

Shelby County Master Gardener

OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY EXTENSION



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President's comments--By Dave Slagle



Hello, Master Gardeners and friends. The May flowers are a little bit slow and it looks like we will have some more chilly weather in the next week. Mother's Day is the day most gardeners look forward to, but this year could be a little different. Jim McCracken has his onions looking great, but nothing much else is planted in his huge gardens. I believe that last month's meeting went very well. Had a good turnout and we were impressed with their program at the Call Ministries in Celina. Looking forward to next meeting at Karen Seger's home next week. See you all then. 🌱

Next Meeting—Bring Your Lawn Chair Wednesday May 15, 2024

**Directions to Karen Seger's Home for May 15th
3074 St. Rt. 66, Houston OH 45333; 937-658-1807**

- From the Extension Office at 810 Fair Road, head west and south west on Fair Road.
- After passing through intersection by Love's and Vandemark Rd., (at the Sidney Auto Tech), Turn right and take slight right onto W Millcreek Road, going 2.9 miles.
- Turn left onto Hardin-Wapak Rd.
- In .5 mile turn right onto Houston Rd., go 5.7 miles arrive in Houston and SR 66 (by Hardin-Houston Schools)
- Turn left onto St Rt 66, your destination is on the left about .2 miles. Red brick one story with blue door and shutters.
- Look for "**Master Gardener Yard Sign**" (Takes approximately 15 minutes from Extension Office and 11 miles.)

Parking in the back lot and neighbor's yards available.



Join the Agriculture and Natural Resource Newsletter,
Farm and Field Shelby County
By Rylee Kay Puthoff, ANR Educator

Hello everyone! It is a part of my job to connect the community to the research and information provided by Ohio State University. One of my ways to fulfill this goal is to create a newsletter that will be sent out to those in the county, updating and sharing information from OSU Extension to the public. The newsletter I created is called ***Farm and Field Shelby County***. By subscribing to it, you will receive a weekly email, updating you on webinars, new information, and pictures about ANR activities. I am inviting everyone to subscribe and offer feedback on ways that I can make the newsletter better. Please scan the QR code down below to view the website. 🌱

Thanks!

Rylee Kay Puthoff

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MG Officers & Leadership for 2024

President	Dave Slagle
Vice President	Janet Nelson
Secretary	Russ Stewart
Treasurer	Linda Jennings
Volunteer Coordinator	Doug Benson
Extension ANR Educator	Rylee Kay Puthoff



Tomatoes for Sale



Jim McCracken has several varieties of tomatoes for sale, \$2.00 each. Please inform your friends or neighbors, pass his phone number out: 937-489-3734.

Coordinator's comments

By Doug Benson

As I sit here writing, I can't help but wonder how bad the weather will be. The last things we need are more violent storms and heavy rain. Most of us have been fairly lucky so far, but how long will that last? In a way, I miss the farmers going up and down the road pulling their cultivating and planting equipment. The delay in getting their planting completed has to be extremely frustrating.

My own planting has been limited to two half whiskey barrels. One contains garlic that I planted last fall, and other has cilantro, basil, rosemary, and oregano that I got on sale at Menards. Eventually, I will plant some green beans, zucchini, and a tomato or two. On the other hand, I am mowing my lawn every four or five days or whenever it is dry.

I did get one surprise this spring. Several years ago, I put some buckeyes in the ground under one of my apple trees. One germinated and began to grow, but the apple tree stunted its growth. Earlier this spring I had the apple trees removed (they were almost 30 feet tall and out of control). The buckeye tree is sort of lopsided, but last week it flowered. I am looking forward to having my own personal supply of buckeyes this fall.

I don't have a lot to report about the MGV program. We did have a great trip to Celina last month. As far as I could tell, everyone had an enjoyable time. People seemed to enjoy lunching together; the sound reminded me of lunchtime in the middle school cafeteria. The tour of the C.A.L.L. food pantry operation was enlightening. The highlight for me was the aquaponic growing operation. The system uses the waste produced by a tank of yellow perch to provide nutrients for a variety of leafy vegetables that are harvested weekly and packaged for the pantry clients. Staff constantly monitor the water chemistry for maximum benefit to the fish and the vegetables. The outdoor vegetable garden and nearby native pollinator gardens were also quite interesting. Finally, the day was capped off with a productive meeting at Mercer County's new Extension office. Thanks, Ryan and Janet, for setting up the day's activities.

My writing was interrupted by the sound of the tornado siren at this point. I am finishing Wednesday afternoon.

Work continues on the renovations to the Memorial Garden. A crew from the county jail worked up an area where the crabapple tree was removed. They tilled and amended the soil to make it more hospitable for new plantings. Many of the bulbs and plants that were planted last fall have taken root and are in bloom, including the beautiful red azalea Sonnie Bernardi donated to honor Bob. Ann continues to search for additional plants on the plan. Once those are in the ground, we will have a mulching day, so watch for the call. We did have a cleanup day a couple of weeks ago, and it helped; however, the weeds continue to thrive. If you have an hour or two to spare, please stop by anytime. I will leave some trash bags on top of the file cabinet.

The "Plant by Numbers" plots out by the corner of the parking lot also need some weeding. It appears that some of the perennials have returned and multiplied, but we need to fill in some the empty spaces, preferably with what was there originally. We will make a list, and ask you to share if you have some extras in your garden. Amanda is holding the new collections that are designed to attract birds at the Soil and Water office until we get the planting instructions and decide on the planting locations. We are considering locating both their set and ours near the Community Foundation Building at the fairgrounds. I've also talked to Tilda Phlipot at the Ross Historical Museum downtown about planting our set there. We need to make a decision soon.

For those who want or need to take the Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) training so you can safely handle fresh produce to be donated to food pantries such as Agape, Jacob Winters, Auglaize County ANR Educator, will do an in-person training at 10:00, Monday, May 20, at the office. The training takes approximately one hour, and you will receive Continuing Ed credit. Even if you don't plan to donate produce, the training provides a lot of practical information for working in one's own garden. We do have to keep a record of who has completed the training; and, like it or not, we *may* be required to take the training in the future. It will become a part of the basic MGV training program in the future. Please let me know if you plan to participate on May 20.

The Shelby Environmental Education Consortium has not met yet to make plans for the displays and programming at the Shelby County Fair. I will let you know when we meet. When we do meet, I will express our desire to supervise the building and, if necessary, provide an afternoon-only craft activity on "Senior Day." Be thinking of some easy, inexpensive craft activity we might do.

Finally, I urge you to continue reporting your hours on HOC. You can also sign up for the hotline on HOC. Instructions on how to sign up were sent in an earlier email. If you can't find it, or need help, email or call me. In the meantime, Happy Gardening! 🍅

Cultivating Joy: Gardening's Impact on Serotonin Levels

By Karen Seger

When we are happy or feeling a general sense of well-being, we're experiencing the benefits of serotonin. You may be interested to learn there is scientific evidence to support gardening's natural impact on serotonin levels in our bodies.

Serotonin is a neurotransmitter and hormone. It is responsible for boosting mood as well as a host of other functions and behaviors. It plays a role in memory, fear and stress response, sleep and sexuality, digestion and addiction, breathing and body temperature.

Get Your Hands in the Dirt!

Recent studies show that the bacteria *Mycobacterium vaccae* lives naturally in the soil. This soil microbe can activate groups of neurons responsible for producing serotonin. It is absorbed through the skin of the palms and fingers when gardening, triggering a release of serotonin in the brain.

This news is not only a beneficial bonus for adult gardeners, but also something to consider for children and the elderly. Additionally, gardening could also be used as physical activity for maintaining or improving cognitive health in the elderly. 🌱



Blooming Buckeye in Doug Benson's Yard



Auglaize County MGVs Jill Dickman and Lynda Hadley and new Auglaize County Extension Agent, Jacob Winters, distributed 85 Victory Garden Seed packets at the Minster Western Ohio True Value store on April 27th. (Photo submitted by Jill Dickman)

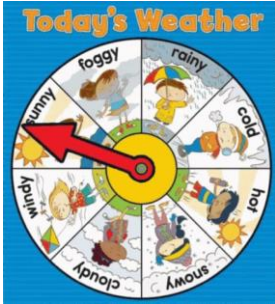


Robert "Bob" Bernardi's Memorial Azalea Blooming in the MG Memorial Garden

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SOMETIMES YOU JUST CAN'T WIN

By Ann Heeley



There's an old saying in Chicago, "If you don't like the weather, just wait a few minutes." This can now be applied to Shelby County, OH. The last several days/weeks, for example, have been rather warm and wet for spring. The ground doesn't know whether to stay warm, start drying out a little, or prepare

for a drop in temperature. What that meant last month for 2 of my 6 azaleas, which were starting to leaf out and set buds, was being nipped by unexpected frost, and looking dead except for a few green spots on sparse branches. I'm hoping they survive, but for the rest of this growing season, they'll probably continue to look sick.

The same holds true for weeds, only in reverse. I meticulously handpicked every weed from the front beds just a few weeks ago so I could lay new mulch. Today a very healthy crop of clover, unknown green leafy things, and maple propellers blanket the ground. I also discovered a hole in the middle of the front lawn where mother rabbit had raised her babies. She had gathered the soft pine needles that had surrounded my azaleas in the winter to line her nest. And when the youngsters finally left, all that remained was a pile of pine needles covering the exit hole. With the tall grass covering the hole (mowing was not always done in a timely fashion due to daily rain), I never knew we had helped another generation of rabbits survive to one day eat my plants.

The hydrangeas I planted last fall in the back yard are, for the most part, looking pretty good. I had chosen a variety of shorter cultivars that wouldn't grow taller than the windows and used metal labels to make sure that I had the correct names for each one. My puppy, who has no gardening sense whatsoever, plucked out all 8 labels and deposited them in various part of the lawn. I'm sure he meant it as a hide-and-seek game for me to not only find all the labels, but to wait for the hydrangeas to bloom so I could match each label with the correct plant. The crape myrtle shrubs foiled his plan to destroy them when he chewed each branch down to nubs. Crape myrtles develop new sprouts from the ground up, so they're coming back and looking no worse for wear. On the other hand, I'm sure the blobs of dirt with dried-out roots and a single stick are the remains of the butterfly bushes (buddleia) that will have to be replaced.

Gardening in the spring is always a new adventure. I take heart from knowing that sometimes you win and sometimes you lose. But the end results are never really final, and there's always next spring. 🌱

THE WORLD'S FAVORITE SEASON IS THE SPRING. ALL THINGS SEEM POSSIBLE IN MAY. – EDWIN WAY TEALE

As May approaches, I can't help but feel excited for the warm weather and all the outdoor activities that come with it.

Springtime is a time of renewal, growth, and change, and there's no better time than May to embrace that.

One of my favorite things to do in May is to go on hikes and explore nature. The flowers are in full bloom, the trees are lush with green leaves, and the air is fresh and crisp.

It's the perfect time to disconnect from technology and immerse myself in the beauty of the **natural world**.

Another activity that I look forward to in May is gardening. **There's something so satisfying about planting seeds and watching them grow into vibrant, healthy plants.**

It's also a great way to incorporate more fresh fruits and vegetables into my diet, which is always a plus.

May is also a great month for socializing and spending time with friends and family. With the weather warming up, it's the perfect time to plan picnics, BBQs, and other outdoor gatherings.

I always enjoy catching up with loved ones and creating new memories together.

Of course, May also marks the end of the school year for many students. As someone who's been out of school for a few years now, I still can't help but feel a sense of nostalgia for the end of the school year.

It's a time of celebration, reflection, and anticipation for what's to come.

One thing that I've learned over the years is that May is a time to be **mindful of self-care**.

With all the excitement and busyness of the season, it's important to take time to prioritize my mental and physical health.

Whether that means taking a break from social media, practicing mindfulness, or getting enough sleep, I know that self-care is crucial for me to fully enjoy all that May has to offer.

As May comes to a close, I always feel a sense of gratitude for the experiences, memories, and growth that the season has brought me.

It's a reminder to embrace change, stay curious, and appreciate the beauty of the world around me.

Overall, May is a month that's full of potential and possibility. I'm excited to see what this year's May has in store for me, and I hope to make the most of every moment. 🌱

Missed it by one day for the newsletter; however, we wish that all mothers had a Happy Mother's Day.



Let's not forget that Memorial Day is an American holiday, observed on the last Monday of May, honoring the men and women who died while serving in the U.S. military. Memorial Day 2024 will occur on Monday, May 27.

