



Workshops, banquets, set for Frankenmuth Herb Society celebration

Good Garden Tip: The Frankenmuth Mid-Michigan Unit of the Herb Society of America, Inc. presents a three-day celebration. Jim Long of Long Creek Herbs, Miss., will be the featured speaker. A luncheon will be at noon Wednesday, April 3, at the Candlelite Banquet Center in Bridgeport. The garden market will open at 10 a.m. Cost: \$25.

Long will hold workshops on making a twig trellis at 10 a.m.

and 6-30 p.m. on Thursday, April 4, at the "Touch of Nature" shop in Birch Run. Cost is \$45.

A Civil War Banquet will be at 6 p.m. Friday, April 5, at the Frankenmuth Historical Museum. Long will host the banquet and lead Contra Dancing during the event. Cost: \$40.

Please call Judy Durkee at (989) 652-8243, or e-mail her at jdurkee@yahoo.com with questions and/or to make reservations.

—Marty Figley

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to plant outside and where each variety will go. The blueprint can also be used to identify what was planted and where when shoots are small.

"Once the weather gets better they can go out and work the soil," McLellan added. "Or, if they're too young, bring them in on doing things, like the watering and explain what the watering does."

Having children plant vegetables can also be a good way to get kids to eat the vegetables that they usually refuse.

Thumbelina carrots are smaller than the miniature types sold in most grocery stores and are often a big hit among kids. Seeds for these carrots are available at specialty stores and seed catalogs.

Make sure all planted seeds get enough light and don't over-water causing mold.

Making seed tapes is also a good project this time of year indoors. The tapes make planting small seeds evenly a lot easier.

A gardening tip sheet from Michigan State University Extension quotes from *Garden Crafts* by Rhonda:

"What you need: newspapers, flour, water, a mixing bowl, a stirring spoon, seeds and planting directions, a roll of plain white, unscented toilet paper, a ruler or tape measure, a waterproof marker, cotton swabs and a friend:

1. Cover your work surface with newspaper.
2. In your bowl, mix flour with just enough water to make a thick mush. When it feels and looks like soupy mashed potatoes, it's perfect.
3. Choose a packet of seeds and decide how long you want the row of that vegetable to be.
4. On top of your work surface, unroll a strip of toilet paper the length of your planned garden row.
5. Consult your seed packet to find out how far apart your seeds should be planted. With your ruler and marker, measure down the center of the strip, and make a mark at the place each seed should go.
6. Dip a cotton swab in the

paste and dab a drop on every mark on the tape.

7. Place the seeds onto the paste, one at each mark. Let the paste dry.

8. When it's time to plant, make a trench in your garden soil as deep as the planting depth for your seed.

9. Have a friend help you set the tape into the trench.

10. Cover the seed tape with fine soil. Water lightly.

Books that might help get you started working in a garden with children are, *Best Kids Garden Book*, by Sunset; *Gardening Together with Children: Roots, Shoots, Bushels, & Boots*, by Sharon Lovejoy; and *Linnaea's Windowsill Garden*, by Christine Bjork.

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Farmington Hills.

Giving back

The women also take turns preparing snacks that match the theme for the week. When the children learned about soil, for instance, the treat was crushed Oreo cookies with chocolate pudding that looked exactly like dirt. The women have been volunteering their time at Isbister for three years.

"We do it mainly because we love it," DeBono said. "Since 9-11, it's even more important to give back to your community."

Otherwise bleak, dull places are being revamped by master gardeners, volunteering their time around the state, according to Mary McLellan, Michigan State University Master Gardener Coordinator.

More than 20,000 people have been trained in the master gardener program since 1978 when it was initiated, McLellan said. Currently, there are more than 5,000 active master gardeners in Michigan and 2,000 more are being trained every year.

Since Sept. 11, McLellan said, more people seem drawn to the craft of making things grow.

"People are seeming to want to get back to basics," she said. "A lot of people are more interested in beautifying the spaces around them. Growing their

own vegetables is something they find calming. There's a therapeutic value in gardening. It's a real stress reliever. You dig in the dirt when you're little and when you're an adult it's that much more fun."

Master gardeners need 40 hours of training and 40 hours of volunteering in a horticultural related activity, like teaching a master gardener program and any other community activity that involves teaching other people about horticulture.

These green thumb experts are leaving their imprint on projects throughout the state. For instance, the Michigan Department of Transportation recently enlisted the help of master gardeners to beautify rest areas. During the Labor Day weekend last year, master gardeners answered questions from building gardeners at the rest stops.

The junior master gardening program was developed in 1994 when a master gardener in Ann Arbor suggested getting children interested in gardening.

"I said to her, 'What a great idea,'" McLellan said. "Why don't you write the curriculum for your 40-hour volunteer work? The impact master gardeners make in their communities is unbelievable. Things get done that city and county governments can never get paid to get done."

In Muskegon, for instance, master gardeners recently took over the gardens at a rundown historic house. They patterned the design after a Monet garden complete with a bridge.

"They've taken neighborhoods that wouldn't normally have a garden in it," McLellan said.

"In Battle Creek they've done a wonderful job going into urban areas with a lot of low income houses and building community gardens. They've gotten the adults as well as the kids involved."

Adult students preparing to become master gardeners often complain when they first hear about the volunteer work they are required to do.

"Then it's an addiction and they can't stop," McLellan said.

"It's amazing."

There are 10 junior master gardening classes, serving 250 children, currently held in Wayne County, according to Michele Telerski, junior master gardener coordinator for the Master Gardener Association of Wayne County.

The program is \$20 for each child, however, Riegall defrays the costs with grant money and school support. Parents were asked to contribute \$5 for each child.

Lifetime learning opportunity

"It reinforces everything that

we've done in science so far," Riegall said. "They are so enthusiastic by the end of the class. It's a fun way to learn about plant science and get a little dirty. I think it's a wonderful program for kids, because it's a lifetime learning opportunity and in many cases you find kids who are able to teach their parents."

The junior master gardening program at Isbister has made a lasting impression on each group of students, Riegall added.

At the end of the six-week program last year, DeBono said, one student gave her a hug and said: "I'll never forget you."

"That's what it's all about," DeBono added.

For more information about the master gardener program and the junior master gardener program go to, <http://www.maue.msu.edu/mastergardener>. For seed catalogue information call, <http://www.mastergardener-shoppingmall.com>. If you want more information about local master gardener classes call, Oakland County Extension, Dept 416, Pontiac 48341-1032 (248)858-0885 and or the Wayne County Extension, 640 Temple Street, Detroit 48201-2558 (313)-833-3412.

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ones. Stainless steel is highly recommended, but others are not. Certain materials can cause scratches, and will leave residue stains. That's why you need to read the instruction book.

Dishwasher detergent should never be used to clean the cooktop surface as it will remove the protective coating. Anything with sugar content that spills over must be cleaned immediately, and that means while the cooktop is hot. You will need to use

extreme care.

Glass cleaner will leave a film on the cooktop. Most cleaners contain ammonia, chemicals, and abrasives that damage the surface. Use the cleaners and polish that are sold with the product.

As you can see, there are a lot of factors to know about smooth cooktops. This column just scratches the surface. Some people love their smoothtops but many are sorry they ever bought it.

Please read all the instructions, every one of them. Stay tuned.

Joe Gagnon can be heard Saturday and Sunday on 760 WJR. He is a member and past president of the Society of Consumer Affairs Professionals.

Got a question for the Appliance Doctor? Call him at (313) 873-9789, or write to him in care of Keely Kaleski Wygonik, Observer Newspapers, 36251 Schoolcraft, Livonia, MI 48150.

Michigan Design Center hosts Alexandra Stoddard

Michigan Design Center will host a return visit by internationally acclaimed interior designer, author and philosopher of contemporary living, Alexandra Stoddard at 6:30 p.m. on Monday, May 6, in the Mid-America Room at MDC.

During her presentation, Stoddard will share many of the same concepts she writes about in her recently released book *Choosing Happiness: Keys to a Joyful Life*.

Stoddard's writings and lectures contain a positive personal philosophy of living life beautifully and spiritually every day. She is a firm believer that changes you make in your environment, mind and heart can help you to be happier day to day.

"You need to have your environment display the joy you have in your heart," she says.

During her lecture at MDC,

she will share images and examples of how to create happy spaces, places and rooms in your home.

Well-known as a longtime host of *Home Across America* on Home & Garden Television, Stoddard has also been featured on the *Today* show with Katie Couric, *The Barbara Walter Show* and the *Oprah Winfrey* show. She has written 22 books in her 39-year career and continues to practice interior design from her home in New York City.

This event is open to the public and advance reservations are suggested by sending a check, made payable to Michigan Design Center, 1700 Stutz Drive, Suite 25, Troy, 48064 by Friday, May 3.

Reservations will be held at the door. For more information, call (248)649-4772, or log onto www.michigandesign.com.

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