



Through the Vine

A Quarterly Newsletter of the OSU Extension Fairfield County Master Gardeners

FALL 2020

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

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Retirement ... Here I Come

a note from Jerry Iles, Agriculture and Natural Resources Educator – Fairfield County – (12/2014–9/2020)

I just wanted to let all my Fairfield County Master Gardener and Local Foods friends know that September 9th will be my last day of work. I'm retiring after 30 years of public service having spent the last 20 years working for OSU Extension. I've been in my current role at Fairfield County for the past five years and ten months. I have really enjoyed getting to know all of you and have learned so much from you.

My wife and I are hoping to buy an RV and do some traveling once we have a vaccination for Covid-19.

I am sure our paths will cross in the future. I'll miss you all. It has been a pleasure getting to know all of you!

I'm attaching a few photos of past events. We always had a great time while we were learning!



Stay in Touch,

Jerry

See page two for Jerry's photos of memorable educational events.



THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY

COLLEGE OF FOOD, AGRICULTURAL, AND ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCES



Retirement (cont'd from page 1)



Bachman Apple Orchard (2016)



Thomas arm - Solar panel program with Eric Romich (2016)



Helser Farms—Peaches (2016)



Brad Berry Farm (2017)



Nightcrawler Gardens (2018)

“These were just a few of the great times we shared...learning and having fun!” - Jerry



The Kale Yard with Erin (2018)



Saum's Farm Tour



Schultz Valley Farm



Hugus Fruit Farm - Fruit Tree Pruning class - coldest day in March for the past 5 years!

CONNIE'S CORNER

Dear Master Gardeners,

September is just around the corner, and it seems like this year is still kind of a blur!! So, here's what I do know:

OSU Extension in Fairfield County is open two days per week on Tuesdays and Thursdays, by appointment only. The Ag Center is locked and all agencies in the building are by appointment only. We are still working from home and can be reached by calling 740-653-5419. I foresee working from home through the end of the year.

Master Gardener projects are still only clean-up, maintenance and food production gardens only via the OSU Exemption #435. Limited to ten people per work session with appropriate social distancing and masks if not six feet apart. We are still discussing as Coordinators exemptions for face to face meetings for 50 MGVS or less. More to come.

Master Gardener Volunteers who are not comfortable, or cannot be working in the garden or assisting with a project, such as newsletter contributions, and want to receive credit for their "give back" hours, can receive "give back" credit by watching any of the previously recorded Lunch and Learn sessions: <https://mastergardener.osu.edu/news/mgvs-horticulture-lunch-and-learn-and-happy-hour-information-and-registration>. Just click on the link and you will find the first Lunch and Learn with Amy Stone on Spotted Lantern Fly. You are still required to give back 20 hours to remain active. When recording your hours go to <https://ohio.volunteersystem.org/users/index.cfm> and record in the project category "Covid 19 in place of service hours."

Lunch and Learns will resume in November, 2020. Topics yet to be determined. IDEAS??

Master Gardener training in 2021—There is a cluster of three Southern Ohio counties piloting Master Gardener Training online. I have seen the materials and they are very good. It is not my preferred method because I fear we will never have connectivity with the class and existing MGVS in the program. Again, this is all being piloted in the next few months, so we will take a "wait and see" approach.

There will be no Master Gardener display at the Fairfield County Fair. The Fairfield County Fair is a JUNIOR FAIR ONLY this year. That means no rides, no Art Hall, no entertainment, very few food vendors and very limited admittance into the Fairgrounds the week of the County Fair.

Finally, thank you to all those who have been working at the Fairgrounds, Wagnall's, Ag Center, Learning Never Ends and the Georgian projects. I know it feels very good to be back in the gardens and being among your friends. I will try to keep you updated as the rest of the year begins to unfold. Thank you for your dedication to the Fairfield County Master Gardener program. YOU ARE APPRECIATED!!!

Sincerely,

Connie Smith
Master Gardener Coordinator
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Newsletter 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**

Please email articles and information to Lisa Stoklosa at lmstoklos@gmail.com

Wagnalls Update

by Pam Jarvis, Master Gardener 2005



The Friends of Wagnalls team is back to work. All educational programs on pollinators that were being planned for 2020 will be pushed back to 2021. I was especially excited about program t-shirts which were pushed back to order in 2021. The

soft shirt is a sky blue with a Wagnalls logo on the front, and on the back, the Cicero quote, “If you have a library and a garden you have everything.” The current price is around \$10.

Several Master Gardeners researched information on labeled plants and this will be compiled for 2021 tours. Ohio Magazine included a short feature on Wagnalls in the June edition. Wagnalls will have a beekeeper, a food truck and a craft vendor each Saturday in September to keep the Honeyfest as alive and safe as possible.



Please Help Keep Information Current

If you have updates to your email or mailing address, please contact Lisa Stoklosa, lmstoklos@gmail.com.

Have you checked out Garden Java... Yes, it is Continuing Education, Too!!

source: *Connie Smith, Master Gardener Coordinator*



Garden JAVA Educational Gardening Sessions for the Public are every Thursday at 10 am via ZOOM.

Grab a cup of your favorite local “joe” and join us! Garden JAVA conversations are informal educational conversations about gardening led by OSU Extension Stark County Master Gardener Volunteers. Programs include a short, informal presentation on a selected gardening topic followed by a Q & A period and discussion. Visit <https://go.osu.edu/GardenJava> to register and receive the meeting link.

Can't make the session but want to get your garden learning in? Garden JAVA sessions are recorded and available for public viewing at <http://osustarkmg.org/resources/garden-java-recordings-handouts/>.

**Don't wait for things to get easier,
simpler, better.**

Life will always be complicated.

Learn to be happy right now.

Otherwise, you'll run of time.

Source: Mary Carter, Master Gardener, 2017

“I don’t see Lightning bugs like I used to . . . where have they gone?”

by Stan Smith, Program Assistant, Agriculture and Natural Resources

In fact, during recent years we are seeing less and less lightning bugs. The reason is likely a combination of factors, although basically it revolves around the loss of habitat over time. Lightning bugs thrive as larvae in rotting wood and decomposing tree litter on the edges of ponds and streams. Those areas are disappearing in and around metro areas, including many parts of Fairfield County.



Secondly, light pollution, or the abundance of light in and around what used to be our less urban areas, is a problem for lightning bugs. They communicate and attract mates with their lights. When much of their habitat is polluted with light that stays on well into the night, they fail to be able to find mates in those well-lit areas. Since they don't often travel far from where they hatch out, lightning bugs simply fail to reproduce in the numbers we became used to as youth.

Lightning bug populations are not only declining in Fairfield County, but throughout the Midwest, especially in and around rapidly urbanizing areas.



DID YOU KNOW?

All About Espalier

Source: Garden-pedia by Pamela Bennet and Maria Zampini

Espalier

Growing a plant in a single plane, often vertically against a wall or other support structure.

This ancient tradition of training fruiting trees to grow in such a way has been adapted to non-fruit producing woody plants. The tree produces more fruit and benefits from the stored heat in the support wall, extending the growing season of the plant.



Traditionally a formal design element, the espalier design is equally at home in more relaxed settings, maximizing the limited space found in smaller, urban gardens and dressing up an otherwise unattractive, plain surface. It also provides a cooling effect for a building . It takes a little more time and effort to espalier a plant but the results are often quite attention-getting (if done right!).



Thinking About a Fall Vegetable Garden?



source: Dr. L. Perry, Extension Professor University of Vermont

Having a fall vegetable garden is fun, easier than gardening at other times of the year, and extends your season for fresh produce. Many claim the same vegetables grown in the fall are tastier and "sweeter" than those grown earlier in the season. Late summer is the time to start crops that mature quickly and take cooler weather.

Growing vegetables in fall you can take advantage of cooler weather outdoors and avoid most weeds and insects that have come and gone. Generally, fall brings more rain, and with less heat, you'll have less watering. Some crops prefer and grow best in cooler weather, such as lettuce and traditional "cool season" crops like carrots, beets, cabbage and kale.

To decide what to grow, there are a couple considerations. Look at the days to maturity listed on seed packets to see if your crops will have enough time to mature before frost. Keep in mind some crops can be picked young, as with frequent picking of lettuce leaves, carrots, turnips and young beets and even their leaves for salads. Avoid crops such as bush snap beans that, although they mature quickly, require warmth and are killed by frosts and cold.

Crops also will vary in how much frost and cold they will withstand. Often we will get a light frost, followed by a warm period of "Indian Summer" prior to harder frosts and colder temperatures. Just a little protection such as from thin fabric "floating" row covers, or old towels, sheets or light blankets may be all that is needed to get your crops past the first light frosts.

Vegetables that withstand light frosts and their days to maturity include broccoli (50-70 days), carrots (50-60 days), cauliflower (60-80 days), cilantro (60-70 days), kohlrabi (60-70 days), leaf lettuce (40-60 days), spinach (35-45 days), Swiss chard (40-60 days) and turnips (50-60 days). From the day you want to plant, count out this number of days to see if your crops will mature before the usual first hard frost for your area. Typically, in Fairfield County, we often receive our first hard killing frost mid-October. Keep in mind that cultivars differ in their days to maturity, so look for ones with the fewest days, when purchasing seeds.

Hardier vegetables, surviving temperatures into the high 20s (F) include beets (50-60 days), green onions (60-70 days), peas (70-80 days, longer than in the spring), radishes (25-35 days) and turnips (50-60 days). Hardest vegetables, surviving temperatures to the low 20s, include Brussels sprouts (90-100 days), collard greens and kale (both 40-65 days).

Plant garlic after the first frost but two to four weeks before the first heavy frost, and shallots after the first frost, for harvest the following summer. These are planted late to avoid stimulating top growth only to be killed by cold.

Fall gardens can be planted in the vacant beds after the harvest of many of the same crops grown in spring. Just make sure to rotate crops for best growth and to minimize diseases and pests. Don't plant a crop in the same part of the garden where it was grown the last couple years.

If replacing spent or dead crops, make sure to remove all plant residue and roots, adding a fresh supply of compost or rotted (weed-free) manure and other fertilizer. If you have fertilized well through the spring growing season, no additional fertilizer may be needed. Or, if plants appear to be growing slow and are yellowish, you may water with a liquid fertilizer for vegetables, or apply a light application of a general purpose dry fertilizer along the rows.

If sowing seeds in hot weather, a couple methods can be used to provide the cool soil that fall crops prefer to germinate and grow best. You can lay some form of shade such as snow fencing or lattice supported on boards, or a shade cloth fabric over the bed while seeds germinate and plants become established.

Or, you can water the beds to cool the soil, cover with a few inches of straw, then water again. Remove the straw in a few days and sow in the now cooler soil. Replace the straw as mulch once plants are growing. Simply using a thick layer (six inches or so) of straw on some root crops, such as carrots, can keep the soil from freezing and extend their harvest into early winter. As with vegetables sown at other times, make sure to keep them watered if rains don't.

This Old House and Grounds

by Barbara Kochick, Master Gardener 2013



Three years ago my daughter and son-in-law realized their dream of owning an old house with some property surrounding it. They found it in Canal Winchester and moved in with much work and many surprises ahead. Over the years the home and the grounds had been both cared for

and neglected. As they became the owners it marked the end of much neglect.

There are records showing that the original section of the house was established in 1853. That is what is now the basement. That section has a large cook-in, now unworkable, fireplace and a cistern. There are windows there that once overlooked the hillside and now look into another section of the basement. It is obvious that the growth from there was up with two stories added above. The characteristics of those stories mark it as creations of the 20's and 30's, arched doorways, tiny bedrooms, dormers, hardwood floors and rough plaster walls. After finding an open water line, they knew that the home next door had been the site of the barn. Someone added a garage and then joined it to the house creating a first floor bedroom and in the upstairs an odd room that requires a pass through the bathroom. Altogether the higgledy piggledy arrangements made a quirky and charming home that suits their lifestyle.

Outside was another more pressing challenge. In the vogue of an era, English ivy had been planted. Now its rampant tentacles had climbed to the top of and choked hundred year old trees. It had covered the outdoor fireplace, reaching into the grouting and pulling the chimney precariously backwards. It had surrounded the house and in

order to increase the curb appeal the owner had dumped on toxic chemicals leaving behind an orange blanket. And the poison ivy had a field day populating everywhere. The small natural pond was choked with overgrowth. And so the work began in earnest, cutting and pulling the ivy, identifying the invasive plants, wading into the pond to weed and propping up the fireplace. Everyone got poison ivy.

That first Spring was a wonder as the best surprises appeared, a very old weeping cherry was spectacular, giant snowdrops formed blankets followed by another cover of bluebells, they found morels, those hundred plus year horse chestnuts bloomed profusely and cypress stumps surrounded the spring house. Later into the summer one entire hillside burst out in hydrangea that thrived through the neglect. They uncovered a set of stone stairs that led to the lower yard and found the remains of a tea house.

Three years into it the work continues but the pace has slowed. Another hillside has been successfully converted to a prairie. The burned out look around the foundation has been replaced with lovely landscaping and flowers. The spring on the hillside, the pond and the creek all run clear. The English and poison ivies have retreated. Seating areas and hammocks dot private spots.

Then one day this summer an elderly woman pulled into the driveway. While she had never lived in the house, her grandparents had owned it in the 1940's. Her grandmother was a talented gardener and had a landscape architect from Columbus help her design the grounds.

They had built the tea house and entertained there. They had brought in the truckloads of fill that produced the underground windows. When the grandparents passed the lady's parents inherited and lived there for years but without much enthusiasm for the care. After that it passed out of the family. The woman herself had lived out of state for many years and was returning to her memories. She said that often reality does not live up to fond memories but her grandmother would be very impressed with the current reality.

GARDEN MUSINGS

Fall Gardening for Old Folks

by *Chuck Zurhorst, Master Gardener 2019*



Now that you've enjoyed your tomatoes, beans and squash planted in the spring and early summer, it's time to start thinking about next year's

garden and preparing for the bountiful harvests that you and your family enjoy so much. Like a good marinara sauce requires the basic ingredients of fine tomatoes and herbs, the garden requires the basic ingredient of soil. And like your marinara sauce which wouldn't be very appetizing without basil, oregano, garlic, onion, salt, thyme and tomatoes, a "delicious" garden soil needs organic matter called humus or compost. Humus is the dark brown stuff that makes our gardens grow. It is a product of soil biological activity. It is full of nutrients, offers a favorable pH, is porous and spongy to permit air penetration and can hold moisture without becoming soggy. Humus is organic matter that has undergone some degree of decomposition. Humus makes soil more drought resistant and it can immobilize many toxic heavy metals, preventing them from becoming available to garden plants intended for our consumption.

Humus is the main component of compost and is essential to creating an ideal soil structure. Composting is a perfect low cost alternative to expensive nursery fertilizers. You can create a compost pile near your garden and fill it with yard waste, leaves, grass clippings (if untreated with chemicals), wood chips, sawdust, food scraps from the kitchen (no meats or fats) and garden waste. **DON'T COMPOST WEEDS!** Build a compost pile that is 3-ft. x 3-ft. x 3-ft. or larger for adequate heat to decompose the material in your compost pile. Add water and regularly turn the compost material. Don't add animal or pet waste or manure. Compost needs high temps, moisture and air for decomposition. Never use manure during the growing season.

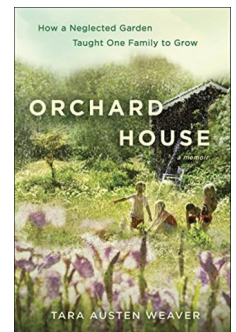
Compost provides ideal conditions for microorganisms to proliferate, offering them abundant raw materials and an increased supply of air and water in the soil and stimulating biological activity with billions of beneficial microbes. It also helps to moderate soil conditions that are either too acid or too alkaline. Soil testing is essential! Healthy plants need certain levels of soil nutrients to thrive. A soil test will provide the necessary information to maintain optimum fertility and give science-based guidance and recommendations for fertilization and nutrients for a productive garden. Most vegetables do well in rich, moist, well drained soil with a pH level in the 6.2 to 6.8 range. Some crops are more fussy than others about their needs for water, drainage, nutrients and soil pH.

The Ohio State University, Fairfield County OSU Extension Office, in partnership with the University of Kentucky Soil Testing Laboratory services all soil nutrient testing needs. Soil bags, input forms and instructions are available at the OSU Extension Office, 831 College Ave., Suite D., Lancaster. The office is currently open Tuesday and Thursday from 8:30am-4pm, by appointment only. Cost is \$6.50 per sample bag. if you package and mail your sample from home. The extension office will do this for you at a cost of \$14.00 per sample bag.

BOOK A REVIEW

by *Barbara Kochick, Master Gardener, 2013*

Orchard House: How a Neglected Garden Taught One Family to Grow
By Tara Austen Weaver



Where others would see a long-abandoned property as a lost cause, Tara Austen Weaver saw promise. Through the course of fixing the house and overhauling the expansive garden and orchard, she and her mother learn to reconnect. As the garden blooms with the fruits (and vegetables) of their labors, so does their relationship.

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

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

SAVE THE DATE

Farm Science Review (Virtual)

Tues-Thurs, September 22-24, 2020

For the first time in its nearly 60-year history, The Ohio State University's Farm Science Review will not be held in person. Instead, a virtual show will be implemented for 2020. There may be some virtual *Lunch and Learn* type sessions from the Utzinger Gardens. Schedule will be forthcoming.

State Master Gardener Conference (Virtual)

Thurs-Fri, October 22-23, 2020, 8:45 am-1 pm

Cost for both days: \$40

This will also be a virtual conference. The Keynote Speaker is Brie Arthur, a nationally recognized up and coming horticulturist. To learn more about Brie go to <https://www.briegrows.com/brie-arthur>. She will sign her book, "Gardening with Grains" and has

agreed to send each registrant a copy! You can purchase her first book, "The Foodscape Revolution: Finding a Better Way to Make Space for Food and Beauty in Your Garden," at a modest cost.

Program schedule and registration will be available around the end of September. Please hold the dates - we hope to see you virtually!

State Master Gardener Conference—Awards Ceremony (Virtual)

Thurs, October 22, 6:00 pm

(Virtual Happy Hour Presentation 6-6:30 pm)

Event is Free

Also, be sure to tune in to the Awards ceremony. Both the Wagnall's Project and the AHA Children's Garden were nominated for awards. Log in instructions will be available soon.



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

Lisa Stoklosa, Fairfield Master Gardener Volunteer Editor

For more information contact:

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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.