

Shelby County Master Gardener

OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY EXTENSION



Volume 29, Issue 10—November 2024



Program Coordinator's comments

By Doug Benson



Our 2024 master gardening activities are coming to an end, and this will be our final newsletter for the year. For those of you who attended the banquet much of this information will be a repeat of what I said there. Overall, we've had a productive year; and the credit goes to those of you who have contributed your time, your effort, and your ideas.

Starting last winter, a committee led by Teresa Freisthler began planning the library seminars. The committee put together a series of six programs, all of which were successful, even in the face of some unexpected challenges. Who in attendance will forget our first program during which Jim McCracken's seed-starting program was accompanied by the sound of tornado sirens? Those attending the second training session in April also encountered stormy weather as they returned home that evening. Finally, we had to find a last-minute replacement speaker for our final September program. Overall, the series was a success with attendance averaging about 35 per session. Special thanks to our own members Jim, Janet Nelson and Ann Heeley for their presentations. I'm looking forward to another informative series for 2025, and I hope that several of you will be willing to volunteer to help with the planning and the presentations.

We provided other direct services to the public as well. We handled more than 60 hotline requests for information and help, including at least 15 site visits. Once again, we provided generous donations of produce to area food pantries including Agape Distribution, Alpha Community Center, C.A.L.L. Food Pantry, and several other church-supported food pantries in the three-county area. Our current total is 2848 pounds of produce, and I will have one more reporting opportunity in December. Our volunteers assisted in distributing 300 Victory Garden seed packets in each of our three service counties. As it turns out, the Ohio Department of Agriculture has decided to move on from the Victory Garden program, and so this was the last distribution of seeds. Thank you to all who helped distribute those seed packets over the past several years.

As always, we did programming with young people in the communities we serve. Some of you made

presentations at Conservation Day Camp as well as some individual presentations with various school and other youth groups. We also did programming for kids at the Mercer County Fair and the Shelby County Fair.

We did some actual gardening as well. With Ann's leadership and financial help from the county commissioners as well as our own treasury, we continued to update and renovate our Memorial Garden at the Extension office. Cheryl Michael continued her efforts to maintain the small garden at the fairgrounds, and we partnered with the Shelby Soil and Water Conservation District to establish another plant-by-numbers bed at the fairgrounds. Several of you also assisted in beautifying your own hometowns by assisting with various gardening projects on your streets and in your parks.

A major highlight of the year was not really our doing, but we have been the beneficiaries. The addition of Rylee Kay Puthoff to the Extension staff is benefiting us greatly. She has brought youthful enthusiasm and new perspectives to the office. Unlike some of her predecessors, Rylee Kay has taken an active part in working with hotline issues. She takes every opportunity to answer clients' questions and seeks out opportunities to make field visits to see what's happening outside of the office. She's even developed a series of programs for presentation at the various libraries around the county. We are very fortunate to have Rylee Kay working with us.

Another highlight of the year was our field trip to Celina. After an enjoyable lunch together, we had the opportunity to tour the C.A.L.L. Food Pantry and observe their hydroponic growing system. We concluded the day by having our monthly meeting at Mercer County's new Extension office. This was the first time in several years that we had taken a field trip together, and I hope that we can come up with another field trip this coming year. If you have suggestions of places that we could visit as a group, let me know. (Continued to page 2)

MG Officers & Leadership for 2025

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

(Program Coordinator's comments continued from page1)

We could not be as successful as we are without good leadership. Thank you to Dave Slagle, Janet Nelson and Russ Stewart for their service this past year as officers. Special thanks to Linda Jennings for her two years of helping us implement the new bookkeeping system that we're using. Dave, Janet and Russ will be continuing their service for another year; and they will be joined by Missy Francis, who will be taking over as the treasurer. Please give them all the support you can. Finally, special thanks go to Carol Strayer, who has been editing our newsletters for at least the past 13 years. With her skills and your contributions, this year's newsletters have been the best ever.

What's coming?

We will be starting the recertification process at the beginning of December. I'll provide more information and instructions at that time. In the meantime, be sure that you have all of your volunteer and continuing education hours entered into Hands On Connect. There may or may not be a training class for new Master Gardener volunteers; Rylee Kay and Jacob Winters are trying to recruit a training class. We should know more in a couple of weeks.

Several goals for next year include: increasing our membership, continuing the library seminar programs, continuing the renovation of the Memorial Garden, organizing another group field trip, developing some new service projects, and possibly planning and presenting a continuing education program specifically for Master Gardeners. But most of all, I want each of us to be able to look back in December 2025 and say, "I'm glad I'm in the Master Gardener program."

Thank you for a great year, and have a wonderful holiday season! See you February 19, 2025! 🍀

Buckeye Book Club Coming Soon!
By Rylee Kay Puthoff, ANR Educator

Hello everyone! There is a project in the works for a book club starting in January. We will be reading *The Hidden Life of Trees* by Peter Wohlben. It is a fascinating book that I hope others will enjoy as well. I will be putting more information out to all of you with more details as they come, but if you have any questions, contact me at 937-419-7126.

See you all in February! 🍀

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*Thank you
to everyone
for making
2024
another
great year
for the
SCMGV
program!*



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Which plants to prune

By Karen Seger



Sambucus Lemony Lace

What Plants NOT to Trim Back in the Fall

Most plants may be trimmed back in the fall and they will still reward you with beautiful spring blooms. However, there are some plants that if trimmed this time of year, will not put on new blooms next season.

In just 6-8 short weeks, my garden shifts from glorious green to a golden jubilee. It is beautiful in every season, but I always miss the glorious flowers when they go. I grow a wide variety of annuals, perennials, trees and shrubs. However, I do not treat them all the same.

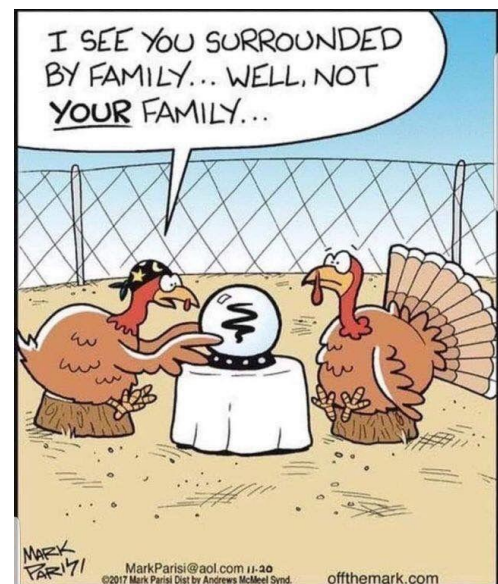
What I don't prune in fall:

- Anything evergreen or semi-evergreen, whether perennial, tree or shrub.
- Woody perennials like Russian Sage, lavender, perennial hibiscus and St. John's Wort.
- Any perennials that look pretty with a dusting of snow like astilbe.
- Shrubs with berried branches, colorful stems and ornamental grasses. Love winter color and shelter for birds.
- Plants with hollow stems like delphiniums- to prevent moisture from traveling down the stems into the crown of the plant. Mistake made on this one already!
- Any shrubs that bloom on old wood (previous season's growth) including Azealia, sweet shrub, forsythia, big leaf hydrangea, mountain hydrangea, oak leaf hydrangea, lilac, ninebark, and weigela. Trimming now would eliminate next year's flowers.

What I do prune in late fall:

- Any perennials that have gone completely dormant and will have mushy foliage, hostas, tall phlox, bunniera, lilies, bleeding hearts, daylilies, ligularia, cat mint, bee balm, peonies and salvia. Slugs love to lay their eggs in the dormant foliage!
- Any perennials or roses with diseased foliage—bag and dispose instead of tossing into compost.
- Any plants with broken branches or those that have grown over pathways, windows or roof. We took off a huge branch of the smoke tree in the front that was over the roof. I will prune the magnolia closer to Christmas so I can use those leaves in decoration.

If you are not sure when to prune, a good rule is just don't do it! 🍴



A Smokies substitute, sort of

By Doug Benson

For at least 25 years, one of my favorite activities



was to go camping and hiking in Cades Cove in Great Smoky Mountains National Park. However, for the last two years health concerns have kept me from making the trip. Last week, completely to my surprise, I discovered a somewhat reasonable substitute less than ten miles away.

Friday afternoon, November 8, Rylee Kay and I joined David Reynolds, a hydro technician with the



Miami Conservancy District, on a hike in the Lockington Reserve on the west side of the dam. Suspecting that he had discovered some mature ash trees that had somehow survived the emerald ash borer attack, he asked us to go along and possibly confirm his suspicions. As we

followed some of the fairly well maintained walking trails, I found myself transported back to Cades Cove. The crunch of the leaves, the sight of fallen decaying trees, the sounds of the birds, and the smells associated with the forest in the fall were all reminders those hikes in the Smokies. The only things missing were the bears, deer, and wild turkeys. And yes, we did find some ash trees, which Joe Boggs confirmed, based on the pictures that Rylee Kay had taken.



According to the signage, Lockington Reserve is maintained by the Shelby County Park District, but I'm not sure what if any resources the park district has.



The part of the Lockington Reserve that is on the east side of the dam is probably better known, but I haven't explored that area yet. The forested area is populated by various oak trees, especially red, chestnut, and swamp white oak. Other trees include American beech, maple, ironwood, tulip poplar, hornbeam and beautiful white American sycamore trees lining Loramie Creek. We also found a grove



of pawpaw trees; of course, the paw paws were long gone by this time. Some of the gullies were highlighted by the pink leaves of winged euonymus shrubs, the invasive result of the popular burning bushes used in landscaping. We were told by a local

resident who does some trail maintenance on his own that the area is very popular with mushroom hunters in the springtime, and I can only imagine the amount of spring flowers that will be present.

If you want to go for a quiet peaceful walk, the area is quite easy to reach. Go west from Lockington on Fessler-Buxton Road crossing over Loramie Creek below the dam. When you come to the three-way intersection by the cemetery, continue straight on Fessler-Buxton for about a mile and a half until you reach a turn off to the right, which is Lockington Dam Road. Follow this road for about a half a mile to the parking area; you'll actually be parking on top of the dam. The trail begins off to the left of the parking area. As far as I know, there are no maps of the trails, so you'll need to pay attention to where you're going so that you can back when you're done hiking. It might be a good idea to hike with a friend. Cell phone service is a little spotty in places. I hope you'll enjoy this area as much as I have.



*A flock of wild turkeys
Washington Twp. 10/25/24*



The People's Garden

By Conelia Dixon



(Linda and Cal Jennings)

We have such a nice fall going this year! If we had looked at the weather ahead of time and seen that it would be this mild in October and

November, we could have planted more beans and other mild weather crops in The People's Garden! We still do have a few vegetables that are being harvested in October and November of 2024, some that were planted in late summer or early fall. I want you to be aware that you can grow garden foods in the cool or cold times. It is fun and amazing to see what you can come up with for your meals, and to serve nutritious food right from your raised bed in early fall or even into the winter. I always love seeing seeds sprout, indoors or out, and turn into food!

Some crops really do well in the cooler temperatures, more so than in the heat of mid-summer. Many things will bolt and go to seed, stopping growth, and can be planted in very early spring, in March or April, and in the fall, in September, October and November. You just need to know when the first heavy frost date is for your region. Shelby County is in hardiness zone 6, there being 6a and 6b, which is a little farther south than 6a. With climate changes, you must check each season.

Crops that we see doing very well at the garden this fall are herbs, like sage, dill, oregano, cilantro, and parsley. Other nutritious cool weather foods are salad greens, like arugula, different lettuces, green onions, chard, kale, and spinach. Some crops that people sometimes don't think of to add to salads are beet leaves, carrot tops, radishes of all kinds, and snap peas. You can plant these things in very early spring and late summer, into fall. It is called succession planting, to keep on having delicious salads and other additions to your menu for many months. I have harvested kale and arugula in the snow. There are other plants that like the heat of

summer, like peppers and tomatoes. Interplanting these different crops is advisable if they are "companions". There are many sources online to find out which crops grow well together or are beneficial to each other. Basil and tomatoes are good together and planted with the little flower alyssum, you can attract the parasitic wasp that kills tomato worms!

There are innumerable methods to employ to extend your growing season. Some require more work like building structures or covering crops in various ways. Cold frames, high or low tunnels, green houses, cover for crops like tarps or light fabric.



(Example of a low tunnel. Conelia Elsass)

You can use the grow bags or pots on patio or balcony and move them inside temporarily if weather is blustery. Use your imagination to use the space you have, the materials available and the community volunteer support.

Here is a list of some foods that do well in cool weather: garlic-that needs the cold for vernalization, kale-does well in the snow if not subzero, bunching onions, carrots, spinach, lettuces, Bok choi, fava beans, broccoli, Brussels sprouts and other brassicas, beets, radishes of all kinds, turnips, microgreens, and arugula. There are some flowers that are edible too, but that is for another time to tell you how delicious nasturtium flowers and leaves are or pansies, and petunias. I am forever tasting these things in the garden...doing a little research on them first, of course. Look at what you have grown or like to grow and look them up on a reliable site to see if you can use some of your flowers for food, garnishes, or decorations on cakes or cookies. 🌱