

Shelby County Master Gardener



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President's comments--By Dave Slagle

Hello, Master Gardeners and friends. Wow, it's July and time for the Shelby Co. Fair. I hope your gardens and landscaping are doing well. Some of us were in the hail damage area but things are not looking too bad for what we thought at the time.



I want to thank Janet and Doug for running the June meeting. I was called out of town for over a week. Also, thanks to Conelia for sponsoring the meeting at Agape.

Doug and helpers are working on the display for the fair. I am sure we will cover this at the next meeting.

Thanks and see you at the meeting on the 17th at the extension office. 🍀

Happy Fair Month Everyone!

By Rylee Kay Puthoff, ANR Educator

I hope that everyone's month has gone well so far. It feels like just last week we met up for our June Meeting. I will not be in attendance at the July Meeting due to another event. I will leave some words with Doug to share at the meeting. I have little to say this month, so I will keep it short and sweet. Remember the County Fair is June 21st – 27th. Please volunteer and enjoy the fair!

Miami, Shelby, and Darke Counties are hosting a pond management program on July 31st. 6:30-8:00 pm at Tawawa Park in Sidney. We will be discussing how to manage pond vegetation and fish. There will also be a Q&A session if you have questions regarding a pond. If you or anyone you know would like to come, please shoot me an email, or call the office. See copy of pond management flyer on page 7 of this newsletter.

Thank you to everyone who subscribed to the Ag and Natural Resources Newsletter! I hope that everyone finds it helpful. If you were not at last month's meeting, want to subscribe to the Ag and Natural Resources Newsletter, reach out, and I'll help you.

I hope everyone has a great month, and I will see you all at the Fair! 🍀

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Next Meeting—

Wednesday, July 17, 2024 @ 2p.m.

At the OSU Extension Office--maybe Zoom.

List of Ohio State and Area County Fairs:

- Ohio State Fair July 24—August 4
(Tues., 7/30 Senior Day, 60 & up free admission)
- Auglaize Co. July 28—August 3
- Darke Co. August 16—August 24
- Mercer Co. August 8—August 14
- Miami Co. August 9—August 15



Coordinator's comments

By Doug Benson

The weather continues to be a challenge for both our plants and ourselves. The heat has been oppressive, and the inconsistent rain has really slowed the growth of just about everything but the weeds. What do they know that we don't? Let's hope that the weather during our various county fair weeks is better.

Speaking of county fairs, plans continue. At the Shelby County Fair, we will be in charge of the building on Tuesday, July 23, from 8:00 a.m. until 9:00 p.m. We will be doing kids crafts from 3:00 p.m. until we run out of supplies or kids, but no later than 5:00 p.m., using a variety of materials left over from previous activities. We still need some help for the 4:00-6:00 and 6:00-8:00 time slots, as well as set-up on Friday, July 19 at 1:00. Sign up on HOC. I've been working on updating our display board. I plan to have one whole panel dedicated to the dangers posed by poison hemlock and wild parsnip. Again, this year we are sponsoring the awards for the Junior Fair flower and vegetable competitions. Amy Hoying designed and etched plaques for the awards. Our only cost will be for the cutting boards she used.

I will tear down the display Saturday evening and set it up the next morning at the Auglaize County Fair. Jacob Winters has volunteered to keep an eye on the display and return it to Sidney following the end of the fair. No special activities are planned. We voted at the June meeting to dispense with giving door prizes at any of the three fairs, so that is one less thing to worry about.

The ladies from Mercer County are once again planning their activities and display. In the past, they have participated in the "Hoof It" program for the children at their fair. I know they are exhausted when the day is over. It's always interesting to hear about their experience.

The Hotline has actually been getting more calls. We have had calls about maple trees, oak trees, pine trees, arborvitae, boxwoods, hibiscus, geraniums, big bugs, little bugs, insect larva, and more. Rylee and I have been handling most of the questions because we aren't getting many volunteers to help. I can't guarantee that calls will come in every day, but it would be helpful for more volunteers to sign up. Right now, only three days between now and the end of September are covered. Sign up on HOC. You might also consider

attending one of the state-sponsored diagnostic workshops to learn more about diagnosing problems. Right now, Karen Seger and Missy Francis have registered to go with me to the July 25 program in Ottawa. I have room for one more, but you could also get together with some others; it's just a little over an hour drive from Sidney. There will be another workshop in Springfield on August 26.

Renovation of the Memorial Garden continues under Ann Heeley's leadership. Most of the planting has been done, but now we need help watering – especially if we continue to experience the hot, dry weather. It took me a little over an hour the other day to water by directing the hose directly on the individual plants, and I didn't spend much time on established ones. If you will let me know when you could come in and water for an hour or so, I will try to coordinate efforts so not everyone shows up at the same time and competes over use of hose. The weeds are fairly under control, but they need monitoring, and some of the flowers would benefit from deadheading.

Jacob Winters is working to get a Master Gardener Volunteer program started in Auglaize County, and he is planning a training class. Rylee and I will be meeting with him during our fair week to see how we might help and participate. This may offer us an opportunity to add to our group. I'll keep you informed.

Conelia provided an interesting tour of the People's Garden, and we had a productive meeting even though it was a week late. The garden has come a long way in the few short years of its existence. Conelia has done a great job!

This month we will return to the Extension office at 2:00 p.m., Wednesday, July 17. I hope most of you will be able to attend. I'm not sure if it will be on Zoom; I'll let you know the first of the week when I send out the June minutes and the agenda. In the meantime, keep reporting your hours on HOC and take care of yourself, your family, and your garden. 🌿

**Year 2000
Pre-Memorial Garden**



South Dakota summer trip

By Karen Seger



This year our summer vacation was a trip to Hill City, South Dakota with family to ride Polaris Razors on trails. My brother, Bob Bergman, and my Godson, Justin, own Bob's Polaris in Sidney. We rode 3 days and saw a lot of cattle free ranging and several mule deer. We also visited Mt. Rushmore and Crazy Horse.

South Dakota is a large, Midwestern state with granite hills and stretching prairies. South Dakota encompasses USDA plant hardiness zones 3 through 8.

On our rides, I saw anemone, columbine, milkweed, butterfly milkweed, bellflower, Spurgeon, goldenrod, black-eyed Susan, and geum. 🌿



Conservation Day Camp

By Teresa Freisthler



On June 29, Marily, Cheryl, Becky, and I gave a presentation on butterflies to 110 campers at the Conservation Day Camp at the Fish and Game Reserve outside of Sidney. These young people were exiting second, third and fourth grades. We taught about the life cycle of butterflies, butterfly anatomy, and plants that are beneficial to butterflies. Becky shared a butterfly house she has used to watch the caterpillars grow, pupate, and morph into adult butterflies. (I was so impressed I had to buy one from Amazon myself!) We listed interesting facts about butterflies that many people do not know.

After the presentation, each camper made a wooden butterfly windchime, and were given milkweed seeds to plant. The most challenging part of the program was having them make the windchimes. Coloring the wooden butterflies was easy enough but stringing the windchimes and tying them proved to be troublesome to some. With the help of the adults, all were able to make the windchimes, and some even came during lunch to finish coloring them. It was a great day, with terrific weather! Each camper was given a word search using words from the presentation, and facts about predators and plants associated with butterflies.

Here are some facts we discussed with the campers:

1. Butterflies have taste receptors on their feet.
2. They see ultraviolet colors humans cannot see.
3. Butterflies get nutrients drinking from puddles.
4. Butterflies cannot fly if the temperature is below 55 degrees Fahrenheit.
5. Butterfly wings are made of transparent scales.
6. Adult butterflies live on an all-liquid diet.
7. A newly emerged butterfly cannot fly until its wings have dried.
8. Butterflies are near-sighted but can see color.
9. They use tricks to avoid being eaten. Most butterflies are diurnal.
10. Most adult butterflies live only two to four weeks.
11. An adult butterfly must assemble its own proboscis quickly in order to eat.
12. Butterflies are found on all continents except Antarctica. 🌿

Lemongrass Loves Hot and Humid

(Perfect Plant for our part of OHIO)

By Janet Nelson



Lemongrass (*Cymbopogon citratus*) is an easy to grow tropical grass. It has long slender foliage growing to about 2-3 feet tall. The leaves are grayish-green in color and the stems and

leaves impart a strong lemon flavor when used in cooking.

The May speakers for the Sidney Library Series introduced me to lemongrass. They encouraged its use as a “thriller” in containers. With that inspiration I set out to grow a new herb.

I learned that lemongrass is an herbaceous perennial that originates from India. It is considered an annual here with a hardiness zone of 8-11. Recommendations are to fertilize every two weeks and not to overwater. Pests are seldom a problem in the Midwest.

References report that it prefers to grow in hot, sunny, humid locations in well-drained soil. It likes regular watering but does not like to dry out. Another source says “Lemongrass grows slowly until the heat of summer arrives, then it increases in size dramatically.”

And that proved to be true. I planted my lemongrass May 20. The plant was about 12 inches tall. The temperature was cool and only slow growth occurred. But then mid June the heat and humidity kicked in. My records show the lemongrass to be 19 inches on June 19th, 25-26 inches on June 22nd (notice that is only 3 days!!). June 27th the grass blades were at the 31 inch mark. Finally on July 3rd it reached over the yardstick, probably near 40 inches. It looks like lemongrass really does like *hot* and *humid* temperatures.

Lemongrass can be the thriller in the container but it is also well known for its culinary purposes in the Asian cuisine. Harvest lemongrass once the stalks reach ½ inch thick. To harvest, cut stems at ground level, or push an outside stem to the side, twist and pull off, or cut with a knife. Discard the outer woody layers and the leaves. The plant stalks are quite hard, so they are usually mashed and simmered in water to extract the

lemony flavor. It will be a fun, this fall, to experiment with the use of lemongrass.

The take away: Lemongrass is a plant that loves Ohio’s hot humid summers AND provides us with a “thriller” and lemon flavoring. Wow. 🍋

Growth progression of lemongrass plant, started at 12” on May 20:



19” on 6/19



25-26” on 6/22



31” on 6/27



Above 36”-40” on 7/3

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Lantana a Winner!

By Mary Delzeith

Lantana is one of the easiest to grow plants; it can survive despite over or under watering, full to part sun, or poor soil. Lantana is in the Verbena family. It is an annual in most regions of the U.S. but can be a perennial in warmer hardiness zones 10 to 11. I like to plant an old wheelbarrow with these multicolored flowers. However, when we vacation on the North Carolina coast they are large shrubs.

Lantana is known for its pretty flowers. There are multiple small blooms in 1-to-2-inch clusters, in colors ranging from orange, pink, red, yellow, purple and white. The trailing varieties are usually purple or white. I frequently see bees buzzing around my Lantana flowers. The blooms last all season and need minimal deadheading.

Lantana blooms best in full sun but tolerates partly sunny conditions. It tolerates drought but blooms best with regular watering after top couple of inches of soil are dry. Nevertheless, it usually survives more frequent spring rain showers.

Lantana will tolerate poor soil but grows best in slightly acidic soil or a good potting mix. It does not need fertilizer as fertilizing will even decrease flowering.

The leaves are a deep green and have a nice fruity or citrusy fresh scent when crushed or brushed up against. Insect pests do not seem to like Lantana. Once I discovered Lantana, I've planted it every year. It is such a pretty flowering plant that needs minimal care and that is a winner in my book! 🍃



Lantana planted in old wheelbarrow



*In North Carolina-
Lantana is a shrub*

Photos of the Memorial Garden over the years Provided by Doug Benson



Year
2000



undated
pre-
fountain



Year
2005



Year
2008
OSU



Year
2013

Totally unscientific Japanese beetle treatment--By Ann Heeley

As a Master Gardener Volunteer, I can't recommend this method of dealing with Japanese beetles. There is absolutely no research or supporting evidence to back it up. But after countless cups of soapy water, words that should never be spoken in public, and heart-breaking damage done to my crape myrtles, I am now a believer in the totally unscientific method I'm using to deal with these pests.



Here is what I tried before my major breakthrough:

- Hand-picking Japanese beetles and dunking them in a cup of soapy water—many times, many cups;
- Spraying my crape myrtles with Neem;
- Dumping the drowned beetles around the base of the plants (I read where they don't like the smell of their deceased brethren);
- Cutting off and disposing of the chewed-up crape myrtle leaves, which means no flowers on those tips until they send out new shoots.

And here is the method that I finally used which resulted in NO new Japanese beetle damage for the past week: Vicks VapoRub. Using latex gloves, I smeared Vicks on one leaf near the tips of each branch, especially the longest ones. It doesn't seem to hurt the leaves. It doesn't wash off in the rain. It has retained its odor for the past week. And the cost is next to zero.

Yesterday, I discovered Japanese beetle damage on my newly-planted serviceberry and on one of my blueberry plants. I plan to use the Vicks method on both of these plants, too. I'm looking forward to posting my totally unscientific results on TikTok or an equally revered horticultural journal's website. 🌿

Websites and Newsletters By Ann Heeley

Before I purchase a plant (annual, perennial, shrub, or tree), I like to check out its needs, the amount of maintenance required, the preferred location and soil, and size at maturity. As I'm looking around, I may veer off to other websites that take me away from my initial goal. Since I have such a short attention span and am highly distractible, this happens quite frequently. Sometimes, however, these side trips offer valuable content that I may not have otherwise encountered.

Take, for example, these three sites I stumbled into that provide loads of up-to-date information:

Eastern Forest Pests (EasternForestPests.com) – This site is published by the Ohio Department of Agriculture Plant Pest Control in conjunction with the Ohio Department of Natural Resources and the Great Lakes Early Detection Network. Ohio State University, the University of Kentucky, and the University of Tennessee are contributors. It focuses on insect and disease pests that affect trees and shrubs, not just in forests, but also in our own backyards. The photography is exemplary, and there is a Guide that can be downloaded or printed which explains and illustrates in great detail what to look for and whether treatments are available.

Ohio Woodland Stewards Program (woodlandstewards.osu.edu) – An Ohio State University site that many of us have used to log continuing education hours, this site also provides a newsletter. You can request the weekly newsletter by emailing ohiowoodlandstewards@lists.osu.edu. Although the focus may be on larger properties, this site contains a variety of information on native plants, beneficial insects, mushrooms, maple syrup, and many other topics.

The National Gardening Association's website (garden.org) is similar to **Dave's Garden** (and both sites are free to subscribe). It has forums on many different topics, a learning library, a huge plant database, and a plant ID forum where you can post photos of your mystery plant/weed and have other users identify it. You can also sign up for a free weekly newsletter by clicking the link on the main page. (You'll have to check the box that indicates that you're a human and not a bot!) 🌿

(Editor's note: whenever a link is mention in our newsletters, you will not be able to just click on it; you will have to type the address in your search browser. My software removes these links and wants to sanitize most things. Their reasoning is that malware can be hidden in links; so it takes them all out.)

Pond Management

July 31st : 6:30pm - 8pm

Tawawa Park
12 Tawawa Dr
Sidney, Ohio

Bring a lawn chair and prepare to receive the information needed to care for your pond.

Guest speakers:

Eugene Braig, OSU Extension Aquatic
Ecosystems Program Director
Caden Buschur, OSU Extension Educator,
Darke County



To register go to:

<https://go.osu.edu/tri-county-pond2024>

or use the QR code provided

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