



1st Annual Gardening Conference

Thursday, March 20th

Ralph A. McMullen Center, Roscommon

Join us as we come together to celebrate the joys of gardening and learn new ways to start or improve your garden for the coming season. This day is dedicated to supporting our WISEWOMAN gardeners, so there is no cost to attend.

But, you must register to confirm your spot.

Conference Registration includes all educational sessions, lunch and an afternoon refreshment break. There will be 2 tracks offered during the day. Track 1 is geared toward 'seedlings' those who are new to gardening. Track 2 is geared toward 'hardy perennials' those who have been growing for two or more years and ready to learn some advanced gardening techniques.

If you have any questions, or need additional information on the conference, please contact Helen DeFlorio, deflori2@anr.msu.edu or 989-709-0616.

Register Online: [WISEWOMAN Gardening Conference](#)

Conference Held at: Ralph A. McMullen (RAM) Center which is located 5 miles west of I-75 off exit 244. The RAM Center is located 1.5 miles east of US27 off the Military Road exit. Highway signs on both expressways indicate which exit to take. The entrance to the facility is off N. Higgins Lake Drive on the south side of the road.



Conference Agenda—Thursday, March 20th



9:30-10:00 **Conference Welcome**

10:05-11:20 **Session 1**

Track 1: Soil Amending and Composting

Bob Gothard from 3rd Day Farm in Lake City will share his years of experience in building, amending and maintaining healthy soil. He will cover the importance of a healthy start for your plants, how to build soil blocks for seedlings and basic composting methods. Bob and his wife Anne, a WISEWOMAN gardener, grow much of their produce in low tunnels and hoophouses.

Track 2: Advanced Season Extension

This workshop is for gardeners who have some experience growing in hoophouses or high/low tunnels. Gardeners will learn tools and methods to improve efficiency, plan crop rotation, and improve their growing practices. Presenter Laura Haselhuhn from the MSU Horticulture Department will also discuss the challenges of growing in this setting and potential solutions.

11:25am-12:40 **Session 2**

Track 1: Extend the Growing Season with Low Tunnels

Low tunnels are a relatively easy and inexpensive way to extend your growing season. During this session participants will learn how to grow in a low tunnel, the challenges of growing in this environment, potential diseases and insects and what varieties grow best in this setting. Presenter Laura Haselhuhn from the MSU Horticulture Department will also discuss low tunnel materials and construction, especially related to weather issues such as heavy wind and snow.

Track 2: Selling at Market

Join seasoned WISEWOMAN gardeners Anne Gothard, Lisa Gusler, and Shirley Salmon as they share their wisdom and experience selling at farmers markets and roadside stands. Learn some tips and tools of the trade to make the most of your market stand or space. WISEWOMAN Gardening Coordinator Helen DeFlorio will also bring some actual items and provide examples of ways to make your selling space stand out from the crowd.

12:40-1:30 **Lunch & Culinary Herbs Demonstration**
Shirley Salmon, WISEWOMAN
Helen DeFlorio, MSU Extension

1:35-2:50 **Session 3**

Track 1: Veggie 101/Container Gardening

Learn the basics of growing vegetables. This session is ideal for beginning gardeners or gardeners who have not had much success. Learn how to create the best growing conditions for your garden with the proper amount of sunlight, water, how to position your rows, companion planting, growing veggies in containers and other alternative growing ideas. Roy Eli is a Master Gardener and retired from MSU as a Master Gardener Coordinator.

Track 2: Cottage Food Law/Food Safety

This session will focus on the Cottage Food laws in Michigan will describe what kinds of prepared or value-added foods you can and cannot sell at the market. Food safety is the reason some foods are permitted and others are not. Attendees will receive a *certificate of completion* on the subject. The certificate may be used to display at the market informing your consumers that you have been trained in proper handling of the products you are selling and the Cottage Food law.

2:50-3:00 **Refreshment Break**

3:00-4:15 **Session 4**

Track 1: Disease and Pest Management:

Want to avoid pesticides and chemicals in your garden? Learn about natural ways to deal with pests and plant diseases. Master Gardener Linda Stemen has lots of backyard gardening experience with fruits, vegetables and herbs. She will be discussing techniques and safe substances to use to prevent losing plants and make sure you and your customers have the best quality produce.

Track 2: Making Extra Income with Market Fresh

The Senior and WISEWOMAN Market FRESH Programs provide qualified older adults and WISEWOMAN participants with coupons to purchase Michigan-grown products at farmers markets and roadside stands. Join Sherri King, Nutrition & Wellness Coordinator for the Michigan Office of Services to the Aging and learn how you can boost your income and increase access to fresh fruits and vegetables in your community by participating in the Market Fresh Program. Sherri will also be certifying gardeners who want to accept Market Fresh coupons for the 2014 growing season.

4:15-4:30 **Conference Wrap-Up**