

Shelby County Master Gardener

OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY EXTENSION



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President's comments

By Dave Slagle

Hello master gardeners. It seems that summer is going fast as many schools are starting in the next two weeks and that means fall is just around the corner.

Our friend, Jim McCracken, is planting some fall veggie crops. If anyone has some questions about fall planting, I am sure Jim will share his expertise with you.

I am looking forward to visiting and seeing you all next week. Speaking of fall, we need to be thinking about officers for 2026.

Program Coordinator's comments

By Doug Benson

In the comments that I wrote last month, I mentioned that I was concerned about my electric bill because of all the heat. As it turned out, last month was settle-up month for my balanced billing, and I had a good carryover. Thus, my bill wasn't nearly as bad as I had expected. Something else that surprised me was that my electrical usage this year was lower than it was a year ago even though the average daily temperature was higher. As far as my vegetable garden is concerned, as I predicted, the second planting of spinach was a complete failure. The peas produced well, but I made a big mistake. When I picked the peas, I put them in a small bucket, but then I set it aside and didn't shell them right away. Now I have a bucket of mold. The cucumber vines are spreading all over the place and are really producing well. I've given some to my neighbors and some to my sister; now I'm toying with the idea of seeing if I can actually make some pickles.

The weeds and the lawn continue to thrive. Because of wet ground and/or extreme heat, I've had to delay mowing until the grass was so high that I had to mow two times in three days. I'm probably going to be faced with the same situation again, as last night I had a little over 2 inches of rain during the storms. Fortunately, the fields around me were so dry that they soaked up most of the rain and the creek across from my house didn't appear anywhere near flooding.

Speaking of lawns, now is the time of year to be thinking about doing any over seeding or reseeding of your lawn.

Most experts recommend that the best time to do seeding or reseeding lawns is the last couple of weeks in August and the first couple weeks in September. If you have large areas that need to be cleared so that you can completely reseed, you need to get on that as soon as possible to allow time for the herbicide to kill the existing grass and weeds so that you can get the receding done by the middle of September. Dr. Zane Raudenbush, a professor at OARDC in Wooster, created a great six-part video series about renovation. [Lawn Renovation Video Series by OSU's Zane Raudenbush | BYGL](#).

We made it through the Shelby County Fair and the Auglaize County Fair successfully. Thank you to all who helped with the display at our local fair, and special thanks to those of you who organized the birthday party for me. It came as a complete surprise. As I mentioned in an e-mail after the fair, we had 75 entries for the door prize, and the winner was Mary Bornhorst from Fort Loramie. Of the 75 entries, 14 people checked the space that they were interested in knowing more about the Master Gardener program. Rylee Kay and I will be following up on that in the not-too-distant future. Thank you to Conelia for helping me take down our display in Sidney and then going with me to Wapak to set it up the next morning. I don't know how much traffic there was at the Auglaize County Fair, as we didn't have a drawing. Thanks to the Auglaize County educator, Jacob Winters, who kept an eye on the display and then took it down at the end of the fair. And thanks to Riley Kay for picking up the display, thus saving me an extra trip to Wapak. I hope everything went well at the Mercer County Fair which is just wrapping up today.

By the time you read this, our fifth library program will be over. I'm interested to see how it goes, as we're doing something completely different. Instead of having a speaker, we're doing it more as a one-hour hotline program. We've encouraged attendees to bring in plant problems and questions or insects for identification.

(Continued to page 2)

Next Meeting: August 20 at 2pm & Zoom
Be mindful of
Memorial Garden maintenance.

(Continuation of Program Coordinator comments.)

In the newspaper and radio announcements and in the e-mail that I sent to those who have left their e-mail addresses when they registered for a session earlier, I also suggested they could bring in or e-mail pictures for us to look at. I'm hoping this goes well. Thinking about the hotline, it's not too late to sign up for a session or two, as there are many vacancies in the last part of August and all of September,

Thank you to those who signed up to be responsible for Memorial Garden maintenance for a week. A number of you have really taken that job to heart, and it definitely shows. Now we need to continue to maintain it for the remainder of the season. We'll have the sign-up sheet at the meeting, and I hope we can fill most of those spaces.

Here are some reminders of things to come. At our September 17 meeting we will be electing some new officers. Dave, Janet, and Russ are completing their second year in office, so those offices will need to be filled. Now would be a good time to start putting together your campaign committee and collecting funds for your election campaign. Recent history tells us that filling these positions can be a real challenge. As this was Missy's first year as treasurer, she does not need to run again. At that same September meeting, we will be collecting reservations for the banquet and dues for 2026. We will have the cost for the banquet available to you a week or so before the meeting.

Reservations for the State Master Gardener conference to be held October 9 and 10 at Secrest Arboretum in Wooster are being accepted now - \$75 until August 31, and \$99 September 1-25. No refunds after September 25.

Keep recording your hours in Hands on Connect. Let me know if you have any problems doing so. Also, if you have extra produce from your garden, you can drop it off at Agape (remember that you need to enter from Brooklyn Ave., as the drive by the bridge is now the exit). Tell them you are donating for Master Gardeners. You can donate to other food pantries; just send me an e-mail telling me where and how much you donated, so I can report it to Columbus.

Our next meeting is Wednesday, August 20, at the Extension office. Once again, we will try to have it covered with Zoom broadcast for those who are unable to make it to the meeting. I'll be emailing the tentative agenda, the July minutes, and the Zoom link Sunday evening or Monday morning and again on Wednesday morning. In the meantime, be healthy, be safe, and enjoy your gardening. 🌱

Growing Horseradish

By Karen Seger

Horseradish is a hardy perennial plant prized for its pungent roots, which are used as a spicy condiment. It thrives in full sun and well-draining soil, making it relatively easy to grow.

Amoracia rusticana is the scientific name. Horseradish features large, dark green leaves and produces small, white flowers in summer. The roots can grow long and narrow, sometimes reaching up to 2 feet in length. Horseradish can spread aggressively.

Harvest Horseradish roots in the fall before the first frost. The old timers say, dig in a month with an R in it. The roots are best after the plant has experienced some cold weather, which enhance their flavor.

Horseradish is low in calories and rich in nutrients, including Vitamin C, fiber and various minerals. It has been associated with microbial properties and may aid digestion and support the immune system. I call it a spring tonic.

Our poor looking horseradish plant! It is now getting part sun due to the flowering plum. It is in the path of our two dachshunds and has taken a beating! Japanese beetle are also feasting on it!

We will be harvesting this fall! Will keep you posted! 🌱



Living Wall

By Marily, Becky, and Missy

On July 19th, three of us (Marily, Becky, and Missy) attended a workshop on “Living Walls”. We have been curious about these walls for some time and jumped at the opportunity to attend a local workshop. If you do not know, a living wall is a vertical garden that incorporates living plants and can be grown indoors and outdoors. These vertical gardens let you bring greenery and nature into your space, provide food, decoration, privacy and freshen your air. They work in any space if they have light and water. Living walls are also referred to as “vertical gardens, green walls or eco-walls.” They were patented back in 1938 by Stanley Hart White.

When creating a living wall, you need to consider the light, nutrition, and water needs of the plant to determine how much time you will need to devote to your plant wall to be successful. Lower maintenance plants are good candidates for a wall because they can flourish without too much fuss. Plants such as ferns, herbs, succulents, mosses, and low ground covers work well. Succulents are some of the best options. They are easy to grow, happy in confined areas and are great for beginners. Hen & chicks, fern varieties that are small and compact like Adiantum, Dryopteris & Cryptonium, Blue Star, and bird nest will spread quickly and fill in the gaps. Herbs, such as mints, thyme, sorrel, and lemon balm can tolerate lower light conditions. Vegetables can also be used but will need a grow light and will have higher fertilization needs.

We started our walls by filling up our wall container (ours looked like a shadow box with wire screening) with a mixture of soil and perlite. We were using succulents for our walls so the perlite will improve the drainage, as succulents prefer well-drained soil. Once we filled our containers to the top of the screen, we began filling the area with succulents. There is no rule to follow on this. We just used our creativity to place the plants within the space. The succulents we used were Jade Plant, Creeping Stonecrop, Needle Stonecrop and Chinese Dunce Cap. The walls need to lay flat for 3-4 weeks to allow the new plants to root before they can be hung. We were pleased with the workshop and the outcome of our walls. We have included several photos of the workshop. 🌱



Butchart Gardens

By Teresa Freisthler

Last month John and I did an Alaskan cruise starting from Seattle Washington. We saw much beautiful scenery, including mountains, glaciers, and the Pacific Ocean. We saw animals including whales, eagles, and seals. Our final port before returning to Seattle was at Victoria, British Columbia in Canada. My favorite stop was at the Butchart Gardens outside Victoria. The gardens are on an estate covering 130 acres of land, 55 of it in gardens. It began as an idea from Jennie Butchart over one hundred years ago who felt she had to beautify a worked out limestone quarry (gravel pit) that had supplied the limestone for her husband's concrete plant. The gardens have a mixture of rare and exotic shrubs, trees and flowers. Through the years, it has grown and is still operated by the Butchart family with talented and dedicated staff. It is visited by nearly one million visitors a year, and has been designated as a National Historic Site of Canada.

The grounds include **The Sunken Garden**, where plants were added to the original quarry. When we reached the top of the concrete path, and looked below at the garden, I said to John that when I die, I think heaven will look much like this! He agreed. There are beds of annuals, flowering trees and shrubs growing at the base of the towering walls. A rock mound overlooks the still waters of Quarry Lake lying in a deep pocket of limestone. At the far end of the Sunken garden is the Ross Fountain, which has a seventy feet high water display.

The Rose Garden is full of Hybrid Tea Roses marked with the names, country of origin, and year registered with the American Rose Society. Roses of every color and hue can be found there. The aroma was magnificent! There is a bronze Sturgeon fountain cast in Florence, Italy in the rose garden.

There is a beautiful carousel for anyone to ride, and a concert stage and lawn area where concerts are regularly presented.

Japanese Garden that has Himalayan Blue Poppies throughout. Unfortunately, for us, they were not blooming in July. There were many other beautiful flowers in bloom, though.

The **Star Pond** is found walking a path leading up from the Japanese Garden. It was designed for Mr. Butchart's flock of ornamental ducks. Colorful annuals surround the pond and frog fountain in the center of the pond.

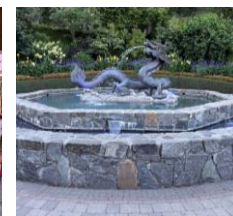
The Italian Garden has a bronze statue of Mercury between two arched entrances. There is a cross-shaped pond fed by a fountain with a child holding a fish. This area used to be a concrete-surfaced tennis court, but became a garden in 1926.

The Piazza features a bronze statue of Tacca the Boar. To the right, is the Dining Room Restaurant. We were there late in the evening, so we did not get to eat there. There were several shops, a greenhouse, and Visitor's Center that were open, so we could browse until our tour time was ended. Being in Canada, they accepted our US money, but gave us our change in Canadian currency and coins.

The Mediterranean Garden features many drought resistant plants from various parts of the world that share similar growing conditions. Even though it is Canada, it boasts a mild climate comparable to Zone 8.

What surprised me was the use of color combinations there. I would never have thought of using purple and red flowers in the same beds, but it worked! There were so many annuals and perennials including begonias, tuberous begonias, geraniums, and ROSES!! To me, it was a trip to heaven while here on earth!

I included a few pictures. I did use a cane walking on the trails here and in Alaska. It made the walking better, and I was able to keep up the pace even though this was not a guided tour. We had two hours to view this gorgeous garden, and we were able to see it all. If you are planning a trip to this area, don't miss the Butchart Gardens! 🌿



The Tomato-Potato

By Ann Heeley

Earlier this year, I presented a seminar on new plants for 2025. One of the new plants, a pomato (or TomTato or Potato Tom depending on the company selling these plants), produced tomatoes above ground and potatoes underground. This is a grafted plant, not a hybrid, and I haven't found too many reviews from those who grew it. The few that commented noted that grafting cherry tomatoes with potato plants works best. Others said that the yields were substantially lower than growing the two separately. Then I came across this article by CBSnews.com (July 31, 2025) that I found interesting.

Meet the potato's unexpected ancestor: the tomato. That's right, a fruit. Potatoes and tomatoes don't look alike, smell alike or taste alike, but in a study published Thursday in the journal *Cell*, scientists said that the potato evolved from a tomato ancestor around 9 million years ago.

"We've finally solved the mystery of where potatoes came from," corresponding author Sanwen Huang of the Chinese Academy of Agricultural Sciences said in a news release.

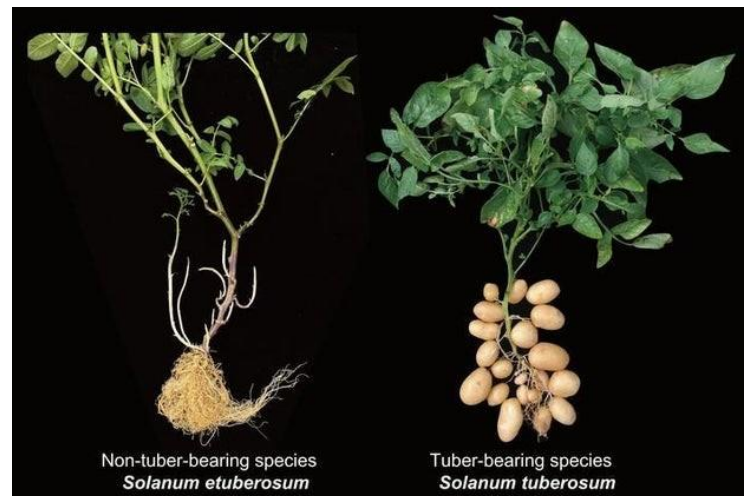
The origin of the modern potato has puzzled scientists for years. In terms of appearance, potatoes resemble a species from Chile called *Etuberosum*, with one crucial difference: *Etuberosum* don't produce the starch-rich tubers. That's where the tomato comes in.

While tomatoes don't have tubers, the ancient tomato did provide a crucial gene that, when mixed with the genetics of *Etuberosum*, told the modern potato to form tubers, according to the researchers. The SP6A gene from the tomato parent tells the potato plant to make tubers, while the IT1 gene from *Etuberosum* assists in controlling the growth of the underground stems that form tubers. Both pieces were needed to create the potato that's known and loved today.

Non-tuber-bearing and tuber-bearing species of the potato plant: "Our findings show how a hybridization event between species can spark the evolution of new traits, allowing even more species to emerge," Huang said. The research team analyzed 450 genomes from cultivated potatoes and 56 of the wild potato species during the study. "Wild potatoes are very difficult to sample, so this dataset represents the most

comprehensive collection of wild potato genomic data ever analyzed," said the paper's first author, Zhiyang Zhang of the Agricultural Genomics Institute at Shenzhen.

Outside of the ancestry, there's also a linguistic similarity, according to [Merriam-Webster](#). "The word 'tomato' started out as 'tomate' and came from the Nahuatl word 'tomatl.' Since the potato had been introduced to the English some decades earlier, the word evolved to mimic the form of 'potato' — hence the spelling 'tomato,'" the dictionary notes. 🌱



A View into the Future of Farming

By Ann Heeley

I'm no farmer, but I'm increasingly interested in purchasing nutritious food that hasn't been contaminated with chemical herbicides and pesticides. I try to buy organic fruits and vegetables whenever possible, even though they're more expensive. The major problem, however, is that too often, there are no options for buying "clean" food.

Several companies, including one in Seattle, however, have come up with a way to deal with weeds that affect farm crops in a totally chemical-free way. Using AI technology, Carbon Robotics has developed



machines that scan for weeds and use lasers to kill the weeds while leaving the crops and soil undisturbed. Over the past few years and

with the shortage of farm laborers, these robotic machines have transformed the way in which crop yields have increased and soil health has improved.

Currently, the cost of these machines may prohibit small farmers from taking advantage of the technology. (\$50,000 to \$1,000,000+) But as with technology in general, prices are expected to come down. As more farmers begin to assess the cost of labor and chemical herbicides compared to the *LaserWeeder*, they may soon realize the benefits of modernization. And for consumers, especially those of us who don't want a side of Atrazine with our corn-on-the-cob, we welcome this advancement.

I hope that scientists and engineers will now continue their work by inventing a robotic device that can detect and destroy insect pests while preserving the beneficial insects!

For a preview of how the Carbon Robotics LaserWeeder works, see

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2s-0wgQWXM>

or search Laser weed killer on YouTube. 🌱

(If link doesn't work, search on YouTube for "Laser Weeding Robot Kills 100,000 Weeds Per Hour.")

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Master Gardener Newsletter Recipes

By Conelia Dixon

Spiced Apple Butternut Squash Soup

¼ cup unsalted butter
1 large onion, diced
2 granny smith (or other) apples, peeled, cored, and diced
1 tsp. nutmeg, ground
½ tsp. cinnamon, ground
2 butternut squashes, peeled, halved, seeds removed and diced
3 quarts chicken stock
Salt and pepper to taste

Melt the butter in a large pot over medium heat. Add the diced onions and apples, and cook until tender, about 10 min. Stir in the spices, cook for 1 minute, and then add the squash and chicken stock. Bring to a boil; reduce heat and simmer, uncovered, until the squash is tender, about 20-30 min. Puree and serve. Add additional stock, if necessary to desired thickness, Season with salt and pepper. Refrigerate leftovers.

Cowboy Caviar (bean salsa)

1 can kidney beans, drained
1 can black beans, drained
1 can whole kernel corn, drained
1 can chopped green chilies, 4 oz.
¼ cup finely chopped onion
1 tbsp oil
A couple limes, juiced (optional)
Pepper to taste (optional)
Hot sauce if desired
Serve with raw vegetables and/or corn chips

I have tried both of these and they are two of my favorites made with vegetables. Conelia.

PLANT RESCUE

Janet Nelson

Mother's Day seems to be the time that plants sales are booming. The plants look wonderful and staff work hard to tend to their needs. As the spring moves into summer, the plants are picked over, less tended and looking rather bedraggled. The plants then go on clearance. So...this year I choose to rescue some plants at various big box stores.

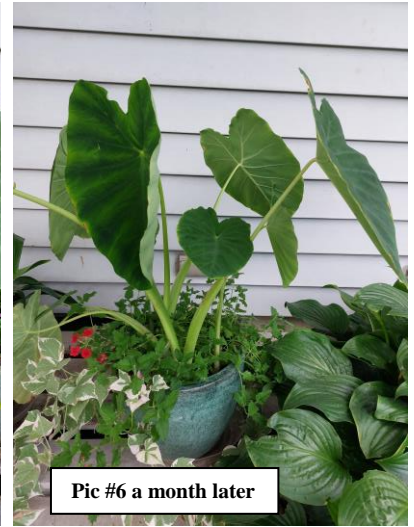
(Pic #1) The local Menards had this 6 pack of coleus for fifty cents (perhaps because it was a five pack). I added the coleus to the over wintered dahlia bulbs in a container for the patio. They seem happy together. (Pic #2) Another six pack (it truly was a 6 pack) was not labeled. I recognized it as Stevia and added it to several containers. So far so good but I know pruning is in the forecast. (Pic #3)

The 50% off clearance rack at Lowes was too hard to resist. I came home with Sun Club Calla Lily, Torenia, aka Wishbone plant, Superbena Red Verbena and two Tri color ipomoea. All were planted in containers. They needed extra TLC, pruning, deadheading with fertilizer added, placed in a sheltered area for a week and watered well. (Pic #4, Pic #5) But the little rescued plants tolerated the transition very well. (Pic #6 & 7) If you notice the Elephant Ear (Colocasia), it is on its third year with the bulbs overwintered in the garage.

Rescue plants that are destined for the dumpster with wise choices can be added to the summer collection with minimal cost and a little extra effort.



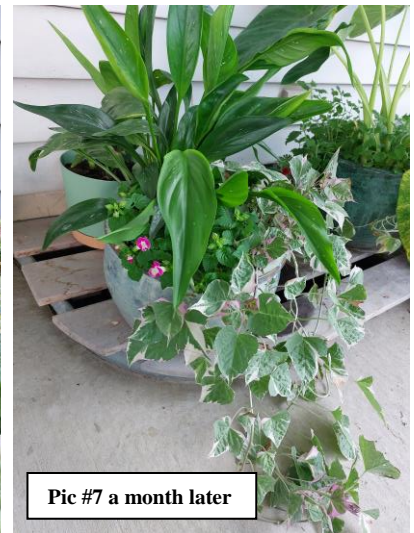
Pic #6



Pic #6 a month later



Pic #7



Pic #7 a month later



Pic #1



Pic #2



Pic #3



Pic #4



Pic #5

Schedel Arboretum and Gardens

By Linda Jennings

I recently went back to my home town, Elmore, Ohio, to visit my brother and attend a garden party at Schedel Gardens, located on the west side of town. I was aware of the Schedel family, Joseph and Marie, even as a young child. Their estate was fenced-in, gated, and kind of mysterious. The Schedels, who had no children, established a foundation in their names, in order to preserve and protect the estate for the enjoyment of present and future generations. The gardens and arboretum were established in 1989 and opened to the public in 1991. The site is located at a bend in the Portage River, and about half of the site is upland, with the rest lowland. The sharp drop between the two allows for a variety of plantings. It also means there are either rather steep steps to get from one level to another, or a slightly less steep gravel path. But, happily, there are golf carts to transport anyone who prefers not to make the descent or the climb back up to street level.

While the Schedels traveled the world, they returned to tiny Elmore with many beautiful treasures for both their home and gardens. In their home, they enjoyed displaying Persian carpets, a collection of jade, teak furniture, Japanese silk embroidery, and other items. They planted 25 varieties of Japanese maple, 16 species of pine, various types of beech, bamboo, katsura, Franklin Trees, and nearly 50 lilac varieties. They installed greenhouses where annuals are readied for planting. Each spring about 15,000 plants are transplanted from the greenhouse to the grounds, where there are already perennials, shrubs, and trees.

My favorite area of the garden is the Japanese garden, which has a beautiful red arch, bridges, stone lanterns, and a stupa (a place of pilgrimage and meditation). There are also two waterfalls that empty into pools or streams which flow into two lakes. The rose garden is lovely, with many varieties of hybrid tea roses. The Foundation hosts rotating exhibits of sculptures and other artistic works. Since 2021, they have hosted the Blair Museum of Lithophanes. Lithophanes are 3D translucent porcelain plaques that reveal detailed images when backlit. They were first created in Europe during the 1820's. I think that you have to see them up close to understand them. They are housed in the original 1887 house that the Schedels purchased along with the property when they first came to Elmore.

There is a tropical garden on the upper level, featuring several varieties of banana trees, some 20 varieties of elephant ears, pineapple, several types of lemon, lime and pomegranate surrounding a reflecting pool with both tropical and hardy water lilies, gold fish, koi fish, frogs and turtles.

Near the tropical garden is the Bonsai shelter. I was surprised to see the about 95 bonsai sculptures in northern Ohio. Each one is different from the others, and some have lived for nearly 100 years.

I've never been there in the spring to view the iris and peony gardens. Maybe next year. 🌱

