

# Shelby County Master Gardener



 THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY  
EXTENSION

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## Vice President's comments--Janet Nelson Praying Mantis, the Welcomed Guest to My Garden

Our gardens are more than soil and plants, they are an ecosystem. The garden is a community of plants, birds, pollinators, and other wildlife that form a balanced system. There are some habitants of my garden that I find intriguing. The Praying Mantis (mantid) is one of them.



*Photo by Andrew,  
Janet's grandson*

The term mantis refers to the genus *Mantis*, while mantid refers to the entire group of insects. Mantids have a triangular head with large, compound eyes and long, slender bodies, and modified arms to tightly grasp prey and adult mantids have wings. One of the unique properties of this order of insects is that they appear to be “praying” with their front legs. These garden predators will sit and wait, folding their front legs together as if in prayer while they survey their surroundings for a potential meal.

Praying mantises are among the giants of the insect world. Ohio has three species of praying mantis that range in size from 2-4 inches. The Carolina mantid (*Stagmomantis carolina*) is native to the United States and found from New York south to Florida and west to Utah, Arizona and Texas. Both the European mantid (*Mantis religiosa*) and Chinese mantid (*Tenodera sinensis*) were introduced into the United States in the late 1800s and are now common in Ohio.

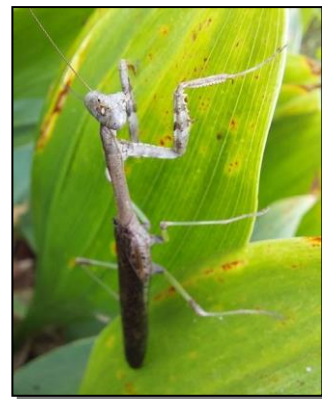


Despite their large size, these insects blend into their surroundings and they can be difficult to see among the plants. Their green and/or brown color and long thin bodies look like leaves and stems. I am often surprised by a praying mantis jumping from my bucket or moving as I am deadheading.

However, it is this camouflage that benefits them while hunting. When hunting, they sometimes sway back and forth to mimic plants moving in a breeze. Another intriguing quality of the mantis is its ability to rotate its head 180 degrees. This provides it with the ability to find the prey without moving and giving away his location.

They are excellent predators, feeding on anything they can catch, such as flies, beetles, crickets, moths, and grasshoppers. I have read reports of larger species of tropical mantids that will eat other animals, such as lizards, frogs, or even hummingbirds.

Autumn is the mating season for mantises and while sexual cannibalism may occur the National Geographic says sexual cannibalism occurs only about 30% of the time. The females of the species may kill and consume males after or during mating. The cannibalism may be advantageous for the female to gain a necessary energy boost before laying eggs. Females may produce more eggs after this large meal and the males die soon after mating regardless. After mating, female mantids deposit their eggs in a mass of foam that hardens into an egg case; the foam is called an ootheca that can hold up to 400 eggs. It dries to look much like styrofoam protecting the mantids so they may survive the winter as eggs and hatch in the spring as nymphs. The nymphs lacking wings resemble the adult insect and will molt many times prior to developing into a reproductive adult. The Praying Mantis completes one generation per year. In my garden, I often find an egg case when I am cutting down plants for the fall or early spring. I then move the ootheca to a safe location (a tree, or shrub) for spring hatching.



Their diet may include beneficial insects but they get their share of predators too. Locating the egg casings and later observing the insect making himself at home in my garden is a treat and a great learning opportunity. The mantises are always welcome in my garden. 🌿

**Next Meeting—September 18, 2024 @ 2p.m.  
At the OSU Extension Office—maybe on Zoom**

## New Master Gardener Volunteer Training

By Rylee Kay Puthoff, ANR Educator

### Cherry Defoliation May Not be Drought-Related

Rylee Kay Puthoff, ANR Educator

*Hello everyone! I will get all my news out of the way first, and then I have less serious business in another article! First, I apologize for not being at the meeting this month, I am currently running around Farm Science Review. I have never been before, but I am very excited! Secondly, I am offering CE (Continuing Education) credits for anyone who attends my Back to School Library Talks. The next one is on Monday the 23<sup>rd</sup> at Russia Community Library, and we will be discussing Native Trees.*

***This article was originally written 9/9/24 by Joe Boggs on the BYGL.***

Participants in the 2024 Ohio Plant Diagnostic Workshop held this past Friday in the OSU OARDC Secrest Arboretum in Wooster, OH, observed weeping cherries in various stages of defoliation. Leaves were turning an intense yellow and dropping from the trees.

Until recently, the Wooster region was suffering from droughty conditions; however, the defoliation of the cherry trees was not related to lack of water. The leaf loss is the parting shot of **Cherry Leaf Spot** caused by the fungus, *Blumeriella jaapii*. The fungal pathogen was formerly known as *Coccomyces hiemalis* and the disease is sometimes called “Coccomyces Leaf Spot” in older literature.

Other common names for the disease are **Yellow Leaf** owing to the chlorosis that appears on heavily infected leaves and **Shothole Disease** derived from the holes that commonly appear in the leaves. Both illustrate that disease symptom development is a dynamic process with symptoms changing over time.

Holes in leaves are commonly associated with leaf-feeding insects. However, the holes produced by the cherry leaf spot fungus provide a good example of *symptom progression* with symptoms changing in a somewhat predictable way over time. The dead (necrotic) tissue produced by the cherry leaf spot fungal infections contracts as it dries out causing the necrotic tissue to separate and eventually drop from the leaves to produce holes. This symptom progression isn't confined to cherry leaf spot.

The cherry defoliation is indeed related to environmental conditions; however, they occurred much earlier in the season. The fungus overwinters in fallen infected leaves. Infectious spores are produced in the spring and ideal **environmental conditions** that support heavy infection are **heavy rainfall** and **cool temperatures**.

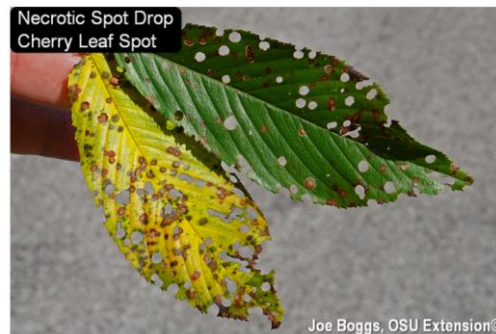
Cherry leaf spot can be devastating for orchardists in the Midwest with defoliation of sweet and sour cherries sometimes occurring in mid-summer. Spray programs are

required to avoid serious losses in production and to protect tree health.

However, the disease is mostly a curiosity on ornamental and woodland cherries. The leaf spots may develop early in the season, but leaf yellowing and leaf loss don't occur until late in the season after the trees have produced and stored enough carbohydrates to support leaf production the following season. Indeed, we're close to the time of the year when we see normal fall leaf drop. The late-season defoliation means fungicide applications aren't needed to protect the health of ornamental cherries. Of course, leaf yellowing and heavy defoliation can affect aesthetics. Leaf infections next year can be reduced by raking and destroying leaves shed this season.

On a final note, the images on BYGL article provide anecdotal evidence that some cherries may be less susceptible. The first image was taken last season and shows a grafted weeping cherry with a topknot of stems sprouting from the rootstock. The second image was taken a few weeks ago and shows leaves on the sprouts from the root stock that are heavily infected by the cherry leaf spot fungus while the leaves on the scion show little evidence of fungal infections.

[see BYGL 9/9/24 article for extensive subject referenced photos: [Cherry Defoliation May Not be Drought-Related | BYGL \(osu.edu\)](#)]



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## Coordinator's comments

By Doug Benson

It's difficult to find much good to say about the weather. We need rain badly, but it doesn't look like we're going to get much help from Francine. About the only positive thing is that at least we had some cool days and nights that let us save some money on the air conditioning. I've been replenishing my rain barrel with well water and then using it to keep my peppers and zucchini alive. My one tomato plant is producing a few tomatoes, but they're not nearly as large as what they should be. Given what the farmers are facing, I guess I really shouldn't be complaining.

I stopped up and visited Dave on Monday. His recuperation from bypass surgery is going quite well. Weather permitting, he goes out and walks around his driveway to get some exercise. At this point in time, he is not permitted to drive because of the risk of an accident disrupting the healing of the wound. He is really eager to resume cardio rehabilitation at the hospital.

Our master gardening activities are rapidly winding down for the year. By the time you read this, we will have had our last library seminar. Thanks to Teresa and the other members of the committee, our series was a great success. I will be sending out a survey to the people on the mailing list as well as our members to get their input about the series and what they might want for next year. If you have suggestions about topics and/or speakers, please pass that on to Teresa or other members of the committee so that we can begin planning for next year.

The hotline continues to get sporadic calls, many of which are dealing with trees and especially apple trees for some reason. We still have a few more dates left in September for people to sign up and get some volunteer credit; you can do that on the HOC. Once again, a reminder to those of you who have signed up to work on the hotline or the county fair, be sure that you go back into HOC and give yourself credit for the time you spent.

As with our home gardens, the Memorial Garden has presented some challenges because of the lack of rain. It's been especially difficult to get some of the new plantings established and survive. Both Rylee Kay and I have watered the garden on occasion just to keep the plants alive. As usual, many of the weeds have survived in spite of the lack of rain. Many of the flowers that have bloomed still need to be deadheaded, so if you have a spare hour sometime, stop in and help with that. It would be greatly appreciated. As in the past, we will schedule a major fall cleanup at some point in time probably sometime toward late October, so be watching for the call.

Our annual fall banquet is coming up in about four weeks on October the 16<sup>th</sup>. You should have received an email with the information about the reservations, the cost, the menu, and everything about the banquet. Reservations are

due by September 27<sup>th</sup> and should be sent to Linda Jennings at the address on the reservation form. The cost of the meal is \$28 per person, and checks should be made payable to OSU Extension. Even if you're unable to attend the banquet, please return the RSVP along with your \$20 for 2025 dues. Both your dues and the meal charge may be written in one check. If you want, you can bring your rsvp form and your check to the meeting next week. I hope that many of you will be able to attend the banquet. It's always a good time, and the food is excellent.

Speaking of the meeting next week, remember that one of the major activities will be the selection of new officers. Please consider serving as an officer in the organization. None of the positions requires a whole lot of work, but the organization will function much better with leadership. Plus, you can get volunteer credit for those things that you do as an officer.

Several activities will be occurring at the state level soon. Farm Science Review at London, Ohio, will be occurring this coming week the 17<sup>th</sup> through the 19<sup>th</sup>. There will be a number of continuing education opportunities available. The state Master Gardener organization will be having its virtual state conference on October 24<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup>. The schedule and registration information should be forthcoming within the next week or so. Also, plans are being made for the next series of webinars to take place throughout the late fall in the winter. And don't forget, you can find a list of previous webinars to use either for continuing education credit or just for your own edification by going to the state Master Gardener website. That website address is [MasterGardener.osu.edu](http://MasterGardener.osu.edu).

Jacob Winters and Rylee Kay are working to put together a training class that will be held in Wapak starting sometime in January. They are planning an orientation/information session on Thursday, September the 26<sup>th</sup>. If you know of someone who is interested in taking the master gardener training, please have him or her get in touch with me, Rylee Kay or Jacob. The training will be in-person and occur on evenings and a few Saturdays; they will not be using the online materials. Having the training will be dependent upon getting sufficient enrollment. Whether Sessions will be open to current master gardener volunteers has not been determined yet; so stay tuned.

This article has turned out to be a lot longer than I expected. When I first sat down to start it, I thought it would only be a couple of paragraphs. In closing, I want to remind you to be sure you get your volunteer and continuing education hours entered in the HOC before the end of the year. If you need help with HOC, give me a call and we'll see how we can get it done. Finally, I want to thank you, the members, for all that you have done this year to help the Master Gardener program and the community that we serve. I hope to see you at the meeting next week and at the banquet next month. In the meantime, pray for rain! 🌧️

## A “Few” Words About My Tomatoes

By Ann Heeley

This year, I started way too many tomato plants. I started all of them from seed and wound up giving many of them away. I still kept too many. In fact, I’ve been foisting tomatoes upon anyone who even expresses a minor need. They’re all heirlooms, meaning I can save the seeds, and when/if they germinate, they’ll look like their parent plants. Although I didn’t transplant them into proper containers until several weeks after I should have, they are now going gangbusters. I kept them watered, fed, and babied using shredded newspapers as mulch. Luckily, I also caged them since all but one plant is growing over the 5-foot cage. The only problem I’ve had is remembering the names of the red varieties. Yes, I labeled them, but the labels have sunk down into the containers, and I can’t find them.

Chapman tomatoes are indeterminate; they continue to produce all season. They’re large (about 1 ½ lbs.) and sort of flattened with bulging sections. Although the flavor is good--slightly sweet—the shape of the tomato makes it difficult to get clean, round slices. Some of them developed catfacing, a condition that causes irregular growth that doesn’t affect the flavor. They’re good in salads, sliced in wedges, but I don’t plan on growing them again.



*Chapman*

Great White tomatoes are one of my favorites, and I grow them every year. They are huge—usually 2+ lbs. each—with yellowish-white flesh and low acidity. Since Great Whites are so heavy, they definitely need to be caged for support. Nice and round, one tomato will cover 6 to 8 hamburgers with no problem. Fruit production is on the low side, and they take a long time to mature, so I’ll need to remember to get them out earlier next year.



*Great White*

I thought, according to the seed packet, that I was planting Amish Paste tomato seeds. I’ve grown them in the past, and they’re a type of Roma that is very large and meaty. They make excellent sauce. However, my plant turned out to be a dwarf version of Amish Paste. The vining plant itself is enormous, but each fruit is only 2 ½ to 3 inches long, a miniature of the true heirloom. I wrote to the company that sold me the seeds, but I haven’t yet heard back from them.



*Amish Paste*

I'm very happy with the Heinz tomato which I had never tried before. Developed in 1963 by the H.J. Heinz Company, this tomato is good for canning, eating fresh, making sauce, or for use in dishes that include cooked tomatoes. My plant has produced over 50 tomatoes, and it isn't anywhere close to stopping. It's supposed to be a determinate tomato, but my plant isn't playing by the rules. Heinz tomatoes are almost perfectly round and weigh around 6 oz. They haven't cracked, split, developed catfacing, or ripened unevenly. They are the perfect, bright red grocery store tomato with far superior flavor. This variety is a definite winner in my book.



*Heinz*

Mandarin Cross is a Japanese heirloom that I plan to plant again, too. Each slightly oblong tomato is about 10 -12 oz. with orange flesh and low acidity. Although my plant isn't very prolific, I think I used a too-small container that constricted its size and productivity. It's delicious sliced or cut in wedges with a little olive oil, white balsamic vinegar, salt and pepper, and feta cheese.



*Mandarin Cross*

Last, but not least, are my purple tomato plants from seeds that were developed by Norfolk Healthy Produce (California) in conjunction with Norfolk Plant Sciences (Norwich, UK). Seeds were offered to the public for the first time in December, 2023, and I bought some. They are inbred heirlooms: large, bioengineered cherry tomatoes with purple skin and purple flesh. Two genes from snapdragons give them their purple color. Purple tomatoes have the highest level of antioxidants per pound of any fruit or vegetable. And they taste great! They are a vining tomato, but the size of each plant can be kept smaller by pruning. I haven't pruned mine, and they are climbing all over their neighbors—which is fine since they're providing shade from the hot sun. They grow in clusters like grapes, starting out green and eventually darkening to a deep purple. They are ready to harvest when no green can be seen and they are slightly soft. In spite of a huge abundance of leaves, these plants seem to be very disease resistant. They also keep on the kitchen counter for a few weeks without spoiling. I've used Purple tomatoes in combination with the Heinz, Great White, and Mandarin Cross for a colorful tomato salad that looks as good as it tastes. Since they're inbred, the seeds can be saved for next year, which I plan to do. Meanwhile, I can't keep up with the harvest, and I give away more than I can use.



*Purple tomatoes*

I grew several other types of tomatoes, too (Kellogg's Breakfast, Dwarf Pink Passion, Super Marmande, Bush Beefsteak, and Big Beef), but they either died or disappeared when I wasn't watching. If you took home any of the extra tomato plants I brought to a Master Gardener meeting that was held at Agape, I'd be interested in hearing how your plants fared. 🍅

**Starting Fresh This Fall, and a Request for Help!**  
**Rylee Kay Puthoff, ANR Educator**

I know, I am putting out two articles this month, but this article is a little more personal, and I wanted to put out the other article as an informational post. As some of you know, I purchased my first house a few weeks ago. It is very much a fixer-upper and still needs a lot of love. One of the things I learned while talking to the neighbors, is that the last owner had mulberry trees/bushes growing all over the property. It was so bad, that even the mail lady said she could barely get to the mailbox on the front porch!

By the time I saw and purchased the house, the management company had taken all the mulberries down and mulched the beds over. Currently, all that is growing is new mulberries, so I get the joy of starting a new garden from scratch! I know it is time to plant bulbs and other spring plants, and if anyone has some bulbs, they would like to get rid of, let me know! I am also accepting any planting or planning advice you have! Most of the beds are on the east side of the house under a giant silver maple. So, if you have any shade plant recommendations, let me know! I am excited to start something new and have my own garden to talk to the rest of you about.

Reach out to me if you have anything you would like to get rid of or stop by the office to give me some advice! I love to have visitors!

Have a great month and see you in October! 🌿



*Danica winter color changes on the tips*

Foundation shrub alternative to boxwood  
Danica Arborvitae “Thuja occidentalis ‘Danica’  
By Carol Strayer



This landscape shrub, Danica arborvitae, is globe shaped and has a mounding growth habit. Requires full sun, six + hours of direct sun. Keep soil moist the first year. Space 18-24” apart. Average mature size is 18-24” H x 18-24” W. Cold hardy -30 to 30° F.

Lowe’s carries this plant in the spring and they usually sell out fairly fast. The plant can be found in a couple of container sizes; the one I like for cost comes in 1.5G container and sells for \$22.98 as of 2024.

Danicas are a little slow growing but they are not going to get very big anyway. The best feature of this plant is that you are not going to have to trim it every year unlike what you have to do with boxwoods.

Keep in mind that Lowe’s as well as other stores selling globe shaped arborvitae have other varieties that seem similar but read the label to see what the mature size will be. You may not want a 3’ x 3’ or larger but may prefer a smaller more compact 2’ x 2’ plant like the Danica.

You can plant in a group of three plants or in line with building foundation. Maintain space from the building and keep space between each plant at minimum of 24” from outer edge of the expected growth of 2’ x 2’ to the outer edge of the next plant. It looks more pleasing to see your mulch around and between each plant instead of plants touching each other.

Tip: Lowe’s offers a 1-year guarantee. To claim any refund, you must present the sales slip, plant label from container and the dead plant within a year of purchase. 🌿

## The Year of the Monarch

By Teresa Freisthler



wasn't disappointed!

In June, I taught about butterflies at the Conservation Day Camp with the help of Marily, Cheryl, and Becky. When Becky brought her butterfly house, I knew I had to have one! It was a great purchase.

As the summer wore on, I would go to the milkweed plants looking at their blooms hoping to find at least a monarch egg. It was the middle of August until I noticed anything. I found about eight caterpillars eating the leaves. I didn't want to put all the caterpillars into the little



house, so I chose four, and left the other four on the plants outside. I put several sprigs of milkweed in a vase of water, with the caterpillars on the milkweed and let the caterpillars feed. Boy did they eat! Then, the frass came! Lots of it! I had to carefully clean out the house and add more milkweed without the

caterpillars escaping.

In a few days, one of the caterpillars climbed to the top of the house and made a J shape. The next day I found a green chrysalis hanging on the top of the house. Within several days, the three remaining caterpillars made their chrysalises. One made it on the bottom of the cage instead of the top. After about ten days, the first chrysalis became transparent, and a



butterfly emerged. I let it in the cage several hours for the wings to dry. When it started flying around in the cage, I opened the cage and let it out. It stayed in my hand before it flew to some nearby flowers, and then flew to a tree. It stayed in the tree for a while. The others emerged on following days.

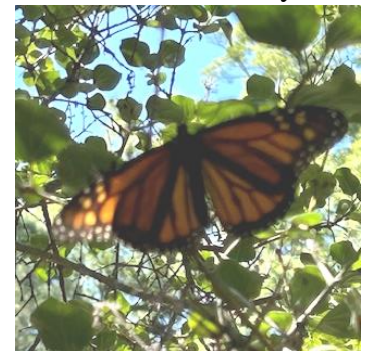
As I watched them in the butterfly house, it seemed like it took them awhile to get used to having wings. They would climb along the sides and top of the house,



probably not knowing their wings would let them fly. They finally gained enough confidence and flew around in the cage. I let them do that for a while, and then opened the cage to set them

free. It was such a rewarding experience to watch them fly away! All four survived to fly away!

I don't know what happened to the ones I left on the milkweed outside. I never found their chrysalises hanging anywhere. I would like to think they made it also. I did see monarchs flying this September, and hoped they were the ones that got their start here. This is going to be an annual project for me. I hope I will have more milkweed plants and more butterflies in the future! 🍀



[Butterfly cages can be purchased on Amazon. The cage that Teresa used measured 15.5 W x 15.5 L x 23.5 inches H. Amazon has other size selections as well.]

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