

Shelby County Master Gardener

OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY EXTENSION



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Program Coordinator's comments

By Doug Benson

As I sit here talking to my computer, I'm amazed at how far technology has come in such a short period of time. It's a good thing that it has advanced so much because my typing skills have gone completely out the window. When I try to type anymore, I have mistakes in about every three or four words out of five. Now, when I dictate my thoughts, about the only mistakes that I have to correct may be punctuation or once in a great while a misunderstood word. I wish it were as easy to take care of my lawn and my garden as it is to do this writing.

As we will report at the meeting next week, our plans for the cut flower workshop in July are progressing rapidly. We have the program planned, and we have most of the speakers lined up. We're in the process of ordering supplies. Rylee Kay submitted promotional posters and information about the program to the university's branding department, and they approved the designs; so we can begin to publicize the program. We'll begin by distributing the announcement of the program along with registration information to Master Gardener organizations statewide using the state's list serve. Hopefully, we will get a number of Master Gardeners from the area to take part in the program. After about a week, we'll begin to publicize the program to the public using various sources such as Facebook postings and the newspaper and radio. There will be a limit of 50 registrations accepted. We will have the details next week at the meeting.

We made progress on the Memorial Garden clean up couple of weeks ago.



However, due to the limited number of volunteers that were available, we still have work to do. Additionally,

we still need to figure out a way to have ongoing maintenance of the garden. Right now, the garden really looks good as the enclosed picture will show. The predominant color right now is purple or various shades

of purple. The azalea that Sonnie Bernardi donated to honor her late husband Bob is in full bloom and really looks good. I sent her a picture of the shrub last week and she was very grateful. I'm sure that Ann will have more to say about continuing renovations of the garden, and we will again take up the issue of maintenance.

Earlier today, I sent out a reminder that we need help with the Hotline. Right now, only about six dates between now and the end of June are covered. And no one has signed up for July through September, but that's not that big a deal right now. We are not currently overwhelmed by calls, but they do come in sporadically. Rylee Kay and I have been handling almost all of the calls thus far, but we really could use some help. For those of you who are uncomfortable with the process of diagnosing problems and offering suggestions, I strongly encourage you to think about attending one of the diagnostic workshops that's coming up in the near future. I've sent out announcements about the nearest ones which are in Dayton and Columbus early in June. They are all-day sessions that include classroom-learning activities in the morning and then afternoon diagnostic practice using samples the instructors have brought in. From experience, I found that if you can get one or two other Master Gardeners to go with you, you can work in pairs or groups doing the diagnostics. It really helps you learn together. I usually try to go every year, but due to various doctor's appointments and other things this summer, I'm not sure if I'll be able to go. If I do go, you're welcome to go along with me.

I understand that the wildflower walk at Sandy Czajka's was quite interesting, though not very many were able to attend due to previous commitments. I wanted to go, but I was having my annual eye checkup and had my pupils dilated right about the same time that the walk took place. Perhaps some of you who did attend will be able to speak about your experience at the meeting next week. And I thank Sandy for having hosted the walk.

And just some miscellaneous topics - I don't have anything to report about the Shelby County Fair at this time as we have not yet had a meeting. The hydroponic experiment in Mercer County that involved the Head Start classes didn't go very well. Hoping to be able to

(Continued to page 2)

Next Meeting: May 21 at 2 pm
& on Zoom, at OSU Extension

(Continuation of Program Coordinator comments.)

have some produce to eat before the school year was over; we decided to use spinach because it has a fairly fast growth period. Unfortunately, none of the seeds germinated. We thought we followed the proper protocols by soaking the seeds and then planting them in the little pods, but something went wrong. At least the classes still have the kits so perhaps they can start over again next fall. Our library seminars continue to be successful. Last week Ann did a wonderful job talking about various new plants, and I personally found her first part where she explained how new plants are developed quite interesting. We have three programs done with three more to go. I'm pleased that we're getting quite a bit of interest from non-Master Gardeners.

I'll end this report the same way as I always do by encouraging you to continue to report your volunteer and continuing it hours using Hands On Connect. Continue to check BYGL for the latest updates about what's happening in the world of horticulture around the state of Ohio, and keep an eye on your own garden. Keep well, and I hope to see you at the meeting next week! 🌱

Growing Your Garden For Cut Flowers By: Rylee Kay Puthoff and the Planning Committee



I am happy to roll out the announcement that the committee established at our last meeting has brought you a program ready for registration! They have been hard at work, and I encourage you all to attend. For supply and cost reasons, we are capping the program off at 50 people. I will be handing out flyers at the May meeting, and I encourage you to post them wherever possible! I would like to see great attendance at the program. Thanks once again to everyone who volunteered their time and leadership skills to make this happen! (See copy of the program flyer on last page of this newsletter). 🌱

Spruce® Weed and Grass Killer: Efficient or Hoax? By Rylee Kay Puthoff, ANR Educator



Early last week, I spoke to Missy and Judy (thank you for working the hotline!) and lamented to them that I could not find a topic to write about for the newsletter this month. We then discussed weed control, and Judy mentioned how she had been using Spruce with great results. I had never heard of it before, so I decided to research how the product worked. For anyone interested, here is what I found.

Spruce is the common name for a weed and grass herbicide (meaning it is nonselective and will kill any plant it touches). It has been advertised online and on

television as being safe for pets and children in 10 minutes, and will have proven results in one hour. While I have yet to see this work in person, I am going to trust in the folks who have given it a positive review. It comes in a clear, plastic jug, one of their many marketing plugs, and in several different sizes.

Per their website, as well as the official label listed with the EPA, there are a few active ingredients. Geraniol, a common essential oil found in citronella, roses, and other flowers, will disrupt cell membranes, allowing the next ingredient to do its job. Cornmint oil, high in menthol (mint), will dehydrate the plant by pulling water out of the cells. Sodium lauryl sulfate is another ingredient that helps hold the product together and remove water from the cells, and is commonly found in toothpaste, soaps, and sometimes food.

There are about 6 other ingredients, half of which hold the product together and reduce separation of the essential oils from other products, and the others to balance the pH, making it safe for human and pet touch. Some notable ingredients include isopropyl alcohol (rubbing alcohol) and urea. Urea is a common fertilizer, but in this case, it is used to stabilize the formula of the product and is used in small enough amounts that it is unlikely to cause the weed to grow.

How the product works is that it will coat the leaves of the plant. The geraniol will remove the waxy coating that the plants have on their leaves. The remaining ingredients will enter the leaves, pulling out the water and rupturing cell walls. This induces a very quick reaction of the plant wilting because it has no ability to hold onto water through its cells anymore.

While I do not know how long-lasting the impacts of this treatment are, the ingredients and the science behind the product suggest that it will certainly provide a short-term solution. The products, which are listed on their website, individually are not typically toxic. But I would not recommend using this product as a mouth or face wash. It is mentioned on the Safety Data Sheet (SDS) that it is incredibly flammable and can cause blindness if the product contacts the eyes.

Again, I have not used this product personally, and everything listed here is taken from data sheets, web searches, or medical documentation. For the sake of keeping the article short, I will not include my references, but if you would like me to show you where I pulled my information from, please reach out to me and I will gladly share that with you! 🌱

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Wildflower Walk in Sandy Czajka's Woods

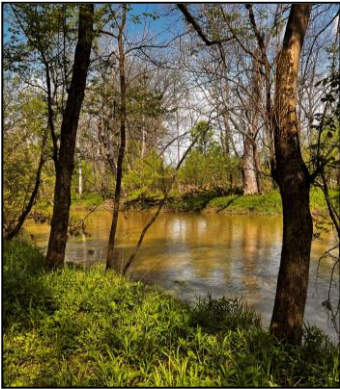
By Jill Dickman

On Friday, May 2nd, new Shelby County MGV Sandy Czajka, opened her woods and gardens to our group and the Miami County MGV group for a 'Wildflower Walk' in her approximate 100-acre woods. Sandy and her friend, Yvonne Cecil, of the Miami County



MGV group were very knowledgeable of the woods and the 30+ different varieties of wildflowers they have previously identified as growing therein. The rolling woods runs along Loramie Creek, which provides even more beauty and support of fauna, birds, insects and other wildlife.

At the beginning of the walk, the path is wide enough for a vehicle to drive along – this was easily walkable. Then the path narrows and we navigated a hill leading to Loramie Creek (some may need assistance traveling down the hill for a short time). The path is mowed regularly and becomes once again easy to navigate. The return trip up to the house is a meandering walk slightly uphill.



On our walk, we spotted several new varieties of wildflowers that had not been previously identified in Sandy's woods:

- Cup Plant (*Silphium perfoliatum*)
- Nodding Rattlesnake Root (*Nabalus crepdineus*)
(Both are in the Asteraceas family)

We saw a small field of Twinleaf (*Jeffersonia diphylla* – in the Barberry family) that is uncommon in our area. It is named after President Thomas Jefferson, has two identical leaves (hence its common name), grows 12 – 18 inches tall, and has star-like white flowers with 8 petals. It had already flowered by the date of our walk. Twinleaf is also known as the Rheumatism-Root plant. It was used medicinally by Native Americans for treatment of dropsy, urinary ailment, gall and diarrhea. They also used it to make poultices for sores and ulcers.

Next year, Sandy hopes to offer two or three April and May dates when different wildflowers are in bloom, such as the Twinleaf.

Thank you, Sandy, for a wonderful guided walk through your beautiful woods and property. I hope more SCMGV members can enjoy one of the walks in 2026. 🌿

Cup Plant



Nodding
Rattlesnake
Root



Twinleaf
Liatris



MORE VILLAINOUS PLANTS AND SOME ALTERNATIVES

By Ann Heeley

Last month, I laid out some of my least favorite plants and some better alternatives. Here are some more.



Trumpet Vine (*Clematis radicans*): Those of you who have grown this tropical-looking vine know how much hummingbirds and bees love it. Those of you who have never grown it don't realize how invasive it will become. That's because trumpet vines don't know when to quit. Their roots form networks that can extend both above and below ground for quite a distance. If you trim this plant and leave only a ½-inch piece laying on the soil, it will take root and quickly begin to grow into a new plant. It can damage driveways, sidewalks, and sturdy structures...like your home. It can also reproduce from seed. Double whammy. The flowers are gorgeous, but so are the flowers of any of these red clematises that enjoy full to part sun:



'Ernest Markham' – 10-12'; Zones 4-9; long bloom period; large flowers



'Rebecca' – 6-8'; Zones 4-10; rebloom in the fall



'Nubia' – 3-5'; Zones 4-10; rebloom in the fall



Lamb's Ear (*Stachys byzantia*): You can see this plant in our Memorial Garden at the Extension Office. It seems to pop up where it wasn't seen in the prior year, and then it begins growing into the grassy area. Lamb's Ear can be quite aggressive and invasive when it crowds out other plants in our garden with its creeping stems. Like many invasives, digging out the plant, making sure to remove every single piece of root, is a constant struggle. Repeat applications of a broad-leaf herbicide may be more successful. If you like the looks of Lamb's Ear, but don't want the hassle, these two silver-leafed plants may be better choices:



Edelweiss 'Matterhorn' (*Leontopodium alpinum*) – 4-10"; white flowers May to June and again August and September; Full sun; Zones 4-10. Make sure not to purchase *Leontopodium nivale*, a short-lived perennial with a much shorter bloom time.



Artemisia 'Silver Mound' – Grown for its silvery, needle-like foliage; 10-14" in a mound; full sun and well-drained soil. If it starts to open up in the center, prune down to 5-6" and it will grow back quickly. Don't prune down to the ground in the fall.



Ostrich Fern (*Matteuccia struthiopteris*) – This clump-forming fern with its rambling, intrusive rhizomes will stop at nothing to continue past their boundaries. With lots of moisture, they spread quickly and invade other shade-loving plants. With dry soil, they start to turn brown, keel over, and look rather ratty. There are so many other ferns that are much more attractive, such as:



Japanese Painted Fern (*Anisocampium niponicum* 'Pictum') – This particular variety was developed by Monrovia and used to be called *Athyrium niponicum*. I believe it's the variety we have in the shady area next to the double doors in our Memorial Garden. It is widely available for Zones 4-8.



Christmas Fern (*Polystichum acrostichoides*) - This one has stiff waxy leaves and reaches 1-2' in height, but is not invasive. It thrives in soil that is drier than most ferns require and is evergreen. Zones 3-10; full shade.

Slugs love to feed on newly-emerging fern fronds, so you might try sprinkling slug bait in the early spring as young fronds begin to peek out. For other fern alternatives, check out <https://www.fancyfronds nursery.com/ferns>.



Last, but certainly not least, is my greatest nemesis: The Chameleon Plant (*Houttuynia cordata*). Why nurseries are allowed to sell this plant is a total mystery to me since evil lurks where the Chameleon plant grows—and it grows in sun or shade, dry or wet soil. It is more invasive than any plant I've ever seen, and that includes Lily of the Valley and Obedient Plant. It likes to wrap its brittle roots around the roots of nearby desirable plants, making it difficult to eradicate. I'm still finding baby Chameleons sprouting after 3 years of digging and using undiluted herbicides. ANYTHING would be a better alternative, although in a sunny area, I would use...



Creeping Thyme (*Thymus praecox*) – This Zone 4-8 perennial handles foot traffic, smothers weeds, and has purplish-pink flowers from June to September. It prefers dry, sandy soil after it's established. With a height of only 3" or so, it will spread, but not invasively, and it's easy to pinch or prune back if it starts to grow where you don't want it. It also smells good! I had it in my previous garden, and it was such a reliable ground cover, I'm going to look for it again. Don't confuse it with woolly thyme. Woolly thyme can't handle much moisture or humidity at all, and with the rain we get in the spring and fall, it quickly turns to brown mush with fungal décor.

With the plant swap coming up at our May meeting, I promise not to bring any of the above offenders. Please feel free to share plants and tips on what to plant and what to avoid. Happy Spring! 🌱

Memorial Garden Storage

By Carol Strayer



We have added a storage box, which was donated to hold our growing collection of gardening gear. The box will be next to the watering hose and faucet, which is in a somewhat hidden area of the garden. We will be able to keep tools, plant labels, garbage bags, buckets, gloves, sprinkling can and sprinkler, rake, broom and lawn chemicals organized and out of viewer eyesight. Goal would to have everything needed to do any garden maintenance. This will make it easy for our Members to stop by anytime, even after hours for whatever time they can spare to do a little weeding, deadheading or maintenance.

Consider donating any duplicate or spare used or “new” gardening tools that are in good condition.



Since we want members to be able to use them in maintaining the memorial garden, please donate only tools in good condition. Before donating make sure tool is sharpened and oiled. Won't be able

to except anything longer than 56” to fit in the box. I think our basic needs would be for trowels, by-pass pruners--both hand and longer handled ones, shrubbery shears, small pruning saw, hand-weed puller tool and a “D” handle pointed shovel.

Bring your donations to the next membership meeting on May 21 and just place your items directly in the box. The box will be locked up later and you will be given the code at the next meeting. 🌿



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My Favorite Garden Tool

Submitted by Janet Nelson

Hello MGV friends. Hope you are making progress in your gardening. Currently, my knees are dirty, my hands are aching and my neighbors get to laugh at my “butt scooting” around the yard.

Do you have a favorite gardening tool? We appreciate a tool that can perform multiple tasks, be lightweight and be tough enough to stand many years. Each person's favorite matches the need they have in the garden. Mine favorite is this tool. (Not sure what it is officially called.) The triangular blade is made of steel and has been re-welding at least once. The tool is 18 inches long giving an extended reach. It works wonderful for weeding, creating rows, digging small holes, cultivating between plans, and making the “ditch” between grass and flowerbeds.

Enjoy the beautiful weather. It is time to get back to the garden chores. Happy Gardening! 🌿





DATE
Wednesday, July 9th, 2025

TIME
9:00 am - 12:00 p.m.

LOCATION
Clopay Building,
Shelby Co. Fairgrounds
655 S. Highland Ave. Sidney
OH 45365

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Growing Your Garden for Cut Flowers

Join us for a hands-on journey into the world of cut flowers — learn what to plant in your garden for beautiful blooms all season long, study the art of drying flowers to preserve their beauty, get creative with a fun and engaging dried flower activity, and explore the basics of floral design. Then, put your skills to the test and make your own stunning floral arrangements to take home. Whether you're a budding gardener or a flower enthusiast, this program is your all-in-one guide to growing, drying, and designing with flowers!

PROGRAM COST: \$20 for public, \$15 for Master Gardener Volunteers

For more information, visit go.osu.edu/shelbyflower