

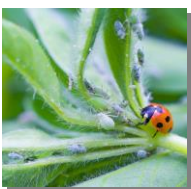


## President's comments

By Jim McCracken

### Spring Cool & Wet

This spring has been a challenge for all of us who enjoy growing plants in the dirt "soil". April temperatures were below average on many occasions although we did have temperatures as high as 70 degrees on a handful of days. This yoyo pattern can be a challenge for gardeners but can have a negative effect on plants. Our last frost was on April 28 but future weather patterns are more promising. Shelby County soil temperature is low and moisture levels are high thus few fields or gardens have been planted. Remember working soil that is too wet may form mud clods providing poor growing conditions for both seeds and transplants. Waiting on "Mother Nature" may be your best alternative.



### Aphids

Aphids are small, soft-bodied insects that are usually gray-green but can be various colors. Most are 1/8 of an inch, can be either winged or wingless with antennae located at tip of head or jutting out of their bottom. Aphids are

usually present on vegetation during the growing season as well as into the fall months.


If you wish to prevent aphids from occurring in as large numbers, you may try the following:

1. Compost and remove all old plants. Aphids can over-winter in dead plant tissue.
2. Harvest crops on time and often. Brussel Sprouts left alone too long become their breeding grounds.
3. Encourage beneficial insects. Ladybugs top this list along with lacewings and parasitic wasps.
4. Keep plants healthy and strong. A healthy plant can fight off many problems that may occur in the garden.

Yellow sticky traps can be used for aphids. This pest loves the color yellow and will be caught. The problem with this type of trap is more aphids will be drawn to your garden and you may have a larger aphid problem than before getting the traps.

Aphids will excrete a substance called "honeydew" as they suck sap from your plants. You will find your

vegetables sticky with this substance; proof aphids are living on your plants. You may also find ants whenever this pest problem happens as ants use the "honeydew" as a food source also.

Rosemary, mint, and catnip are all fragrant and should attract beneficial insects that can help control the aphid numbers. 

## Volunteer Coordinator's comments

By Doug Benson

It feels like summer may finally be on the horizon. Now, if we could just get a few more breaks from the rain! It's hard to keep up with the lawn mowing and weed control; but at least it is green. I plan to put the tomatoes and peppers I started indoors in the ground this week, so no more frost, please.

Our Memorial Garden is looking good. The grape hyacinths and daffodils are about done, and the alliums have multiplied dramatically and will be putting on a great show in the next week or two. The crabapple trees were spectacular, but the heavy rains cut the blooming short. Some of the flowering shrubs are blooming, and the Japanese maple looks better than ever. We lost a few plants, but most are returning with full vigor. Even the grass seed I spread near the flagpole is beginning to fill in the bare spots. We still need to do some weeding, especially to eliminate the thistles, and then put down the mulch before our Wednesday meeting. I just looked out the window and saw little birdies taking drinks from the fountain.

We will be adding a new plant to the Memorial Garden. Sonnie Bernardi is donating an azalea in memory of Bob. She told me they had one, and it was one of Bob's favorite plants. Ann Heeley and I surveyed the garden and think that a good location will be near the front of the garden between the light post and the "birdhouse." We will need to move one or more of the sedums, but we have places for that. We thank Sonnie for this tribute to Bob and for sharing him with us.

**May Meeting**  
**Mulching before at 1:00p**  
**Wednesday, May 18, 2022 @ 2p**  
**Both at Extension and on Zoom**

## Volunteer Coordinator's comments

By Doug Benson—Continued from page 1

By the time you read this, most of the Ohio Victory Garden seed kits will have been distributed. Thank you to all who have been helping with this project. With ongoing rampant inflation and predicted shortages of fresh, nutritious vegetables, this program couldn't be timelier. It is also a great opportunity to get kids away from their electronic games and start doing something useful. If we have extra kits available, I will have them at the meeting.

Want to review the minutes of a previous meeting or read our newsletter, but you have lost/deleted the emails with the links? Look no further than the Shelby County Extension website link: ([Master Gardener Volunteers | Shelby \(osu.edu\)](https://www.osu.edu/master-gardener-volunteers-shelby)) and click on "Master Gardener Volunteers" under "Featured County Programs" on the left side of the screen.

You can also find the "Hotline" schedule; however, you cannot sign up to help. You will need to contact me by email or phone to place you on the list. And, we do have several additional openings.

Conservation Day Camp is just a little over a month away, June 28-30. I've been checking to see where we stand with that program. Tentatively, Tuesday, June 28, Teresa, Marily, and Becky will be doing a program about plants and pollinators. Thursday, June 30, Doris, Dave S. and I will help the campers make seed bombs. I will pass along any information I get from Jill Smith, with the Ohio Farm Bureau.

I have heard nothing about plans for the Shelby County Fair. I don't know if there will be craft activities, or even whether there will be a display area. Just in case, we need to be thinking about possible activities.

As far as our small garden at the fairgrounds is concerned, I met with Eugene Schulze, fair board representative, Chris Roediger, maintenance supervisor, and Cody Myers, Sidney High School FFA advisor, about plans for erecting the memorial monument in the garden. We identified the location, and Chris will see that the foundation is poured, and the monument erected. Our task is to determine what plants to move/remove/replace. Cody will have members of his FFA group take care of resetting the retaining wall and doing some backfilling and mulching. If we have the plants we want, they will probably do the planting as well. The fair board is to provide some funds for plants. The goal is to have this all completed by fair time.

Of even more immediate concern is our May 18 meeting. Once again, we will meet at the Extension office at 2:00. Weather permitting, we will gather at 1:00 to mulch the garden. With lots of help, we should easily be able to finish in less than an hour. Following the meeting we will also have our annual plant exchange. If you have some extra plants or seeds to trade, bring them with you. It helps if you have them identified. We usually have plants left over, so even if you don't have any plants, chances are good that you will still be able to take something home. Looking ahead to June 15, Jim McCracken is inviting us to his home for a garden tour, meeting, and bonfire starting at 6:00. More details to follow.

I've written enough, and it's time to work outdoors. Until Wednesday's meeting (it will be on Zoom also), enjoy the great weather. 🇺🇸

## Rose Watch

By Ann Heeley

Years ago, I gave up growing the old-fashioned, fragrant roses I admired because they required more care than my kids. Then came knock-out roses and their kin. Yes, I miss the fragrance, but many are almost as showy, and maintenance is far easier. However, problems can occur even with these long-lived perennial shrubs. And since I've also given up harmful pesticides, I'd like to share a few ideas on controlling the pests and diseases I've encountered.

Now is the time to look for evidence of **rose slug sawfly** damage. This is the insect that seems to cause most of the damage on my knock-out roses. Once the eggs hatch in early spring, hundreds/thousands of small, green "caterpillars" climb up the plant and begin chewing the



undersides of leaves. You'll notice the leaves have white spots or holes on top, and when you turn the leaf over, chances are good that you'll see ¼"-long, skinny worm-like pests. Since this pest is a larva, not a true caterpillar, Bt is not effective. Fortunately,

Neem oil, insecticidal soap, and spinosad work well to control this pest before buds form. Just be sure to spray the undersides of leaves. I've also poured spinosad directly on the soil around the base of the rose bush. If the lower leaves are unsightly and nearly transparent, clip them off and destroy them. The longer you wait to eradicate rose slug sawflies, the more damage you'll see on the leaves as these tiny monsters chew their way upward.

Japanese beetles can also be a problem (some years worse than others), and I haven't found any successful,

non-chemical way of getting rid of them other than hand-picking and dropping into soapy water. They say that Japanese beetles are easier to catch in the early morning hours when they are sluggish. I can't verify that.

Speaking of **slugs**... if large, ragged holes appear in lower leaves, that may be an indication of these midnight marauders, especially if the ground is overly moist or heavily mulched. I haven't used copper strips around my roses, but I've used it around hostas. Slugs experience a sort of electric shock if they try to climb over copper strips. Just



make sure you don't make the same mistake I did on one of my hostas. I trapped the slugs inside the copper strip! Iron sulfate slug bait is another effective method of controlling slugs. It is safe to use around pets and kids. Hand-picking at night is also effective, but incredibly gross. Beer or any yeasty liquid in tuna cans on the ground will attract slugs. Emptying cans every day and refilling them for the next day's victims is both gross and time consuming. Don't bother with diatomaceous earth, crushed egg shells, coffee grounds, or sweet gum pods. Research shows that none of these methods work. Besides, the holes in rose leaves are more likely the result of the rose slug sawfly larva, in which case, controls that apply to garden slugs are ineffective against rose slug sawflies.



**Aphids** are said to be the most common insect pests on roses. These tiny green or pinkish insects prefer clustering around the youngest leaves and buds. Experts suggest a strong blast from a hose. I've never found that to be very

effective since all I wind up with is soggy mulch around the roses with aphids clinging for dear life. Insecticidal soap sprayed directly on aphids or Neem oil sprayed when bees are not present work much better. So does a gloved hand dipped in rubbing alcohol and swiped upwards. Try to get rid of aphids before they secrete the sticky stuff that attracts ants and causes sooty mold.



**Spider mites** can attack during hot, dry weather. With their piercing/sucking mouthparts, mite damage often appears as stippling on the upper surfaces of leaves. Fine webs underneath leaves are sure

signs of spider mites. If seen early enough, a strong blast of water can dislodge mites, webs, and eggs. Insecticidal soap also works, but don't spray in direct sunlight or when temperatures exceed 85°.



I've never seen **thrips** on my roses, but I've heard horror stories about these tiny (1/16" long) insects feeding on buds and flowers, causing bud drop and plant death. Thrips are very difficult to control since they

are difficult to see and since damage is spotted only after multitudes of these insects are present and multiplying. The best control is to remove and destroy infected flowers/buds and soak the ground with spinosad. Insecticidal soap applied every 3 days may also help control these pests.



**Leaf-cutting bees** make perfectly round cuts in leaves, usually along the edges. They use the leaf parts to line their nests. Damage is generally minimal, and other than aesthetics, there is no reason

to control these pollinators.



**Black spot** is a fungal disease that occurs during periods of high humidity and cool evening temperatures. It can be exacerbated by overhead watering, poor air circulation, or too much shade. The disease starts on

the lower leaves and gradually moves upward if left untreated. Eventually, the spots expand, and the leaves turn yellow and drop off. Spray affected leaves with a copper fungicide every week to control this disease. Neem oil spray is also effective. The fungus that causes black spot can over-winter on dropped leaves on the ground, so it's important to clean up the area around each plant in late fall.



**Powdery mildew** is another fungal disease that spreads during conditions similar to those causing black spot. At first, leaves develop what looks like a cottony white or gray coating, and eventually, they shrivel up and drop off.

Powdery mildew rarely kills plants, but it can stunt growth and reduce the number of

blooms, so prevention is your best bet. Spray a solution of 1 part milk (any kind) to 2 parts water before you see evidence of powdery mildew. Continue spraying weekly during the growing season. The milk and water solution works better than the baking soda/Dawn/oil/water solution that many rose growers have used. Diluted mouthwash (1 part mouth to 3 parts water) is another treatment that has proven effective in research studies. One treatment that I never knew existed uses potassium bicarbonate. Unlike mixtures containing baking soda (sodium bicarbonate), this salt-free mixture actually kills the reproductive fungal spores that cause powdery mildew...and it's organic! Just mix one gallon of water with 1 tsp. potassium bicarbonate and ½ tsp. liquid soap. This solution can also be used to stop powdery mildew on other ornamental plants as well as edible crops. Potassium carbonate powder is available at—where else?—Amazon. It is also available as a commercial product called MilStop Broad Spectrum Foliar Fungicide, but it is quite expensive for home use. As with all sprays, make sure to spray out of direct sunlight and only if temperatures are below 85°.



There are other problems that have become quite serious over the years such as **rose rosette disease (RRD)**, a devastating viral disease with the eriophyid mite acting as the vector. Symptoms can include

enlarged canes, excessive thorns, witches' broom, red growth that does not turn green, and malformed leaves and flowers. There is no treatment or control for RRD, and since nearby plants can contract this virus, the only option is to immediately remove and destroy diseased plants. Do not compost, and do not plant another rose in the same spot. Weigelas and other flowering shrubs can be planted in place of removed roses since the eriophyid mite feeds only on roses.

Do all of these problems make you want to avoid knock-out roses? Don't worry. In the vast majority of cases, knock-out roses will provide you with a stunning display year after year with little effort. Try the double knock-outs for the look of a small hybrid tea rose.

Or experiment with **Drift roses**, alternatives to knock-outs that stay smaller and are very disease resistant. A few varieties of *Drift* roses are fragrant, too. They are advertised as hardy to Zone 5, but may require some winter protection in exposed areas.



**Easy Elegance** is another hybrid that claims to combine the beauty of hybrid teas with the easy care of shrub roses. 24 colors are available in plants with bigger blooms, and like *Drift* roses, some are fragrant. All are disease resistant and continue to bloom all summer and into fall. *Easy Elegance* roses are hardy to Zone 4 or 5 depending on color.



Try planting **Flower Carpet** roses for difficult areas like steep slopes, alongside a driveway with reflective heat, atop a stone wall, next to a swimming pool deck, or as an alternative to turf. These low-growing, disease-resistant roses combine low maintenance with constant bloom from spring through late fall, and they are self-cleaning—no deadheading required to keep them going. They look more like a shrub rose than a hybrid with arching, horizontal growth, but the smaller blooms are prolific.



All of these low-maintenance roses require pruning in early spring, but none of them will mind if you're a little late or prune too much or too little. Most importantly, these roses will make any sunny area more colorful without a lot of work or money, and being hardy in our area, they'll only get more beautiful every year. 🇺🇸



## Some upcoming events

By Doug Benson

**Thursday, May 19, 6:30 p.m.** – Shelby County MGVs library program. “To Spray or Not to Spray” Matt Schmerge will explain how to safely and effectively use both chemical and organic pesticides and herbicides. Amos Memorial Public Library.

**Wednesday, May 25, 6:00 p.m.** – Mercer County Lawn & Garden Talks. Kim Hupman, ANR Program Assistant in Greene County will present information about “Raised Bed Gardening.” Central Services Building, Celina. Pre-register at 419-586-2179 or [ellis.301@osu.edu](mailto:ellis.301@osu.edu).

**Thursday, June 16, 6:30 p.m.** – Shelby County MGVs library program. “It’s about Thyme” Our own Janet Nelson will discuss which herbs grow best in our gardens and how to use and preserve them. Amos Memorial Public Library.

**Wednesday, June 29, 6:00 p.m.** - Mercer County Lawn & Garden Talks. Kendall Robinson, owner of Unique Roots Garden Center in Celina will present a program about “Succulent Plants.” Central Services Building, Celina. Pre-register at 419-586-2179 or [ellis.301@osu.edu](mailto:ellis.301@osu.edu). 🇺🇸



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# The People's Garden May 2022


By Conelia Dixon



The People's Garden is starting out the 9<sup>th</sup> season with 16 rented, raised beds. Some of the gardeners are new this year and some are returning. We continue to give them help with fencing and information about soil, planting, and other questions about gardening.

Thanks to Terry and Greg, we have a new Martin house on the east side of the garden. Soon we will have other new birdhouses, some in the beds where there is squash. I will report if this helps with the squash bugs or not. The birds help take care of some of the insects/larva that attack some of the vegetables. We have had no tomato worms and no Japanese beetles for two years. Replacing wooden beds with metal continues and we have very few to finish up. A ramp to the porch of The Learning Center is in the works. All the materials are on hand and ready for the construction. We just need to remove the grass underneath and get a building permit.

Something we have always wanted to do as far as engaging community members is to have more international folks and foods in the garden. I am happy to tell you that we have a lovely Japanese lady named Yuka that is renting two beds. We both have apps on our phones that help us translate. I am learning some Japanese and she is actually taking English lessons. She's at the garden quite often and likes to help with chores, as well as taking care of her own beds.

A weight loss group from Wilson Health has rented a bed at the garden and we had a session for them in the evening one day so they could get a sense of how to start a garden and the work that might be involved in taking care of it. 



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