



# Through the Vine

A Quarterly Newsletter of the OSU Extension Fairfield County Master Gardeners

**WINTER 2018**

**Mission:** To make a difference in the community in which you live through gardening education and knowledge.

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## Holiday Cacti are Fun to Grow...

**source:** UConn Home & Garden Education Center

### Holiday Cacti

The group of plants referred to as holiday cacti includes the Thanksgiving cactus, the Christmas cactus, and the Easter cactus. Their common names were derived from the holiday closest to their traditional bloom dates, although over the last few decades much hybridization has taken place and today's newer developments have a more extensive blooming period. More than 300 years ago, Spanish explorers brought some of these plants from their expeditions to South America.

### Three Common Holiday Cacti

The three common species of holiday cacti can be differentiated by the shape of their 'leaves'. The leaves are most accurately described as flattened stem segments or 'phylloclades'. They do not have any true leaves. The Thanksgiving cactus is sometimes known as the crab's claw or lobster cactus because the outer leaf margins are pointed like hooks or claws. Christmas cacti have smaller, smooth edged stem segments, and Easter



Thanksgiving



Christmas



Easter

cacti exhibit bristles at the end of each leaf and inbetween the segment joints.

All three varieties are easy to grow, have similar cultural requirements and are not difficult to propagate. Their habitat is the Brazilian rain forest where they grow on the high branches of tropical trees. Holiday cacti are epiphytes meaning they physically grow on other plants but do not parasitize or derive carbohydrates from them.

### Cultural Requirements

Commercial peat-based mixes are fine. Holiday cacti are indeed true cacti but they are not as drought tolerant as their desert-dwelling relatives. Their potting mix should be kept moderately moist. During

*Article continued on page 7.*



**THE OHIO STATE  
UNIVERSITY**

COLLEGE OF FOOD, AGRICULTURAL,  
AND ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCES



## CONNIE'S CORNER

Dear Master Gardener Volunteers,

I feel like we were just turning the calendar to 2018 and here we are just about ready to begin 2019. As a Master Gardener group we did lots of good things,...including our "fun" day of making paper flowers to cure those winter blahs for the Dig Into Gardening Educational Gardening event, which was a tremendous success. Our Clark County Bus trip, Local Food Tours just to name a few of our activities!!

As we look to 2019, we do have a little unfinished business in 2018...If possible, please try to record all of your MGV "give back and continuing education" hours by December 14, 2018. We will begin recertifying that you would like to continue as a Master Gardener in 2019 on January 1, 2019 and hope to have all of your recertifications completed by February 1. It is a very simple process...3 clicks in the VMS program and you are done and good to go as a volunteer in 2019!!

Finally, we will be conducting a Master Gardener training class in the New Year beginning in March. It will be a pretty intense few weeks from March 21 through May 16, 2019. We will be looking for mentors for our new trainees and without even promoting we already have 15 interested individuals.

Again, I speak from the bottom of my heart when I tell you how very proud of your accomplishments I am. Our various teams at our 10 active projects did great things during the 2018 growing season, not only in the garden but in taking care of the MGV family.

Best Wishes for Good Health and Happiness in the New Year . Thank You for sharing your time and talents with the Fairfield County Master Gardener program.

Sincerely,

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## MG NEWS

### **OHIO Master Gardener Grow Ohio Produce Donations**

**By Connie Smith, Master Gardener Coordinator**

At the final reporting period – 56,931 pounds of produce was donated to help feed local food pantries in 2018. This is 155 pounds over the State-wide Master Gardener donation last year.

Six new counties participated in 2018 - Montgomery, Portage, Lake, Fairfield, Clinton and Morrow. Five counties surpassed their 2017 donations.

Thank you Keith Eichhorn for tending the "Give-Back" plot at the Pickerington Community Garden Site!!

160 lbs of fresh produce went to the Pickerington Community Food Pantry!



## Carol Schleich Memorial Bench Dedication

by Patty Turner, Master Gardener 2013



A memorial bench was placed and dedicated in memory of Carol Schleich (13') at Slate Run Metro Park on October 6, 2018. It can be found and enjoyed by everyone who travels on the Shagbark trail, which is accessed from the Buzzard's Roost picnic area. The site is peaceful and beautiful, and is along a path area that is dog friendly. Carol probably would approve and be awed by this loving gesture, made possible by many donors in her honor.



### SCIENTIFIC FINDINGS

## A Tropic Cascade

by Barbara Kochick, Master Gardener 2013



One of the most interesting scientific findings in recent years has been the discovery of widespread tropic cascades. A tropic cascade is a change that starts in the top or bottom of a food chain and alters the entire structure.

A prime example of a top down cascade is the reintroduction of the gray wolves into Yellowstone Park. Before the wolves were reintroduced they had been absent for seventy years. But the numbers of elk, because there was nothing to hunt them, built up and built up in the park despite efforts to reduce the population. They eradicated much of the vegetation to almost nothing. They just grazed it to oblivion.

But as soon as the wolves arrived they started to have the most remarkable effect. First they killed some of the elk but that was not the major thing.

Much more significantly they changed the behavior of the elk. The elk started avoiding certain places in the park where they could be trapped most easily, particularly the valleys and the gorges. Immediately those places started to regenerate. In some areas the height of the trees quintupled in just six years.

Bear valleys quickly became forests of willow, aspen and cottonwood. As soon as that happened the birds started moving in. Songbirds and migratory birds increased. The number of beavers increased because beavers like to eat the trees. Beavers are engineers who create habitats for other species such as otters and muskrats. Ravens and eagles came to feed on the carrion the wolves had left. Bears fed on it too and their population also began to rise because there were more berries growing on the regenerating shrubs.

Ultimately, the courses of the rivers changed. They began to meander less. There was less erosion. The channels narrowed. Pools formed. All of which were great for wildlife. The reason for this change was that the regenerating forests stabilized the banks so that they collapsed less often and the rivers became more fixed in their course. Similarly, by driving the elk out of some places, and with the vegetation recovering on the valley sides, there was less soil erosion because that was stabilized as well.

Understanding tropic cascade is important to restoring altered ecosystems.

The information in this article came from AccessScience>Briefings.



## GARDEN MUSINGS

# You May Have a Problem if...

by Bruce Garrett, Master Gardener 2015



Many years ago I worked for an alcohol counseling agency as the Director and Counselor. This agency received many referrals from the county court system and when new clients arrived they were asked to complete intake forms. Among these forms was a questionnaire about their drinking habits and how their drinking affected various areas of their lives. I have discovered over the years that this type of questionnaire exists for various addiction help groups and agencies. I have now come to the conclusion that a new questionnaire is needed. The addiction? Plantaholism.

The following contains my ideas for some of the questions on this form. Plant addicted people, active and recovering, will surely have additions.

## 1. Have you ever stolen because of your addiction?

Well, stolen is such a harsh word. Liberated, saved, borrowed? Maybe more appropriate. That flower bed at a motel in Ft. Bragg, CA, interesting plants in those large flower pots in front of Shadowbox in Columbus, those seed heads from flowers along the road in Florida? Sure, they found a new home in Ohio. But stolen? Don't believe what my wife says. Note: Before most of our trips I am asked, "How many plants are you going to steal this trip?" Harsh.

## 2. Has your addiction caused financial problems for your family?

Not really problems but as the addiction has grown I'm sure it has added up. Ollie's has 50% off on pots and planters? Better stock up. My indoor winter space is filling up? Check the flyers in the newspaper for sales on more light fixtures. My, isn't that an interesting plant in the pop up in Facebook? Click, click. Ordered.

## 3. Has your addiction affected your family relationships and friendships?

Only in positive ways! In Holland, MI, at a farmers' market, I passed all the succulents without purchasing

one. Note: Just as in other addictions, plantaholics often have a particular area of addiction. Mine is succulents. Anyway, we came across a gentleman who had hen and chick type succulents as big as dinner plates! He gave me the whole history of how he brought back the original plant from Mexico and how he cared for them. Couldn't resist and purchased the plant even though it was day 2 of an 8-day trip and I would have to figure out how to keep it alive. How did it affect my family? Well, my grandkids, who sat on either side of the plant in the backseat, started by naming the plant (Pluffily) and all the new starts. They had a great time and ask to see Pluffily when they visit. It did affect a friendship years earlier when I asked a friend to help me move an 8' banana tree into the house for the winter. The 80 pound rootball was a challenge as was getting the 8' tree through the doors. He said if I ever asked him to help with something like this again, he would never speak to me again. Guess this question is a wash.

Note: The Holland, MI, farmers' market is #3 on my list of all time favorite farmers' markets. #2 is the Lake Merritt market in Oakland, CA, which is under a freeway underpass. #1 is the farmers' market in Ithaca, NY, in the finger lakes region.

## 4. Have you ever made excuses or rationalizations about your addiction?

The succulents in the motel flower beds at Ft. Bragg really did need thinned. As did the tropical plants in Ft. Lauderdale. The plants in front of Shadowbox, well, they will not make it over winter, and I just took clip-pings (we did learn how to propagate clippings in MGV training and due to my training they are doing great) Gotta say NO here. Just good, solid reasons.

## 5. Have you ever snuck around to hide your addiction?

Snuck? Well, I did wait until after dark to get some of these and did look for security cameras. Did I blacken my face and creep around in camo. Absolutely not.

Well this is a start and I will be anxious to hear any additions. Gotta go now. My daughter just texted that Lowes is having an end of the summer clearance on all their succulents! Told her I didn't need any more, but I NEEDED more.

*"Hi, I'm Bruce and I am a plantaholic."*

*"HI BRUCE!"*

## THIS AND THAT

# What might be “Eye-catching” to your Pet During the Holiday Season?

**Source: The Ohio State University Veterinary Medical Center**



Just a friendly reminder to keep your pets safe during the upcoming Holiday cooking, decorating and merriment.

A quick list of things your pet might be tempted to taste or explore.

- Alcohol (including eggnog & punch)
- Bones (chicken & turkey)
- Car engines - outdoor cats seek warmth
- Christmas trees - cats climb and like ornaments & tinsel, strands of lights, stagnant or fertilized tree water, pine needles
- Chocolate
- Confetti
- Electrical cords & wires
- Grapes & raisins
- Lighted candles
- Outdoor hazards - antifreeze, frostbite, frozen water bowl (outdoors), rock salt, subzero temperatures
- Plants - Christmas cactus, lilies, holly
- Ribbons, bows & giftwrap
- Rich foods
- Sugar-free desserts/gum (with Xylitol)
- Trash cans with discarded/moldy foods

Remember to always work in partnership with your family veterinarian.

## Building an Emergency Kit for Winter Driving

**by Lisa Pfeifer, OSU Ag Safety and Health Education Coordinator**

Get a jump on inclement weather and stock a road emergency kit for all vehicles now. Many of the useful items you may find you already have on hand:

- Jumper cables
- First aid kit – take note to add a small supply of any necessary prescription medications
- Cell phone – remember a charger and backup battery pack too
- Local maps
- Flashlight and some extra batteries
- Food and water – energy bars and bottled water take little space, yet can be vital if you become stranded
- Hats and gloves
- Wool blanket
- Ice scraper
- Shovel
- Pen and paper
- Duct tape – can be utilized for many temporary holds/repairs
- Matches in a waterproof container

For more information about OSU Ag Safety, visit <https://agsafety.osu.edu/> or contact Lisa Pfeifer, OSU Agricultural Safety & Health, at [pfeifer.6@osu.edu](mailto:pfeifer.6@osu.edu) or 614-292-9455.



## Winter Projects

by Melinda Lee Adkins, Master Gardener 2015



Winter is a good time of the year to work on projects after the hustle of summer gardening and fall harvesting. My new projects are wine making and natural soda fermentation. I bought wine making equipment over the weekend and I made my first ginger bug and batch of ginger soda. I have a stack of wine making and fermentation books to read in the next few weeks and numerous recipes to sort through. This will keep me busy for awhile.



The only downside to wine making is the long wait for the finished product. I harvested Paw Paw fruit in the fall and I have the pulp in freezer bags in my freezer. So, I think my first wine will be Paw Paw wine. What are your winter projects?



## Gifts for Gardeners—Books

by Barbara Kochick, Master Gardener 2013

The Paperscapes series from Thunder Bay Press provides interesting information about a variety of flora and fauna from around the world. Titles include *The Aviary*, by Matt Meritt; *The Butterfly Garden*, by James Lowen; *The Flower Garden*, by Michael Scott; and *The Tree*, by Steve Marsh.

What's especially fun is that with some careful punching out of the pages, each book turns into a beautiful work of art! They are a wow factor with content!

The books are available online, in bookstores and at Costco.



## It is Time to Update your MGV Hours for 2018 and Recertify as an OSU Master Gardener Volunteer for 2019

Please visit the Master Gardener VMS Website to finalize your hours for 2018 and recertify for the upcoming year.

PLEASE GO TO: <https://ohio.volunteersystem.org/UniversalLogin.cfm> AND FOLLOW THE SIMPLE ONLINE PROCESS TO UPDATE YOUR MGV STATUS.

CLICK ON, “PLEASE COMPLETE THE DOCUMENTS NOW,” THEN CLICK ON, “SUBMIT PAPERS” AND SIGN IN AS SEEKING RECERTIFICATION, EVEN IF YOU DID NOT COMPLETE YOUR HOURS

**Everyone needs to recertify!!**

## Holiday Cacti (*cont'd from page 1*)

periods of active growth, plants should be watered whenever the soil begins to feel dry to the touch. Holiday cacti require excellent drainage and plants should not be allowed to sit in saucers filled with water. Plants can be fertilized once a month from April to October with a water-soluble, balanced fertilizer such as 20-20-20 or the equivalent.

Holiday cacti do not require frequent repotting. Once every three years is usually sufficient. Check the drainage holes for excessive root growth and repot in spring if necessary.

After holiday cacti finish flowering, cut back on water slightly until new growth appears. Then resume a regular watering and fertilizing regime. Plants can be pruned in late spring to encourage branching. Removed pieces consisting of several segments can be rooted in moist vermiculite or perlite to make more plants.

### Propagation

Remove 2 to 5 segment sections and leave them out overnight to dry. Callous tissue will form on the cut or pinched end. Place the cut end about 1 inch deep in the moistened vermiculite or perlite. Place the starts in a bright area but not in direct sunlight. Check the cuttings after a few weeks for roots by gently tugging on them. Once the roots are an inch or more in length, move the cuttings into individual pots filled with peat-based potting medium.

### Post Holiday Care and Initiation of Bloom

Most holiday cacti will appreciate being set outside in a shady place during the summer months. When the temperatures drop below 50° F, it is time to bring them back inside and discontinue fertilizing. Plants can be placed in an area with 60 to 70° F days and 55 to 60° F nights. After 4 to 8 weeks, flower buds will appear.

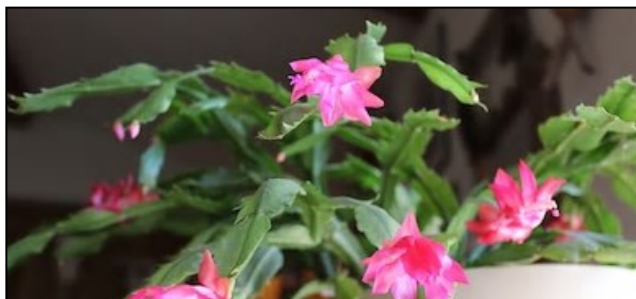
### Common Problems

A common complaint is bud drop. This occurs for several reasons including temperatures that are too high, exposures to drafts, insufficient light, under or over watering, low humidity or exposure to fumes from gas burning stoves. Holiday cacti prefer to be on the dry side while forming buds, during bloom times and when not actively growing, which is generally from October to April.

Underwatering followed by overwatering for compensation is another common occurrence. Since these plants are succulents, often lack of regular watering is not noticed until it is too late and plants begin to shrivel or droop. At this time, well-intentioned owners give them copious amounts of water. Many of the roots have desiccated during the dry period and are unable to take up excess water resulting in water logged plants and causes the remaining roots to rot. If your plant has been underwatered and is wilting, try bringing it back with smaller but more frequent waterings and not a deluge. Sometimes plants are not able to regenerate lost roots and recover.

Overwatering, drops in temperatures at night, and low light can lead to edema, blister-like water soaked swellings on the foliage. The blisters can burst leaving dead corky tissue. Water plants only when the soil is dry but not desiccated.

Mealy bugs, scale, spider mites and aphids can be a problem which is most likely to occur when plants are allowed to spend the summer outdoors or if otherwise exposed to these insects. Contact the UConn Home & Garden Education Center (toll-free in CT) at (877) 486-6271 or your local Cooperative Extension Center for control measures.





## GARDEN DESTINATIONS

### The Stan Hywet Hall and Garden in Akron

by Pam Jarvis, Master Gardener 2005



The fall decorations were abundant and fall flowers full in bloom. Do you like the interesting variety of milkweed?



### The Barberton's Mumfest

by Pam Jarvis, Master Gardener 2005



The mums are planted as 6 inch starters around July 4 and are carefully cultivated to bloom on the weekend of the festival, around the first weekend in October.



## ACROSS THE FENCE

### Small Garden Misconception

by Melinda Lee Adkins, Master Gardener 2015



In conversations about gardening, I have heard people comment that a small garden will not produce enough harvest to can or freeze. They feel it is

not worth their time to plant a small garden. This misconception about small gardening keeps people from enjoying fresh food and the ability to preserve food for the winter months.

In my small garden I planted tomato, cucumber, pepper, broccoli, and sweet potato plants. I only planted 2 cucumber plants in my small garden and I harvested



enough cucumbers to can 80 pints of pickles. I canned Kosher, Polish, Spicy, Bread and Butter and Zesty Bread and Butter Pickles. I think I am pickled out. This photo is my first batch of pickles.



I harvested my tomatoes and canned tomato sauce and salsa. I also diced and froze some of my peppers and made and froze stuffed peppers with the rest. This was my first attempt at planting sweet potatoes and I was pleased to have a nice harvest. My small garden kept me busy all fall and my freezer is now full, so don't let the small garden misconception stop you from planting a garden.



# My Fall Harvest

by **Melinda Lee Adkins, Master Gardener 2015**



## Experimenting in the Garden

Each year I like to try something new in my garden. Either I try a new planting method or plant a new flower, vegetable or fruit. This

year I experimented with seed potatoes. I planted seed potatoes in a trash can and I drilled holes in the bottom of the can for drainage. I placed fabric cloth on the inside bottom of the can to prevent soil loss and I added the soil and seed potatoes. As the plants grew I added soil until the soil was near the top of the can. The plants grew quickly and my curiosity got the best of me. I wanted to see the



results and I harvested early.

When I harvested, I used a tarp for easy cleanup. I put a plastic tarp down to dump the soil and pull out the potatoes. I used the potatoes in a pot roast and it was a tasty meal.



Note: This method is a good option for a gardener who lives in an apartment and has planting restrictions or has a small space for a garden.

## Herb Infused Oil

Since I had an overabundance of peppermint and lemon balm this year, I looked for new ways to use these herbs. I watched a presentation on the 2018 Homesteading Summit about herb infused oils. These oils can later be used to make salves.

The process is easy and I am all about a fast and easy way to preserve my herbs. First, collect fresh



herbs, cut, put into a canning jar, cover with olive oil and put a lid on the jar. Place the jar in a pan of water and bring to a slow boil on the stove. Once it begins to boil then turn down the heat and let it simmer for 2 hours. Make sure to keep a close watch on the water level as it simmers. Do not allow the water to evaporate away. After 2 hours turn off the heat and allow the jar with the herb oil to cool. Once the herb oil has cooled, strain the herbs from the oil and save your infused oil. This oil can later be made into a salve.

Since this was my first try at making infused peppermint oil, I experimented and used a crock-pot instead of the stove top method. I use the peppermint oil to make a pain relief salve for sore muscles and joints.

## Have You Ever Seen a Cabbage This Big?

I made Sauerkraut, coleslaw, Krazy Kraut, and potatoes and kraut. How many ways can you make cabbage? Let me count the ways.



## In and Around the Garden—You Won't Want to Miss It!

Mark your calendars with these important dates and upcoming activities and events!

### COMING SOON:

December 7, 2018

Reservations needed for MGV Holiday Gathering

Please call (740) 652-7260

December 13, 2018, 11am–2pm

Master Gardener Holiday Gathering and Intern Recognition

Fairfield County Agriculture Center  
831 College Avenue, Lancaster, OH



December 24 and 25

OSU Extension office closed for Christmas

January 1, 2019

OSU Extension office closed for New Year's Day

Jan 21, 2018

OSU Extension office closed for Martin Luther King Holiday

### SAVE THE DATE:

March 21, 2019-May 16, 2019

Master Gardener Training

## Newsletter Deadlines



Do you have an article, garden musing, photo from an MGV project, calendar event or other idea you'd like to submit for the MGV newsletter? Articles and information are welcome at any time!

Items not used in an upcoming newsletter can be saved and used in a future newsletter.

Newsletters are published quarterly with the following submission deadlines:

*Spring Newsletter*—submit by **February 1**

*Summer Newsletter*—submit by **May 1**

*Autumn Newsletter*—submit by **August 1**

*Winter Newsletter*—submit by **November 1**

Email articles and information to Lisa Stoklosa at [lmstoklos@gmail.com](mailto:lmstoklos@gmail.com). Contact Lisa by email or at 614-214-3205 with questions or ideas!

***Through the Vine*** is a publication of the Ohio State University Extension Office in Fairfield County

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For the latest information and news about OSU Extension in Fairfield County, including the Master Gardeners of Fairfield County, visit <http://fairfield.osu.edu/>



***Ohio Master Gardener Program Mission***

*We are Ohio State University Extension trained volunteers empowered to educate others with timely research-based gardening information.*