



Through the Vine

A Quarterly Newsletter of the OSU Extension Fairfield County Master Gardeners

WINTER 2020

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

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Does the Woolly Bear Caterpillar Predict Winter Weather?

Source: Joe Boggs/Buckeye Yard and Garden Line



Bristly "woolly bear" caterpillars commence their annual crawl-about in search of sheltered winter quarters in the fall. You may see noticeable numbers crossing roads with some unfortunates becoming laminated onto tires. Their crawl-about may start as early as late September and continue until early November in Ohio. It depends on the weather. These woolly bear caterpillars may be found feeding on a wide range of plants including some field crops. In fact, crop harvests commonly produce an early flush of caterpillars crawling across nearby roads.

The caterpillars are so-named because of their short, stiff bristles. The sharp-pointed bristles serve to defend the caterpillars. However, they are not stinging hairs; they do not inject venom. Still, some people suffer severe localized reactions if the hairs penetrate their skin. Woolly bears will roll themselves into a tight ball when disturbed to bring to bear their defensive bristles. Their resemblance to hedgehogs is referenced by the alternate common name "hedgehog caterpillars." The woolly bear moths have two generations per season in Ohio with the largest number of caterpillars occurring in the second generation. This is one reason we typically see more caterpillars in the fall. Of

course, the other reason is that their mass fall crawl-about in search of protected winter quarters commonly bring them out onto hiking trails, sidewalks, roads, and up onto the sides of homes and other structures.

Research conducted by Jack Layne, Department of Biology, Slippery Rock University, revealed that the woolly bear caterpillars produce antifreeze-like chemicals, collectively known as "cryoprotectants," to prepare themselves for winter. The cryoprotectants prevent sharp-pointed ice crystals from forming which would puncture cell membranes.

According to folklore, which dates back to the American colonial days, the greater the amount of black on a banded woolly bear, the more severe the winter weather. Also, the position of the widest dark bands predicts which part of the winter will be the coldest. If the dark band is widest at the head end, the beginning of winter will be severe. If the dark band is widest at the tail end of the caterpillar, winter will go out like a lion. The predictive ability of the caterpillars is further fine-tuned by "reading" the 13 segments of the caterpillar's body which are said to correspond to the 13 weeks of winter.



THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY

COLLEGE OF FOOD, AGRICULTURAL, AND ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCES



CONNIE'S CORNER

Master Gardeners....I AM SO PROUD OF ALL OF YOU!!!

The Wagnall's Garden Project was awarded one of three outstanding projects in the Environmental Horticulture category for the State MGV awards in the medium program size category.

The AHA! Children's Garden project was named the medium size program Project of Excellence State Winner!!!

This is the first year we have been permitted to enter two categories and how cool is it we placed so well with both of our entries.

You should all be very proud of your efforts and dedication to the Fairfield County Master Gardener Program!!! I wish we could have met in person to celebrate our success...I miss each of you!!

As the saying goes, out with the Old...in with the New!! The State Master Gardener VMS System is going to be replaced early in the New Year with a new system for recording your volunteer hours. This new reporting system is going to be easier to use and will enable us to easily access more data. Of course, there will be a learning curve, but we will all be learning together.

You can help by having all your hours entered in the VMS system at: <https://ohio.volunteersystem.org/users/index.cfm>.

I will be looking at some of our project areas to see if they might be combined or deactivated. Also, if you have changed an email address, please do double check to be sure we have all your current information in the VMS system. Once the transition to our new system occurs, we really want to start with all the correct current information for each of you.

Please do remember in this crazy year, all the time you spent watching the Spring Lunch and Learn and Happy Hours Series. Those will count as service hours, too! Just enter them in the *COVID 19 Continuing Ed section in place of the Service Hours Category*.

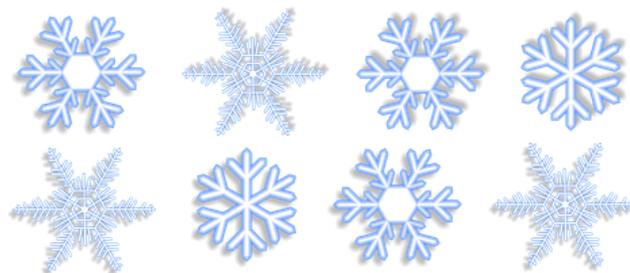
The new Lunch and Learn Series and Happy Hour Series begins in December. All the sign-up information and topics are located at the State Master Gardener website: <https://mastergardener.osu.edu/>.

One thing I have heard numerous times from several of you is "I miss seeing everyone" so, if you would like to join me **VIRTUALLY** via Zoom on Thursday, December 10 at 1:00 p.m. we will simply have a Holiday Happening for you to visit. Be thinking about a favorite ornament, holiday book or craft you are working on to share. There is no agenda for this, I just want to bring you together to see each other and offer a little Holiday Cheer virtually. I will send out the link as we get closer to December 10.

Best Holiday wishes to each of you and your families. I know this is a very challenging time for all of us, trying to navigate through our daily lives and missing out on many of those fun Holiday traditions. Stay safe and stay well.

With sincere gratitude for all you do,

Connie Smith
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AHA! Children's Learning Garden Receives State Master Gardener Excellence Award

by Connie Smith, Master Gardener Coordinator

Congratulations to the AHA! Children's Museum Master Gardener Volunteer Team who recently received the State MG Excellence Award for Medium Size MGV program, 25-50 people. Volunteers gave back 215 hours to AHA! Learning Gardens while interacting with over 75 parents and 150 young children in the gardens while planting and caring for the 15 raised beds in the outdoor learning garden.



Getting Started



Planting the Butterfly and Native Plant Garden



Choosing the Seeds



Planting the Seeds



MGV Edna Wilson planting a Sunflower Wall



Planting the Salad Garden



Planting the Vegetable Garden with lots of extra hands



Harvesting is Hard Work!!

Wagnall's Library Learning Gardens Receives State Master Gardener Award in Environmental Horticulture Category

by *Connie Smith, Master Gardener Coordinator*

The Wagnall's Library Learning Gardens Team was awarded as one of the three projects in the Environmental Horticulture category in the State Master Gardener Volunteer Awards celebration. MGV's gave back over 770 hours to the Wagnall's project in 2019. A walking tour brochure with information to identify garden highlights on the Wagnall's grounds was created which included many of the unique plant varieties in the gardens. MGV's worked very hard to identify and label all the 150 plus plants in the garden areas. Classes were also held throughout the season for the 20 plus members of the Home Schooler's program at Wagnall's. Eight MGV's organized lesson plans and taught the students and their parents how to grow different varieties of corn and about the many uses of corn in our daily lives. Congratulations to the Wagnalls Library Educational Gardens Team!!!!



Mulching Crew at Wagnall's



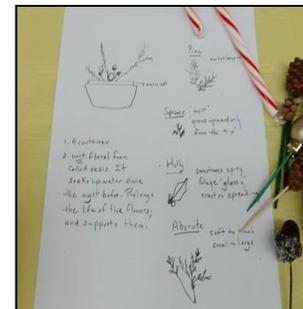
Everybody helps mulch at Wagnalls



A break on a hot day -Fairfield MGV's



Bee / Pollinator Education



Learning about leaf textures at Holiday Greens Class



MGV Billie Mumma teaching at Honeyfest



Winter Education with Home School Class



Teaching in the Outdoor Theatre

SEASONAL

What Will the Holiday Season Look Like for You?

by Ashley Markowski, Dietetic Intern at Cedar Crest College



As we approach the holiday season with the COVID-19 pandemic still impacting our daily lives, it is time to consider how to celebrate safely. This year may present the perfect opportunity to tweak old traditions and try something new! The CDC has provided guidelines to reduce the spread of COVID-19 while celebrating the holidays. The safest way to keep yourself, your family, and your community safe is to celebrate virtually or with members of your own household.

If you choose to gather with extended family, friends, or others this season, know that small, outdoor activities are safer than indoor activities. Those planning to host or attend in-person holiday celebrations might consider whether and how to take the activities to a garage or even outdoors and make them memorable! Just remember, Ohio weather is very unpredictable!!

Holiday celebrations this year will be different for all of us. With a little planning and creativity, you can find ways to experience comfort and happiness with loved ones – and you may even find a new tradition worth keeping!



Food Waste During the Holidays

source: *USDA Media Blog*

Each year, the average American family of four loses \$1,500 to uneaten food — that's about 1,160 pounds of food. With Thanksgiving over and the Christmas baking and cooking beginning, it is timely to think about how we as individuals can keep our household food waste in check. Maybe this is the year to select our two favorite cookie recipes, rather than all the recipes you typically make for drop-in guest visits. Or maybe it is time to take inventory of your cupboards and make a donation to a local food pantry.



The Holiday Traditions of Rosemary

source: *Extension Master Gardener*

Rosemary is steeped, as it were, in Christmas tradition, and would have been a native plant in the Middle East two thousand years ago.

The rosemary legends revolve around Mary's draping of a garment over the rosemary plant. One version tells that during the Holy Family's flight to Egypt, Mary draped her blue cloak over the shrub and its white flowers turned blue.

Another version says that after Mary hung the Christ Child's garments on the bush, it was given its pleasant aroma as a reward for its service to the Child.



How I Overwinter Geraniums



By Dianna Wears, Master Gardener 2011

Do you dislike throwing away perfectly good plants at the end of the growing season? I hate to throw away anything that is blooming and looking so beautiful when fall arrives. (Especially geraniums, as they can be pricey.)

I have tried several methods of keeping them over winter, including hanging them upside down, putting them in a bag, etc., to no avail. The way I have found that works best for me is to dig them up and plant them together in what my Mother used to call a “porch box.” Back when I was growing up, she would plant annuals in long and slender metal boxes and place them on the rails of the front porch for the summer, hence her calling them “porch boxes.” My Dad would drill holes in them for drainage and they would only last a few years because they would rust. In the “modern era,” we now have plastic planters that already have holes in them and some even have their own attached saucer.

At the end of the summer, I dig my geraniums and plant them in a long plastic planter and keep it under grow lights near my orchids for the winter. If they are really leggy, I can trim them back and try to sprout the cuttings or wait until spring to do so. To make cuttings, I remove some of the leaves from the lower stem of a cutting and then place it in florist’s foam in a used plastic ice cream bucket, which works quite well to start new plants. Keep the foam fairly wet and soon the geraniums will sprout. As some may rot off, not all will sprout, but it’s worth a try. I don’t use rooting hormone, so you may have a better outcome if you decide to use it. (This is also a good way to root hostas if you buy new ones in a nursery pot to split and end up with one without roots. Put it in foam, keep the foam wet and the hosta will soon have new roots.)

Most winters some of the geraniums will bloom, which helps with the winter blues and gives one hope that spring is coming soon!

In the spring, I take the planters outside and place them in a semi-sunny area to harden them off and get them used to the stronger sunlight. After a week or two, I plant them in pots or in the ground for their summer home. After many years of doing this, the stems of the original plants will get woody and some will die off. At this point, I either take cuttings or send the entire plant to the compost pile.

I hope this helps you to keep your favorite geraniums from year to year and save money, too.

A Gardener's Winter Wait

by Robin Leja, Master Gardener 2013

The garden is sleeping now, but not the gardener.

She sits waiting, thinking of the garden yet to be.

Dreams of summer flowers, bees buzzing, sunshine, green grass, and butterflies fill her head.

Others may see snow out the window, but the gardener remembers otherwise.

She knows there are bulbs waiting for spring.

She knows roots live on underground.

She knows trees are holding life inside.

She knows her flowers are already waiting inside of their seeds.

All she has to do is gather these dreams, and bring them to life come spring.

Meanwhile, there are plans to make.

There are lists and charts and drawings to make. Seed catalogs will need to be studied.

Research will be gathered, and there's virtual shopping to do.

You see, the garden only sleeps physically.

But inside the mind of the gardener, it still thrives.



Purple Passion Vine (Passiflora, Maypop)

by Darlene Browning, Master Gardener 2015



Beautiful, intricate, fragrant flowers bloom from spring to fall. This is a tender perennial and fast growing vine, hardy to zones 5-9. It prefers full sun but will tolerate some shade. It prefers moist, well drained soil but will tolerate some drought once established. Grows

15 to 20 feet tall with a spread of three to six feet.

Unique to this plant:

The name of this plant comes from it's similarities with the **Passion of Christ's crucifixion**:

- Purple stripes - Jesus' wounds
- Coronal filaments - crown of thorns
- Styles - three nails
- Stamen - hammer that drove the nails
- Petals and sepals - ten faithful apostles present at crucifixion (excluding Peter and Judas)
- Leaves - hands of the prosecutors
- Clinging tendrils - afflictions used to flagellate Jesus as he carried the cross
- Chalice - like ovary - Holy Grail
- Bloom colors (purple, blue, white) - King, heavens and purity

The flower blooms only last a day. If there is another specimen nearby and pollinating bees, then the flowers will mature into large berries about the size of a kiwi. (See the



bee on the flower from Dolly's garden pictured here.) The blooms will turn an orange-yellow color and will be filled with seeds and edible, tasty pulp that can be used for jams and jellies.

The Gracious Snowdrop

by Barbara Kochick, Master Gardener 2013



Snowdrops emerge early when there is nothing else around, often popping out of the snow heralding an oncoming spring. Usually set in naturalistic clumps among shrubs or in swaths under trees, they thrive in moist, well-drained soil and dappled shade. Native to Europe and southwest Asia, snowdrops embrace cold weather, surviving in USDA hardiness zones three to seven. A happy snowdrop will multiply after a few years and continue on for many years. These tough-as-nails little plants are extremely resistant to disease and pests. They graciously disappear to make room for the tulips and daffodils to follow.

Galanthophiles are collectors and growers of snowdrops. The Brits are so into this flower that there is even a 1983 comedy movie, *The Snowdrop Festival*, about the mania. They are an eccentric bunch! Galanthus woonowwi 'Elizabeth Harrison' with its golden ovary, has sold for well over \$1,000 for a single bulb on eBay. Never fear as there is a plentiful variety easily obtainable and much easier on the pocketbook. Mark your calendar to look for the bulbs early in the fall as quantities are usually limited because the bulbs are undried and do not store well. Or, if you are lucky enough to have a gardening buddy who has snowdrops to share you can carefully dig them up after they have finished blooming in the spring and transplant. Plant some to bring early hope to your garden!

DESTINATIONS

Shepherd's Corner Ecology Center

by Barbara Kochick Master Gardener 2013



There is a hidden gem that is close to being in our own backyards. That is Shepherd's Corner in Blacklick, Ohio. You may have even driven by on Waggoner Road and not noticed it. The 160 acres surrounded by suburban growth was donated to the Catholic Church. The property is managed by the Dominican Sisters of Mercy.

This small area hosts many different habitats: field, forest, wetland, woodlands and riparian corridor. The site is ecologically rich and valuable with hundreds of species of fungi, plants and animals. A list of all that call this corner home is available on their website. In addition to the native population there is a herd of sheep and Maggie the guard llama who keeps them safe. They also have a flock of chickens protected by a guard rooster and bee hives to provide honey. These are all part of the educational programs for children and visitors.

In the growing season an acre is dedicated to a food pantry garden. Following sustainable and organic practices, volunteers plant, weed and harvest the produce. Over the past 11 years they have been able to donate 29,252 pounds of produce to local food pantries.

In order to allow nature to sooth the spirit a labyrinth has been created. A single half mile path leads to the center and the same path is followed back out. There is also a meditation trail that wanders through the property. There are 13 reflective stations on the trail. Each station offers something for the mind, body, and spirit. A sign can be found at each station with theme-centered factual information, reflections, and suggested activities.

The centerpiece of the property is the award winning barn. Built in 1903 and no longer needed for farming purposes it was donated in 2005. It was taken apart piece by piece, numbered and brought to its new location. A concrete foundation, windows and solar panels were added.

The rebuilt barn now contains office space, an assembly area, program rooms and a large kitchen. The old barn has a new life and assists in the mission of reconnecting people to the Earth that sustains us.

Of course, due to the pandemic, open times at Shepherd's Corner are currently limited and subject to change. Please check out their website and call before a visit but do plan to visit this gem!

Shepherd's Corner
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Blacklick, Ohio 43004-9505
614-866-4302
shepherdscorner@sbcglobal.net
shepherdscorner.org

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

GARDEN MUSINGS

Winter Gardening for Old Folks

by *Chuck Zurhorst, Master Gardener 2019*



Winter is almost here. And, we're all feeling a little down now that we can't escape to the garden for our daily therapy. There are, however, ways to beat the winter blues! I've often

heard about "Hydroponic" gardening, but never really knew what all it entailed. I've read that a small scale hydroponics system for inside your house can produce fresh vegetables and herbs quite easily. Hydroponics gardening is the growing of plants without soil.

One of the most popular home hydroponics types is called "deep water culture." This is a system that suspends plants in water and uses the water to deliver oxygen and nutrients to the roots of the plant. It is made up of a growing tray, a grow light, water reservoir and a pump to circulate the water and give oxygen to the plants. These systems can usually be found on-line and at some garden centers.

Some of the advantages of hydroponics are the ability to grow your plants and herbs indoors, fewer problems with pests and diseases, no weeding required and you never need to worry about watering your garden. Unfortunately, there are many plants that will not grow hydroponically. However, lettuce, kale, herbs and some tomatoes do really well. If the winter season is getting you down, a hydroponics system is a great solution. As much fun and as convenient as it is to use during the winter though, it is just no comparison to actually getting outside and gardening. However, if you don't have anywhere to garden then you can definitely use it year round.

Basically, you just fill your system with distilled water, add seeds to the seed pods, put them into the system, add fertilizer and keep a schedule or

test your water regularly. There are certain micronutrients that are necessary for healthy plant growth and nutrition including magnesium, sulfur, calcium, cobalt, boron, iron, copper, manganese and zinc. You can buy recommended fertilizer specially made for hydroponics. Your grow light should be used about 14 hours a day. You can turn it on when you get up and turn off when you go to bed. Plant roots will need to be trimmed from time to time to prevent tangling. The older the plant, the longer the roots.

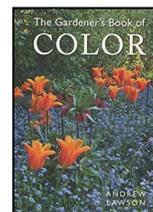
AreoGarden is available on Amazon. Whichever brand you try or even if you build your own, you'll like growing herbs and vegetables in your kitchen or basement. Especially in the winter.

FEATURED BOOK

The Gardener's Book of Color by Andrew Lawson

reviewer: *Barbara Kochick, Master Gardener 2013*

I try to stick with a cool color pallet in my garden beds. I use pink and not red, peach and not orange. I so admire those "hot" color gardens but I find this choice the most pleasing for me. The Gardener's Book of Color caters to every one of these tastes and to every mood. It explores soothing gardens based on varying hues of greens and restrained color palettes, and describes how harmonies and contrasts create a combination of stimulating, pleasing color. Lawson describes the importance of foliage forms, how the shapes of plants and plantings contribute to an effective garden design, and how plant choices extend to the color of their foliage, stems, bark and berries.



The chapters on individual colors feature plant directories with recommendations for a variety of seasonal plants. The notes include brief descriptions of the plant, it's cultivation requirements, and botanical and common names. The author is also a noted garden photographer and the illustrations in this volume are stunning.

GARDEN MUSINGS

Praying Mantis Musings

by *Dianna Wears, Master Gardener 2011*

Every year, I receive a visit from a praying mantis on my back deck. I never see them on the deck or the sliding glass doors until fall. Then I have one visit for a few days. Due to its size, I figure it must be a female, as it is always five to six inches or so long. I have not located any eggs laid on the deck or the house, so I'm not sure where she goes to do the deed.

I watched a praying mantis laying eggs in a hemlock tree one year. I just happened to notice her and kept checking back frequently to watch the progress. It was amazing how many egg cases she laid.

Some years, I have placed a yard stick near her on the deck and taken a picture. She is always large – six inches or so. Most of the summer, I see small praying mantises here and there in the garden while weeding and tending to plants, but never one the size of my special fall visitor.

One summer, I observed a heated battle between a large praying mantis and a winged locust. They were really going at it for some time. The praying mantis was wrapped around the locust and the locust kept buzzing its wings and trying to fly away. I was unable to watch to the end of the battle, but I think that the praying mantis won or at least survived as I saw it later.

I have heard that praying mantises can be beneficial insects in the garden and I have also heard that they can be detrimental as they will eat “good” bugs. I think they are fascinating as they turn their heads to watch you or anything nearby that catches their attention. The triangular head, the large, conspicuous eyes and the folded (praying) hands all work together to make them an interesting creature to observe.

The following photo is the 2020 version of my back deck visitor, photographed by my daughter with her hand visible to show the size. She was



inside the house and the praying mantis was outside on the screen. She has very long fingers, so they give a perspective of the size of the praying mantis.

Fairfield County Ag Center is Still Open for Business via Appointments

Source: Connie Smith, MG Coordinator



If you have business at the Fairfield County Ag Center, please be aware the employees of the Farm Service Agency (740-653-4012) and Soil and Water Conservation (740-653-8154) are available to you via appointment. OSU Extension (740-653-5419) in Fairfield County is open on Tuesday and Thursdays, by appointment only. Social distancing and masks are required.

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

MASTER GARDENER HOLIDAY HAPPENING VIRTUAL ZOOM

Thursday, December 10, 2020 at 1 pm

Please watch your email for the link.



LUNCH AND LEARN AND HAPPY HOUR WEBINAR SERIES:

To register for any of the following Webinars, go to:

<https://mastergardener.osu.edu/>

Poinsettias: History and Production, Peg McMahon

Thursday, December 3, 2020, 12-1 pm

Christmas Trees, from the Ground to the Living Room, Roger Koch & Matt Mongin

Wednesday, December 9, 2020, 4-5 pm

Common Turfgrass Diseases, Todd Hicks

Thursday, December 17, 2020, 12-1 pm

Bees, Pesticides and Politics: Challenges and Opportunities for Sustainable Urban Landscapes, Dan Potter

Thursday, January 7, 2021, 12-1 pm

Addressing Controversial Issues: GMO's, Pesticides and Climate Change, Thomas Blaine

Wednesday, January 13, 2021, 4-5 pm

Plant Cannibals: From Mistletoe to dodder, Jim Chatfield

Thursday, January 21, 2021, 12-1 pm

Therapeutic Horticulture, Rieppe Hendrick

Wednesday, January 27, 2021, 4-5 pm

Keeping Tick Safe in the Garden, Tim McDermott

Thursday, February 18, 2021, 12-1 pm

Yes, You Can Grow Lavender!, Kelly McGowan

Wednesday, February 24, 2021, 4-5 pm

Foliar Diseases of Landscape Ornamentals, Francesca Hand

Thursday, March 4, 2021, 12-1 pm

Annuals: Field Trial Results, Pam Bennett

Wednesday, March 10, 2021, 4-5 pm

Glyphosate, Facts, Hype and Best Practices, Jennifer Andon

Thursday, March 13, 2021, 12-1 pm

Monarch Conservation, Adam Baker

Wednesday, March 24, 2021, 4-5 pm

How Plants Get to Market: The Plant Supply Chain and New Introductions, Holly Scoggins

Wednesday, April 1, 2021, 12-1 pm

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

Lisa Stoklosa, Fairfield Master Gardener Volunteer Editor

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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.