

Featured This Month:

- All About Soil
- Community Outreach
- Enrichment and Education Speakers
- Program Update
- Advisory Committee
- International Master Gardener's Conference

CALENDAR

- **March 5** –*Insects and Diseases*, Susan Ehlenbeck, Kemper Classroom, 1 - 3 p.m.
- **March 17** –*Dirt Festival*, Missouri Botanical Garden, 9 a.m. - noon
- **March 20** – *Organic Farming Part II*, Dr. Lewis Jett, Kemper Classroom, 1 - 3 p.m.
- **March 27** – Advisory Committee Meeting, Kemper Classroom, 1 - 3 p.m.

March 5 Enrichment Speaker

By Mary Ann Fink

Our State Protection Specialist, Susan Ehlenbeck, will present the MG's Enrichment program this month. Susan will share with us the most recent information about insects and diseases, including those we know too well and newcomers that may be heading our way. Using slides and actual examples, Susan will show us what to be looking out for, how serious certain pests are, and what problems we are likely to see in the future. Susan is passionate about protecting the consumer, native plants, and the nurseries and growers in our area. With experience in nearly every aspect of the industry, a B.S. Degree from University of MO–Columbia, and her position as Board Member of the Greater St. Louis Nursery and Landscape Association, Susan plays an important role in horticulture in our area. Please join us!

Monday, March 5**1:00 - 3:00 p.m.****Kemper Classroom**

Soil Essentials

By Steve Cline

Healthy plants need healthy soil. Good soil contains millions of organisms, which improve water and air exchange, break down organic debris into nutrients for plant growth, and support the web of life above the soil line. Judging the quality of soils and successfully improving them involves understanding two primary soil characteristics: texture and structure.

Soil texture is determined by three universal components: sand, silt, and clay. Clay holds nutrients well, but tends to pack down and prevent air and water exchange. Silt holds few nutrients and is slightly better than clay in allowing air and water flow. Sandy soils provide good drainage and root penetration, but are poor retainers of water and nutrients. Ideal soils are a prescribed combination of these components. At the Kemper Center, the soil in our flower border garden, for example, is a mixture of 40 percent sand, 55 percent silt, and 5 percent clay. Using less than 30 percent sand in clay soils could result in mortar-like soils. You can also substitute calcined clay, a lighter but more expensive alternative to sand. You can see an

example of a soil mix with calcined clay in the vegetable demonstration garden.

Soil structure refers to how well the soil forms aggregates or clods. Adding organic matter, such as humus, compost, leaf mold, straw, peat moss and green manure crops helps sand, silt and clay form aggregates, which open up spaces to improve drainage and aeration.

It is advisable to test soils in the fall, then add amendments to allow time for the soil to settle before spring planting.

To learn more about soil, be sure to join us for the Dirt Festival, March 17th from 8:30 a.m. to noon in Shoenberg Auditorium at the Garden.

Junior Master Gardeners

By Anne Gachuhi

The St. Louis Master Gardener Program is hoping to start The Junior Master Gardener Program in the summer of 2001. This volunteer summer gardening program teaches 10- to 12-year-old youths vegetable gardening while "cultivating" other science, math, and language arts skills! Participants experience the fun of

gardening, enjoy a feeling of success, and have the satisfaction of growing their own food and sharing with needy people in their community through local food agencies. The program has already been conducted in Columbia, Springfield, Kansas City, and Kirksville, and is sponsored and administered by University Outreach and Extension. Dr. Michele Warmund has been actively involved in the development of the JMG curriculum at the University of Missouri.

Spring Picnic

By Norma Holler

Mark your calendars for our MG Spring Picnic in the Spink Pavilion on May 20 at 1:00 p.m. This will be a potluck affair—each person is asked to bring a casserole, salad, or dessert for 6—and you may bring a friend, too! The 1999 Master Gardeners will receive their MG Certificates, two newly launched appreciation awards will be presented, and all Master Gardeners will receive new MG badges. RSVP to Norma Holler at (314) 367-5041 between May 1st and May 15th to let her know what food you will bring, and if you will bring a guest. Details will follow in the April newsletter.

...Program Update

Advisory Committee Update

By Linda M. Koenig

At its January meeting, the committee welcomed its four newly-elected members: Ann Robison, Jan Hermann, Laura Muench and Leon Zickrick. Committee officers were also elected, including Linda Meckfessel Koenig—chairperson, Leon Zickrick—vice-chair, John Reiner—secretary, and Ray Kirkman—treasurer. Leon will also be serving as the new chair of the Public Outreach Committee.

Year 2000 was such a progressive and productive year! Let's hope 2001 will continue bringing satisfaction to all of us involved with the MG program.

Look for the new mission statement on the April newsletter masthead. Pick up a copy of the Buzz Book at the Kemper Center, and be sure to check out our new website.

All MGs are invited to attend the next Advisory Committee Meeting on March 27 at 1:00 p.m.

International MG Conference

The 2001 International Master Gardeners Conference will be held in conjunction with the Epcot International Flower and

Garden Festival, May 28 - June 1 in Orlando, FL. The U. of Florida Extension and Florida MGs will host the conference. For more information, visit the conference website at www.ifas.ufl.edu/~conferweb/mg/, and if you're interested in sharing a room, call Phil at (314) 577-9442.

Volunteer Hours—A Hearty Thank You!

St. Louis MGs contributed **19,000** hours in 2000—a **36%** increase from 1999! Congratulations for all your time and hard work in sharing your skills and knowledge with the gardening public in St. Louis. You make a difference!

Plant A Row for the Hungry

Plant a Row for the Hungry (PAR) is a public service campaign of the Garden Writers Association of America (GWAA). Its goal is to help feed the hungry by establishing PAR networks in every state and province in North America. To participate, just designate one extra row (you can obtain special row markers from GWAA) in your personal or community vegetable garden for those who really

need food in the community. If you know anyone who has participated in this program, or to obtain more information, contact Anne Gachuhi at (314) 577-9442.

Master Gardeners Learn to be Effective Speakers

By Betty Struckhoff

On Saturday, January 27, MGs from the St. Louis metropolitan area learned how to become more effective speakers. MGs from Franklin County joined present and future members of the St. Louis Master Gardeners Speakers Bureau. Presenters included Anne Gachuhi, Steve Cline, and Roxanne Miller, Information Specialist for University Outreach and Extension. Some of their topics included preparing a program to meet objectives, targeting the program to the audience, overcoming stage fright, and delivery techniques. Members of the Speakers Bureau - Patrick McNulty, Anita Rayfield, Jan Hermann, and Marshall Magner— shared their experiences with the group. The training event was such a success, it promises to become an annual event.

THANK YOU to the many Master Gardeners who made this year's Home & Garden Show booth a great success: Barbara Snell, Lucyann Boston, Donna Gravatt, Ray Miller, Judy Evans, Maxine Mirowitz, Debbie Schmaeng, Linda Waugh, Larry Turner, Donna Steinhoff, Ronda Anson, Anita Joggerst, Jean Kelly, Kay Pelikan, Kelda Gelber, June Hutson, Glenn Kopp, Dianne Ely, Linda Meckfessel Koenig, Leon Zickrick, John Gergel, Linda Kalicak, Carol Huston, Cathy Gunter, Femi Olomu, Lola Reed, Ann Case, Judy Kamler, Debbie Wyzlic, and John Reiner.

SORRY! Last month's newsletter was a weighty issue, indeed—so much so, it was delayed at the post office for additional postage. We apologize for any inconveniences caused by this delay, and we'll be vigilante in giving the postman his due in the future.

WE WELCOME Master Gardeners to submit articles for *The MG News*. Remember that your article is due to Steve Cline and Anne Gachuhi with a copy to Jan Hermann no later than the 10th of the month. The Coordinators and Editor reserve the right to edit these articles.

The MG News is compiled by Jan Hermann, Editor; Tay Farrelly, Joanne Fogarty, Donna Gravatt, Carol Huston, Sheila Mapes, Tom Prebil, Betty Struckhoff and Robert Weaver.