



Brighton Bloomer

BRIGHTONMIGARDENCLUB
MEMBEROFMICHIGANGARDENCLUBS, INC.
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WEB SEPTEMBER 2026

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SEPTEMBER MEETING DETAILS

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NOTE:

The contents of this newsletter have been slightly modified for the web with the removal of the calendar and budget information.

A letter from your president

Dear Members,

Deep Roots, Blooming in Joy

After an all-too-short summer, it is wonderful to return to our regular meetings and reconnect with one another. As the days grow shorter and the temperatures begin to cool, we have the opportunity to gather again, share our summer experiences and look ahead to a new year together.

Our theme this year, Deep Roots, Blooming in Joy, reminds us that a garden flourishes when its roots are nourished and connected to the soil around them. Our club is much the same. Our roots are found in our shared love of gardening, our community gardens, our traditions and, most importantly, the friendships we have built with one another.

Each of us finds our own way to put down roots in BMGC—through a community garden, a committee, a fundraiser, a luncheon, a program or simply by getting to know another member. And each member brings something special to our club: knowledge, experience, enthusiasm, creativity and a willingness to share.

Our September program, BMGC Membership Connection, is a wonderful way to begin the year. We will hear from the chairs of our six community gardens about the successes and challenges of the summer. Our gardens are at the heart of what makes Brighton Michigan Garden Club special, and this is an opportunity to learn more about the work that goes into them.

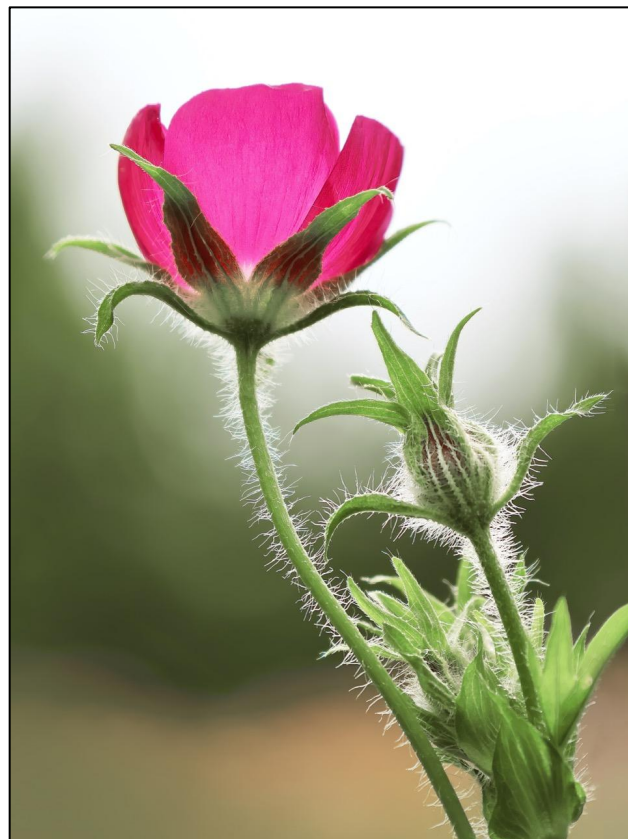
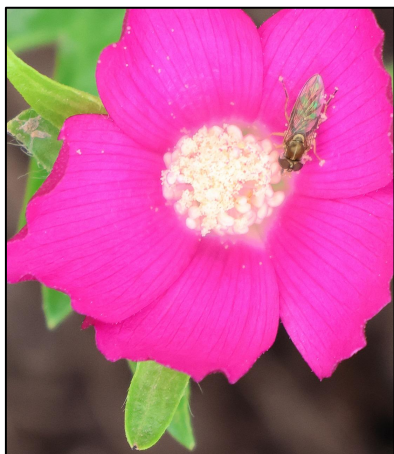
We will also have some fun with Tool Time, sharing favorite gardening tools, tricks and apps. I know I purchased several gardening gadgets after our last Tool Time and found them very helpful. Finally, we will discover the many areas of gardening knowledge and expertise within our own membership. Where are our pockets of knowledge? Who has a special interest or skill that others might enjoy learning about? By sharing what we know, we can help one another grow.

Perhaps most importantly, let's use this year to deepen our connections with one another. Established members and newer members may not always have an easy opportunity to meet. So let's be curious and take that first step. Try asking, "Are you a new member? Welcome! What is your favorite part of gardening?" Or, "How long have you been a member of BMGC? Which garden do you work in?"

A garden doesn't thrive because of one plant. It thrives because many plants grow together, each contributing something of its own. Let's put down our roots, deepen our connections and begin a year of blooming in joy—together.

Hilary

Native Plant Feature



Purple Poppy Mallow

(*Callirhoe involucrata*)

By Lynn O'Shaughnessy

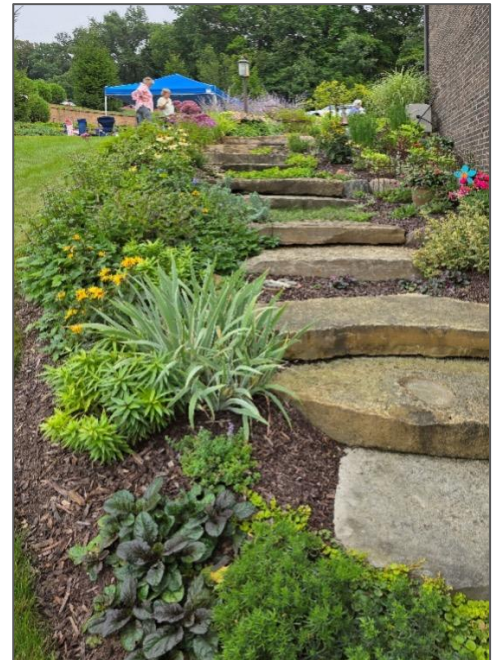
Purple Poppy Mallow created a beautiful display of fuchsia, cup-like flowers that bloom from late spring into the early fall. The plant only gets about 6 to 12 inches tall, but the leaves/stems will spread out over the ground up to 3 feet. The good thing is, though, that the stems do not take root...they just ramble across the ground to give the plant more space to share more flowers with the sun. They would do well with other shorter plants to share the space with since they do not spread by rhizome. When my stems start to spread out into the walkway, I just wind them back up with the rest of the plant in the garden. The flowers open in the morning and close in the evening.

This plant is healthier and grows more vigorously when grown in full sun and drier soils. I do have a sprinkler system, but they seem to dry out enough during the day. This species has a long taproot and does not transplant well because of a long tap root, so hopefully you can put them in a place where they can stay. That long taproot also helps also withstand drought.

Literature says Purple Poppy Mallow is a host plant for the Gray Hairstreak and Checkered Skipper caterpillars, but I have not seen anything eating on the leaves of my plant. It is also suggested to interplant with Allium or Milkweed to deter rabbits and deer from snacking on these plants.

August Picnic

Twenty – five members enjoyed a delightful time at the annual August picnic hosted by Debra Wagenmaker. The weather was perfect and everyone was eager to share their summer stories and tour Debra's wonderful gardens. Many thanks to Debra for hosting this fun event, complete with golf cart rides for those having difficulty with the steep hill. Some photos from the day from Lynn O'Shaughnessy and Mike Wagenmaker.



Front row: Cindy Moriandi, Lynn O'Shaughnessy, Evelyn Dionise

Middle row: Carmen Novak, Hazel Yarnevich, Claudia Jablonski, Sandy Darby, Sue Diebol, Terry Such, Julie Cooper

Back row: Hilary Sproule, Sharon Burnett, Liz Gaines, Debbie Miller, Laura Carr, Keri Wasylik, Linda Battison, Cheryl Yelen, Carol Adas, Marsha Lesley, Nola Hoggess, Stella Jay



Blue dasher dragonfly on black-eyed susan.

The Message of Dragonfly

By Lynn O'Shaughnessy

Dragonfly sends us a message about what it takes to transform,
To positive thinking and finding joy by looking outside of the norm,

To realize who we truly are and who we were meant to be,
By smiling and just enjoying life without worrying what others may see.

So next time you see a dragonfly just staring you right in the eye,
Remember what brings you joy in life and let all the bad things go by.

Red, White & Blue



Post Office Garden



Sculpture Garden

*Photos & Text
By Lynn
O'Shaughnessy*

Each of our six community gardens did a fabulous job with their red, white, and blue flowers to celebrate our country's 250th birthday. Here is a photo from each of the gardens. Thank you to the teams that tend these gardens. 😊



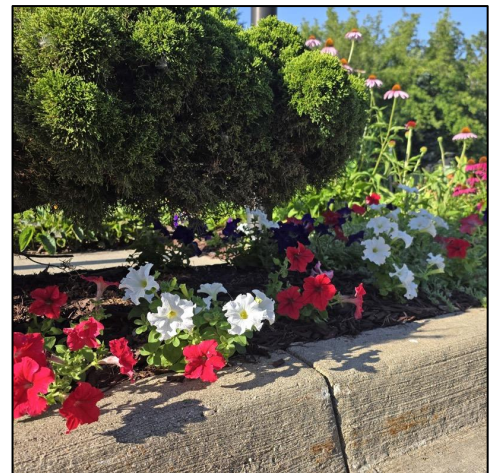
Veterans Hall



City Hall



Library Garden



Community Center Garden

Youth Activities Update

Plant Parts for 500, Please

By Linda Battison, Youth Activities Committee Chair

Additional Committee Members:

*Karen Alberts, Evelyn Dionise, Carol Estes,
Sue Sutherland, Debra Wagenmaker*

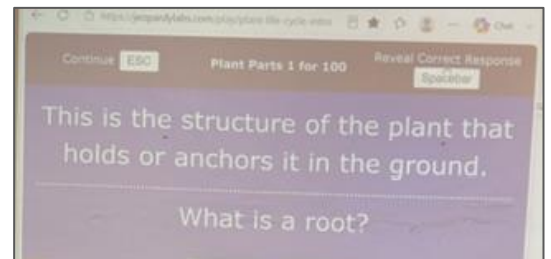
On August 6, the Youth Activities Committee presented an interactive educational program on Plant Parts as part of Grandparents Camp at the Brighton Community Education/Senior Center. Designed for children ages 6-12 and their grandparents, the class provided a fun opportunity for multiple generations to learn together through hands-on activities, discussion, and friendly competition.

The program introduced the major parts of a plant through a large bean plant illustration and a variety of common vegetables. Participants identified corn as a seed, carrots as roots, celery as stems, romaine lettuce as leaves, broccoli as flowers, and peppers as fruit. As each plant part was discussed, participants learned about its role, function, and importance in plant growth.

To reinforce the lesson, attendees were divided into two teams for a Jeopardy-style game created by the committee. The competition quickly became the highlight of the event, as participants eagerly raised their hands to answer questions based on the material they had just learned. The close final score reflected both the enthusiasm and engagement of the group.

Following the game, participants explored educational displays featuring lily flowers with visible pistils and stamens, celery and carnations placed in colored water to demonstrate how xylem transports water through a stem, and examples of tree seeds, fruit and leaves. Each attendee received Plant Parts activity worksheets to take home, along with information about the Brighton Garden Club and its Gnome Adventure program.

This successful program highlighted the value of experiential learning and intergenerational participation while advancing the Brighton Garden Club's mission of promoting gardening and environmental education in our community. The event was presented in partnership with Brighton Community Education as part of its Grandparents Week/Game Day program.



Awards & Recognition

Congratulations to the Post Office Garden Team!

By Hilary Sproule

Congratulations to Sue Rusnik, chair of the Post Office Garden, and her dedicated team on receiving the MNLA Plant Michigan Green Community Landscape Beautification Award for their “Celebrating America’s Birthday” garden project.

Michigan Nursery and Landscape Association (MNLA) Executive Director Amy Upton presented Sue and her team with a plaque and decorative metal sign recognizing their award-winning garden at a presentation held at the Post Office. The award recognizes outstanding community landscaping and beautification projects throughout Michigan. Entries are evaluated by landscaping professionals on such criteria as overall appearance, plant selection and placement, design, craftsmanship, quality of materials, and how well the garden integrates with its surroundings.

This is a significant statewide honor—only four awards are presented throughout Michigan. We were especially pleased that Ann Bollin, State Representative for the 49th District, and Lana Theis, State Senator, joined Amy Upton for the presentation. Both offered their congratulations and expressed their appreciation for the Brighton Michigan Garden Club’s commitment to volunteer service and the beauty our gardens bring to the Brighton community.

A special thank-you goes to Sue Rusnik, whose leadership, determination, and enthusiasm helped make this recognition possible. Her leadership reflects the dedication that makes our community gardens successful.

While this award recognizes the Post Office Garden Team, it is also a celebration of the Brighton Michigan Garden Club as a whole. The beauty of the Post Office Garden is the result of the team’s hard work and creativity, but the resources that helped make the project possible came from funds raised through the collective efforts of our entire club. Our six community garden teams each contribute in their own way to making Brighton a more beautiful place.

So, congratulations to Sue and the Post Office Garden Team! Your award is a wonderful reflection of what can happen when dedicated volunteers work together—and it is an achievement that every BMGC member can share with pride.



The Windshield Phenomenon

By Arla McPeck

I just got back from a road trip out west, and I saw several things that alarmed me. In Wyoming, I saw a bear not far from where I had been hiking solo the day before. Near Chicago, I saw snapped trees, twisted billboards and crashed cars from a tornado that passed minutes before I drove through. But what alarmed me most was something I didn't see.

I didn't see nearly as many dead bugs on my windshield as in years past.

I have driven through the Midwest more times than I can count. We used to make the trip multiple times a year when I was a child, traveling between our home in Wyoming and later Utah to see relatives in Iowa and Kansas. And in those days we'd have to stop every few hours to clean the dead bugs off our windshields, just so we could see well enough to continue.

Not so this week. One cleaning per day was plenty.

The observation that there are fewer dead bugs on our windshields these days is not unique to me. In fact, it's got a name: The Windshield Phenomenon, or, if you're British, The Windscreen Phenomenon. There have been a number of studies (mostly British) that have confirmed the number of bugs is declining.

- In 2004 the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds asked motorists in the UK to attach a sticky film to their front license plate to capture the insects their vehicle hits so they can be counted. Back then, each vehicle averaged one insect for every five miles driven.
- A follow-up study in 2019 conducted by Kent Wildlife Trust used the same methodology and found half as many insects.
- Another study in 2021 by Kent Wildlife Trust and Buglife, a nature conservation charity, showed the number of insects decreased by 72% compared to the 2004 results.
- A 2025 study conducted in Kent by Buglife found that insect population has decreased by 66% since 2021.

This matters because life on earth depends upon insects. Not only do we need insects for pollination of plants, but they are also a vital part of the food web, with many creatures depending directly on insects for food, and other animals depending on the insect-eating animals for food. Without a sufficient number of insects, whole ecosystems could be threatened, with cataclysmic results.

Here are some things individuals can do to help right now, according to the Kent Wildlife Trust.

- Stop – or at least drastically reduce – the use of insecticides in your own garden and yard.
- Use alternatives to peat compost to reduce CO2 emissions and slow the impact of climate change.
- Tolerate a little more untidiness in your yard for the good of the insects. Let the grass go a little longer, sow wildflowers and don't be so quick to cut things back in fall.
- Decrease your carbon footprint in an effort to slow climate change. Try to think of ways to drive less. Buy your food from local suppliers or grow your own vegetables. Be alert to other ways to lessen your impact on the environment.
- Get involved with a conservation organization whose mission is to protect and restore the environment.
- Download an app like iNaturalist to be a citizen scientist and add your observations and data to that of other citizen scientists. (There's an app called Bugs Matter that deals specifically with insect counts on cars, but it's still limited to the UK, Republic of Ireland and France.)

Bug splats on a windshield are a humble way to gather data, but they point to a serious problem: The world is losing insects at an alarmingly rapid rate. We need to turn this situation around for the health of our planet.



Shelby Parker Captures Garden Club Scholarship

*By Marsha Lesley, Ways & Means
Committee*

The Brighton High School scholarship recipient this year is Shelby Peters. Shelby stood out as a person who could successfully juggle school work, extracurricular activities, year-round employment and volunteer work, and still find time to help an elderly neighbor care for her animals. A horse lover herself, Shelby was a member of the varsity equestrian team and volunteered at two horse barns. What stood out was Shelby's passion for a healthy environment and need for "a clean Earth" as well as protection for the creatures that inhabit it. Due to her interest in wildlife biology and environmental health, she has enrolled at Michigan State University; however, has chosen to spend her first year of college at Lansing Community College before moving on to MSU. Hilary Sproule and I had the pleasure of sitting with Shelby Peters and her mother at the Awards Ceremony, and found Shelby to be a treasure—a young voice excited to learn more and have a positive impact on the health of our planet.



Sharon Burnett, Genevieve Sobolevski, Eric Howe and Marsha Lesley



The newly planted native garden



The two new native gardens by the school windows and potential area for development Phase 3 – quiet area for reading and reflection.

Spencer Garden Club: Growing a Love of Nature

By Hilary Sproule, School Grants Committee

Established in September 2024 by fourth-grade teacher Jenny Sobolevski and Instructional Coach Eric Howe, the Spencer Garden Club now involves approximately 70 students from Junior Kindergarten through fourth grade. The club promotes hands-on environmental education, student responsibility, and the benefits of Michigan native plants while creating habitats for birds and pollinators.

Phase One: In 2025, students designed and planted two native-plant gardens, taking part in every step—from growing seedlings and preparing the soil to planting, maintaining, and educating others about native plants. BMGC member Lynn O'Shaughnessy supported the students with educational presentations and donated approximately 250 native plants.

Phase Two: In 2026, the club expanded its native plantings into playground areas outside the classrooms. BMGC helped make this next phase possible with a \$500 grant for native seeds, gardening supplies, tools, and protective fencing. Lynn continued her support by sharing her knowledge and donating additional native seedlings.

The project has inspired such enthusiasm that former club members have returned as volunteers and mentors. Looking ahead, Jenny and Eric hope to expand the gardens with outdoor reading and quiet reflection areas, bringing nature even more fully into the school's learning environment.

BMGC is proud to support the Spencer Garden Club as it grows young gardeners, environmental stewards, and a lasting connection to nature.

Let's Get Together



Parade Fun

By Lynn O'Shaughnessy

The Brighton Michigan Garden Club was once again represented with their gnome float in the Fourth of July Parade down Main Street...except this year was extra special. The float was done up beautifully in red, white, and blue (and other colors), 10 members walked alongside greeting the public with candy and flyers, Nola's family rode on the float dressed as gnomes, and Nola and Ralph rode in the car. What a fun day!



Engagement Calendar

Support the Brighton MI Garden Club
and purchase your calendar today!

\$20 each plus sales tax

Money will support BMGC with
their native plant projects
and scholarships



New Year, New Book

By Lynn O'Shaughnessy

Are you looking forward to 2027 and the fun it will bring? To make the upcoming year even more fun and playful, order your "2027 Finding Joy in Nature" engagement calendar! The 2027 calendar will again feature 53 weeks of my nature photography along with 53 inspirational and/or informational poems to go with the photos. My hope is to bring a smile and some joy to those who order one. We can never have too much joy in our lives. 😊

The proceeds from the sale of this calendar will go to support the Brighton Michigan Garden Club with both native plant projects and their scholarship program. To save paying the shipping, these calendars will be available for sale at the upcoming meetings and one of the Farmers Market days in September. **If you know of someone who would like to have the calendar shipped directly to them, the QR code includes shipping.** The cost is \$20 plus sales tax (\$1.20) for a total of \$21.20 if you pick one up in person. If you want one mailed to you, shipping is an additional \$7.

The calendars are printed and ready to go now. Please let your friends and family know about this exciting project. Even if you don't use it as a calendar, the photos and poetry make it a worthwhile keepsake and a great gift.

Thank you so much for supporting this calendar project and I can't wait for you to find joy in nature in 2027!