



Charlevoix Area Garden Club

A PUBLICATION OF THE
CHARLEVOIX AREA GARDEN CLUB,
MEMBER OF
MICHIGAN GARDEN CLUBS, INC.
& NATIONAL GARDEN CLUBS, INC.

December 2023

www.charlevoixareagardenclub.org

President's Message

December Greetings to my Dear Fellow Gardeners,

With Thanksgiving behind us and the holidays ahead, many of us are bustling... presents to buy, cookies to bake, houses to clean, cards to address, decorations to hang.....It's not easy being an elf, or Santa, for that matter.

I remember one Christmas when I had to drive from Detroit to Charlevoix in a raging snowstorm by myself with our two small children to prepare for the holidays while my husband continued to work downstate in our retail stores up until Christmas Eve. Icy roads, blinding snow and black ice caused the trip to take way longer than expected. It was dark as we approached Charlevoix. The car was overloaded with packages, suitcases, decorations, and groceries, some piled on my children's laps. And, though my kids were cranky, I insisted that we must get our tree before heading to the cottage. Only then could we relax!



We pulled into a deserted tree farm off US31 (Who would be there during a blizzard?), found a spindly tree and then discovered we, (me, really) had no way of tying the tree to the car roof. I located a bit of string and tied it to some bungee cords I found. Then, in the bitter cold, climbed onto the roof to fasten the tree to the car. Satisfied, I clambered back inside. As we headed down US31 in 50 mph winds, my young son hollered to inform me the tree was now HANGING off the roof and coming down the side of the car. Apparently, I had tied the tree backward and the wind opened the branches like an umbrella. I forced my son to climb on the roof with me to fix the tree. Neither of us had gloves or hats as they were buried under the mounds of groceries and other paraphernalia. We froze to get that tree back on the roof, and probably drove 10 MPH to make sure it stayed up there.

Finally, we arrived at the cottage and drove into our garage where I got on the roof and shoved the tree down into the arms of both kids, who stood timidly below with their arms outstretched. We brought the tree inside to let the branches breathe and unloaded the car. AHHH, I relaxed, but not for long. I still had to put the tree in the stand, which I had located after much hunting. But alas, the stand circumference was too small for the tree trunk. I looked around the garage and spotted an electric circle saw and began to viciously hack the trunk of the tree, making it square instead of round! This while my son loudly protested, "I'M TELLING DAD THAT YOU ARE USING HIS TOOLS AND HE WILL NOT LIKE IT!" As you can imagine, that did not sit well with me, and my kids retreated inside to hide from their mom, who was losing it by now. Tired and exhausted, I made dinner and later, in a better mood, asked the kids to help me decorate the tree, which they did. As we stood back to admire our work, the entire tree started to sway and quickly CRASHED to the floor!!!! (Of course, given my hack job on the trunk.) My solution? Get some rope and tie the dang tree to a light sconce on a nearby wall. (You can imagine how wonderful that looked!) My husband arrived several hours later, admired the tree, and inquired about the beautiful rope attached to the light fixture... which immediately let loose and again deposited the tree on the floor of our cottage! Fortunately, I could laugh by then, probably relieved at knowing my wonderful handy hubby could fix the problem.

Sometimes, things do not go as planned (in our gardens, as well as our lives) ...hard as we try. May you take some time this season to enjoy the good, count your blessings, spread some love and kindness and weather the unexpected with a sense of humor and gratitude.

I wish you a Merry Christmas, Happy Hannukah, and Happy New Year filled with love, peace, and joy!

Kathy Kopitz

December Membership Luncheon



Our December Meeting, Holiday Luncheon, and Installation of new officers takes place on Tuesday, December 12 at 11:30 am at Stafford's Weathervane Restaurant. Hopefully you have sent your RSVP and check for \$30 if you plan to attend.

Every year when we meet for the Christmas Luncheon we fill boxes with needed items for the Women's Resource Center, Safe House. Please consider donating to this worthwhile organization again this year! The Safe Home's greatest need is supermarket/grocery/gas gift cards and financial contributions of all amounts so that they have the flexibility to act immediately to each of their client's unique situations as they arise.

CAGC Activities

Several club members met at the Charlevoix Blue Star Memorial to commemorate Veterans Day. They were joined by students from St. Mary School.

The Floral Design Group met on November 11 to create works using the theme "Stretch". These designs were constructed using two units, one smaller than the other, and having a prominent component connecting the two units (the stretch component). All CAGC members are welcome to participate in the Floral Design Group. Contact Marge McGoff for more information.



Floral Designs created by Martha Rohr, Rhea Dow, and Marge McGoff

Members attending our November Meeting created Thanksgiving-themed centerpieces to be donated to shut-ins.



Conservation: How to Minimize Your Pets Carbon Paw Print

Submitted by Carrie Minch

Our pets help connect us to nature. By sharing our lives with these once-wild creatures, we get more in tune with the natural world. The social and emotional sustenance we get from them makes us better Earth citizens. The same principles that help you live more sustainably also apply to Fluffy and Fido. What's good for the environment is also good for your pet—no compromises on tasty treats necessary.

Getting a Pet: First off, adopt; don't shop. Millions of animals are available from shelters and rescue operations, which—unlike breeders—spay and neuter their wards, reducing overpopulation. You don't need to limit yourself to a dog or a cat. Some shelters house herbivores like rabbits, rodents, goats, and reptiles (did you know some are vegan?) that would love to move in with you.

Feeding Your New Best Friend: The bulk of pets' carbon paw print stems from their diet. Your local pet store probably carries food made with organic, sustainably farmed, perhaps even plant-based ingredients. People's decision to spring for "human-grade" pet food is a morally questionable choice in a country where more than 10 percent of the population is food insecure. The truth is, pets aren't picky. Seek out food brands that incorporate rendered animal byproducts. Try treats from Chippin, made from delicious, low-impact crickets. Ask your local pet store about brands that participate in recycling programs. Cats are obligate carnivores that require sulfur-rich amino acids like taurine at levels typically available only in meat-based diets. Contrary to their "carnivorous wolf descendant" reputation, most dogs are good candidates for flexitarianism, if not veganism.

Fun and Games: A zero or low-waste lifestyle for your pet is more doable than you think. Look for toys made from upcycled materials, like denim or rope, and consumable chew toys. Invest in durable leashes, harnesses, and collars - and tell your local pet store how much you prefer plastic-free goods. As with human wares, supporting local companies saves emissions, and DIY is always the most climate-friendly option.

When Nature Calls: All that food has to end up somewhere. America's pets produce over 5 million tons of feces a year—more than that of 90 million Americans. When cleaning your yard, scoop the poop into trash bags you're already using. Better yet, consider flushing your dog's waste down the toilet (but never your cat's—toxoplasma, a parasite found in cat feces, can infect marine life). You can also compost dog waste: you'll need a mix of nitrogen-rich materials like food waste and grass cuttings, and carbon-rich materials like sawdust or leaves. For cats, avoid kitty litter containing bentonite clay, which comes from strip mines, and look into biodegradable options

Sierra Magazine, Summer 2022

https://www.sierraclub.org/sierra/2022-2-summer/material-world/how-minimize-your-pets-carbon-paw-print?utm_source=print&utm_medium=sierra&utm_campaign=sierramag



National Garden Clubs

Looking Ahead: 2024 NGC Convention. The next convention of the National Garden Clubs will take place June 2 – June 5, 2024 in Westminster, Colorado. The registration deadline is May 24, 2024.

The NGC Newsletter "The National Gardener" Is published online seasonally. To view the fall issue click the link below:

<https://gardenclub.org/sites/default/files/2023-10/tng-fall-2023.pdf>

NGC Schools provide members and non-members with a range of educational opportunities on the art and science of the environment, gardening, landscape design and floral design. For more information: <https://gardenclub.org/our-schools>





Michigan Garden Clubs

MGC Monthly Member Meetings take place via Zoom. All CAGC members are welcome to join using the **Meeting ID: 912 729 4983** and **Passcode: mgcmeets**

December 11, 10 am: Make a Holiday Centerpiece, cohosted by Bunny LaDuke and Nancy Ryan. Phyllis Straw Master Flower Show Judge, President Lakeshore Flower Arrangers Guild and District 3A&B Michigan Association of Accredited Judges Representative will lead us through making our own holiday centerpiece right at home! For a list of materials required use this link:

<https://files.constantcontact.com/e7d207a4301/929b152e-ad01-4ace-9fec-cf6950805619.pdf>

January 8, 2024, 6:00 pm: Flower Photography, cohosted by Melinda Popa and Nancy Ryan. Mike Moats, an award-winning professional photographer, will teach how easy it is to produce excellent artistic flower photography whether you own a camera with lenses, or just a cell phone.

Have you looked at the renewed version of the MGC website? The site was renovated during this past summer to allow easier access to information. To access the Member Resources area of the website, use the password: *mgcgrow*

News and Notes

Our Club received a thank-you letter from the Charlevoix Historical Society. It was addressed to the chairs of the Depot Heritage Garden (Rhea Dow, Ruth Augustine, and Joan Nowak), and read as follows:

"Thank you very much for forwarding a copy of the Depot Heritage Garden 2023 Annual Report. I found it very informative of the time and talent you and your team spent on caring for the lawn and gardens at the Depot this past year. The beauty you and your team create is so enjoyed by visitors and community members alike.

All of us here at the Society wish you and your team a joyous holiday season.

Sincerely,

*Geoffrey D. Reynolds, President
Charlevoix Historical Society"*

Advice from MSU Extension about keeping your real Christmas Tree Fresh:

Use the following link to read tips and watch videos about keeping your tree looking good throughout the season:

https://www.canr.msu.edu/news/water_is_the_essential_ingredient_in_keeping_your_farm_grown_christmas_tree



Foundations of Gardening: Registration begins on December 7 for the Winter 2024 session of the MSU Extension Foundations of Gardening course. Foundations of Gardening is the horticulture course for both those wishing to apply to the MSU Extension Master Gardener Program and those seeking horticultural training for personal reasons. The course is offered via Zoom and runs from February 8 – through April 11, 2024. To learn more, or to register for the course, go to: <https://www.canr.msu.edu/courses/foundations-of-gardening>

The Charlevoix Conservation District 2024 Tree Sale Catalog will be coming out on February 1. A pdf of the catalog will be posted on their website www.charlevoixcd.org or you can call their office 231-582-6193 to be added to their mailing list if you wish to receive a hard copy.



CAGC Events and Community Calendar

December 2023

- 7** Registration begins for Winter 2024 Session of "Foundations of Gardening" (see news and notes above)
- 11** **MGC Monday Meeting**, 10 am via Zoom, "Make a Holiday Centerpiece". Join Zoom meeting using the Meeting ID: 912 729 4983 and Passcode: mgcmeets.
- 12** **CAGC Member Meeting and Holiday Luncheon**, 11:30 am, Stafford's Weathervane Restaurant. Installation of the Club's 2024 Officers will take place.

January 2024

- 9** **CAGC Member Meeting**, Noon, Charlevoix Public Library. Soup luncheon.
- 11** **MGC Monday Meeting**, 6 pm via Zoom, "Flower Photography". Join Zoom meeting using the Meeting ID: 912 729 4983 and Passcode: mgcmeets.



CAGC Newsletter, Website, and Social Media

Submission deadline for the January CAGC newsletter is December 25. Email your photos, information, and articles to Beth Cowie at bethcowie@mac.com. You can also send information and photos for our website and social media.



Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/CharlevoixAreaGardenClub/>
Instagram [@charlevoixareagardenclub](https://www.instagram.com/charlevoixareagardenclub)



Go to our website www.charlevoixareagardenclub.org Scroll to the bottom of the main page for our latest blog posts.