

Shelby County Master Gardener

OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY EXTENSION



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President's comments

The Scenic Way Home

By Nancy Russell



The official start of spring is now three days old as I write the April President's comments. Already there are awakening and emerging plant growth, especially daffodils at

my house, that one would believe it is more like the middle of April. With the recent trend of warming temperatures in the upper 50's to near 80 degrees the grass is green, pollen counts for trees are high (I suffer from that), and the daffodils are in full bloom. If I was still teaching I would have had to adjust the timing of my route as I took "the scenic way home."

As all of you know when you worked, there were certain ways you took to arrive home. Maybe even an alternative route that you took when traffic was backed up because of an accident, stalled car, or construction, whatever the reason. I did, too. In fact, I had three routes I took from school: my usual route, my bad weather route, and my scenic route. My usual route was the quickest way home. The bad weather route involved avoiding the steep and curving road south out of Port Jefferson and driving the long way using Route 47. My favorite route, however, I took only this time of year, my scenic route.

My scenic route was saved for Friday afternoons in April. It was a road less traveled except for the farmers who lived along there, school buses, and now me. Once my day was done at school, I would turn north on Johnston-Slagle Road from Dingman-Slagle Road and head to Port Jefferson. Once on Johnston-Slagle, I would slow my drive so I could look for the wheat crop greening in the fields. Some of the trees were starting to show their wakening up colors from a long winter, lime greens and darkest of reds. As I traveled on, hoping a fast-driving high schooler didn't catch me, I was looking for three different stands of rising daffodils. When I eventually found them, I remembered what my Grandma Rauch once told me, "When you see daffodils standing alone, someone used to live nearby." She would go on to explain that the woman of the house or cabin would plant daffodils to brighten up her otherwise drab house and welcome spring. Remembering that I would think

about those women whose homes were now gone, but their presence still lives on.

So sometime this spring take "the scenic route home" and look for things that bring you hope and joy. Welcome spring, everyone! 🌱

Coordinator's comments

By Doug Benson



Our roller coaster weather continues to present challenges. It's difficult enough for us humans to deal with temperature swings of 40° and 50° in the same week, but at least we can easily adjust our wardrobes and the temperature in our homes. Plants don't have it that easy; once those buds break dormancy, there's no going back. Last month, I wrote a little bit about phenology and growing degree-days (GDD), and I think you're going to read more about it in this newsletter. When enough of those warm days accumulate insect eggs are going to hatch and buds on trees and flowers are going to flower. At that point they are vulnerable to frost or freezing temperatures. The unusual number of warm days during March put many plants ahead of their usual schedule. Thus, they are more vulnerable to very cold nights. We may be able to help some of the smaller plants, but for trees just hope, they're tough.

On to the work of Shelby County Master Gardeners. We had a very productive meeting last month in Celina. We covered several topics, and I will be distributing a copy of the minutes for you to peruse sometime later this week or early next week. Following the business meeting, Dr. Gary Gao, Extension specialist in fruit production, gave an interesting talk that focused primary on preparation of the growing bed and composition of soil for fruit production. Thanks to Ryan McMichael for hosting the program and providing snacks. I don't know if anyone attended the evening program that Dr. Gao gave, but if you did, you might summarize for us what he talked about. (continued to page 2)

**April 15 Membership Meeting at
The OSU Extension Office at 2:00 p.m.**

(Coordinator comments continued from page 1)

Contrary to what we originally announced, our April 15th meeting will be in the big room at the Extension office. A change of schedule made the room available. The rest of the meetings will also be at the Extension office. Two topics on the agenda will be signing up for the hotline and determining how we will handle maintenance of the Memorial Garden. It's been suggested that we try what we did last year - that is, have an individual or small group sign up for a week or two. If we decide to go that route again, we will have sign-ups for that activity. We also need to decide if we're going to do flash talks again this year. To speed things along please check your calendar to see when you might be able to sign up for one or more of these activities.

Our library series has faced some challenges. With memories of the storms including the tornadoes that occurred two years ago during Jim's presentation, we thought it best to cancel our March program which was to feature Amanda Hurley talking about using native plants. As it turned out, we probably could have gotten through the program, but people would have faced driving in the storms on their way home. I've talked with Amanda, and there is no time that we can reschedule her program for this year; but she says she definitely wants to give the presentation next year. Therefore, that's one program we'll have on the agenda.

Ann's and Conelia's April 23 program, "Let's Get Potted," has its complications too. Reacting to a neighbor's dog, Ann's dog caused her to fall, resulting in a broken leg that had to be surgically repaired. Thus, Ann is out of commission until sometime in May. Fortunately, Teresa has agreed to present Ann's portion of the program. I encourage you to come and support Teresa and Conelia in their presentation. Also, Judy needs your suggestions of gardening "hacks," shortcuts and tips to make working in the garden easier. Just be sure that anything you suggest is supported by research.

Teresa and Conelia presentation on April 23 "Let's Get Potted"

A few final announcements: I have nominated Marily Schweitzer for a 2026 Outstanding Master Gardener Volunteer Award and our 2025 Library Series for an Outstanding Master Gardener Volunteer Project Award. Winners will be announced during the virtual State Conference in October. I do not yet have dates and locations for the diagnostic clinics this summer. And, my last comment as always: keep recording your hours in Hands on Connect. 🌱

How a Broken Leg Affects Gardening

By Ann Heeley

A week after surgery, the smiling and optimistic surgeon says to me, "In just 4 to 5 months, you'll be as good as new!" MONTHS?? That's the entire gardening season! The seeds that I carefully started, labeled, and watered that sat on heat mats with grow lights above? Goners. The caladiums that I started early so they'd be ready in June? Dehydrated now. The Anabelle hydrangea that should have been pruned way down? Growing like a weed that will surely flop over in May. The blueberries that I meant to replant in new containers with fresh, acid soil? Still in the same, old dirt. The annual seeds (zinnias, cosmos, nasturtium) that I saved last year? Maybe they'll be OK for 2027. The azaleas that I need to treat now for Azalea Lace Bug (*Stephanitis pyrioides*)? You're on your own, boys and girls. I'm the epitome of the lazy gardener just watching things grow...or not. However, I'm not asking for help. I'm using this opportunity to just sit back and see how Mother Nature takes care of things. It's not the end of the world—just the end of gardening for this year. And while I sit in my wheelchair and watch what happens, it will give me a chance to get up close and personal with no-maintenance gardening. Maybe I'll start a new trend. I'll let you know. 🌱



*Virginia Blue Bells blooming in the
MG Memorial Garden*

Spring woodland wild flowers

By Jill Dickman

My spring fever took me on a walk through the woods behind our house where I found these wildflowers in bloom or at least with new foliage. These wildflowers had not exposed themselves on walk a week or so ago, so I am heartened that maybe, just maybe, spring is in its way! iNaturalist 'Seek' identified them for me, and I researched a few more facts to share:

White Avens (*Geum canadense*) – Native



This perennial wildflower is in the rose family (Rosaceae) and is widespread across much of Canada, the United States, and Mexico. White Avens bloom in late spring/early summer on attractive, often evergreen, foliage. It can grow 1.5 to

2.5 feet tall, tolerates many soils, and is resistant to black walnut toxins. It can be used as a groundcover in low-traffic and shady areas.

Common Whitlow Grass (*Draba verna*) – Introduced?



This small early blooming winter annual in the mustard family is an important early nectar source for bees and disappears when the weather gets hot. It was once listed as being 'Introduced' from Europe but is now considered Native to both

continents.

Cut-Leaved Toothwort (*Cardamine concatenata*) – Native



Also called 'crow's toes', 'pepper root' or 'purple-flowered toothwort', this is a native in the Brassicaceae family and is a nectar source for early pollinators. It is named for to the tooth-like appearance of its rhizome.

Both the rhizome and the leaves are edible and have a spicy, peppery flavor. It is a perennial woodland wildflower native to eastern North America and is a spring ephemeral (lasts a very short time) and blooms in March, April, and/or May.

False Mermaid (*Floerkea proserpinacoides*) – Native



This tiny wildflower is native to many areas in North America and is found in moist, shady forest areas. It is an annual herb which grows on short stems which may lay flat on the ground or grow in clumps. Also known as 'false mermaid weed' and 'floerkea', it is the only species of plant (monotypic) in the meadowfoam family. The foliage is edible and can be added to salads and has a pungent flavor.

Virginia Spring Beauty (*Claytonia virginica*) – Native



This wildflower is all over my woods currently and is also known as eastern spring beauty, grass-flower and fairy spud. It is an herbaceous perennial in the Montiaceae (pussy paw) family with a range covering eastern North America. Its scientific name honors Colonial Virginia botanist John Clayton (1694-1773). This common, low-growing ephemeral has 5-petaled white or pale pink flowers with darker veins that close at night and on cloudy days. It grows from small underground corms in moist woods. This plant is edible, with a chestnut-like flavor. Historically, it was used medicinally for convulsions and eye problems.

Fawn Lilies (*Erythronium* spp.) - Native



Seek could not identify the exact species as its foliage was just starting to poke above the carpet of leaves covering the ground. However, they are spring-blooming ephemerals with mottled leaves resembling a fawn's coat. It is also sometimes called 'dogtooth violet' or 'adder's tongue'. Its lily-like flowers come in shades of white, yellow or pink on a leafless stalk with petals that may bend backward. The 'trout' lily, with yellow flowers, is common in eastern North America, whereas the 'fawn lily' with white, cream or pink flowers are common in western North America. 🌱

Cheating Your Zone: How to Overwinter Tender Plants

By Karen Seger

Zone envy is real! If you ever visited beautiful gardens in a climate warmer than yours and wished some of those plants would grow for you, you've experienced zone envy.

Plants that are healthy, robust, well-watered going into winter tend to be more resilient than those that aren't. So taking good care of your Plants during spring, summer and fall will pay off in the winter.

It might seem counterintuitive, but snow is one of the best insulating materials for your garden in winter. Air becomes trapped between snowflakes, and as they poke up, create a blanketing effect, and similar to feather down. It prevents the ground from freezing as deeply and helps to maintain a consistent soil temperature, which limits a freeze/thaw cycles that can be detrimental to plants.

Snow is helpful for a few more reasons in the garden. Stems and buds surrounded by snow are essentially cloaked in a down coat that protects them from cold, drying winter winds. Snow also provides a slow, steady source of moisture.

It's most beneficial when snow falls early in winter and sticks around, especially during the coldest days of the season, if a thick blanket of snow falls before the ground freezes and sticks around all winter, the soil may not freeze at all that year, and you'll have more borderline hardy plants overwinter as a result. Essentially, snow cover helps to cheat your zone.

Additionally, spreading 3-4 inches of mulch around the roots can help them tolerate winter cold. A chicken wire cage filled with leaves will also help. 🌱



Growing Degree Days

Rylee Kay Puthoff, ANR Educator

Hello Gardeners! I was debating giving you an update on my garden, which is full of tulips, daffodils, narcissus, crocuses, and grape hyacinth, but I thought it might be better to give you something educational instead.

I am sure many of you are aware of what a growing degree-day is, but today I want to discuss how to best use the Growing Degree Day (GDD) Calendar. GDD is a way to measure the temperature and how it affects the growth and development of plants and insects. OSU keeps a website that tracks the local GDD in your area. You just enter your zip code, and it will tell you how many growing degree-days you have so far.

Another amazing thing about the calendar is that it will describe which plants and insects are active at those times. Once your zip code is entered, it will tell you how many GDDs you have. On April 1, 2026, in Sidney, we had 237 GDDs. The number does not mean much on its own, but if you click on the link, view the full calendar, and you can see the growing degree-day milestones that may have an impact on your garden.

For example, at 234 GDDs, common lilacs will begin to bloom. You may not see many, but they will begin. By 315 GDDs, the common lilacs should be in full bloom! That means that on April 1, with 237 GDDs, we may see one or two lilacs beginning to bloom, but over the next few weeks, we will begin to see more blossoms!

This is also helpful when you are struggling with insects. On the full Growing Degree Day Calendar, there are names written in bold font. Those are insects, and the calendar describes when they first emerge and when they are at full adult maturity. This is a wonderful way to time pesticide applications in the garden. This can also be used as a diagnostic tool, because if you notice something munching on your hostas, looking at the Growing Degree Day calendar will give you an idea of what insects are present and active during that time.

Below is the link to the Growing Degree Day calendar. I encourage all of you to look at it and play around with it. It is just another tool to have ready this spring!

<https://weather.cfaes.osu.edu/gdd/>

As always, if you have any questions or would like help using the website, reach out to me at (937) 419-7126 or Puthoff.84@osu.edu. 🌱

Asian Jumping Worms

By Janet Nelson

When you hear “Watch it wiggle, see it jiggle,” do you think of the 1980’s Jell-O commercial? I sure did until last week. Visiting a friend on the shore of South Carolina, we were repotting some plants. As we removed the first plant, we saw several earthworms. We commented on how healthy the soil must be until the worms became thrashing around and jumping inches from the ground. My friend replies, “It is acting crazy.” It was then, that I remembered hearing about the Asian Jumping Worm.

The Piedmont master gardener (VA) website helped us identify the worms. It mentioned that these unwanted worms are lighter in color than our common worm. The final diagnosis came from the clitellium, the band that goes part way around the common night crawler but completely encircles the jumping worm. We had handfuls of Asian Jumping Worms!!

Mike Hogan in the BYGL (Aug 20, 2020) reports that the Asian Jumping worms (*Amyntas spp*) are also known as snake worms or crazy worms for their quick, crazed-like movement. Our friendly common night crawlers are great at breaking up the soil, creating tunnels for water and air and adding nutrient from their excrement. Not with the Jumping worm, because they feed on or near the surface of the ground and leave behind piles of coffee ground looking castings. These invasive worms change the soil composition—for the worse. They eat large quantities of organic matter in the soil, depleting nutrients for plants and wildlife. They alter the soil structure, leaving it drier and gravelly, less hospitable for microorganisms.

Our next question was “Now what?” We followed the recommendation of the Piedmont MGV, and placed them in a plastic bag in sunshine. It did not take long for them to stop moving and shrivel up. Also recommended are to drown them in soap water. Another interesting fact is that they do not survive the winter. Rather their eggs overwinter in the soil. Hence, sharing or purchasing potted plants, compost, mulch could contain the eggs and be a source of infestation.

Are the invasive Asian Jumping worms in Ohio? The BYGL article of 2020 indicates their presence in central Ohio. Consequently, it is advised to keep a look out for these wiggling, jiggling worms then destroy them also solarize the soil and mulch as necessary.

The wiggles and jiggles of Jell-O remain a fond memory. However, after last week, I see wiggling, and jiggling, crazy worms much differently.

<https://bygl.osu.edu/node/1679>

<https://www.piedmontmastergardeners.org/article/invasive-jumping-worms/>



Asian Jumping Worm--Photo by Janet



BYGL Photo

Plants for Sale
Jim McCracken has a wide variety of tomato and pepper plants available for purchase. Pass his phone number on to family & friends.
(937) 489-3734

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Fair Haven Looking for Gardening Programs!

Fair Haven Retirement Facility in Sidney is looking for speakers for their newly formed garden club. They are still in the beginning stages and are looking for volunteers to give talks on a variety of gardening topics. They are working to start growing their own raised beds, but due to low funding, they must fundraise and/or rely on donations. If anyone would feel comfortable giving a talk to their club (around 15-20 people), please let Rylee Kay know, and she will get you in contact with Robin, the activities coordinator.

If you have anything that you would like to donate or perhaps know a place that would give away or sell gardening supplies at very low costs, please let Rylee Kay know so she can pass on the information. This group is looking for a way to help the residents return to their normal lives inside the facility. If you have any questions, reach out to Rylee Kay at (937) 419-7126 or Puthoff.84@osu.edu

Growing and Enjoying Rhubarb

By Mary Delzeith



Early spring brings beautiful flowers from crocus and hyacinths to daffodils and tulips. There are numerous blooming bushes and trees, such as forsythia, magnolia, and redbud. Another noteworthy indicator of spring is the rhubarb plant. This perennial was a classic staple of historic homesteads. A plant can live for up to 50 years with proper care.

Rhubarb plants are available through seed catalogs, nurseries, and big box stores. And if you are lucky enough to know someone with an established plant, by dividing an established plant. A rhubarb plant is best divided while it is still dormant in late winter. Clear soil from around the crown and identify one or two buds. Using a sharp spade carefully cut through a section of the crown containing one or two buds. Refill the soil around the original crown once the procedure is complete. Plants are typically divided every five years. Space each plant three feet apart for optimal growth. Dig a hole deep enough so the crown sits at soil level. Rhubarb grows best in full sun or partial shade. A soil pH of 6.0 to 6.8 is ideal. Administer a balanced fertilizer or compost at the onset of spring to promote optimal growth. Mulch around the plant to maintain consistent moisture. You may need water during dry spells.

Rhubarb plants need at least one year to establish themselves before harvesting stalks. When harvesting the stalks, DO NOT cut the stems but gently twist and pull on the stems. If the stem is cut, water or rain can seep into the crown, leading to rot. It is also important to cut off the leaves. The leaves are toxic because they contain high concentrations of oxalic acid, a substance that can harm the kidneys. It is recommended to stop harvesting rhubarb stalks in early summer.

An interesting fact is that the color of rhubarb stalks can vary in color from crimson red through specked pink to simply green. Rhubarb's color is due to anthocyanins and differs by variety. The color is not related to suitability for cooking.

Surely, everyone has his or her favorite rhubarb dessert. I found this **rhubarb pineapple jam recipe** quite tasty.

- 4 cups chopped rhubarb
- 4 cups sugar
- 1 (20-ounce) can crushed pineapple undrained
- 1 (6-ounce) package strawberry flavored gelatin

Bring rhubarb, sugar, and pineapple to boil in a saucepan. Boil gently for 12 minutes. Add gelatin and boil for 1 additional minute.

Place in sterilized jars and seal. 🍷

Mild March?

By Jim McCracken



If you think March this year was warmer than usual, you would be correct. Only ten days in the entire month were

temperatures below normal for daytime highs. With warmer temperatures came great wind speeds and several violent storms. On a few occasions, temperatures dropped as much as 40-50 degrees in a matter of 12 hours or less.

At the Dayton International Airport, March of 2026 was the 7th warmest March since records were kept. 2026 was the warmest March since 2012. Early April continued the same temperature patterns as March did. On April 4, we reached a high of 82 degrees, and the next morning, I built a fire as temperatures dropped into the 30's. The extended forecast for April 8-17 look more consistent with daytime highs ranging from mid 60's to high 70's.

Growing Degrees Days for March 31st

20-year average for the date – 104

3-31-25 – 152

3-31-26 – 237

Highest: (3-31-2012) – 245

Lowest: (2014, 2015) – 32 🍷

You Could Find Something Unexpected on Your Next Trip

By Jim McCracken

During the second week of March my wife, Elaine, along with Lou and Nita Niekamp took a trip to San Antonio. We spent a lot of time hiking the River Walk, visiting beautiful churches and checking out the famous Alamo. Never did I think a massive oak tree near the Alamo would catch my eye as it did.

In the early 1900's, it was widely thought that mature trees could not be transplanted. Walter Whall, a retired English seaman, proved it could be done and started San Antonio's first tree moving company. With simple tools, he cleared dirt from around a tree's roots, and then lifted it from the ground with block and tackle. Whall transported trees throughout San Antonio on wagons pulled by mules. He contended the hardest part of the process was avoiding the telegraph and power lines.

This Oak tree was approximately forty years old when Whall brought it to the Alamo in 1913. The base of the tree now measures 13 feet in circumference, while its branches sprawl well over fifty feet in every direction.

The Oak tree looks similar to one found in a Tarzan movie. The branches sprawl very long distances as the branches twist and turn in many different directions. In the foreground of the modern day photo, you can see a metal post that supports the branch. There are several of these posts around the tree to support the lower branches from hitting the ground and rooting themselves. 🌿



PLAYING IN THE DIRT

By Ann Heeley

Want to boost your immune system, mental clarity, and physical stamina while reducing stress, anxiety, and health problems related to getting older? According to research studies by the Harvard School of Public Health, Michigan State University Extension, Tulane, Colorado State, Texas A & M, and our own Ohio State University, you can achieve all of the above by gardening. These studies conclude that a minimum of just 40 minutes per week results in measurable, quantitative improvement in mental, social, and physical health. Moreover, who among us doesn't hit the minimum 40 minutes per week?

In addition, these studies show that merely being outside increases the amount of accessible Vitamin D, the sunshine vitamin, that is crucial for bone health. Gardening has also been shown to reduce the risk of dementia in seniors by 36%! Considering the average age of Shelby County Master Gardener Volunteers, these two facts alone should encourage us to spend more time in our gardens and less time in front of a TV or computer.

The only health disadvantage: Gardening between 11:00 am – 2:00 pm on hot summer days to protect against high UV levels, dehydration, and sunstroke. However, most of us can easily avoid those peak hours without difficulty.

We've always known that gardening contributes immensely to our sense of accomplishment, connection to nature, well-being, and plain old enjoyment. Now we have definitive research that underscores why we should continue playing in the dirt. 🌱



April is Kids Gardening Month

By Carol Strayer

To follow-up on Ann's article, I learned today that April is kids gardening month. I'm not sure who made that designation but a note came from the National Gardening Bureau. They suggested six ideas to get kids excited about gardening.

1. **The Snack and Grow Garden:** plant easy –to-eat veggies like cherry tomatoes and snap peas to encourage healthy snacking. I would add cucumbers and summer squash to that list. And what about carrots?
2. **The pollinator Patrol:** plant bright, nectar rich flowers specifically to attract butterflies and bees for kids to watch.
3. **A Secret Garden Adventure:** build a bean teepee or a sunflower house to create a magical living hideout.
4. **The Miniature World:** design a fairy or dinosaur garden. This idea would work with a container or tough and you could use some of your Red Rose Tea collectable miniature ceramic figurines. It is sad that Red Rose Tea no longer puts those little figurines in their boxes.
5. **Planting the Rainbow:** choose plants in every color to create a multicolored bed.
6. **The Science Lab:** experiment with different and new flowers and vegetables. 🌱





IT'S HUMMER TIME!

By Ann Heeley

Hummingbirds have already been spotted in southern Ohio as of April 4, and soon they will be in Shelby County. Of the many species, the one most commonly seen in our area is the Ruby-Throated Hummingbird. Males are the first to arrive in the spring and the first to leave in the late summer or fall, depending on the location of their winter migration destination. Only the males have the ruby throat; females have a white or gray throat instead. One or two broods are produced during the summer with 2 eggs in each nest. Males take the “love ‘em and leave ‘em” approach since the females build the nests, incubate the eggs, and feed the young. Males and females are both very territorial, and they can often be seen chasing one another away from feeders using a dive-bomb method.



I usually put my feeders up by mid-April, and although it sometimes takes hummingbirds a while to find them, by the beginning of summer, their constant buzzing and chirping provide constant entertainment. Hummingbirds prefer a mixture of 4 parts water to 1 part sugar. I usually boil the water, add the sugar, stir until dissolved, and let cool. Never add red dye or food coloring. Use feeders that have a red base to attract hummingbirds.

However, hummingbirds actually prefer to sip nectar from real flowers, especially taller plants that produce tubular blooms and droop downward. Blooms that face down are less likely to attract other insects.

When choosing flowers, don't worry about fragrance. Unlike most birds, hummingbirds have a sense of smell, but color rather than fragrance attracts them to specific flowers. Typically, their sense of smell warns them of formic acid produced by ants. Formic acid can injure their eyes and skin. Large swathes of color rather than a single brightly-colored plant point hummingbirds to sources of rich nectar. Although red is their favorite color, they are also attracted to patches of purple, blue, orange, and lavender.

Many flowering plants in Shelby County attract hummingbirds, but here are the top 5 plus a few others for your consideration:



'Black and Blue' Salvia (Salvia guaranitica) – If you can only choose one plant, this is the one to pick! Heat and drought tolerant, this annual grows 30” to 40” tall in full sun. Deadheading keeps it blooming all summer and into the fall until the hummers are ready to migrate south again. I couldn't keep up with the number of hummingbirds that were constantly on this plant.

Cardinal Flower (Lobelia cardinalis) – This bright, red annual thrives in moist or even wet soil. It prefers morning sun or partial shade. Growing to 2' to 4' tall, deadheading prevents reseeding while encouraging new flowers.



Coral Honeysuckle (Lonicera sempervirens) – Flowering on both new and old growth, this perennial vine prefers full sun and can grow between 10-20 feet in length along several stems. Mid-spring blooms may continue into the summer in shades of orange-red to coral-pink. Prune down to 18” or so every few years in late fall or winter to rejuvenate the vine.



Bee Balm (Monarda) – ‘Jacob Cline’ is the variety to pick in this category. As a perennial that prefers full sun, this one is very resistant to powdery mildew, a common disease among other Monarda varieties. Growing 3’ to 4’ tall in humous-rich soil, dead-heading will produce a constant supply of nectar-rich flowers. Leave a little extra space between plants for good airflow.



Hummingbird Mint/Hyssop (Agastache) – Fragrant and heat tolerant, this short-lived perennial has been hybridized without affecting the nectar that hummingbirds (and bees) love. Deadhead to produce a second flush of blooms in full sun. Good varieties include ‘Blue Fortune’ and ‘Sonoran Sunset’.



Beardtongue (Penstemon digitalis) – Drought- and heat-tolerant, these perennials last for years in the garden. We have several varieties in the Memorial Garden, including a hummingbird favorite, ‘Husker Red’. Blooming in full sun from late spring through summer, Beardtongue flowers range in color from pale lavender/white to pink. Penstemon smallii has red flowers. Two other Beardtongue varieties that hummers love: ‘Onyx and Pearls’ (lavender) and ‘Pocahontas’ (lavender/pink).

Warning!! Although many people recommend Trumpet Vine (*Campsis radicans*), and although hummingbirds really do enjoy the tubular, reddish-orange flowers on this vine, please DO NOT allow it to enter your property. It will swallow you whole and laugh as you try for years to eradicate it.

Here are some other choices to consider when you purchase plants this spring...

- Eastern Columbine (*Aquilegia canadensis*) – early spring bloomer; may be prolific reseeder
- Wild Bergamot (*Monarda fistulosa*)
- Jewelweed (*Impatiens capensis*)
- Hummingbird Sage (*Salvia spathacea*) – aggressive perennial
- ‘Vermillionaire’ (*Cuphea* hybrid) – annual
- Virginia Bluebells (*Mertensia virginica*) – early spring bloomer; perennial, but dies to the ground in early summer, leaving bare soil
- Red Hot Poker (*Kniphofia*) – perennial, but not all that hardy; may rebloom if cut back
- Crocosmia – ‘Lucifer’ is the best variety; corms may need to be dug up before winter
- Indian Pink (*Spilegia marilandica*) – spring and early summer perennial
- Flowering Tobacco (*Nicotiana*) – annual; fragrant
- Scarlet Salvia (*Salvia coccinea*) – bright red annual; long bloom if cut back
- Autumn Sage (*Salvia greggii*) – Try ‘Hot Lips’ since it’s drought tolerant and loves the heat
- Fuchsia (*Fuchsia magellanica*) – Good in partial or filtered shade in hanging baskets; I’ve never had good luck with this one, but it’s beautiful. 🌿

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