Shelby Township

Date: September 17, 2026

Annual Meeting

Presentation of Grant Recipient Projects

Date: October 15, 2026

Presenter: Karen Burke

Topic: Savory Tea Workshop

Date: November 19, 2026

Presenter: Lily Smalstig

Topic: Overview of the Office of Conservation

Date: December 2, 2026

Jingle Mingle

POPPY'S PODCASTS

The Informed Gardener: Linda Chalker-Scott, Washington State University

The Informed Gardener is a series of audio podcasts intended to educate and inform urban gardeners on a broad variety of topics—including addressing some misconceptions borne of “old wisdom” that can sometimes be more hearsay and conjecture than scientific fact. <https://puyallup.wsu.edu/lcs/podcast/>



Would you like to suggest a podcast to be included in our newsletter? Submit a few words about a gardening or nature based podcast that we can include in future newsletters to:

macombcountymga@yahoo.com

2026 Macomb County Master Gardener Association (MCMGA) Grants Available

Grants are available for up to \$200 for any educational group, not-for-profit organization or other groups /persons providing horticultural education and /or horticultural therapy.

Applicants must be based in, located in and serve residents of Macomb County. A MCMGA Extension Master Gardener (EMG) must be a member of this project. EMG's can join the MCMGA by clicking the online Membership link below.

[Membership](#)

The deadline to turn in grant applications is March 15, 2026. Please review the guidelines and application by clicking the Grants link below.

[Click Here for the Grant Application](#)

[Click Here for the Grant Guidelines](#)

2026 Wildflower Association of Michigan Annual Native Plant Conference March 7 and 8, 2026 Kellogg Convention Center

Join us for the 39th annual Michigan Native Plant Conference, where people come together to learn, connect and celebrate their passion for native plants.

Keynote Speaker: Dr. Doug Tallamy

Registration is now open!! For conference details, please visit:

[WAM Conference - Wildflower Association of Michigan](#)

FUNDRAISING

Macomb County MGA Native Plant Sale

September 20, 2026

Octagon House
57500 Van Dyke
Washington, MI
Noon to 3:00 p.m.



Kroger Rewards Program



To Sign up Go to [Kroger Community Rewards.com](https://www.kroger.com/rewards)

Sign in/Register for Kroger Rewards Account

Proceed as directed

Edit Kroger Community Rewards

Enter Kroger Plus Card #

Enter NPO-CQ024 or

Macomb County Master Gardener Association

You will see group name on right side of page

Questions/Problems:

877-576-4377

Photos from Jean Persely's Garden



After a foggy morning, the remaining moisture was frozen on plant material. Switchgrass



Little bluestem is a bright spot in the winter garden.



An icy coating throughout the garden looked especially lovely this day.

Save the date! Jean Pearsely is hosting a garden walk and native plant sale on July 25th 10 am to 1pm.

<https://www.facebook.com/events/1376361487320162>