

Shelby County Master Gardener

OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY EXTENSION



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President's comments--Not Just a Leaf

By Jim McCracken

A year ago during the fair, several of the Master Gardeners whom work with the flower department were looking at the flower entries, as was I. They explained the various classes and what a judge would want to see in a prize-winning exhibit. Ann Heeley made the comment, "Jim, you should enter a flower a next year's fair." For some reason, I remembered her challenge.

I entered several vegetables for the first time since 2014 at the Shelby County Fair. As I was filling out the entry sheet prior to the fair, I remembered Ann's challenge and entered three flowers. I settled on only bringing one to the fair – a hosta leaf 2-5" in diameter.



When I brought the hosta leaf to the fairgrounds, I was a bit nervous. Nevertheless, I felt I had nothing to lose by exhibiting it. I was met by Nancy Russell, who had a big smile on her face and a very positive attitude for anyone showing flowers. Right away, she found me a vase. As

a rookie, I put the flower directly into the vase. Like a seasoned coach, she explained I needed a collar to "have the leaf stand tall." She helped me place the stem into the collar, and to my amazement, the leaf suddenly appeared more worthy of being exhibited. The collar made a huge difference in the appearance of the leaf!

Teresa Freisthler was the first person I saw when entering the Grange Hall on Tuesday evening. She explained a beef (complaint) with a *certain hosta leaf* being exhibited. It was mine. She teased me about my leaf beating her leaf. Teresa went on and explained how proud she was that I entered that leaf and how well it looked to beat her entry. A great form of sportsmanship shown by a classy lady that I get to call my friend. She also sent me a very nice email on how well she liked my vegetable entries at the fair.

In closing, I would like to thank Ann, Nancy, and Teresa for your help and encouragement in showing my first flower exhibit ever. I have shown pigs, sheep, rabbits, and vegetables...but never a flower until this year. Each of you had a huge role in a positive flower adventure at this year's fair. I am going to exhibit flowers again next year because of friends like each of you. Next year, Ann, I expect a vegetable entry from you. Happy Gardening! 🌱

August Membership Meeting
Wednesday, August 16, 2023 @ 2 p.m.
Extension Office & on Zoom

Coordinator's comments

By Doug Benson

First, let me say thank you to all who wished me well for my hand surgery. The procedure to correct a trigger-finger condition on my left ring finger was done by the same surgeon that did my knee replacement; he has now done my hip, knee, and hand. I hope that will be all. Once again, I am staying with my sister in Tiffin for a few days. I plan to be back for our August 16 meeting, which will be Matt's last. Read more about Matt in another article.

The Shelby and Auglaize County fairs are now over. Thanks to all who helped and congratulations to those who received awards for their entries in various competitions. As far as the Shelby County Fair is concerned, we had only twelve entries for the door prize, but six of them did indicate an interest in knowing more about the MGV program. The door prize winner was Greg Mitchell of Sidney. I've not yet received a report from Alan Pratt about the Auglaize County fair. The Mercer County Fair begins Friday, August 11, and runs through Thursday, August 17. I know our MGVs always have a great display and kids' activity. Here's hoping they have good weather.

As they were all present to help supervise on our day at the Shelby County Fair, the Memorial Garden renovation committee used some of their time to work on plans. After well over an hour, I think they came up with a proposal. Ann was going to work on the budget

(Coordinator's comments continued from page 1)

for the plan, and we will try to schedule a meeting with the county commissioners before the end of August to make our request. I hope Ann will share the plans with the whole group at our August 16 meeting. Until the renovations begin, the garden still needs regular tending. Many of the plants are completing their life cycle and are in need of deadheading. Along with the Memorial Garden, our Plant by Numbers beds are beginning to take hold and also need some regular care.

The Hotline continues in operation for another month, ending September 28. You can sign up using the calendar in the "My Counties" section of HOC. Many of our interns have been doing a great job of answering calls. Most of the calls have dealt with insect and weed identification, and when necessary, control recommendations. And speaking of insects, if you haven't been keeping up with the news, Spotted Lanternfly (SLF) is spreading in Ohio. Check out the

article in BYGL (bygl.osu.edu) that identifies eight counties around the state with confirmed infestations – all of them are along Interstate highways. Now is the time to be looking for the adults to begin emerging. If you see them, capture or photograph them and report the exact location to the Ohio Department of Agriculture using the reporting resources in the BYGL article.



Our August meeting will be Wednesday, August 16, at the office at 2:00. I will attempt to make it available on Zoom if I can remember how. Among topics to be discussed will be the election of officers at the September meeting and the October banquet and dues for 2024. I will be providing the snacks, so come early and enjoy.

As my fingers still aren't working smoothly, I will make this report shorter than usual. Keep reporting your volunteer and continuing education hours in HOC. See you next week! 🍀

Thank you, Matt Schmerge

By Doug Benson

As most of you know, Matt will be leaving Extension and joining the Danone Corporation, the producer of Dannon products. In the short time he has been with us, he has done an amazing job. When we conducted interviews to fill Dr. Debbie's position, I asked each candidate what he/she would do for the MGW program. Matt answered, "Whatever you need and want."



He has done that and more. Before he could even meet with all of us, Covid hit, and we had to move to Zoom. Throughout the time the office was closed and we could have no direct contact with clients, Matt made numerous house calls to handle hotline questions. He and I were able to handle those inquiries pretty successfully. He has continued to address such questions, even though that isn't his primary responsibility.

Matt has been especially helpful with interpreting soil test reports, but he has been concerned that the Penn State reports don't always provide enough data. Working with other ANR educators in surrounding counties, Matt has been instrumental in making arrangements to begin sending future soil tests to A&L Great Lakes Laboratories in Fort Wayne, Indiana. The cost will be a bit higher, but the reports will be more complete and can be customized. You will hear more about these plans in coming months.

Other positive contributions Matt has made to our program include the move to bring our finances "under the umbrella" of the university. While we still need to smooth out the transition, it should prove to be a good move. He also arranged for us to add the "Plant by Numbers" beds to our collection, and they are beginning to get established. Most recently, he has laid the groundwork for us to approach the county commissioners for support to do some major renovation of the Memorial Garden. Matt also led the efforts to get a color copier for the office, and he has bailed me out more than once when I've had problems with the computer in our office (we are to receive a new laptop on Matt's last day). I hope you will join me in thanking Matt and wishing him well in his new job. 🍀

ALL-AMERICA SELECTIONS FOR 2023
By Ann Heeley

Each year, a wide variety of plants are grown and trialed anonymously by independent, volunteer judges all across North America. The entry is scored next to a comparison variety across North America. To earn the National Winner designation, the selection had to perform in a majority of sites, proving itself to be a great choice for gardeners all over North America. There is a good variety of choices, from annuals to edibles, and 6 plants were chosen as the best of the bunch. While it's probably too late to start them in your garden now, keep them in mind for next year as you evaluate your own personal winners and losers.



'Coral Candy' Coleus – You can start this coleus from only 3 seeds, and it will fill a container with striking coral-centered leaves edged in dark green. Performing well in partial sun or shade, Pan American Seed company developed this cultivar to withstand hot, humid summers. Keep it out of direct sunlight to avoid scorching the leaves. Mature plants are mounding and will reach 12” in height and width. This coleus produces very few flowers, if any, so save some seeds for next year in the refrigerator and plant when the soil is warm or start indoors several weeks before the last frost in the spring.



'Royal Hawaiian Waikiki' Colocasia (*Colocasia esculenta* 'Waikiki') – This plant is a colorful take on the traditional elephant ear. Growing only 3 feet tall and wide, the white splotches and pink veining on shiny leaves give it a unique look. This one performs best in part sun to keep the leaves looking their best. Mulch will help keep the soil

moist, but be prepared to give it frequent drinks during the growing season. Remove dead leaves during the summer to encourage new growth. After the first frost in the fall, cut the plant down to a 2” stem on the tuber and store it indoors in peat moss or potting mix inside a plastic pot. Keep the peat moss moist, but not wet until ready to plant.



'San Joaquin' Jalapeno Pepper – This mild jalapeno deserves a spot in every vegetable garden, especially since it is extremely disease resistant and produces around 50-60 peppers per plant. Leave them on the plant a little longer, and their brilliant green color changes to red without affecting the

flavor. Seeds germinate quickly and produce peppers in only 2 months.

'Sweet Jade' Kabocha Squash (*Curcubita maxima*) – I'd never heard of this squash cultivar, but those of you who grow or eat winter squash may want to investigate this one further. It is a personal-sized squash, also called Japanese Pumpkin. According



to Park Seed, a source for seeds, “the flesh is deep blood-orange when ripe and has an outstanding, very sweet, earthy flavor that is a cross between pumpkin and sweet potato, with a hint of chestnut.

Kabocha has drier flesh than other squash, making it easier to cook with oils. A culinary staple in Japan, kabocha is good fried, roasted, baked (including in pies and muffins), or puréed to flavor and thicken curries and soups. It is an excellent source of beta-carotene, fiber, and vitamins A and C. Like pumpkin, kabocha has seeds that can be dried, tossed with olive oil, salted, and baked for a tasty, nutritious snack.”



'Blue by You' Salvia (*Salvia nemorosa*) – I'd grow it just for the name of this hardy perennial! It's actually a cross between two different varieties of salvia (*nemorosa* and *pratensis*), and when dead-headed, the deep violet-blue blooms keep coming all season and into fall. It grows around 20” tall and 18” wide, but descriptions of this plant all indicate

that it doesn't flop open like many salvias. Butterflies and hummingbirds are attracted to both its color and nectar, while deer and rabbits tend to avoid it because of its unappealing odor. Since this is a sterile hybrid, it probably won't reseed reliably, so it's best to start with young plants that will bloom from late spring to fall. Salvias like full sun, and once established, they can stand up to high heat, drought, and humidity with very little additional watering needed.



Doubleshot Snapdragon, Orange Bicolor (*Antirrhinum majus*) – Hem Genetics came out with this double-flowered snapdragon series, but only the Orange Bicolor was grown and trialed by AAS gardeners and judges. This new series will soon be available in peach, pink, yellow, and crimson red. Hybridized for strong stems

and summer heat, this cultivar can be started from seed in early spring for blooms that last for a much longer time than regular, old-fashioned snapdragons. Test gardens showed that even in part sun and windy areas, this snapdragon passed the test. It grows up to 20” tall with excellent branching to 14” wide. If it reseeds, resulting plants probably won't look like Doubleshots.

All of these plants and seeds are available via many different online and catalogue sources. Just Google the plant name and cultivar. If you purchase seeds now, place the entire seed packet in a Ziploc bag and store in the refrigerator (not freezer) until next spring. Keep in mind that since these cultivars are relatively new, they are also more expensive than some of the oldy-but-goody stand-bys. But, hey, we're gardeners, so if we buy it, then we reserve the right to flaunt it! 🌱

Meet the Intern Class of 2023

Deb Cummons-Parker (Jackson Center)

Hello, my name is. I entered into teaching in my mid-40's and just retired last summer. The majority of my teaching career I worked as a high school intervention specialist at Fairlawn. I currently do a little substitute teaching at Jackson Center schools. No more driving in snow! I raised three sons who all reside in Ohio. This is great as I am able to spend time with my two grandsons and one granddaughter. I enjoy reading, cooking, crafting and gardening. I enjoy growing flowers and vegetables in pots. I hope to advance to more raised beds in the future. I have enjoyed everything about the Master Gardener Volunteer Program so far. I look forward to meeting and talking with members. I have learned much so far from the online program and other members. I don't ever want to stop learning new things about gardening.

Jill Dickman: (New Bremen)

I was raised in Wapakoneta and moved to rural New Bremen upon marriage to husband, Tom Dickman, in 1981. Tom grain farms and I retired in 2021 after 41 years at Joint Township District Memorial Hospital/St. Marys as Administrative Assistant to the President. Previous to that, I worked for several different law firms – one in Columbus and one in Wapakoneta. Tom and I have two adult children: Tricia lives in Marietta, Georgia, with her husband and 3 children; Nathan lives in Maineville, Ohio, with his wife and three children. Our grandchildren range in age from 12 to 5 and are central parts of our lives. Our grandchildren get a crash course in gardening and nature every chance I get – when they're not on the tractor or combine with their grampy.

I have always had an interest in gardening and helped my dad with his large garden and orchard as I was growing up. After supper, we either did dishes or worked in the garden – an easy decision for me! I was one of seven children, so we grew lots of corn, tomatoes, potatoes and apples and other fruits. When friends talked about their Master Gardener training in Shelby County and in North Carolina, I knew I had to sign up! And I've enjoyed every minute of it. Thank you, Doug and Matt, for your dedication to the Master Gardeners program!

Missy Francis: (Minster)

I have been around gardeners all my life. Both sides of my grandparents had large gardens, growing vegetables and flowers. I remember many days sitting on the porch shelling peas and snapping beans, along with a few hot days in the kitchen blanching and cutting corn off the cob for freezing. However, my parents never had a garden. I didn't plant or grow anything until we purchased our first home. It started with houseplants. I had several ferns and other normal houseplants that hung from a pole in our corner east/south facing window. They thrived very well and didn't take much maintenance. It wasn't till we purchased some acreage and built a home did I get into outdoor flower gardening. There, I planted just about anything that would grow in our zone (Shasta daisies, cone flowers, black eyed Susan, Lillie's, phlox, dahlias, zinnias, petunias, tickleseed, dianthus, etc.). Every night, I would walk my beds, pulling weeds and watering. It brought me peace after the hectic long days in the office. Now, that we live at the lake, we don't have the area that I previously had, so I grow a smaller selection of flowers because of the shade.

I always thought it would be interesting to take the Master Gardener course, but I could never fit it into my schedule. Now, that I have more time on my hands I was able to get into the program. I have enjoyed meeting everyone and learning new things. This year, I branched out on our vegetable garden by adding broccoli, candy onions and potatoes. I am happy to report all three were successful! We devoured all the broccoli and have stored onions and potatoes in the crawl space! Already thinking about what we will try next year.

Lynda Hadley: (Minster)

I can't remember any time when flower gardening wasn't a part of my life, from all the flowers surrounding my grandma's farmhouse to my mother's many flowerbeds to my own home. So enrolling in the Master Gardener Volunteer program was a natural fit. I am a graduate of St Marys Memorial High school and spent the first fifteen years after graduation working at a small bank in New Knoxville, The last 34 years, I have been employed at St Marys Foundry in the accounting/payroll department – slowly making my way out the door – now working twenty hours a week. I've been married for 34 years to my husband Glenn and have 2 stepchildren living in central Indiana. My hobbies, besides the obvious gardening, include crocheting and counted cross-stitch. I have really enjoyed getting to know all of you (short term memory stinks now, so sometimes it's a challenge!!) and look forward to many years of participation in the MVG program.

Melanie D. Kuck: (Anna)

Here is a little information about myself. I grew up in Sidney and moved to Anna in 1998, where I opened my salon (Creative Images). My husband (Craig) and I have 4 children and currently raising one of our granddaughters.

I have many hobbies that I like to do in my spare time. I enjoy spending lots of time in my landscaping and garden. Gardening and canning was a big part of our family growing up. I also enjoy painting, quilting, stained glass and golfing with my family.

Master Gardener Volunteer was something I was always interested in doing but with Thursday being a long work day for me it never worked out. I was so thrilled when online classes opened up where I could get my education in. It has been a wonderful experience learning all the interesting things I didn't know. I look forward to my retirement in the future where I can spend more time with all the opportunities MGV has to offer.

Phyllis Rose: (New Bremen)

I live in New Bremen and have 3 grown children and 2 grandchildren. I retired as Vice President of Operations at Minster Bank in January 2023 (after 42 years, 8 months, and 7 days ☺).

Growing up on a farm, plants have always been part of my life. When spring comes along each year – I am truly a farmer's daughter – can't wait to get my hands in the dirt.

I enjoy houseplants, outside flowers and shrubs and raised bed gardening.

Master Gardeners has been on my bucket list for a long time. I enjoy using my small talents in gardening to teach and inspire others.

Karen Seger: (Houston)

I live in Houston with my husband Steve and two rescue dachshunds Oscar and Zeke. Our house is close to the state route but is 2x deeper in back. It is fenced and I have worked hard to cover that chain link! I love perennials and all flowering shrubs. Our pride and joy is a tri-color beech that came with the house. We have neutered and feed the many stray cats. My other interests include cooking, flower arranging, camping in our vintage Mobile Scout, and following the Ohio State Buckeyes and the Reds.

Pam Wagner: (Sidney)

I am a registered nurse. I worked at Wilson Memorial for 21 years and then retired from Mary Rutan at the end of 2021 after 21 years. I still work on a call -in basis at Ohio Living Dorothy Love. I enjoy volunteering and being involved in the church and community. I enjoy exercising, swimming, reading, traveling and the Cincinnati Reds!

My grandfather had a big garden but my parents did not. I have enjoyed, growing petunias and geraniums in the summer but very little gardening except tomatoes, peppers and cucumbers. I wanted to learn more about gardening, especially growing more fruits and vegetables. My husband is a farmer and enjoys helping me. I have two sons who are married and three grandchildren (ages 5 – 13). They do not have gardens so the grandkids are enjoying my larger garden this year.

Judy Westerheide: (Sidney)

Becoming a Master Gardener Volunteer has been on my "To-Do List" for many years. But I never was able to fit it into my schedule, until it was offered on-line this past year. I am a retired teacher who has loved gardening all my life, ever since my mother gave me a small area of our yard for my very own. Being able to share my love of all growing things with others will help fill my retirement years. Of course, that is if there's much time left after I tend to my other loves: husband (Tom), my three children & eight granddaughters, and travel!

Consider a way to support The Peoples Garden at Agape on August 22 by eating out at Culver's between 5-8 pm. 🌱

DONATE WHILE YOU DINE

Visit Culver's of Sidney on Tuesday August 22nd from 5-8pm and we will donate to **The People's Garden Agape**. Enjoy a delicious meal, benefit a great cause and feel good all over.

THANKS FOR YOUR SUPPORT!

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Small text at bottom: Culver's BUTTERBURGERS FROZEN CUSTARD Welcome to Delicious

Have you seen these guys?

By Carol Strayer

These guys are feasting on summer squash leaves. They look like weevils but haven't been able to identify. They resemble the Grey Asian Weevil but these have very distinct black legs. The body is grey with spots and don't have lines or ridges running down their backs. Any ideas? 🌱



Conelia says, it's much easier to manage the raised beds with this nice fencing system at The Peoples Garden.



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