

# Shelby County Master Gardener

OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY EXTENSION



Volume 27, Issue 9—October 2022

## President's comments—Thanks to MG Members By Jim McCracken

As the growing season comes to an end, I wish to express my gratitude to all Shelby County Master Gardeners. Your efforts and talents do not go unnoticed. Many of you have given countless hours of volunteer work to projects or programs that are your passion. I was impressed with the committee that spearheaded the library seminar program.

A special thank-you to the following individuals:

- Carol Strayer — for her outstanding work on the club's newsletter. The publication is always professionally done, making it a masterpiece!
- Carol Braun — did a great job with our treasury. She kept an accurate ledger of the club's finances.
- Nancy Russell — a wonderful job as our secretary. She gives a detailed, interesting account of every meeting in a timely manner.
- Doug Benson — as a MG coordinator he goes way beyond what is required. Without his dedication and hard work our club would not function as smoothly or successfully. Doug has a passion for the MG program!

Hopefully this year has been a rewarding experience for all our Master Gardener Volunteers. As winter approaches, take the time to educate, plan your gardens, reflect on how to make your garden or landscape successful next spring, and re-energize yourself. Let's all be ready to accomplish our personal goals for gardening in 2023. 🌱

## Volunteer Coordinator's comments By Doug Benson



MG Memorial Garden on 10/12/22. Photo by Doug Benson.

Our 2022 Master Gardener Volunteer year is just about over. We still have our annual banquet and the fall Memorial Garden clean-up yet to go. While we still haven't completely recovered from the Covid epidemic, at least we've returned to a semblance of normal. I hope the year has been rewarding for each of you, and you are looking forward to even more normal 2023.

Looking back over the year, we were able to get back to regular in-person meetings, supplemented by Zoom coverage – when I remembered to set up the connections. Moving to mid-afternoon meeting times seemed to work out fairly well. Unfortunately, the weather didn't cooperate with our plans to have meetings at Jim's and Teresa's homes. Maybe next year will be more conducive. We distributed almost all 500 of our Victory Garden seed packets. Several of us made presentations at Conservation Day Camp. We offered four successful evening programs at the library. The Shelby County Fair also returned to normal, and we were able to conduct the craft activity (and only had to do it once – yea!). Our Mercer County volunteers again had a successful "Hoof It" activity at their fair and also helped organize their very successful evening seminars.

We had other accomplishments as well. We continued to maintain our Memorial Garden – thanks to all who helped either during organized efforts or on their own. We did some renovation of the small garden at the Shelby County fairgrounds, with Cheryl leading the efforts. We answered numerous hotline calls, with

### MG Officers & Leadership for 2023

President	Jim McCracken
Vice President	Dave Slagle
Secretary	Nancy Russell
Treasurer	Linda Jennings
Volunteer Coordinator	Doug Benson
Extension ANR Educator	Matt Schmerge

## (Volunteer Coordinator's Comments – Continued)

Matt and I taking care of most of them. Our “Grow Ohio” food donations total approximately 2000 pounds to date, and we’re and still counting. Jim and Harry Homan account for over 1500 of that total. My final report is due in December, so if you still have some poundage to report, let me know. Incidentally, I learned at last weekend’s state MGCV conference that our 2021 donation total was sixth highest in the state.

We have continued to implement the new reporting system, Hands On Connect. Similar to when we started using VMS, there have been challenges, but I hope everyone is getting a handle on the program. Best of all, we have begun a new training class for future MGCVs. We have ten eager trainees getting started with the hybrid program. We’ve had our initial in-person orientation, and our second session will be November 3, when we will focus on composting and interpretation of soil test reports. As part of their registration fee each trainee received a Penn State soil test kit to use at home. The results will be the basis for the class session. Active members are invited to attend and count the time for continuing education.

I want to thank those who have provided leadership this past year: Jim McCracken – president, Doris Hibner – vice president, Nancy Russell – secretary, and Carol Braun – treasurer. Thanks as well to committee chairs: Ann Heeley – seminar planning, Teresa Freisthler – fair craft, Conelia Dixon – People’s Garden, and Marily Schweitzer – banquet planning. A huge thank you goes to Carol Strayer for another year of excellent newsletters. And finally, thanks to Matt for his excellent guidance, leadership and support.

Rather than keep going with this writing, I am going to talk about 2023 in a separate article. So, stand by! 🌱

## MG Plans for 2023

By Doug Benson

Looking forward to 2023, here are some goals:

1. **Complete our training program** and bring our ten trainees into the group. We will be having several in-person classes, and active members are invited to attend both for continuing education credit and to meet, greet and support the trainees. Dates and times will be announced. Please offer your support and mentorship.
2. **Participate in the 2023 Victory Garden seed distribution.** The program is expanding to 50 MGCV organizations. We will be receiving 300 packets containing sunflowers, cucumbers,

- carrots, and lettuce sometime in March. Distribution will start on April 3, but we need to have our distribution plans made by March 3. Do we have a volunteer to lead the planning?
3. **We need to expand our library seminar series** to six or seven sessions, preferably starting in March. I hope that our existing committee will be willing to take the lead in planning, and others are urgently requested. We need suggestions for topics and presenters – think about what would interest you.
4. **Consider organizing a continuing education program** for our own MGCVs as well as those in surrounding counties (not the general public). The state MGCV office has 500 dollar grants available to support speakers, publicity, and materials (not food and registration). Again, we need suggestions for topics and presenters. This could be half-day or all-day, weekday or weekend.
5. **We will continue the hotline, but Matt and I need help.** We would like some of you with expertise in various horticulture areas to be willing to assist us when pertinent questions arise. It would be great if some of you would focus on a specific area that you could cover; for example, indoor plants, plant propagation, weed control, attracting beneficial insects, etc.
6. **Develop some new outreach opportunities.** We need to become more visible in the communities we serve. Remember, we want to focus more on teaching than weeding. Perhaps cultivate a relationship with school, youth, church, or civic groups to spread the word about horticultural topics such as invasive species, good gardening practices, or safe use of chemicals.
7. **Strengthen our organization by taking an active part in programing and participating in the various activities.** I’d like to have an educational component at each membership meeting. Volunteer to research a topic and make a 10 to 15-minute presentation at the start of a meeting. We also need to consider issues related to finances and organizational liability.
8. **Personal growth and fulfillment** should be an ongoing goal. Find something that makes you happy, be it learning something new, perfecting a skill you already have, or sharing time and experiences with your fellow MGCVs.
9. **Add your own goal:** 🌱

**(Reprint of the emailed article from Garden Gate)**  
**How to Save Tender Summer Bulbs for Next Season**  
By Jennifer Howell

Do you grow summer flowering bulbs like canna, dahlias and glads? Find everything you need to know about saving these tender summer bulbs, corms, and tubers to grow again next year. We earn from qualifying purchases made through affiliate links.



**Don't toss your tender summer bulbs!**

If you love growing tender summer bulbs, such as cannas (*Canna* spp. and hybrids) or **dahlias** (*Dahlia* hybrids), but they aren't hardy in your zone, save tender bulbs over the winter and grow them again next year!

**What is a "tender bulb"?**

Technically, not all the plants called "tender bulbs" are actually bulbs. There are also corms, rhizomes and tubers. They're all enlarged root-like structures that store energy to resurrect these plants each spring. But to keep things simple, they're often all referred to as tender bulbs. For most tender bulbs, you'll follow the same process of digging, curing and storing. Learn more about each step below, and then scroll down for specific information on some of the most popular corms, rhizomes, tubers and bulbs.



Here we see dahlia tubers being dug up to be saved over the winter.

**Step 1: Dig up the tender summer bulb**

Digging when the soil is moist, not muddy or dried and cracked, makes it easier to lift and clean the tender bulbs. If you dig too early in the season, your bulb may not have stored enough energy to grow a healthy plant next year. Too late and the ground may have frozen hard and the tender bulb with it.

Most plants can be lifted when their foliage yellows and dies back, or after the first hard freeze, when leaves turn crispy and dried or black and mushy.

A mesh screen works great to lay tender bulbs out to be cured or dried before being put away for storage over the winter.



**Step 2: Trim, clean & cure the tender bulb**

Trim the stems and clean soil off the tender bulb so fungi, soilborne diseases or insects won't ruin it during storage. After you have your bulb cleaned, inspect for diseased tissue, shriveling from dehydration and insect damage from borers or bulb mites. Discard any that don't look healthy and firm. Cure tender bulbs for a few days up to a few weeks in a well-ventilated area so they can dry completely. Excess moisture can cause bulbs to get moldy and rot over the winter.

- Tubers can be sprayed with water to clean soil out of the crevices, as long as they are dried completely after so they won't mold.
- **Don't wash corms** — they have a papery covering that shouldn't get wet before

storage. Instead, air dry or cure them out of direct sunlight in a well-ventilated spot at 60 to 70 degrees F. After two to three weeks, use a paintbrush to remove any soil still clinging.

After being cleaned and cured, proper storage will ensure healthy bulbs for next spring.



**Step 3: Store the tender bulb**

Keeping tender summer bulbs cool and in darkness is important to maintain dormancy and ensure healthy bulbs for next year. On a shelf in a chilly basement or garage is a good place to store tender bulbs for the winter.

- Tubers and rhizomes are fleshier, so they need a bit of humidity to prevent them from drying out over the winter. Store them in slightly moistened **peat moss** or in a newspaper-lined crate, cardboard box or shoe box.
- Corms and bulbs like it cool, dark and dry. Once they've had a curing period, pack them away in small paper sacks with their cultivar name written on the

outside or a **mesh produce bag** with a label.

**HOW TO DIG AND STORE 7 COMMON TENDER SUMMER BULBS**

Now scroll down for 7 common tender bulbs and tips to help prepare them for storage in cold winter zones!



### #1 Calla lily (*Zantedeschia aethiopica*)

Using a shears, cut yellowed foliage 1 to 2 in. from the rhizome after the first frost. After it has dried up, you can remove the stems completely.

**Type:** Rhizome

**When to dig:** After frost has killed the foliage, let it dry several days in the ground, then dig the rhizomes.

**How to cure:** Brush off excess soil and remove dried stems at the rhizome after setting aside for two to three days.

**How to store:** Store in slightly moist peat moss, **vermiculite** or sand at 40 to 50 degrees F.



### #2 Crocosmia (*Crocosmia* spp. and hybrids)

Small cormels will form off roots. Snip them apart and plant for more divisions. Old, dried corms, like you see in the photo above, can be discarded.

**Type:** Corm

**When to dig:** These plants are often hardy to 25 degrees so for zones where they won't winter over dig six to eight weeks after blooms finish or after a killing freeze.

**How to cure:** Brush off soil but do not wash. Cure corms two to three weeks at 60 to 70 degrees F in a well-ventilated area. Remove the old corm and discard — do not compost any throwaways as they are invasive in areas where they are hardy.

**How to store:** Store in paper or mesh bags in a cool, dry area, such as an unheated garage, at 35 to 40 degrees F.



### #3 Gladiolus (*Gladiolus* hybrids)

New corms form on the original gladiolus corm planted in the spring. Peel the old shriveled one off the bottom and discard it, saving the new one for next year. Check out our article on **saving glad corms** or a step-by-step how-to.

**Type:** Corm

**When to dig:** Dig corms six to eight weeks after bloom when foliage is yellowing or after a killing frost.

**How to cure:** Cure corms for two to three weeks on a screen in a well-ventilated area at 60 to 70 degrees F. After curing, remove old dried-up corm and discard. Collect small cormels and plant in a 6-in. pot if you like.

**How to store:** Store in paper or **mesh bags** in a dry, well-ventilated location at 35 to 40 degrees F.



### #4 Tuberose (*Polianthes tuberos*)

“Daughter bulbs” form at the base of the main rhizome. They'll bloom after they reach the size of your thumb, so pull to separate the roots and plant them, leaving tinier ones still attached to grow another season.

**Type:** Rhizome

**When to dig:** Dig rhizomes after a killing frost.

**How to cure:** Brush off excess soil and dry for two to three days. **How to store:** Store in perforated plastic bags with sand or vermiculite. If you don't want divisions, tubers can also be stored in the pots they grew in; just quit watering in late fall and keep it dry over winter. Store at 55 to 65 degrees F.



### #5 Canna (*Canna* hybrids)

Use a paintbrush to clean soil off rhizomes before inspecting them for damage. Wash roots with water if brushing doesn't get it all off.

**Type:** Rhizome

**When to dig:** Let foliage dry a few days after a killing frost, then cut stems 3 in. from the rhizome and just above the soil line. Dig the clump.

**How to cure:** Wash off all the soil. Let the rhizomes cure several days in a cool, well-ventilated spot. Make sure they are dry before storing.

**How to store:** Place in moist sphagnum peat, vermiculite, or sand in covered boxes. You can also store them loosely in plastic bags, checking periodically to release condensation or mist with water if they are

drying up. Rhizomes should be humid, not wet. Store at 40 to 50 degrees F.



### #6 Dahlia (*Dahlia* hybrids)

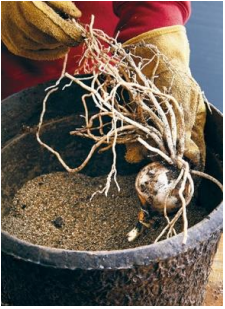
You can use a **permanent marker** to write the cultivar name directly on a fleshy tuber like this dahlia.

**Type:** Tuber

**When to dig:** One week after a blackening frost, when foliage turns dark and wilts, cut stems to 1 to 2 in. from the soil surface, then dig.

**How to cure:** Wash clump of tubers to remove excess soil, then dry stem side down for two to three days so moisture drains out of the hollow stems and won't mold.

**How to store:** Store covered in slightly moist sphagnum peat vermiculite in boxes or plastic bags with perforations. Check every couple weeks and air out if condensation forms or **mist** with water if the tubers are withering and drying out. Keep at 40 to 50 degrees F.



### #7 Peruvian daffodil (*Hymenocallis x festalis*)

Dry vermiculite prevents mold while still helping the roots retain moisture. Be sure to cover them completely so they don't dry out. Burying them upside down discourages early sprouting.

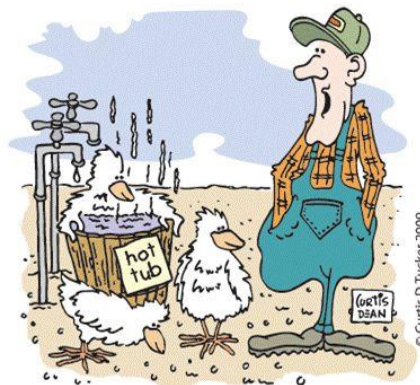
**Type:** Bulb

**When to dig:** Dig before frost when foliage is yellowing in late fall.

**How to cure:** Separate clumps of bulbs carefully to prevent damaging large roots still attached to the bulb.

**How to store:** Place upside down in dry vermiculite or sand to discourage sprouting midwinter. Store at 60 to 65 degrees; any colder and the bulbs may not bloom the next year.

## Gardening Humor



"Okay, which one of you has been laying the hard boiled eggs?"

