

Shelby County Master Gardener



 THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY
EXTENSION

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Vice President's comments-- Submitted for Dave by Janet Nelson--“There is a Season”

First and foremost, Dave extends his sincere thanks to all for a great 2024 MGV season. Ditto to that from Russ, Linda and I.

Do you remember The Byrds song “Turn! Turn! Turn!” ?

“To everything turn, turn, turn
There is a season turn, turn, turn
And a time to every purpose under Heaven”

Fall is now upon us and it is the season for many tasks. One task that I try to accomplish each fall is preparing my garden tools for winter storage. If we have rinsed and cleaned tools throughout the growing season, the task can be quite simple. If you have not maintained your tools during the growing season, a bit more elbow grease may be required.

The first step is to clean the tool. Spraying the tool with water gets most of the dirt off. If necessary, soak in a bucket of soapy water. Scrub with a stiff brush. As necessary, scrub with a steel wool or a scouring pad. With the dirt off, inspect for rust. You may need to use a wire brush, a grill brush or even sandpaper to clean tough to remove dirt and/or rust. Some websites suggest chemicals for cleaning, but I try to avoid that and use good old hard work instead.

Sharpening the blade of bigger tools e.g., shovels, hoes, loppers etc. requires a metal file. I use a ten-inch general-

purpose mill file called a bastard file (I don't think I want to know why). Hold the file at about a 45-degree angle and run it several times across the surface. Apply even pressure, filing in just *one* direction. As you file the blade will become shiny. If burrs develop on the backside of the blade, remove them by running the file across them a couple of times.



On the smaller tools like the pruners, use a small carbide file. Again, file at the same angle as the existing bevel approximately (45-degree) Start from the bottom of the blade and move the file across the length of the blade in a sweeping motion.



Use consistent pressure and a sweeping motion.

Now that the tools are clean and sharp, they need oil. I use boiled linseed oil on a rag to wipe all surfaces of the blade.



This layer of oil will help prevent rust. Also, check the wood handle for rough spots or splinters. Use fine sandpaper to remove these areas and use the rag to apply a good coat of linseed oil to the wood. Penetrating oil, such as 3-1 or WD-40 may be used to lubricate moveable parts of loppers, pruners etc.

Finally, store these valuable tools in a dry area. I prefer to hang the larger tools with blades up without nesting them tightly together.

Winter is around the corner and as The Bryds sang, it is “A time for peace, I swear it's not too late.” 🍂

Recognition Banquet—October 16, 2024

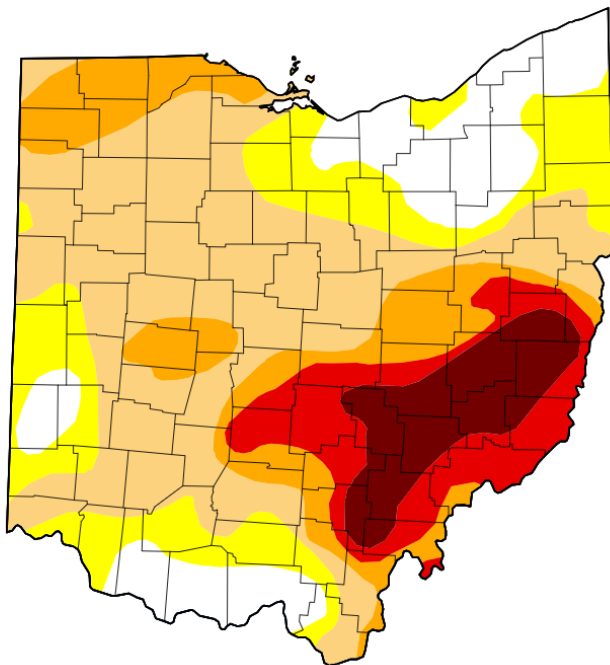


Don't Let the Rain Fool You!

By Rylee Kay Puthoff, ANR Educator

I know we have gotten approximately 2.5- 3.5 inches of rain in the last two weeks. It came down in a slow drizzle that the soil easily absorbed. While that rain has been beneficial, we have not had enough recently to make up for what we did not receive in the summer. Yes, lawns have greened up, and plants are looking healthier. However, without additional rain, we will be back down the path to dry soil again. A majority of the County is still in Moderate Drought conditions according to the U.S. Drought Monitor (As of October 1st). We have heard a lot about the flooding in North Carolina, and Hurricane Milton battering Florida. We hear lots about rain in other places but are getting little of it ourselves. And according to weather forecasts, we will not be getting much anytime soon. With all of that said, keep in mind that the drought has not left, and keep an eye on those plants!

Link to US Drought Monitor: <https://droughtmonitor.unl.edu/> Use this link for the most up-to-date information on Drought Status.



Map released: Thurs. October 3, 2024

Data valid: October 1, 2024 at 8 a.m. EDT

Intensity

- None
- D0 (Abnormally Dry)
- D1 (Moderate Drought)
- D2 (Severe Drought)
- D3 (Extreme Drought)
- D4 (Exceptional Drought)
- No Data

Authors

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Pacific Islands and Virgin Islands Author(s):

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Coordinator's comments
By Doug Benson



Well, we're almost at the end of another year, and overall, it has been a good year, especially for me. Early in the spring, Rylee Kay joined the Extension office staff and immediately became

involved with our Master Gardener hotline. She has continued to show a great interest in learning more about plants and insects and various other gardening problems. Her background in agronomy has been especially helpful when we've had soil tests to interpret. She has also come to my rescue several times when I've had problems using the computer. Most recently, she converted my questions into the Qualtrics survey about the library programs. We are really fortunate to have Rylee Kay leading our program.

One of the highlights of the year for me was our field trip to Celina. It seemed like everyone enjoyed the opportunity to have lunch together and then go on to the tour of the C.A.L.L. food pantry and see their hydroponic growing program in action. It had been a long time since we had taken a field trip like that, and I think we ought to consider doing something similar in 2025. As we sit around watching the snowfall this winter, let's be thinking of possible places that we could visit next year. Then next spring let's put together a committee to investigate and plan another field trip.

We had a lot of really positive things happen this year, one of which was the increased participation in the newsletters. Carol Strayer has done a wonderful job of editing the newsletter for many years, and I know that she was pleased with the number of contributions made by members. She has indicated that if there are sufficient contributions, she will do one more newsletter in November. I have a number of additional comments to make about 2024, but I'm trusting that many of you will have enough things to contribute to have that November newsletter, and I can include those additional things that I have. You might write about something that you did or perhaps something you're going to do. Let's all try to help Carol make the November newsletter the best one of the year. The deadline will be November 13.

I do have some concerns about what we did this year and what we need to do going forward. With Ann's leadership, we did quite a bit of renovation to the

Memorial Garden. We removed some old plants, moved others, and added new plants. Unfortunately, the weather did not cooperate very much with getting some of the plants established. The lack of rainfall and the high heat made it difficult for some of the new plantings to survive; however, it didn't slow down the weeds very much. Consequently, the garden doesn't represent our Master Gardener program as well as it should. I think that next year we need to have a more organized and formalized work schedule and/or work crew to provide regular maintenance in the Memorial Garden. I know that we all have our own personal lawns and gardens to maintain; but there are enough of us that if everyone takes his or her turn, we should be able to keep our garden looking much better than it has this past year.

Another concern that I have is how we report our hours in the Hands On Connect program. As I've been trying to assemble some data for year-end reports, I've noticed some problems with the way that a lot of the hours are being reported. We have over 30 specific opportunities/projects identified to be used for reporting, but many of the hours are being grouped under the heading of "Community Service." It's true that most of the activities being reported are services to the community in one way or another, but it would be more descriptive if we could list those activities under more specific headings. I will take the blame for not identifying the different projects more clearly and using them to report your hours. If you have already reported hours under Community Service, don't go back and try to change them. That would cause more confusion than we have now. If you still have hours to report, look at the various opportunities that are listed in "Search Projects" under the "My Counties" heading in Hands On Connect to see if what you've done will fit into one of those specific Opportunities. Later this fall or sometime during the winter, we'll have a Zoom session to go over the various Projects so that you have a better idea of how to use each of them. Just be sure you get your hours for 2024 entered sometime before December 15th.

I will have more to report during the banquet this week, and I hope many of you will be there. I know that some of you will be traveling; so have safe travels and keep in touch when you return. That's all for now. 🍂



5 Steps to a Better Border

By Karen Seger

October is the perfect time to deal with borders that you've been disappointed with during the growing season. This job can be a bit daunting, but with a little planning, it'd possible to breathe new life into your garden with year-round interest.

1. Make a plan.

When planning a border the first thing to do is to get your idea down on paper. Come up with a word to describe how you want to describe how you want the border to feel-'hot', 'bold', 'romantic'-it's to keep you focused on the final look. I love English Gardens and their romantic feel so romantic is my word. Measure the area, noting all the existing plants and marking ones you want to leave in their present position. Now is the time to draw up any changes. I need to mark the sun/shade areas. I also stick to a color scheme.

Designing a border is all about the layers. The tallest layer being the tall trees. Next comes shrubs followed by the perennials and low growing ground cover and small bulbs. Then formulate a clear list so as not to go overboard at the garden center!

2. Prune your shrubs.

Pruning is an easy way to bring an overgrown shrubby border back to its former glory.

3. Rejuvenate your perennials.

Perennials can become congested over time, with all the vibrant, flowering growth on the outside of the clump, and little going on in the middle. Other perennials can become thug-like and take over. The best way to solve these problems is to dig them up and divide them.

4. Remove weeds.

In mature borders, weeds can hide among perennials and take hold before you realize. Annual weeds, like chickweed or hairy bitter cress, are easy to remove by hand or light hoeing, so get them before they set seed. Perennial weeds take more time and effort. The key is to remove all of the roots!

5. Treat yourself to new plants.

Remember take a list to the garden center. Perhaps it needs more color, late-season interest or height. Don't just splurge on lots of plants that all flower at the same time.

If you have lots of space to fill and a tight budget, try growing perennials from seed, or buy plants that you can divide immediately into two or three plants, or that you can take cuttings from. Also, sow hardy annuals such as poppies, cornflowers and pot marigolds for flowers next summer. Prepare the soil by adding compost and water well to help the plants to establish. 🌱



Spring 2024

Updates from Jim McCracken

Plants hit by hailstorm:

As many of you know my garden was hit by a hailstorm on May 29, 2024. The storm woke my wife Elaine and I up at 12:45 AM. We both witnessed the hail begin to cover the front porch with small size hail that lasted only nine minutes. The next morning I was shocked when I first saw the damage done by the hail. The damage was nearly indescribable, basically vegetation was totally stripped or damaged so badly the crop appeared to be destroyed. I decided not to tear out the vegetables rather just pray mother nature would mend itself.

In the next couple of weeks vegetables began to repair themselves, it was nothing short of a miracle. Corn, green beans, and cabbage showed signs of new growth first. Onions and tomatoes I felt were both still questionable if production would occur at all. My garden actually produced well considering what damage the hail had done in late May. The sweet corn was some of the best we have ever raised. Pepper, tomatoes and sweet potatoes recovered well but just delayed the harvest. Onion production was well below what is normal, as many bulbs rotted in the garden. I have included many photos of the damage done in May.



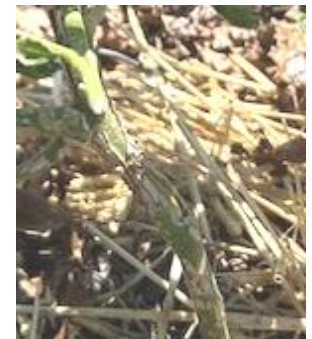
Onions before and after hailstorm. Photos taken 3 days apart.



Corn, broccoli, and green beans after hailstorm.



Left tomato totally destroyed, right one went on to produce even with the crushed stem.



Close up of stem.

Over-wintering pepper plants:

Last October, I tried to over-winter 4 varieties of peppers: jalapeño, bell, banana, and a small sweet pepper. I researched the topic and decided to dig up and plant the four types in pots. The vegetation was cut back with the majority of the leaves removed. I found in my research that over-wintering is possible but plant roots should remain on the drier side. I think I over did the dry concept as three of the four pepper plants died in late February to mid-March. The lone surviving jalapeño pepper plant is still producing well in the garden. I have photos of the plants during my experiment. My conclusion is smaller pepper types, in non-clay pots, and provide more moisture than last year will be successful. I am considering over-wintering a cayenne pepper plant this year.



Non-clay green pot was the jalapeño over-wintering.



Jalapeño produced well.