

bcsem

September, 2016

Next Quarterly Meeting:

September 15

Brownstown Township Events Center

CALENDAR

DEC. 8 (TENTATIVE) QUARTERLY MEETING IN HUNTINGTON WOODS WITH OAK PARK

October 20-21 KMB Annual Conference and Awards Program Kalamazoo

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Beautification Council of Southeastern Michigan

Area 1 of Keep Michigan Beautiful, Inc.

September, 2016

President's Message

What a gorgeous day we had in Auburn Hills as they hosted us for the June meeting at the beautiful, city owned, Fieldstone Golf Club. Their featured speaker, Steve Nikkila, provided excellent instruction on planting container grown plants especially when the roots are not right. His advice was most helpful in assuring success and cost effectiveness. The presentation was followed by an excellent "best practices" discussion which we hope to implement at all meetings. Special thanks to the City of Auburn Hills, their Beautification Council and to Richard Foster, Pattie Ormsbee and Elizabeth Brennan for their hard work.

The BCSEM calendar is filling up but we continue to need host communities for future meetings. The most urgent is for March 2017. Please consider how your community can participate in hosting. Co-hosting with a neighboring community, group or business is possible.

Thanks to all the communities that submitted nominations for the Individual Service Award. Our winner/winners will be announced at the 9-15-16 meeting in Brownstown.

Gardens are glorious -- they are for everyone and every place. Gardens are a source of beauty and bounty, they offer a place to gather and be in community, they reconnect us with the natural world, they offer us physical and mental health benefits and they are fun. Have you seen any interesting gardens this summer? Gardens come in all shapes, sizes and types. They are limited only by the gardener's imagination and skills. They can be as basic as a flower garden or vegetable garden or as unusual a guerilla garden or a garden without plants. They can be structured or free form. They can have a practical purpose or a

decorative purpose. Listed below are some gardens that may be just right for you.

- alphabet gardens
• aquaponic gardens (without soil)
• butterfly gardens
• community gardens
• container gardens
• desert and succulent gardens
• edible gardens
• flower gardens
• guerilla gardening on land w/o legal rights
• herb gardens
• labyrinth & formal gardens
• memorial gardens
• native plant gardens
• pool gardens from vacant swimming pools
• rain gardens
• raised bed gardens
• rock gardens
• rooftop gardens (on the rooftop or the actual roof)
• spiritual or sanctuary gardens
• straight from the soil bag gardens
• shade gardens
• sculpture gardens
• sound gardens
• straw bale gardens
• tire gardens
• topiary gardens
• tropical gardens
• water gardens
• woodland gardens and more

Plant a garden, Visit a garden, Enjoy a garden!

See you in Brownstown, they have planned a great meeting.

Pat Deck

Our September Host: Brownstown Township

*“This will be the
third time
Brownstown has
hosted a BCSEM
meeting.”*

Denise Sheldon

*Hosting
opportunities are
available.*

*When was the
last time your
community host-
ed?*

*Contact a
BCSEM officer.*

This will be the third time Brownstown has hosted a BCSEM meeting. Its beautification commission, which merged a few years ago with the community's historical commission, has been in existence since June 1989, with our chairwoman, **Pat Pfau**, helping to organize the charter group. Our vice chairwoman, **Denise Sheldon**, was appointed in 1991, and is marking her 25th anniversary as vice chairwoman this year. Other long-term beautification members are **Eva Walters**, who started as an alternate in 1992 and **Dan Szymanski**, who joined us in 1995. The rest of our this august group joined within the past five years and includes **Mary Lou Burke**, **John Golovich** and **Debbie Galik**. Their board liaison, **Mark Maxe**, began his duties with Brownstown Beautification Commission nearly 20 years ago.

The commission has undertaken many ventures, including the creation and installation

of new signage throughout the township, awarding homeowners for the best Christmas displays, initiating a successful farmers' market, instituting a large community garden with some produce being donated to local food pantries, a Yard of the Month program, an annual two-week special trash pick-up for ordinarily unacceptable items, such as small car-parts and appliances with Freon; and they had a highly successful program wherein residents and the township split the cost of semi-mature trees. It was funny—even after they were told the size of the trees—to see some residents pull up in little VW's to haul home a 14-foot Lotus weighting about 200 pounds. The expressions on their faces when they saw the trees was priceless. They have many more projects in the works and hopefully, they can bring back some programs that were, of necessity, cut during poor economic times. Meanwhile, feel welcome to visit our community anytime—especially September 15!

Straw Bales Create Gardens Anywhere

Add productive garden space and raise your planting bed with straw bale gardening. This technique allows gardeners to create raised bed gardens on a patio, lawn or any area with poor compacted soil. Straw bale gardening has been around for centuries, but thanks to Joel Karsten's book [Straw Bale Gardens](#) it has gained new popularity.

All that is needed are a few straw bales, fertilizer, a bit of compost and time to condition, plant and water the garden.

Type of Straw Bale

Be sure to purchase straw bales made from alfalfa, wheat, oats, rye or other cereal grain that have less weed seeds than hay. Start a few weeks before the designated planting date.

Permanent Location Place the bales in their permanent location with the cut sides up and twine parallel to the ground. Once



you start the condition process, the bales will be very heavy and hard to move. When the bales are in place you are ready to start the conditioning process. This is done to start the inside of the straw bales composting, so they'll support plant growth

Day One to Six

On day one, spread fertilizer over the top of the bale. Use a ½ cup of a complete garden fertilizer or three cups of an organic based fertilizer like [Milorganite](#). Then completely moisten the bale. The organic fertilizers feed the microorganisms that help decompose the straw into a nutrient rich planting medium. Thoroughly soak the bale every day. On days three and five you will add more fertilizer at the same rate used on day one.

Day Seven to Nine

Days seven through nine use half the rate

Con't. p. 4

September's Guest Speakers

Our guest speakers for the September Quarterly meeting will be Dr. John Hartig and advanced master gardener, Paul Rodman. Dr. Hartig is currently Refuge Manager for the Detroit River International Wildlife Refuge, and served as River Navigator for the Greater Detroit American Heritage River Initiative, established by Presidential Executive Order, and has authored or co-authored a plethora of books and papers. Paul Rodman, book author and popular newspaper columnist, was named *Master Gardner of the Year* in 2013, and will dispel some long-accepted gardening myths...or are they truths?

ISA Award

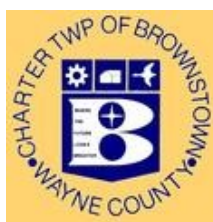
The Individual Service Award Committee thanks the communities who chose to honor a volunteer with a nomination. We had an excellent group of nominations. And judging, under newly developed guidelines, is underway at this writing. The winner/ winners will be honored at the September Quarterly Meeting in Brownstown Township. *John Derin*

We Can't Be Divided, So We Stand United — Brownstown

As far as we know, and we're trying to verify, Brownstown may be the only community in the United States to be completely divided geographically into three separate sections, connected solely by a state highway.

Although our 31,000-plus residents live under the Brownstown Township umbrella, our three sections have differences. The south section is located on the shores of Lake Erie and is mainly a residential area offering fishing and other water activities. Brownstown's middle section presents a vast variety of residential and recreational opportunities and the north part of the township has residential, recreational and commercial developments. Each section has something special to offer and we're proud of all three.

In 1827, the township was one big landmass, but over time, various areas incorporated and became villages and eventually, cities. These incorporations greatly affected Brownstown by dividing it into those three separate sections. Because Brownstown itself incorporated as a charter township in the early 1970s, it is no longer legal to grab its land. So it remains that the northern section of the township is 15.5 square miles, the center section is two square miles and the southern sector is 5.5 square miles.



Today, Brownstown boasts hundreds of thriving businesses and beautiful residential neighborhoods, including Bridgewater, a Del Webb adult community. The township also has many active civic groups, an abundance of senior activities, churches, a dog park, and booming recreational programs-- reflected in new baseball diamonds, soccer fields, a splash pad, tennis courts, and new amenities in Thorn Park. Our recreation program includes dozens of various year-round classes, summer performances by popular local bands, and current movies shown on the portable stage behind the Events Center. Beautiful Lake Erie Metro Park is encompassed within the township and offers a wildlife area, scenic shoreline and boardwalk, a wave pool, walking trails and picnic areas, plus a hands-on nature center.



Yes, we may be divided geographically, but we invite you to see how we are totally connected as a community. Please join us September 15, at our new Events Center for the BCSEM autumn meeting.

Denise Shelden



Officers

President:

A. Pat Deck

Immediate Past President:

James Keehn

1st Vice President:

John Darin

2nd Vice President:

Betty Stone

Rec./Corr. Secretary:

Flo Jagielski

Treasurer/Membership/

Historian:

Dorothy Wood

Directors for 2015/2016:

1. Lois Adams
2. Position open

Directors for 2016/2017:

1. Henrietta Baczewski
2. Jerald Stone

We're on the web
www.bcsem.org

Committees:

ISA Award

John Darin

Travel Trophy

Lois Adams

Raffle

Henrietta Baczewski

Parliamentarian

Marion Schmidt

Newsletter

Barbara Miller

tcmliller224@sbcglobal.net

Contact

Pat Deck, President

lpdeck@sbcglobal.net

Straw bale gardens *con't. from p. 2*

used on day one. This would be ¼ cup of a complete garden fertilizer or 1 ½ cups of an organic fertilizer. Thoroughly water the bale each time.

Day Ten

On day ten you will add one cup of 10-10-10 or three cups of an organic fertilizer rich in phosphorous and potassium. This completes the conditioning process.

Get Ready to Plant

Bales treated with a complete fertilizer should be ready to plant. You may need to wait a few more days when using an organic fertilizer. The inside of the bale should be the tempera-

ture of warm bath water or cooler for planting. If it is hotter than this, wait for the bale to cool a bit before you plant.

Use a trowel to pry open a hole in the bale. Place the plant in the hole and cover the roots with potting mix or compost.

Planting with Seeds

Create a planting bed for seeds by covering the bale with a one- to two-inch thick layer of planting mix. Follow the planting directions on the back of the seed packet.

Watering

Regular watering is critical for success with this meth-

od. Soaker hoses or drip irrigation make this an easier task. You can also use gallon milk jugs with holes in the bottom or inverted two-liter soda bottles placed near the base of each plant to provide water where it is needed.

Nutrient Boost

Give your straw bale garden a nutrient boost with Mi-lorganite about once a month or as needed throughout the growing season.

Follow these steps and you'll be well on your way to growing a productive straw bale garden to enjoy throughout the season.

Repurposed vacant swimming pool into a garden.



Repurposed 2 liter bottles.

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