



## Snowdrops

Article and Photo by: Louise Sloan

Though many may think of the snowdrop (*Galanthus nivalis*) as quintessentially British, the late winter bloomer traces its roots back to Europe and SE Asia. A member of the amaryllis family, snowdrops are one of the first blooms to poke their delicately drooping heads out of the cold ground. Snowdrops can naturalize to cover the ground with white blooms and slender green leaves in woodland settings. Would-be gathers should beware: besides snowdrops being poisonous if ingested, rural English tradition holds that bringing a snowdrop bouquet into your house is bad luck. Whether or not you believe that, you'll be likely to be filled with joy at the nodding white flowers since they announce spring's arrival.

## The Oakland Gardener

March 2026

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### Monthly Plant Feature

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## Crocuses: An Early Hello

Article and photos by: Jamiel Dado

After enduring yet another long Michigan winter, there is perhaps nothing more heartening than glancing down while walking through your garden and coming across a crocus. Years ago, I was out back on the first of March and saw some technicolor splendor peaking up at me.

That single wonderous flower signaled to

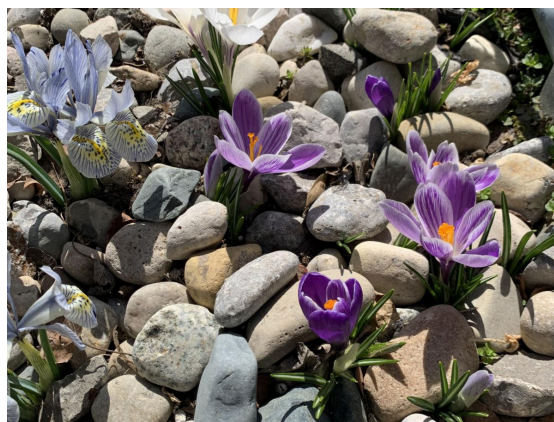
me that warmer days were ahead. As one of the earliest blooming flowers of the year, the crocus is a joyful sight that welcomes us into the gardening season ahead.

Although there are some **90 species** of crocuses around, the spring blooming beauties we mostly see are the Dutch crocuses, or *crocus vernus*. First brought to the Netherlands from corms procured in the roman Empire in the 1560's, it finally made its way here through early settlers. There are no native crocus species, despite the existence of the prairie crocus, which is merely a moniker for the pasqueflower. Interestingly, the name literally comes from the Latin ***crocatius***, meaning "saffron yellow," even though the only crocus species humans harvest for saffron is *crocus sativus*, which blooms in the fall.

Best **planted** in the fall at a depth of 2 to 4 inches, crocuses require partial shade to full sun and prefer a rich, well-draining soil. Sandy loam with nice organic compost is preferred, while heavy clay is less than ideal. Unfortunately, crocus corms are a favorite of squirrels and other rodents to dig up but on the plus side, they are deer resistant. Crocuses are hardy from anywhere between zones 3a and 8b, allowing them to thrive in a very wide range of conditions.

As with other spring bloomers, allow the foliage to yellow completely before removing. This way, the corm can store up enough energy to give you another burst of early cheer next year. Every 3-4 years they can be divided in the fall and redistributed as you like.

When planning a bed, it's always nice to find a range of spring bloomers to plant together, from snow drops all the way to alliums. That way, your crocuses become a part of a bigger show that you can enjoy all the way until summer has you in full swing.



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## Debunking Plant Myths

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### Volcano Mulch: Debunking the Myth with TLC for Your Tree

Article by: Leah Blinstrub  
Photos by: Joe Boggs, OSU Extension  
and <https://arbutustree.ca/>

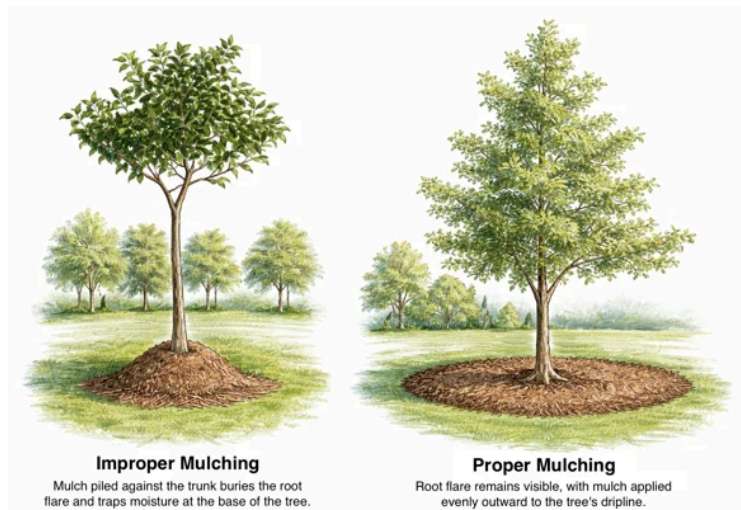


Picture this. You are a child, and you're headed outside in the winter. Your loving mother bundles you up in warm clothes. You appreciate the love, and you're prepared for a day outside.

Trees enjoy extra warmth and care in the winter as well! A little mulch can help insulate roots and decrease winter stress. Take that same winter scene above, but this time insert the character Randy from the familiar movie *A Christmas Story*. Picture how the cozy comfort shifts drastically to bulky immobilization. Mom is clearly full of love, but she gets a little carried away. Instead of simply dressing Randy in warm clothes, she has him zipped into an enormous snowsuit. The suit makes it nearly impossible for Randy to see, move, or lower his arms. Admittedly, this analogy is dramatic, but it illustrates how too much of a good thing can be harmful. Let's clear up a myth: mulch is good, but a volcano mulch is harmful to trees.

What's a volcano mulch, you ask? Put simply, a volcano mulch is when regular mulch is heaped against a tree in the shape of a volcano, piled high at the trunk and sloping outward. One drive through a suburban neighborhood will highlight how common this landscape practice is. Sometimes, volcano mulch is used for aesthetic reasons. Fresh mulch on top of old mulch looks appealing. Other times, volcano mulch occurs because of confusion or misinformation related to mulch application.

Like Randy in his smothering snowsuit, volcano mulch can make trees uncomfortable. Thick mulch prevents proper airflow to tree roots. It encourages roots to grow into the mulch as opposed to down into the ground. Trees with roots growing up experience decreased stability and risk of root girdling. Mulch is helpful, but the correct placement and amount are important.



Volcano mulch might seem like a cozy blanket in the winter, but unfortunately, it's damaging year-round. Each season adds a new challenge for trees battling improper mulch.

Springtime brings rainy weather, and mulch against a tree trunk can cause the bark to rot and mold to grow. This increases disease risk.

Summertime can be hot

and trees need rain. Mulch piled at an angle can lead rainwater to run off the trunk at a slant and pass the root system. Fall mulch piled high against a tree becomes a desirable place for rodents, like mice and voles, to overwinter. Rodents see tree bark as a tasty snack, and bite marks weaken the tree.

When spring arrives, give your tree a loving donut shape of mulch, like a gentle embrace for its roots. The University of New Hampshire suggests the 3-3-3 Rule. This refers to a 3-inch layer of mulch in a 3-foot donut around the tree, leaving at least 3 inches between the mulch and the tree trunk. Applying mulch in this manner provides year-round benefits for your tree, including winter insulation, summer moisture retention, decreased spring soil erosion, and fall weed suppression. When mulch is applied correctly, trees are cared for, comfortable, and loved in a way that supports a lifetime of good health.

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## Extension Master Gardener News

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### Rochester Pollinators

Article: Pat G. Wilson

All photos courtesy of Rochester Pollinators

It's not often that you walk away from an interview feeling completely energized—but that's exactly what happened when I met Marilyn Trent, founder and director of **Rochester Pollinators**. I expected an informative conversation about pollinator gardens. I didn't expect to be completely blown away. Her energy and genuine passion were unmistakable—and contagious. Within minutes, I found myself nodding along and mentally redesigning my own garden (again!) to make room for more **native plants**. This isn't simply a project for her; it is clearly a calling.



As an MSU Extension Master Gardener (EMG), I appreciate when passion is paired with solid horticultural practice—and Rochester Pollinators delivers both. The organization protects pollinators through habitat creation, education, and community engagement. At a time when butterflies, bees, birds, and other pollinators face mounting challenges from habitat loss and environmental pressures, their work is both timely and impactful.



#### Marilyn explains the importance of native plants clearly:

*“Research has shown that native insects often cannot reproduce on non-native plants, even when those plants are attractive or widely available. By incorporating native species into our landscapes—whether in a small garden bed, a mixed perennial border, or a larger restoration area—gardeners can make a meaningful difference for pollinators and the broader food web.”*

Their native plant installations provide season-long blooms and habitat for monarchs, native bees, and other pollinators—and they're beautiful. Ecological gardening enhances curb appeal rather than sacrificing it.

Education is central to their mission. Through workshops, volunteer days, outreach, and milkweed giveaways, Rochester Pollinators helps residents create pollinator-friendly lawns. Gardeners of all levels are welcome.

**Adding even more excitement is their new podcast, We Have a Plant for That**, created by Rochester Pollinators and Marilyn Trent. The series blends education with storytelling to inspire ecological action.

For EMG's especially, this organization offers a meaningful way to extend our training into the community. **Volunteers** can:

- Tend and maintain one of the local pollinator gardens
- Pot up and care for native plant seedlings
- Clean, sort, and package seeds for the seed library
- Assist with seed sowing workshops and educational events
- Help staff information tables at community outreach events

**For more information:**

**Email:** [pollinators@trentcreative.com](mailto:pollinators@trentcreative.com) or *find Rochester Pollinators on Facebook and Instagram.*

*The native plant pre-sale begins at the end of March at [RochesterPollinators.org](http://RochesterPollinators.org).*

**Contact:** Marilyn Trent | 248-250-3198 [pollinators@trentcreative.com](mailto:pollinators@trentcreative.com)

*As Marilyn says, "Whether you enjoy working outdoors, organizing materials, sharing information with the public, or helping behind the scenes, there is a role for you. If you have the will, we will find a way for you to help—and we promise we will have some fun while we're at it."*

In a turf-grass landscape, Rochester Pollinators is transforming yards into science-driven habitats that support biodiversity. If you've ever wanted to deepen your impact as a gardener, this is the perfect place to start. You may arrive thinking you're just volunteering, but you'll leave inspired and ready to plant with purpose.

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## Gardening Tips and Tricks

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### Michigan's Top Invasive Plants and Pests—and How to Dispose of Them Safely

Article by: Melanie Fuhrmann, MSU Extension

Photo by: Lawrence Barringer, Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture.



Protecting Michigan's natural resources requires an ongoing commitment to identifying, managing, and properly disposing of invasive species. These species—whether plants or insects—can outcompete native vegetation, threaten forest and agricultural systems, and disrupt ecological balance. As highlighted by the [Michigan Invasive Species Program](#) and [MSU Extension's invasive species resources](#), early detection and proper disposal are key strategies in invasive species management. The following overview provides Michigan residents, landowners, and gardeners with research-based information on five invasive plants and five invasive pests currently of concern.

#### Top 5 Invasive Plant Species in Michigan

##### **1. Hydrilla (*Hydrilla verticillata*)**

Hydrilla is an exceptionally aggressive aquatic plant that can form thick mats that impede boating, fishing, wildlife movement, and water flow. It was recently detected in southwest Michigan ponds during routine monitoring.

### **2. Purple Loosestrife (*Lythrum salicaria*)**

A prohibited species in Michigan, purple loosestrife quickly dominates wetland ecosystems, reducing biodiversity and altering habitat structure. State law allows landfill disposal of loosestrife waste when it results from eradication efforts

### **3. Garlic Mustard**

Garlic mustard spreads aggressively in forest understories and interferes with native plant communities. Michigan's disposal guidelines specifically include garlic mustard as material appropriate for landfill disposal rather than composting.

### **4. Japanese Knotweed (*Reynoutria japonica*)**

Knotweed spreads primarily through rhizomes and can damage infrastructure, including pavement and building foundations. Guidance from Macomb County notes that knotweed should not be composted or burned, as plant fragments can remain viable.

### **5. Flowering Rush (*Butomus umbellatus*)**

This aquatic invasive can alter shorelines and degrade habitat for fish and wildlife. Like knotweed, it should not be burned or composted due to its ability to regenerate from small fragments.

## **Top 5 Invasive Pests in Michigan**

### **1. Spotted Lanternfly (*Lycorma delicatula*)**

This pest feeds on grapes, hardwoods, and ornamental plants, posing major risks to fruit production and forest health. Michigan's statewide outreach campaign—"See it. Squish it. Report it."—encourages residents to destroy and report any life stage.

### **2. Hemlock Woolly Adelgid (*Adelges tsugae*)**

HWA can kill hemlock trees, which play an important ecological role in Michigan's forests. Infestations have been confirmed in several counties, prompting intensive management and monitoring.

### **3. Beech Leaf Disease**

This disease, caused by a nematode, threatens Michigan's approximately 37 million beech trees. Symptoms include leaf thickening and striping, eventually leading to canopy decline and tree mortality.

### **4. Box Tree Moth (*Cydalima perspectalis*)**

This invasive caterpillar is now under a statewide quarantine because of its ability to strip leaves and kill ornamental boxwood shrubs. USDA and MDARD expanded the quarantine area in 2023 to slow its spread.

### **5. Spongy Moth (*Lymantria dispar*)**

A persistent defoliator of oaks and other hardwoods, the spongy moth remains a critical invasive species identified by MSU Extension. Periodic outbreaks cause significant canopy loss.

## **Proper Disposal Guidelines for Michigan**

Correct disposal of invasive species—especially plant material—is essential to prevent accidental spread. Michigan's recommendations are outlined in the [Michigan Citizens' Guide to Invasive Plant Disposal](#), which interprets requirements under the Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Act (NREPA).

### **1. Do Not Compost Invasive Plant Material**

Plants such as garlic mustard, purple loosestrife, Japanese knotweed, and flowering rush should never be composted. Their seeds and plant fragments can remain viable through composting.

## 2. Double-Bag and Dispose in the Landfill

Michigan guidelines recommend double-bagging invasive plant material before placing it in the landfill. This includes woody species and herbaceous species removed during control efforts.

## 3. Sun-Dry Woody Species Before Disposal

Woody invasives—such as buckthorn or barberry—may be sealed in bags and left in the sun for several days before being added to the trash, which helps ensure plant death.

## 4. Do Not Burn Herbaceous Invasives

Plants such as knotweed, garlic mustard, and flowering rush should not be burned. Some species have heat-tolerant seeds that survive fire.

## 5. Never Release Aquatic Plants or Animals

Aquatic invasives (water lettuce, frog-bit, water hyacinth, etc.) should be double-bagged and placed in the trash—never released into lakes, ponds, rivers, or storm drains. Michigan’s RIPPLE guidance stresses proper disposal for aquarium plants and animals.

## 6. Report Invasive Pests Promptly

If you encounter pests such as spotted lanternfly, hydrilla, HWA, or box tree moth, report them immediately through [Michigan.gov/Invasives](https://Michigan.gov/Invasives) or your regional CISMA.

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# Gardening for Health and Wellness

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## Planting for Prevention and Long-Term Health: *How Prepping Your Garden Helps Support Your Body*

Article and photo by: Sophia Speroff

As gardeners, we know spring preparation sets the tone for the entire growing season. The choices we make now — what we plant, how we prepare the soil, and how we care for our bodies — influence our harvest months down the road. The same principle applies to health. As both a Master Gardener and a Registered Dietitian, I often remind people that spring gardening isn’t just about food production; it’s about planting habits that support long-term disease prevention. A garden rich in

vegetables, fruits, herbs, and legumes naturally aligns with evidence-based nutrition strategies shown to reduce the risk of chronic diseases such as diabetes, heart disease, osteoporosis, and inflammation-related conditions.

### Gardening and Diabetes Prevention

Dietary patterns high in fiber, vegetables, and whole foods are strongly associated with improved blood sugar control and reduced risk of type 2 diabetes. Gardening supports this by increasing access to non-starchy vegetables like leafy greens, tomatoes, peppers, beans, and squash.

These foods slow digestion, reduce blood sugar spikes, and improve insulin sensitivity. Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health notes that even modest increases in vegetable intake can improve glycemic control. When gardeners grow their own produce, they're also more likely to cook at home and reduce reliance on processed foods — another protective factor for diabetes prevention. Spring planting of greens, peas, onions, and herbs creates early access to these blood-sugar-friendly foods and helps establish healthier eating routines before summer.

### **Heart Health Starts in the Garden**

Heart disease remains the leading cause of death in the U.S., yet many risk factors are strongly influenced by diet and lifestyle. Gardens naturally promote heart-healthy eating patterns by emphasizing vegetables, fruits, legumes, and unsaturated fats.

Foods commonly grown in home gardens — tomatoes, leafy greens, beans, herbs, berries, and squash — are rich in potassium, fiber, antioxidants, and plant compounds that support healthy blood pressure and cholesterol levels. Herbs such as basil, rosemary, thyme, and parsley allow gardeners to flavor meals without excess sodium, supporting hypertension management. Gardening itself also contributes to cardiovascular health. Light to moderate physical activity, stress reduction, and time outdoors all support heart health, especially when practiced consistently throughout the growing season.

### **Bone Health and Aging Well**

Bone health often receives less attention until problems arise, but spring gardening is an excellent opportunity to support skeletal strength. Vegetables like kale, collards, broccoli, and Swiss chard provide vitamin K, calcium, magnesium, and other nutrients essential for bone maintenance.

Weight-bearing garden activities — digging, lifting, squatting, and carrying — help stimulate bone formation and maintain muscle strength, which reduces fall and fracture risk as we age. Gardening offers functional movement that supports both bone density and balance, particularly important for older adults.

### **Reducing Chronic Inflammation**

Chronic inflammation plays a role in heart disease, diabetes, arthritis, and many other conditions. Diets rich in colorful plant foods are consistently associated with lower inflammation markers.

Garden foods such as berries, tomatoes, leafy greens, garlic, onions, and herbs contain antioxidants and phytonutrients that help counteract oxidative stress. Growing these foods encourages regular intake and variety, both of which are key to inflammation reduction. In addition, the calming nature of gardening lowers stress hormones, which can otherwise contribute to inflammation and metabolic dysfunction.

### **Planting for Prevention**

Spring gardening is more than seasonal work — it's an investment in long-term health. By choosing to plant a diverse, nutrient-rich garden, you're laying the groundwork for improved blood sugar control, stronger bones, a healthier heart, and reduced inflammation.

As you prep your beds this March, remember: every seed planted is also a step toward prevention. The habits you cultivate now — in the soil and on your plate — can nourish your health for years to come.

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Smart Gardening is MSU Extension's campaign using earth-friendly messages to help gardeners make smart choices in their own backyards. The goal is to equip gardeners with a "tool kit" of research-based knowledge to use immediately at home. Whether choosing plants, using garden chemicals, fertilizer or applying water, gardeners need to understand the long-term impacts on their communities. For more Smart Gardening information click [here](#).



### Ask Extension

Call the MSU Extension Lawn and Garden Hotline at 1-888-678-3464 (Monday, Wednesday and Friday 9am to noon)

## Upcoming Events

**MSU TOLLGATE FARM & EDUCATION CENTER**  
*Annual Fundraising Event*  
**MAPLE FEST**  
Sat. & Sun.  
March 7th & 8th | 9-5pm  
\$18 in Advance | \$20 at the Door | 2 & Under FREE



All-You-Can-Eat Pancakes  
Courtesy of Chris Cakes

- Tree Tapping
- Farm Animals
- Sugar Shack
- Wagon Rides
- Maple Products
- Farm Activities



📍 28115 Meadowbrook Rd, Novi, MI 48377

Visit our Website

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## Join us at the 2026 Smart Gardening Conference!

Registration is **almost FULL** - Get your ticket now!

# 2026 SMART GARDENING CONFERENCE

 **March 28th**

 **9AM - 4 PM**

 **WCCCD Ted Scott Campus  
Belleville, MI**

Check-in opens at 8 AM

 **Cost: \$120**

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Join Michigan State University Extension for a full day of engaging, research-based gardening education. This conference features expert speakers covering sustainable gardening, pollinators, invasive species, and intentional garden design. Perfect for home gardeners, Extension Master Gardeners, and plant enthusiasts of all levels.

- **Kevin Williams** – Designing the Big Picture: Gardening for the Future
- **Kelly Konieczki** – Growing Hope in the Garden
- **Ronnie Miller** – Bees & Pollinators
- **Carolyn Miller** – Invasive Species & Native Plants
- **Matthew Ross** – Intentional Garden Design Workshop

### Registration

**Pre-registration  
required**  
Scan QR code or  
visit:



### What's Included?

- Full day of educational sessions
- Boxed Lunch
- Continuing Education Hours for Extension Master Gardeners
- Access to Expert Gardeners

<https://events.anr.msu.edu/2026SESGConference/>

Michigan State University Extension programs and materials are open to all without regard to race, color, national origin, gender, gender identity, religion, age, height, weight, disability, political beliefs, sexual orientation, marital status, family status or veteran status.

**Register Here!**

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*Save The Date!*

MGSOC 12th Annual Educational Gardening Conference  
**Gardening and All That Jazz – Designing a Better World**

Keynote speakers:

**Alan Branhagen • Carol Reese • Jack Barnwell • Page Dickey**

**Saturday, April 25, 2026 from 7:30 a.m.-4:45 p.m.**

**The Oakland Center, Oakland University, 312 Meadow Brook Rd., Rochester, MI 48309**

**Four great speakers – four outstanding presentations!**

Come to our 12th Annual Educational Conference for new and experienced gardeners – you need not be a Master Gardener to attend! Register on Eventbrite here: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/gardening-and-all-that-jazz-designing-a-better-world-tickets-1977187701640>

Price is \$95 by check, \$95+fees on eventbrite. For complete information, and to download an application and pay by check, visit our website at <https://mgsoc.org/educational-conference/>

Sponsored by Piechnik's Garden Gate, Telly's Greenhouse, and the Greater Detroit Jazz Society.



**Master Gardener Society  
of Oakland County, Inc.**

AFFILIATED WITH MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY EXTENSION

Our conference includes a.m. bagels and refreshments, lunch and beverages, shopping our unique marketplace and vendors, speaker book signings, and the *Scott Gwinnell Trio* performing during lunch. Registration is limited to 300 so don't delay, deadline to purchase tickets is **Monday, April 10, 2026.**

## Master Gardener Society of Oakland County Annual Education Conference

The **Master Gardener Society of Oakland County** is proud to present our **12th Annual Education Conference on Saturday, April 25, 2026. "Gardening and All That Jazz – Designing a Better World"** is an all-day, fast-paced educational event that's really **FUN** to attend! Our conference is open to gardeners of all levels, you do not need to be a Master Gardener to attend. Master Gardeners receive 5 educational credits.

Our four nationally-known garden speakers/authors are impressive. **Alan Branhagen, Carol Reese, Jack Barnwell and Page Dickey** will present the latest and best horticultural information, and three of the speakers will be selling and signing their books that day.

Our conference is located at **The Oakland Center at Oakland University**. In addition to education, we'll offer bagels and refreshments in the a.m., lunch and refreshments throughout the day as well as shopping at our outstanding garden market. We have fantastic door prize drawings all day long, and grand raffle prizes at the finish. As always, we have live jazz during lunch featuring the **Scott Gwinnell Trio**. Scott, is a jazz pianist/composer and educator throughout the Detroit area, and a professor at Oakland University where he instructs jazz theory, improvisation, arranging, and history.

To learn more about our speakers, their credentials and purchase your ticket, visit the website of the **Master Gardener Society of Oakland County** <https://mgsoc.org/educational-conference/> Here you may download a 2-page registration form to mail in a check for your payment. Or, you may sign up directly on Eventbrite using a credit card. **Please note that on Eventbrite, you**

**will purchase a ticket for the conference and will also need to make a luncheon selection.**

**Betty Peters is the Chair of Gardening and All That Jazz; please direct any questions to our Registrar, Ann Hudak, 248-812-9437, or e-mail: [mgsoc.conference@gmail.com](mailto:mgsoc.conference@gmail.com)**

Please share this information with your garden club and friends. We expect this event to sell out quickly so don't delay in purchasing your ticket. See you there!

**Visit our Website**



## **NATIVE PLANT SALE!**

**Downtown Rochester Farmers' Market  
May 16 & Online at [RochesterPollinators.org](http://RochesterPollinators.org)**

Curious about planting a butterfly garden and don't know where to start?

It's easy when you choose the right plants for their beauty, food and habitat.

Receive a **FREE Milkweed plant** on May 16 at the Downtown Rochester Farmer's Market for the Monarch butterfly!

Choose from a comprehensive inventory of authentic Michigan Native Plants & Shrubs.

- Shop online at [rochesterpollinators.org](http://rochesterpollinators.org) for pick-up (use 10% off code *Pollinator Picnic*)
- OR Shop at the Downtown Rochester Farmer's Market (Water & 3rd St.) on May 16, 8 am-1 pm.
- OR Shop at the Native Plant General Store at 114 E. 2nd Street, Downtown Rochester Michigan from May 18th to the 22nd.
- Talk to on-site garden designers when you shop.

You will also find information on Michigan native flowers, garden plans and other resources to plant your personal pollinator garden paradise. For inquiries, please contact us at [pollinators@trentcreative.com](mailto:pollinators@trentcreative.com).

Find Us At:   [Etsy](https://www.etsy.com)



Helen's Flower



Butterfly Milkweed



Purple Coneflower



Beardtongue/  
Floxglove



Columbine



New England Aster



# HEALTHY HABITATS AND PRODUCTIVE POLLINATORS

Taking action today to support tomorrow's pollinators

Thursday, June 18, 2026

9AM - 4PM

Crossroads Village

6140 Bray Rd, Flint, MI

MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY | Extension

For more information

MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY EXTENSION PRESENTS

## PRUNING WORKSHOP

Pruning is a key practice for maintaining the health, safety, vigor, and appearance of woody plants. It blends art—shaping plants to enhance their natural form—with science—knowing how, when, and why to prune effectively. During this in-person workshop, you'll watch live demonstrations on trees and shrubs and have the chance to ask questions of Extension Educators.



**SATURDAY**  
**APRIL 18, 2026**

**10:00 AM - 12:30 PM**

MSU TOLLGATE FARM AND EDUCATION CENTER  
28115 MEADOWBROOK RD., NOVI, MI 48377

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

[HTTPS://EVENTS.ANR.MSU.EDU/2026OAKLANDCOUNTYPRUNING/](https://events.anr.msu.edu/2026oaklandcountypruning/)

# News You Can Use



## Michigan Gardening Calendar

Planting dates based on Zone 6a.

- Plant 1 week earlier in Zone 6b
- Plant 1 week later in Zone 5b
- Plant 2 weeks later in Zone 5a

(Always adjust based on local weather conditions.)

Soil temperature is more important than air temperature.

- Cool-season crops germinate best at 55°F+
- Warm-season crops need 75°F+

Warm soil speeds germination and reduces disease risk.

Most vegetables can be planted from July to September for a fall harvest. Check "days to maturity" and count backward from the first frost.

Cool-season crops tolerate light frost and often improve in flavor after a chill.

Start spring transplants indoors approximately 4 weeks before outdoor planting. Check the seed packet for exact timing. Harden off plants 7–10 days before transplanting outdoors.

Cool-season crops = leaves, stems, roots (lettuce, kale)

Warm-season crops = fruits (tomatoes, peppers, corn)

<b>March</b>	<b>Plant</b> Peas Spinach Lettuce  <b>Garden Tasks</b> Soil Test Prepare Beds Clean tools	<b>April</b>	<b>Plant</b> Carrots Swiss Chard Beets Potatoes Onion Sets Spinach  <b>Garden Tasks</b> Thin Seedlings Mulch Start warm crops indoors	<b>May</b>	<b>Plant</b> Broccoli Cabbage Kale Bush Beans Beans  <b>After Frost:</b> Tomatoes Peppers Cucumbers Squash Eggplant  <b>Garden Tasks</b> Harden off Plants Thin early seedlings
	<b>Plant</b> Pole Beans Pumpkins Sweet Corn Melons  <b>Garden Tasks</b> Weed & Mulch Water regularly Scout Pests Stake tomatoes & peas		<b>Plant (Fall Crops)</b> Radishes Lettuce Spinach  <b>Garden Tasks</b> Weed routinely Maintain irrigation Harvest often Fertilize if needed Monitor for pests & diseases		<b>Plant (Fall Crops)</b> Broccoli Collards Kale Beets  <b>Garden Tasks</b> Shade seedlings Continue harvest Monitor for pests & diseases
	<b>Plant</b> Garlic Cover crops  <b>Garden Tasks</b> Remove spent plants Watch for first frost		<b>Garden Tasks</b> Harvest remaining crops Clean beds Amend soil with organic matter Mulch garlic		<b>Garden Tasks</b> Soil Test Mulch garden Clean & Store tools Review season Plan next year's garden
<b>June</b>	<b>July</b>	<b>August</b>	<b>September</b>	<b>October</b>	<b>November</b>



## WHAT'S WRONG WITH MY BOXWOOD? COMMON ISSUES & SOLUTIONS

By: Melanie Fuhrmann and Caitlin Splawski

### Winter Damage

*Environmental Damage*



- Browning of foliage
- Spring leaf drop
- Caused by cold, wind, sun, salt
- Severe or repeated damage can kill plants

**Management Tips**

- Plant hardy cultivars
- Avoid late-summer pruning
- Use burlap screens or windbreaks for protection



### Box Tree Moth

*Invasive Caterpillar*



- Chewed leaves & webbing
- Defoliated - Skeletonized branches
- Quick onset of damage
- Can lead to plant death
- Green caterpillars with black stripes, white spots & a shiny black head

**Management Tips**

- Hand-pick larvae for small infestations
- Keep plants healthy with proper pruning & watering
- Double bag dead plants and clippings for disposal in trash
- Visit <https://www.canr.msu.edu/tao/box-tree-moth/> for other treatment options

Read More: 

### Boxwood Leafminer

*Native Fly Larva*



- Blistered, yellowed leaves
- Yellow-orange discoloration
- Clicking sound when shaken
- Cosmetic damage, may weaken plants over time

**Management Tips**

- Prune after adult fly season (late Spring)
- Plant resistant cultivars
- Chemical control can be difficult



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## Michigan Garden Calendar

February 23, 2026 - [Melanie Fuhrmann](#)

Planting dates based on Zone 6a.

- Plant 1 week earlier in Zone 6b
- Plant 1 week later in Zone 5b
- Plant 2 weeks later in Zone 5a

(Always adjust based on local weather conditions.)

Soil temperature is more important than air temperature.

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## New boxwood diagnostic tool now available to help Michigan homeowners protect their landscapes

March 2, 2026 - [Caitlin Splawski](#) and [Melanie Fuhrmann](#), Michigan State University Extension

Check out our new user-friendly diagnostic guide designed to help you quickly identify common problems affecting boxwood shrubs and determine practical next steps for treatment and prevention.

[Read More](#)



## What can I do about sandhill cranes in my yard and garden?

[David Lowenstein](#) and [Sarah Rautio](#), [Michigan State University Extension](#) - February 19, 2026

Updated from an original article written by Gretchen Voyle, Michigan State University Extension.

Michigan is a state with many types of large birds. One bird that has become more abundant in recent years is the sandhill crane (*Antigone canadensis*). Adult sandhill cranes are differentiated from other large birds by their long legs and necks, a patch of red on their featherless foreheads, and white-feathered cheeks. Their body color can be anywhere from soft gray to brown to reddish gray.

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## Dogscaping: Landscaping for you and your dog

[Dixie Sandborn](#), [Michigan State University Extension](#) - February 09, 2026

What exactly is dogscaping? Quite simply, it is landscaping for your dog's safety and enjoyment. But dogscaping is not only for your dog's enjoyment, it is for yours as well. If you enjoy the outdoors, like to garden or at least maintain a nicely landscaped lawn, it can be exasperating to have a pooch who does not share your passion. Four-legged friends do not always appreciate the hours you labor to have beautiful flowerbeds and perfectly groomed landscape plants around the patio.

There are a few things to keep in mind if you love your pets and your lawn. With a little planning and training, you and your dog can enjoy a shared outdoor space. Landscape design should always begin with a list of how you want to use the space.

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