



Through the Vine

A Quarterly Newsletter of the OSU Extension Fairfield County Master Gardeners

SPRING 2021

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

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Logan Oak Stands Tall After Five Centuries

by Connie Ogg, Master Gardener 2019 (article and photos)

White Oak (*Quercus alba*)

The limbs of this mighty white oak tree reach for the cobalt blue sky as well as stretching to the winter brown ground sprinkled with leaves. Shadows are cast like arms reaching across Old Logan Cemetery in Logan, Ohio.

After five centuries the majestic oak stands strong amongst sandstone monuments from many years past. If one would estimate the age of the Logan Oak as 500 years old, that means the tree sprang from its ancestral acorn in 1520, before Ohio was a state. How true to its roots that it be there.

The knots, gnarls, and scars represent years of strength, endurance, and stability, yet this gentle masterpiece of nature provides refuge and a home for birds, squirrels, and bugs.

The Logan Oak has provided a splendid spot for respite for many through the years and I too enjoyed my afternoon and look forward to going back. I will stand in the shadow of this magnificent creation again.



CONNIE'S CORNER

Dear Master Gardeners,

Even though we are counting down the days until Spring, we are definitely in the midst of a good “old fashioned” winter. Even though we know Spring will inevitably come, we still have a few weeks of rough, nasty winter weather ahead. No doubt we are going to have a few rough days ahead with the Master Gardener program as we transition from the Volunteer Management System (VMS) to our new system Hands On Connect (HOC) record keeping system.

It is anticipated we will have about 20 days with no system in place prior to our training for Hands on Connect in early March. From February 15th to when the new system is up and running smoothly, please keep track of any hours either on a spreadsheet, piece of paper or however else you want to track. The goal is to have this time period as short as possible. Stay tuned, I will keep you posted!

I would also like to encourage each of you to think about ways you are preparing for your garden season 2021. Whatever you might be doing (i.e. seed shopping, starting seeds, tending overwintering houseplant, or reading a good garden book) take a picture and send it to me (smith.3204@osu.edu) or share it on the Fairfield County MGV Facebook group page. Your photos and knowledge will be a great addition to our efforts to engage with other interested gardeners. Currently, we have 228 followers and I would like to double that amount this year. Your gardening knowledge and passions are what will inspire and educate others!!

As always, I am so very grateful for YOU, the Fairfield County Master Gardener Volunteers... you truly are the heart and soul of our programming efforts.

Stay well,

Connie Smith
Master Gardener Coordinator
Smith.3204@osu.edu

In Memory of

Henry (“Hank”) Barrows, husband of MGV Joan Barrows (class of 2006), passed away on January 31, 2021. Please keep our friend Joan and her family in your thoughts and prayers. Cards may be sent to Joan Barrows, 1960 Miller Avenue, Canal Winchester, OH 43110.

James (“Jim”) Smith, husband of MGV Louise Smith (class of 2006) and father of MGV Marsha Smith (class of 2019), passed away on February 15, 2021. Please keep Louise, Marsha and their family in your thoughts and prayers. Louise's address is 5955 Stringtown Road NW, Baltimore, OH 43105. Marsha's address is 1107 Market Street, Baltimore, OH 43105.

Free Growing Equipment

Two growing lights, two heating pads to put under the starts, two 6” greenhouses to cover the trays, two trays. The trays have been sitting in my barn for a couple of years. I also have the chains. I hung them from the beams in my basement ceiling. If interested, please call Rosalind Batley at 614-397-3121.



Wagnalls Teen Garden Club

by Pam Jarvis, Master Gardener 2005 (article and photos)

The Wagnalls Memorial Library is so excited to share the news that our Teen Garden Club has been awarded a \$4,259 Library Services and Technology Act Grant through the Institute of Museum and Library Services.

The garden program was started in October of 2020 for Bloom-Carroll students in grades 8-12. They meet the second Saturday of each month and are led by seven Master Gardener volunteers. The library provides staff, resources and space for the students to meet. Teens will glean knowledge through hands-on activities in the Walker-Hecox-Hinkle Memorial Gardens.

Topics such as the history of the gardens/library, composting and mulching, flower arranging, famous gardens (seen online), canning, planting seeds, reading a plant tag, propagating plants, and learning the parts of a tulip with a watercolor lesson are just a few of the activities planned. Students will also learn about pollinators and the differences between weeds and flowers and annuals and perennials.

Thrivent Financial Services made it possible to begin the club. Each student received a trowel, dandelion digger, garden gloves, and a shirt, all purchased with Thrivent Financial Services grant money. This grant also purchased pumpkins which were decorated and placed in the gardens for the October pumpkin walk, unusual apples from Ochs Fruit Farm and cider and donuts.

This partnership will allow the Master Gardeners to work directly with students and to pass on their skills and knowledge to the next generation. There are thirteen students who are committed to the program.

This grant gives us the funding to get the program up and running. We hope to grow the program each year with more learning experiences, not just for this age group, but for students of all ages who want to learn to garden.



Overcoming Pandemic Paralysis

*source: Family Consumer Sciences blog,
January 28, 2021, Shannon Carter*



I sat for what seemed like a frustrating amount of hours and minutes every day... zooming, teleworking, watching television, healing from back pain (exacerbated by

long hours on the computer)... almost immobilized by fear, depression, anxiety, lack of motivation... and guilt... why wasn't I connecting more with my teen children who are struggling through this pandemic with their own issues, connecting more with my husband who is a teacher and so exhausted from teaching all day, trying to motivate his students to hold it together, that he is crashed out napping in the other room? Why wasn't I more effective with supervising my work teams? Is this all that life has right now? Is this what the next several months will be like? Maybe.

Have you been here? When there are things you must do, but you just can't move? This phenomena has been termed "pandemic paralysis" recently by psychologists and popular press. This paralysis can leave us feeling defeated, deflated and depressed.

And then one evening that just seemed to drag on endlessly, I got up and cleaned a bathroom in my home. That felt motivating in and of itself, as it had been too long-neglected. So I cleaned another bathroom, then the kitchen. I asked my husband for help on a project I couldn't do by myself. Then my kids came home and my daughter asked for help with studying, and my son needed to talk through an issue that was bothering him. And I had energy and desire to assist. I re-connected with a sense of purpose even in my own home. With the next work day, I was re-committed to the teams and staff I support and supervise. I wanted to help others be their best self, contributing to the best team. I reached out to a couple friends and acquaintances to check on how they were doing.

How can we switch from that time paralyzed on the couch to feeling productive and worthwhile? Sometimes, we just need to do something. Living with the uncertainty of so many issues in this pandemic can be exhausting and paralyzing. But take heart, there are some things we can do. Start with what you CAN do. Try to impact some things you can control.

Shift from worry and problem-focused thinking to solution-focused thinking. Focus on aspects of a problem that you can do something about, and you'll enter a mode of active problem-solving.

Chunk your time. This term is used by mental health professionals to help people understand how to break tasks into smaller, more do-able segments. Creating just the right size chunk of a task helps you feel a sense of accomplishment. This helps us not to feel so overwhelmed, which can snuff out any degree of motivation. This is a good approach to 'one day at a time' or 'one moment at a time.'

Deal with your emotions. It's easy to get overwhelmed with fear and anxiety. Try to deal with those negative emotions instead of ignoring them. Allow yourself to experience these emotions during times of uncertainty, and they will eventually pass.

If you struggle greatly with the need for control and certainty, perhaps that is something to learn to let go of. Helpguide.org has lots of practical tips and a meditation.

If you literally don't have the strength to get up, get some help. Call your doctor, talk to a licensed mental health practitioner. Please reach out to someone!

If you can impact your immediate environment enough to make a small, motivating change, you can create that power in your own life. The power of now. The power of the positive. The power of finding purpose. What if the 'something' you do is so much greater than cleaning a bathroom? What if what you decide to do is help someone beyond your family, reaching out to those in need. How much more will that help you feel empowered to do something? Do anything!

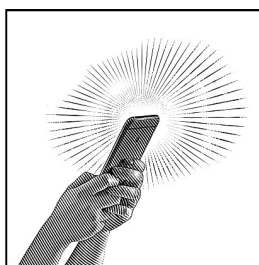
My Winter Garden

photos by Connie Ogg, Master Gardener 2019



Pruning with Your Digital Camera or Phone in Winter

by Connie Smith, Master Gardener Coordinator



Sunny winter days are a great time to assess your landscape. With all of the leaves gone on your trees and shrubs you can definitely see crossing branches and things that need to be corrected. Why not pull out your phone or a

digital camera and take pictures of trees and shrubs that need pruning? Be sure to get pictures from several angles. You will then have a digital image you can refer to when it comes time to prune. Or, you can print your photos and mark branches that you want to have removed when hiring a professional to visit your property for corrective pruning measures.



Taking photos at different vantage points will also give you a good idea of the overall shape of the plant.

Newsletter Deadlines

Do you have an article, garden musing, photo from an MGCV project, calendar event or other idea you'd like to submit for the MGCV 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**

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

Sunflowers

By Barbara Kochick, Master Gardener 2013

I noticed last year on our Facebook page that many of you grow sunflowers or are interested in growing them. I thought that I would do a little research to provide some information for “sunflower season.”



**Award winning photo,
“Sunflower Sunset” by
Robin Leja, MG 2013**

The sunflower is native to North America. It was the American Indian who first domesticated the plant. The seed was ground or pounded into flour and also cracked and eaten as a snack. There are references to the oil being used in cooking, on the skin and hair and medicinally. Both seeds and oil were used in various ceremonies and dried stalks were used as building materials.

This exotic plant was taken back to Europe by Spanish explorers around 1500. It became widespread through Western Europe but mainly as an ornamental. In the 18th century the sunflower became popular as a cultivated plant. Most of the credit for this is given to Peter the Great who encouraged the production of sunflower oil. By the early 19th century Russian farmers were growing two million acres of the flowers. Late in that century the seed found its way back to the America's. For one hundred years “Mammoth Russian” could be found in the seed catalogs. The first commercial use of the crop was as silage feed for poultry. Increased interest in the production of sunflower oil greatly increased the acreage devoted to this crop.

Concerns about the effect of animal fats on cholesterol again boosted the growth and use of sunflowers and their products. The plant had finished its circuitous route. It arrived and flourished in its native habitat.

In our home gardens we grow them for their cheer, ease and “happy faces.” Nowadays you can grow dwarfs, which thrive in containers. Many colors available now were unimaginable not too long ago, such as red, white and bicolor.

Also, happily, sunflowers are among the easiest and cheapest flowers to grow. They flourish in fertile, well drained soil and full sun. To sow directly outdoors, wait until all danger of frost has passed. Most seeds germinate when soil temperatures are between 60 and 70 degrees. Seeds require a good bit of moisture to germinate but after sprouting an inch a week is adequate.

Plant the seeds about one inch deep, keep moist and look for sprouts in a week to ten days. You can enjoy beautiful plants right up until frost by making consecutive two week plantings. If the soil has been prepared with compost fertilization is not necessary. Otherwise a basic granular fertilizer worked in around the plant will be fine. Weed control is important as the plants compete for nutrients and moisture. Keep your hoe handy or mulch well.

When sunflowers are young they exhibit heliotropism. This means that the heads follow the sun. As they mature and the stems become woody, this habit becomes less noticeable and in many varieties the heads face the ground.

You can purchase seeds at vendors from big box stores to discount retailers, but you'll find the greatest variety online.

At a time when we need all the sunshine we can find, think about including these ambassadors of cheer in your garden.

References:

Albert A. Schneirer, Ed. Sunflower Technology and Production (The American Society of Agronomy, No.35, 1977)

Gilmour - The Ultimate Guide to Growing Sunflowers

GARDEN MUSINGS

Mushroom Harvest 2021

by Mary Carter, Master Gardener 2017

Remember those lovely, warm days the first part of December? I do.

I decided to take advantage of those beautiful days and do more cleanup in the backyard. While clomping around in the backyard flower beds, I came across my mushroom log and decided to check it one more time.

I lifted the black landscape fabric covering the log “and what to my wondering eyes did appear” no, not reindeer, but three large shiitake mushrooms. In my haste to get back in the house for a camera and find my notes on how/when to harvest these treasures, I stumbled and almost fell head long into the flower bed.



After two years of watering and sheltering this special oak log, I have shiitake mushrooms! I harvested the first and largest mushroom on December 10, and the last two mushrooms on December 13.

No, I did not dry any mushrooms, but I sure did enjoy eating them. So fresh and so good. OK, I’m hooked on mushroom growing.



The year 2020 has been a very challenging year for everyone, but the shiitake mushrooms were the highlight of the year for me.

Thank you again, Jerry Iles for the program on Growing Shiitake Mushrooms held at the Fairfield County Ag Center in 2018.

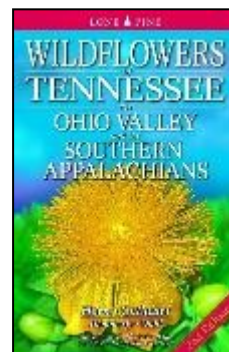
FEATURED BOOK

Wildflowers of Tennessee, the Ohio Valley and the Southern Appalachians

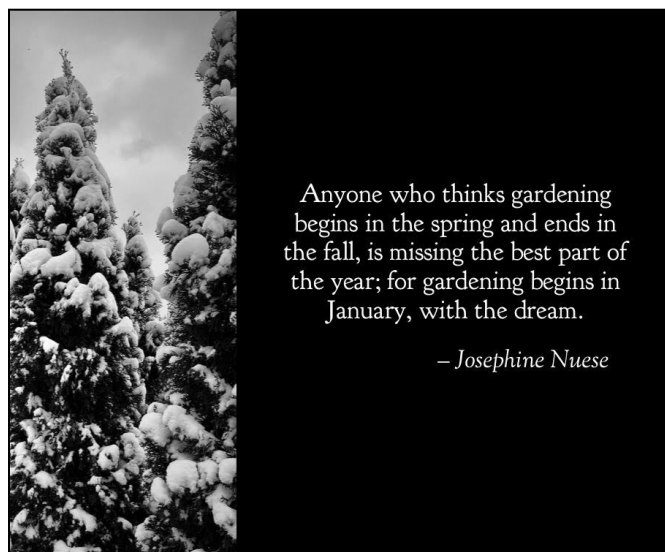
by Andrew Lawson

reviewer: Connie Ogg, Master Gardener 2019

My sister recently gave this book to me because I was always sending her photos of wild flowers that I could not identify. I am looking forward to researching those flowers on my own, now that I have this great book. It has 800 full colored photographs and 1,250 species and variety descriptions. This book will be a worthwhile and informative resource on my spring wildflower walks.



Hiking trails are open in national, state and metro Parks regardless of the season, the temperature or the Covid-19 virus. Take some time to get out and get some much needed fresh air and exercise. Spring flowers will be here soon. In the meantime don your mask and bird watch.



Anyone who thinks gardening begins in the spring and ends in the fall, is missing the best part of the year; for gardening begins in January, with the dream.

— Josephine Nuese

Created by Robin Leja, Master Gardener 2013

GARDEN MUSINGS

Spring Gardening for Old Folks

by **Chuck Zurhorst, Master Gardener 2019**



What do you have to do in the garden today? Can it wait, or not do it at all? Gardening should be relaxing and enjoyable. Not exhausting or painful. Here are some things to think about before you put

on your gloves and gardening hat. Avoid excessive heat and sun. The risk of dehydration and sunburn just aren't worth the potential reward of a few cucumbers and tomatoes. Take a break when you get tired and drink plenty of water. Use that sunscreen you have in the garage and put on your sun hat. Are you getting tired? Take a break. Sit in the shade of that magnificent red maple and enjoy a glass of iced tea or a tall glass of water. Change your gardening tasks frequently, especially if you are tired. Repetitive tasks can lead to muscle aches and even potential injury. Poor posture resulting from repetition and exhaustion often leads to pain, fatigue and strains. Avoid resting your weight on one leg or one arm while you work. Gardening is an exercise. Stretch often and respect pain.

One helpful hint is to lift safely. Remember safe lifting techniques. Bend your knees, lift with your legs. Keep your feet shoulder width apart and keep your head up. Look ahead, not down. When you lift, hold it close to your body and set it down in front of you. Don't twist and toss. Use your wheelbarrow or a cart to haul heavy plants, supplies and tools. Make more trips with smaller loads and avoid carrying heavy or awkward objects. Try to minimize working with your hands above your shoulders, limit reaching, lifting and pulling and use long handled tools to reduce the need to reach or stoop. To reduce stress on your hands and wrists, frequently switch from pruning to less hand-intensive work or alternate which hand you use, keep your wrists and hands in a neutral position instead of twisting, and use grippy gloves to hold tools without exerting your

hands and wrists. Finally, avoid working in awkward positions or standing for long periods of time. Wear comfortable and supportive shoes with a good tread. And, remember to take frequent breaks.

Most importantly: enjoy that glass of iced tea under the red maple tree and all the fruits and vegetables that will later result from your hard work in the garden .

FEATURED BOOK

The Dirty Life: A Memoir of Farming, Food, and Love by Kristin Kimball

reviewer: **Barbara Kochick, Master Gardener 2013**

This true to life story is the engaging and often funny tale of two young people who meet, fall in love and marry. Kristin was raised in an upper middle class family, graduated from Harvard and traveled the globe as a journalist. Mark, on the other hand, grew up with folks from the hippy generation. He was down to earth: a farmer, gardener, chef and homesteader. He valued what he earned from the land. Now they share their ambitious goal of growing everything needed to feed a community.



GARDEN MUSINGS

Tomato Hornworms

by *Dianna Wears, Master Gardener 2011*



I have been plagued in recent years by the tomato hornworm. Perhaps you have never heard of them. Perhaps you have been visited by them. I had heard about

them, but never experienced them until the last ten years or so. I guess I was lucky previously.

Since I am the only person in my household who eats tomatoes, I usually plant two pots with a single plant in each and put them on my upper deck above the walk out basement. I figured I would not have to worry about tomato hornworms as I thought it would be harder for them to crawl up onto the deck. After experiencing them and doing some research I found out that they don't arrive by crawling! We'll go back to that in a minute.

I have had some lovely, full foliated tomato plants over the years. Unfortunately, once the hornworms visit, they can go from full foliated to practically bare in less than 24 hours. It always seems that I find them once I notice the bare branches and the hornworms are the size of my thumb! How did they get so big, so fast????!!

One year, I had a competition of sorts with my Mom – she was busy catching mice in her basement while I was busy getting rid of hornworms. I won – I think I had 14 hornworms (on two plants) to her 12 mice – although I really wouldn't consider that a win. Certainly not like winning the lottery!

After research, I found that not only is there a tomato hornworm (*Manduca quiquemaculata*), but there is also a tobacco hornworm (*Manduca sexta*). You can tell the difference by the stripes on the bodies and the “horn” on the back end. Not only do they eat the foliage, but they will also chew holes in the ripening fruit.

Tomato hornworms have a “V” on their side that points towards their head. In addition, there is an “eye” at the intersection of the “V” on the inside of it

and a black “horn” sticking out of the last section of the worm. The tobacco hornworm has a slash mark on its side. The lower part points towards the head and the upper end of it points towards the rear. It has an “eye” underneath the slash mark and its “horn” is red.

Eggs are laid by a type of hawk moth (of which there are several varieties) on the underside of the host plant's leaves. This explains why my thinking that hornworms couldn't get to tomato plants on the raised deck by crawling was erroneous – they got there by flying! Eggs are light green and oval shaped and can be picked off or removed with a spray of water. They can also overwinter in soil as a pupa, which is brownish, and looks sort of like a spiral shell with a “hook” at the larger end. It is advisable to till the soil in the spring, which will kill most of the pupa.

In addition to tomatoes, hornworms also feed on plants in the nightshade family – potatoes, eggplant and peppers. They are not poisonous and do not bite. I generally flick them off my tomato plant and let them fly through the air and land on my lower deck. It's a perverse sort of pleasure for me! If the sudden thud of their landing doesn't kill them, a bird can make a meal out of them. If you have chickens, a bearded dragon, chameleon, leopard gecko, scorpion or tarantula, you can feed them the hornworms – they are high in calcium, low in fat and have no exoskeleton to interfere with digestion.

If you find a hornworm with what looks to be rice on it, do not kill it. It has been infected by a braconid wasp, which is a beneficial insect. What you see are the cocoons of new wasps. The female braconid wasp lays her eggs under the skin of the hornworm. When the eggs hatch, they ingest the innards of the hornworm and then make their way to the surface where they make their cocoon to begin the life cycle anew. In the meantime, the hornworm will die after losing its innards. Yay!

Hornworms are very good at blending in with tomato plants. When you examine your tomato plants, look for small black dots on the leaves. This is indicative of the presence of hornworms, as it is the “poop.” Coupled with this and missing leaves, chances are very good that a hornworm is at work. Keep looking and you will find it, but I hope you don't have the problem in the first place.

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

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

UPCOMING EVENTS

MASTER GARDENER 4TH MONDAY ZOOM MEETINGS

Fairfield County Master Gardeners will be meeting via Zoom the 4th Monday of the Month thru April.

Please mark your calendars now:

Monday, March 22, 2021, 4 pm

Monday, April 26, 2021, 4 pm

LUNCH & LEARN AND HAPPY HOUR WEBINAR SERIES:

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

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



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

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.