

Green Thumb Prints

Newsletter of the Hancock County
Master Gardener Volunteers



August 2010

*Gardening is our Passion
Education is our Purpose*



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Coordinator's Corner

by Nancy Kronberg

Hope many of you can attend the Thursday, August 14th Bug Walk which will be led by Curtis Young. Meet at the Lodge at Riverbend ready to go at 6 pm. Bring your own drinks, bug spray, and desire to learn! An optional trip to Dietsch's will happen after we are done.

Everyone should have received information regarding the 2010 State MGCV conference. Since the conference is close (Huron County) and the price reasonable, I have included a registration form at the end of the newsletter. Remember there is a \$50 educational stipend available to all mgcvs and this qualifies. I plan to attend and hope several mgcvs will go also.

Due to various commitments and the shortness of time, it has been decided that an MGCV open house just isn't feasible this year. Marty, Noreen, & Caroline will be shifting their attention to making sure flyers are posted and radio, tv, and newspapers are contacted. Applications packets are available in the workstation. Contact any of them if you are willing to help in any way.

August 1 - 7 will find me in Atlanta again. Any mgcv questions can be directed to Bill Jones or wait until I return!

See you at the Bug Walk!

Nancy

Dates to Remember!

Mondays: 9:00-noon, workstation. See page 4.

Fridays: 9:00, demonstration garden.

Wednesday, August 4: Green Industry Summer Session at Owens Toledo: Contact Ruth Furiate for details

Thursday, August 12: Bug Walk at Riverbend hosted by Curtis Young. 6 PM Meet at Lodge. Bring own drinks. Will go to Dietsch's for ice cream after (optional)

Wednesday, August 18: WFIN Phone Club, 9:00-11:00 Bill Jones, Marilynn Beltz, & Cathy Grossman

Upcoming Events

September 1-8: Hancock County Fair. See Page 4 for info.

September 14: MGCV classes begin.5:30-9:00pm.

October 9: Worm Composting at Birchaven.

October 14: 3rd Grade Days at VB State Park.

October 21: NW Ohio Urban Forestry Seminar

"Dreams and Reality - Summer of 2010"

By Bob Campbell (Part I of III)

Every spring for gardeners is a time for dreaming new dreams. And every July/August becomes a reality check! I shared a few of my spring dreams with you earlier. Now, the reality.

Orange Globe Mallow turned out to be a bad dream.

In earlier years, I would have called it a nightmare. But (at least in gardening) I have come to terms with death. This plant refused to grow and eventually died. I never saw the orange blossoms like these pictured below:



Photo by G.A. Cooper, courtesy of Smithsonian Institution

Orange Globe Mallow was supposed to be "not the least bit picky about its soil"; it was "supposed to thrive in heavy clay." Perhaps the continuous rainfall in June was too much for it. Perhaps the opening weeks of July drought did it in. Whatever, I really loved the gray-green foliage (See picture below). But somewhere in mid-July, it lay on the ground, a brown withered corpse.



A second dream might be called a dream deferred. The South African River Lily (*Crinum bulbispermum*) was supposed to do well "in all kinds of compost enriched soils including heavy clay." While "drought tolerant" it "will bloom well in standing water." Its blooms are like these pictured below, except my variety is pure white.



Photo by G.A. Cooper, courtesy of Smithsonian Institution



So far South African River Lily has survived the June rains and blazing July sun. It has kept a good green color and has grown some above ground, maybe more below. Hopefully next spring will bring the blooms.



MOONLIGHT GARDENS

The idea behind a moonlight garden is to grow plants that can be experienced at night both through sight and smell. A moonlight or night garden contains primarily white or silver plants, as these colors reflect the most light and will glow in the light of the moon. Fragrant plants add to the allure, mystery, and enjoyment of these romantic gardens. Moonlight gardens are excellent ideas if you entertain in evenings, if you work by day so have little time then in the garden, or just want a space for meditation or relaxation.

Although this may be a recent trend, the concept is not. Centuries ago, white sand and pond moonlight meditation gardens were common in China. In 1639 the "Mahtab Bagh" (which means moonlight garden) was created for Shah Jahan in India. Moonlight or moon gardens became popular in America in nineteenth century New England.

When designing a moonlight garden, one of the first and perhaps most important considerations is location. Your garden needs to be placed where the moonlight will strike it. Walk around on a moonlit night to scout out possible sites. You need to avoid places where the trees will cast moon shadows. Think about where you plan to sit to enjoy your garden, whether it's outdoors on the patio, or from your favorite armchair indoors, and choose a location where you can view it comfortably. “

Something else to consider is indirect lighting for the nights when there is no moon. You might want to pick a spot where light from a house window or porch light will shine. Also you can install night lighting to illuminate your yard on cloudy nights. Inexpensive kits are readily available in many home and hardware stores, or you can find decorative ones in lighting stores.

Your garden spot also must get adequate sun, as most flowering plants require at least six hours of direct sunlight. For beds that will get less than five hours of sun, select shade-loving plants such as white impatiens, variegated hostas, white bleeding heart, and lungwort.

Many gardeners like to design their beds in the shape of a full moon or crescent--even a star--though any shape that is pleasing to you is fine. As an all-white garden can be overwhelming, however, keep your moon garden small. Another means to give your moonlight garden some variety is to include light yellow, cream, pale lavender, light pink, or other soft colors. These enhance the garden's

appeal in the daylight hours too. Avoid strong colors like orange and red, as they will dominate the garden.

As a rule, only plants in the same shade of white should be combined. An off-white flower next to a bright-white flower will look dingy. You can get around this by separating the whites with another color like green. The whites will appear to be the same, even if they are different shades.

Avoid putting all the scented plants in one location. Keep in mind, too, that not all scents blend well, or you may not like certain scents, so you may need to remove or move some scented plants. Many scents are faint, so place these plants near patios, walks, and windows.

The choices of plants with white or silver blooms and foliage are plentiful. Since many plants you'll find listed come in colors other than white, check the description in catalogs, books, or with the experts at your local garden center to make sure you are buying the right variety. Look for selections that are "self-cleaning", their flowers falling off on their own. Otherwise you'll need to "deadhead", removing spent blossoms to keep plants attractive and prolong bloom.

For **annuals** with white blooms consider pansies, violas, white ageratum, 'Helen Campbell' spider flower, cosmos, white marigolds, white impatiens, white begonias (both the latter are good for shade), Marguerite daisies, dianthus, and white zinnias. Try new, low varieties of zinnias like 'Crystal Star', 'Profusion White', and 'Zahara Starlight Rose'. White-scented annuals include white alyssum, white-scented petunias, tall flowering tobacco, night phlox (*Zaluzianskya*), and stocks.

There are many white **perennials** to choose from. These include certain species and cultivars (cultivated varieties) of violets, bellflowers, candytuft (*Iberis*), creeping phlox, Shasta daisies, daylilies, irises, dahlias (these are tender and will need to be dug up for winter), garden phlox 'David', peonies, foamflower, gooseneck loosestrife (site carefully as this one spreads aggressively), bugbane (*Actaea*), soapwort, foxglove, mums (these are grown as annuals in cold regions), and fall asters. White-scented perennials include roses and sweet rocket (*Hesperis*).

Then there are **vines** such as selections of moonflowers,

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MOONLIGHT GARDENS

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'Milkmaid' nasturtium, clematis, climbing roses, morning glories, and climbing hydrangea. Hibiscus, lilacs, crabapples, and viburnums are some trees and shrubs that have white flowers, depending on selection. The Korean spice viburnum is very fragrant.

Don't forget spring-flowering bulbs such as white selections of daffodils, tulips, crocus, and hyacinths. Snowdrops and summer snowflake (*Leucojum*) begin and end, respectively, the spring bulb season with their white flowers. Hyacinths and some daffodils are fragrant.

Several tender perennials or tropical plants you'll find for summer garden use include the huge bell-shaped hanging flowers of the angel's trumpet (*Brugmansia*) or upright flowers of the thorn apple (*Datura*), calla lilies (also good in water gardens), tuberose (a tender summer-flowering bulb, quite fragrant), and the Atamasco Lily (*Zephyranthes*).

For interest, add some plants with interesting silver or white foliage such as the annual dusty miller or 'Longwood Silver' mintleaf (*Plectranthus*). The annual licorice plants have small leaves, hugging the ground. Perennials for their foliage include lamb's ear (*Stachys*), lungwort, variegated hostas (both the latter grow in shade), artemisia, and silver-leaved creeping thymes.

For a fully sensual experience, add a water feature with a gently quiet trickle (a loud fountain isn't very relaxing). If you're enjoying your moonlight garden outdoors, without the protection of a screened porch, mosquito repellent may be needed in many areas! Try and find a scentless one if you have some fragrant plants in your moonlight garden.

Source: Dr. Leonard Perry, Extension Professor, University of Vermont Ext. ,Dept. of Plant & Soil Science

August Workstation Schedule

August 2: Bill Jones, Marilyn Beltz

August 9: Jerry Bibler

August 16: Ruth Furiate

August 23: Kay Sidaway

August 30: Bob Campbell

2010 Hancock County Fair Update/Info

Wednesday, September 1 -
Monday, September 8

We will be in the same location as last year. The booth is large and very visible. At the July MGV meeting, a sign up sheet was sent around. We would like to have at least one MGV available at each of three time slots daily. The times are 11 am – 1 pm, 2 – 4, and 6 – 8 pm. Please be prepared to meet and greet visitors. This sheet will be available at the bug walk. It is also posted in the MGV office.

This year's theme will be Experiencing Fall Gardening. We would like to have displays dealing with fall clean-up tasks, planting spring blooming bulbs, fall container gardening, rooting cuttings, taking plants indoors, a fall vegetable garden, etc. Any one interested in helping create a display, let Nancy know. All supplies will be furnished. It's really lots of fun and can be accomplished in a morning or afternoon. We will also have 2 quiz boxes available.

Of course, we will be promoting the MGV classes as long as we have enough to hold classes. As of 7/28/10, there are 8 confirmed applicants. I have not heard from all of last spring's applicants so will be contacting them again. I would really like to have close to 15 applicants to hold the classes. There is still a month until the August 27th deadline.

The Fair set up will most likely be either Sunday, August 29 or Monday, August 30. That worked really well last year. Tear down will not be until Tuesday, Sept. 7.

More info at the Bug Walk.

AUGUST GARDENING TIPS

August is generally a month to harvest, not plant, crops although it's not too late to put in one last crop of lettuce, as well as spinach, chard, and kale for fall picking. It's also a good time to plant perennials in pots to add late season color to the garden.

Once your peas and other early garden crops have stopped production, remove them from the garden. Getting these plants out of your way makes it easier for you to care for remaining vegetables and reduces the chance for diseases to get going on aging foliage. It also opens up space for planting later-producing crops or cover crops that need an early start if they are to put on significant growth before frost, such as oats.

If you've been trying to grow "the great pumpkin" for an end-of-the-summer fair or Halloween, early August is the time to do some pruning and fertilizing. Start by taking off all but one or two pumpkins from the vine. Pinch the ends off the vines to encourage development of the fruit already set on the vines.

Apply liberal amounts of composted cow manure or a diluted plant fertilizer around the base of the plant. Keep the area free from weeds to prevent competition for nutrients and moisture. Mulching with straw or leaves can help. You also may want to spray the foliage with an appropriate fungicide to prevent mildew from reducing the vigor of the plant.

Raccoons can be a problem in sweet corn. They seem to know, even before you do, when the corn is ready to pick. The only surefire way to keep them out is to use an electric fence. The first strand should be six inches above ground level, the second about 16 inches high. Just make sure no weeds or grass touch the wire fence as it will short out the charge and allow the raccoons to get into the corn.

In late August repair problem area in your lawn. Many brown spots are not the result of summer dormancy due to drought but rather injury caused by white grubs. This is also the time to reseed severely injured areas, keeping newly seeded lawns moist and mulched.

Other activities for August: donate surplus vegetables to your local food shelter; remove blackberry and raspberry canes that have fruited.

Source: Various
University of Vermont, Department of Plant and Soil Science

A GARDEN FOR KITTY

Some people want to keep cats out of the garden. If you'd rather invite them in, here's what you do.

Create a garden for your feline friends by planting catnip, catmint, and other plants they love. In giving cats their own space may help keep them out of your flower beds and vegetable plot. Because cats will want to eat, sleep, and play in their garden, the plants may become bedraggled, bent, or broken. So, you'll probably want to tuck the garden behind a garage or in a corner of the yard. It's also a good idea to isolate it from favorite flowers or your vegetable crops.

Prepare the soil as you would any new garden, working plenty of organic matter and fertilizer into the soil. Clay and sandy soils especially will benefit from the addition of compost or peat moss. Water frequently throughout the season.

Although not all cats respond the same way to all so-called cat aphrodisiacs, most will go crazy over catnip (*Nepeta cataria*). Long before anyone discovered that this plant, a native of Europe, triggered a response in cats, it was used for tea and as a medicinal herb to treat a number of ailments. It is also said to be an effective mosquito repellent. Plant catnip in full sun in well-drained soil. Plants will grow to a height of nine to 12 inches, producing tiny lavender flowers beginning in early summer. Most cats also will adore catmint (*Nepeta mussinii*), which induces similar frenzies in cats. The plant has silvery leaves, and flowers ranging in color from white to dark blue, depending on variety. The compact plants make a nice place for an afternoon catnap. For best results, this cultivar needs to be grown in a sunny location.

No cat's garden would be complete without cat thyme (*Teucrium marum*) or valerian (*Valeriana officianalis*). The first is a member of the mint family and has deep green leaves and purple spires. A Mediterranean native, it may grow to heights of one to two feet if planted in full sun in a moist, well-drained spot. It is related to the herb Germander, not the herb Thyme, so its common name is misleading!

In addition to planting a smorgasbord of favorite plants, be sure to leave a patch of loose dirt for rolling and digging. Compost is sometimes even better than dirt for cats, but if you use this in a good flowerbed be aware that they may use this for a litter box! You can put some wire mesh under mulch or compost to make less attractive.

Add some shade with a small teepee of boards or half a plastic culvert, burying the bottom few inches in the soil so it won't collapse in heavy rain or wind or by roughhousing by playful cats. The culvert or similar structure also provides a secure hideout for them, or protection if being chased. It saves them from getting stuck up a tree! Just make sure it is not too large for small kids to climb in and get stuck. It also provides cover

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KEEPING KITTY OUT OF THE GARDEN!!!!

Some people love cats. Others hate them. But whatever your feelings about felines, chances are you probably don't want them digging up your garden. So, what do you do?

First, it helps if you can think like a cat. With the exception of a few plants, catnip being the main one, cats really aren't out to destroy your beloved perennials or garden vegetables. What they really like is the dirt. Most cats think the outdoors is their litter box, and a patch of dirt is an invitation to come do their business. It also makes a great place to play or roll.

One way to keep your own cats from roaming into the neighbor's garden, is to make your space attractive to them. In an out of the way corner of the yard, plant a patch of catnip, the aphrodisiac of cats. Spread some sand for sleeping nearby. Or, if your feline companions prefer to keep you company in the garden, leave a cat-sized play area in one part of the garden. Make sure you plant or mulch the rest of the garden so your cats have no other place to roll and will stay in their designated area.

If you don't want your neighbor's cats in your garden, you will need to take more drastic measures. Try spraying the intruder with a blast from the hose. Most cats will turn and run although some actually enjoy water, especially on a hot day. For them, you must try other tactics, like planting rue. The blue foliage makes this an attractive garden accent, but cats can't stand the odor and will make a wide berth around the planting. Thorny roses also deter cats.

Some gardeners use homemade remedies. Although I can't personally attest to the success of these methods, it won't hurt to try them. Sprinkle your plants with crushed pepper. It will irritate cats and may even produce a few extra pepper plants in the garden. Cayenne is also said to work though you will need to reapply it after every rain. Or try ground-up grapefruit and lemon rinds. Or make a tea of rue, hot pepper liquid, or lemon juice to spray on plants. Commercial products like predator urine and cat (and dog) repellents also are available at many garden centers. Or try to get rid of unwanted cat visitors with devices that use sound, light, and/or water to scare them away. Another possibility is to lay down mats, which have soft upward facing points. It won't hurt you--or the cats--to walk on these, but most cats don't like to step on them.

If you have bird feeders near your garden, move them to a new location or hang them higher than a cat can jump. Otherwise, cats may continue to visit your garden in hopes of catching birds. Finally, remember that cats are not stupid creatures. They can be taught. Sometimes a stern "no" is all it takes to teach a cat to stay out of the garden. But if all else fails, there's always cat behavior modification--better known as therapy--for your furry friend, and you!

Source: Dr. Leonard Perry, Extension Professor, University of Vermont

A GARDEN FOR KITTY—Continued

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in bad weather, as does an open area under porch or nearby shed.

Consider adding a water feature like small pond for drinking water for your cats. If you have bird feeders near your garden, make sure that they are high enough so the cats can't climb up to get birds.

Finally, cats like to nibble on grass. So, include some nice grassy plants in your garden or leave a patch of un-mown grass near the garden for munching. Then sit back, relax, and watch your pets enjoy their new outdoor space.

Source: Dr. Leonard Perry, Extension Professor, University of Vermont

Master Gardener Volunteer Meeting Minutes

Thursday, July 8, 2010

Marty Davis, Vice President, called the meeting to order with 17 members present.

Secretary, Cathy Zernechel – no report. No meetings since March.

Treasurer, Bill Lanning, reported the income and expenses for the year to date. He also gave an updated health report on Anita. She is experiencing some relief. The group expressed their concerns and offered their prayers. Get well Anita!

Nancy provided information on the following:

- Sold 45 rain barrels. There are four left. Donated 1 to Van Buren State Park for their Nature Center.
- Bug Walk hosted by Curtis Young will be held at Riverbend Park on August 12th at 6:00 PM
- Flyers for the Master Gardening training classes are available to pass out around town. The first class starts on September 14th from 5:30 to 9:00 PM. Nancy would like to have at least 12 - 15 applicants if possible. Four of the classes will be held at Oakwood Nature Preserve and there will be four Saturday classes.
- Nancy needs assistants to attend the Worm Composting project for the Kid's Fair. It will be at Birchaven on July 31st at 1:15.
- Sign up sheets were passed around for the Fair.
- The Green Industry Summer Session will be Wednesday, August 4th. Early registration by July 15th. Cost \$15.00 or \$25.00. Ruth agreed to coordinate meeting time at the extension office for carpooling.
- Flyers are available for the Food Preservation Clinic. See Nancy after meeting to get copies.
- Three wreath classes will be held in November & December at the Library

Community gardens were tilled. So far only one family has taken advantage of the lots available.

Sign up sheets were passed around for the Hancock County Fair booth. Still need to verify location.

Committee Chairpersons need to forward information to Kay for the newsletter.

Field trip for the Hidden Gardens will be postponed to a later date.

Noreen reported so far there has been no communication with the library.

Cathy Zernechel was able to fill all times needed in July for the Workstation. The August signup sheet was completed.

Some discussion was given about the EAB infestation happening here in Ohio now.

A special thanks to Tracy for hosting the picnic last month.

Ruth Furiate made a motion to adjourn the meeting seconded by Noreen Walters. The Meeting adjourned at 7:42PM. The next meeting will be at Riverbend Park for the Bug Walk at 6:00PM on August 12th.

Respectfully submitted
Cathy Zernechel, Secretary



The Master Gardener *Green Thumb Print* is a publication of the Hancock County Extension Office, 7868 Hancock County Road 140, Findlay, OH, 45840, 419-422-3851. The Master Gardener Coordinator is Nancy Kronberg.

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MASTER GARDENER VOLUNTEER PROGRAM

2010 Ohio Master Gardener State Conference

Make Green...Routine

Friday, October 01, 2010 - Saturday, October 02, 2010

Firelands Campus of Bowling Green State University
100 University Drive
Huron, Ohio 44839

**Early Bird Pricing of \$100.00 ends on August 31, 2010.
\$125 Regular Price. Final Registration Date September 15, 2010.**

Name: _____ Home Phone #: _____ Cell #: _____
(Please print)
Address: _____ Email address: _____
_____ (To Receive Confirmation)
Check #: _____ Amount: _____

MG County: _____

Opening Session 8:30 – 9:45 am

Keynote Speaker: Renegade Gardener-Don Engebretson

Breakout Session #1 10:15-11:30- Select One

- _____ Designing the New Kitchen Garden-Jennifer Bartley (Landscape Architect, Author, Owner of American Potager)
- _____ Honeybees - Jim Tew (OSUE-OARDC Bee Lab)
- _____ "Garden Smarter.....Not Harder" - Angela Bair (Occupational Therapist, OSUE Wood Cty MG)
- _____ Natives Prairies and Meadows - John Blakeman (Meadows Environments Inc)
- _____ Diagnostic Fundamentals for Master Gardeners - Denise Ellsworth (OSUE Summit Cty)
- _____ Soils and the Benefits of Composting - Sharon Barnes (Head Composting Division of Barnes Nursery, Inc)
- _____ Rain Gardens - Jay Brewster (Independent Landscape Designer)

Lunch Session 11:30am -1:00pm - Select one

- _____ James H Mc.Bride Arboretum Tour - Charlene Margetiak (Naturalist, Erie Cty MetroParks)
- _____ Project S.T.R.A.W. - Sr. Jane Francis Omlor (Project Director of Project S.T.R.A.W.)

