

Shelby County Master Gardener



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President's comments--By Janet Nelson

[This article is being submitted for Dave, our friend and president.]

Do you remember the fourth week of July? It was hot and very dry. (At least that is what my plants told me when I got home). You see, I was traveling to the Upper Peninsula of Michigan with my son, his family and my 17-year-old granddaughter. It was a fabulous time but the weather was substantially different. During the day the temperatures were in the 60's-70's. Nights were in the 40's. In addition, it rained several of the days.

Fast forward to July 23. We ferried to Mackinac Island. It was cool with a steady light rain, but it did not stop us from exploring this "Jewel of the Great Lakes." According to the 2023 USDA Hardiness Zone Map, Mackinac Island, Michigan is in Zones 5b (-15 degrees to -10 degrees) and 6a (-10 degrees to -5 degrees). The average daytime temperature is 61 degrees in May, and rises to 70 degrees for June. The highest temperatures are in July with highs at 76 degrees and lows at 57 degrees. Thus, I have to assume the growing season is short.



(Grand Hotel Garden)

However, we were greeted with many flowering beds, many green trees and shrubs. The Grand Hotel (to no surprise) was gorgeous with the traditional geraniums on the porch rail, many blooming annuals, and a small herb garden. The main street is peppered with colorful hanging baskets. The private homes were also landscape nicely with many flowering annuals.

The visit to Mackinac Island was at a slower pace with no motorized vehicles, history at every turn and an overwhelming display of color. Oh by the way, there must be a need for gardening help. On several occasions, I saw a sign that read, "Gardener needed. Must look good bending over." I thought it was worth mentioning in case anyone is interested. 😊🌱



(Grand Hotel herb garden)



Main street--downtown



Flowerbed at Grand Hotel



Private residence

[Editor's Note: as some may remember, the Grand Hotel is featured in the 1980 romantic fantasy drama film, Somewhere in Time, starting Christopher Reeve and Jane Seymour.]

Next Meeting—August 21, 2024 @ 2p.m.
At the OSU Extension Office—and on Zoom.

New Master Gardener Volunteer Training

By Rylee Kay Puthoff, ANR Educator

Happy August everyone! I hope that everyone has survived the heat and the fair! First, I would like to say thank you to all of those who helped on Senior Citizens Day and made the fair awesome! I enjoyed spending time with everyone and look forward to doing it again next year.

During fair week, Jacob Winters, the ANR Educator from Auglaize County, came over and Doug, Jacob, and I discussed starting training for new master gardeners in the spring. We want to hold an interest meeting in September, but we will need all of you to help us spread the word for those interested in becoming a Master Gardener. Jacob and I are still hammering out the details of the interest meeting, but if you have anyone in mind, let them know, and I hope to have a flyer out soon.

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Free Plants

By Mary Delzeith

Does the cost of all those choices at your favorite garden center seem overwhelming?

I just watched an educational video that explains how to use garden math.

- If it comes in a seed packet and you will get multiple plants and/or food, it is Free.
- If it is a perennial that grows for several seasons, it really is Free.
- If it is on clearance, well that is like Free.
- If it is a plant you can divide into multiple plants, well those are Free.
- If it produces food, well that food is Free.

So shop away and enjoy all your Free plants. 🌿

“Jill Dickman shared photo of her 6 grandchildren picking first bush beans of season in July” 🌿



MG Diagnostic Workshop in Putnam Co.

By Missy Francis

On July 25, I attended the Master Gardener Diagnostic Workshop in Putnam County along with Linda, Doug, and Rylee Kay. The session was from 9-4 and held at the extension office in Ottawa.

The am session covered all types of weeds (summer and winter annual, biennial, and perennial weeds). I learned more details on weeds and how to better manage them. Weeds are classified as plants who are undesirable, unattractive, competitive, persistent, or troublesome qualities that outweigh their good characteristics, or are out of place and were not sown, or grow where they are not wanted. Weeds can be classified as broadleaf, grasses, sedges or woody and their stems can be hairy, colored with the stem itself being square, triangular, or hollow. Annual weeds germinate from seed each year, perennial weeds, live more than 2 years but produce seeds every year. Biennial weeds take 2 years to complete their life cycle. The first year being vegetative and flowering the second year. The best way to manage weeds is to NEVER let them go to seed by applying pre-emergent before the seeds can germinate. You can apply post-emergent chemicals after the weed is growing but this may not be as effective. The am session concluded by discussing various weeds (dandelions, creeping Charlie, clover, crabgrass, poison ivy, poison hemlock, etc.).

The afternoon was spent identifying thirty different plants, shrubs and tree leaves and then looking up common problems associated with the plant. I really enjoyed this session, as we were able to use our skills and open discussions in identifying the plants and issues. We saw needle blight on Red Pines, a Juniper with “scale insect” that sucks on sap, spider mites on asters, burning bush and white oak, gulls and a few plants that had had herbicide overspray.

While I will not remember all that I learned, I did receive training that will assist me in the future in identification of plants and common issues. My plant app was particularly useful during the afternoon session. If you do not have one, you may want to download one. However, you can also use these sites for weed identification: <http://www.msuturfweeds.net/browse-by-name> or <https://weedid.cals.vt.edu/>. Overall, I found the workshop to be well worth my time and effort. I will attend another one in the future.

Coordinator's comments

By Doug Benson

I hope you're enjoying the relief from all the heat. It certainly has been refreshing to not have to run the air conditioner all the time. The rain that we have had has the grass starting to green up again; and, of course, the weeds continue to grow. Even my vegetables are beginning to produce again.

The Shelby and Auglaize County fairs are both over, and the Mercer County fair just ended. Our craft activity on Tuesday went well, but only about 10 kids took part. It seems like a lot of effort with not much to show for it. We'll have to think about whether we wish to do the craft again. As far as I know, the Auglaize County fair went well. I hope that the Mercer County activity was a success.

As we're talking about craft activities, I have another possible activity for us to consider. We have been invited to take part in Forestry Field Day again this year. It will be Sunday, October 20, at Tawawa Park from 1:00 - 4:00 in the afternoon. For those of you who took part last year, it'll be a similar activity. Shelby Soil and Water sponsors the event for families to come out and enjoy nature. There will be exhibits, Smoky the Bear, activities for kids, and free snacks like hot dogs and cider. Please plan to express your opinions about the activity at our meeting next week. This will probably be one of the final opportunities to get volunteer hours this year.

Remember that the minimum requirement each year to remain an active MGVA is 20 hours of volunteer work and 10 hours of continuing education. We are beginning to see additional in-person continuing education opportunities, and webinars will be starting again soon. Continue to report your hours using HOC. Those of you, who worked at the fair, be sure that you go to HOC and give yourself credit for those hours that you worked.

We do have a number of other things coming up in the next couple of months. In September, we will be electing new officers for next year and also collecting dues and paying reservations for the banquet. Rylee has indicated that the office will be able to cover our state support fee of \$10 again this coming year, so we will be able to add the entire \$20 of dues into our treasury. Hopefully, at our August meeting Marily will be able to give us a final figure for the cost of the banquet so that we will know how much we need to

pay in September. PLEASE, PLEASE consider volunteering to become an officer for next year. We will definitely need a treasurer, and probably we will need a new president.

The hotline continues to have sporadic calls; Rylee and I have been handling most of them. We still have many openings for the rest of August and all of September, so this is a good chance for those of you who need a few extra hours to be signed up and come in. If there are no calls, the Memorial Garden still needs plenty of weeding and deadheading so that would be something that you could do in the downtime. Ann has done a good job with the Memorial Garden. Most of the planting is completed for the season, but we still need to weed and clean up.

Ann also did a great job in her presentation last week talking about bulbs. If I counted correctly, we had exactly 40 people in attendance, many of whom were new attendees. We have one more program left. Due to a scheduling conflict, we had to change the September program. The new program will be Polly Bargar, a naturalist at Fort Loramie State Park, sharing information about beekeeping. Thanks to Teresa and her committee for all the work, they have done organizing and conducting the sessions. I hope to send out a survey at the end of the sessions seeking reactions from those who attended and getting suggestions for next year's programming. If you get one of the surveys, please respond.

Our August meeting will be on Wednesday at 2:00 at the Extension office. I will also be on Zoom. I will send out the Zoom invitation, July minutes, and the agenda on Monday and resend it Wednesday morning. I hope most of you will be able to attend in person.

I want to conclude this article with a final request for you to keep Dave in your thoughts and prayers. By the time you read this, Dave will already have had his surgery. Hopefully, everything will have gone well, and he will be on his way to recovery. I will keep you updated on his condition, but in the meantime just say a little prayer for him and his family, Thank you.

Note: if the text of this article seems a little choppy, it's because I tried something different. I just got a new computer, and instead of typing all of this, I did it by dictation and then had to go back and edit. 🍋

Air Plants

By Judy Westerheide

Following a hot workday at the Master Gardener's garden, several MGV ladies were enjoying donuts (National Donut Day) in the air-conditioned meeting room. Naturally, talk centered on gardens, and eventually to houseplants.

I mentioned my love of air plants. I told how this interest began when my dad's work transferred him to Jacksonville, Florida. I was already married and living in Sidney, but my three younger siblings relocated with my parents.

Every time I visited my family, I would see the tiny living things attached to trees in my parents' yard. They fascinated me and I was told they were "air plants". One year I took one home with me and ever since, I have usually had at least one in my home.

What is an air plant? Air plants, or Tillandsia, are a genus of over 650 species of evergreen, perennial flowering plants that belong to the Bromeliaceae family. They don't require soil and generally do not need frequent watering.

At first, I just plopped one in a seashell that I had found on the beach by my family's home. This worked okay, but I have since discovered that these plants do better with more air circulation. I have my plants hanging in my sun porch in little "cages" I buy on Amazon.

This past June, one of my plants began to turn pink. This surprised and scared me because I'd never had one do this. Imagine my delight when 3 days later, the plant bloomed! After all these years, this is the first time this has happened for me.



I bought an air plant fertilizer spray at *Greenhaus Coffee Shop* in downtown Sidney last year and I think that is what finally produced this amazing result.

If you've never tried raising an air plant, they are quite easy. I spray with fertilizer once/month. Twice each month I submerge the plants in water for 30 minutes, then shake off the excess water and rehang.

I recently ordered one on Amazon and sent it to my plant-loving son in San Diego. You could also try *Greenhaus Coffee Shop*. Air plants look so cute hanging in my window. Give them a try! 🌿

EPA takes emergency action to stop use of dangerous pesticide Dacthal

Submitted by Karen Seger

For the first time in 40 years, the EPA issued a rare warning to stop use of a dangerous pesticide linked to serious health risks for fetuses.

The emergency order applies to dimethyl tetrachlorophthalate also known as DCPA, a weedkiller used on crops such as broccoli, Brussels sprouts, cabbage, and onions. When pregnant farmworkers and others are exposed to the pesticide, their babies can experience changes in fetal thyroid hormone levels, which are linked to low birth weight, impaired brain development, decreased IQ and impaired motor skills later in life.

"DCPA is so dangerous that it needs to be removed from the market immediately," Michael Freedhoff, assistant administrator for the EPA's Office of Chemical Safety and Pollution Prevention, said in a statement. "It's the EPA's job to protect people from exposure to dangerous chemicals. In this case, pregnant women may never even know they were exposed could give birth to babies that experience irreversible lifelong health problems. "The European Union banned DCPA in 2009. However, the EPA has been slower to act, frustrating some environmental and public health advocates.

The manufacturer of the pesticide, AMVAC Chemical, sells the pesticide under the brand name of Dacthal. 🌿

Atlanta Botanical Garden

By Jill Dickman



When visiting my daughter and her family in Marietta, Georgia, we often make a visit to the Atlanta Botanical Garden on Piedmont Avenue in Midtown Atlanta.

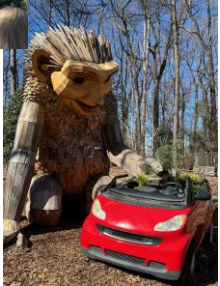
This Garden opened in 1976 and includes 30 acres of outdoor gardens:

a Children’s Garden, a Conservatory, a large wooded area accessed by a canopy walk, and the Skyline Garden, which displays both botanical beauty, and the skyline of the City of Atlanta.

Along with changes brought about by the change of seasons, the Garden changes featured exhibits regularly, so returning guests can always see something new. A Dale Chihuly (world-renowned glass artist) exhibit was added in 2004 and returned in 2016 with a permanent installation remaining. In 2023, a very cool exhibit of huge wooden Trolls was featured throughout the garden; and this year, an Alice in Wonderland exhibit is featured through September 15. (The Troll exhibit has been my favorite.)

Another favorite (and permanent) feature, which changes by seasons in the ‘Earth Goddess’. This 25-foot tall structure has flowing hair and a waterfall spilling out of her outstretched hand. Canadian artisan welders welded thin rods of steel to create the framework for 18,000 annuals, which cover it and bring the Earth Goddess to life each spring. It takes several weeks of growth for the plants to cover the structure, and most of the color comes from foliage and less from the blooms. The Goddess is maintained daily by the horticultural team as continuous grooming is necessary to maintain her features. Fun event that I have yet to see: during the Christmas/Holiday season, thousands of lights illuminate the Earth Goddess’ hair and she becomes ‘Ice Goddess’. Of course, even with an annual pass, a separate admission fee is charged to view this beautiful transformation.

I’ve attached a few photos, which are just a small sample of the beauty we enjoy at the Atlanta Botanical Gardens. If you ever travel through Atlanta, it’s a great way to spend a half a day stretching your legs! 🌿



The Vine That is Eating the Memorial Garden By Ann Heeley

If you've been weeding at our Memorial Garden, chances are 100% that you've encountered a vining weed that seems to crop up everywhere. I always called it "Pea Vine" because that's what I was told years ago. However, it's not the type of vine that will produce Sweet Peas. It's actually the much more evil Honeyvine Milkweed (*Cynanchum laeve*). Reaching 20 feet or more in length, it seems to grow faster than any other plant—or weed—in our garden. According to researchers, Honeyvine is one of the least preferred milkweeds for the monarch butterfly.

To make matters more confusing, some authoritative websites call Honeyvine by another name: *Ampelamus albidus*. Images of both plants look identical. In fact, OSU and the University of Missouri use the same photo with different scientific names to identify Honeyvine. Other common names include bluevine, climbing milkweed, dog's-collar, Enslens-vine, honeyvine swallowwort, peavine, sandvine, smooth anglepod, and smooth swallow-wort.

Honeyvine has a very deep (up to 6 feet), fleshy, brittle taproot with lots of lateral roots that produce new plants. Trying to dig it out and leaving even a small piece of root results in new growth. With heart-shaped leaves, this perennial weed will shoot up until the weight of the plant causes it to creep on the ground. From there, it finds a desirable plant to twine around and climb. Since it grows so quickly, it can strangle and disfigure the plants we want to maintain.

Since Honeyvine is in the milkweed family, the plant exudes a milky sap when cut or crushed. Although the OSU.edu website states "toxicity unknown", other university sites indicate that all parts of the plant are mildly toxic, and can cause irritation, rash, and pain, especially if the milky sap touches any part of the eye.

The best way to control Honeyvine is the most time-consuming: Dig out as much of the plant with roots as possible, wait for regrowth, repeat. Glyphosate is no match for Honeyvine, and the recommended method for eradication involves systemic

herbicides. Since Honeyvine grows so closely to the desired plants in our garden, so systemics are not an option.

So, whenever you happen to stroll through the Memorial Garden, grab a soil knife, dig out as much Honeyvine as you can, and call it a job well done. 🍀



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