

# Green Thumb Prints

Newsletter of the Hancock County  
Master Gardener Volunteers



August 2011

*Gardening is our Passion  
Education is our Purpose*



## WHAT'S INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

- **Drought Resistance**
- **Where did the flowers go?**
- **Yellow Jackets**
- **More**

## *Dates to Remember!*

**Fridays (or anytime):** demonstration garden.

**Saturday, August 6:** 10 am Positively Pretty Perennials (Marilynn Beltz) at Feasel's. Recycling Saturday & Sunday at Feasel's.

**Thursday, August 11:** Picnic at Tracey Pierce's home. See Page 8.

**Wednesday, August 17:** WFIN Phone Club, 9:00-11:00

**Thursday, August 18:** Conifer presentation at Findlay Library 7 - 8 pm Please register with Library

## **Upcoming Events**

**8/30 - 9/5:** Hancock County Fair. See Page 8

**Sunday, September 18:** Gary's retirement celebration - more info in September GTP

**Thursday, September 8:** Brown Bag Presentation by Marilyn Beltz. House Plants 6 pm Extension Office Regular meeting follows

## *Coordinator's Corner*

*by Nancy Kronberg*

What do crepe myrtles blooming everywhere, lantana is a perennial, and naturally blue hydrangeas have in common? Zone 7 gardening and what will be my new home. After much thought and consideration, I have decided to relocate to the Chattanooga area to be closer to my son, daughter-in-law, and ever so wonderful granddaughters. I want to be a larger part of their lives and assist whenever possible.

I will be turning over our program to a very capable leader as yet to be determined for sure. Hancock County will still have an extremely high quality program. Everyone will need to step and dig in to assist in this effort. Some programs will continue, some won't, and new ones will be added.

I have not determined my retirement date although it will be by December 31. Once I find a home in Chattanooga, I will be better able to define the date. I will be turning over the projects on my calendar to very capable mgvs. I will continue to guide and assist whenever possible.

It has been my pleasure to lead this program and hone it over the years into one of Ohio's best. It couldn't have been done without a lot of help. When I considered becoming coordinator in 1999, Jim Kelley and Pat Flinn said if I would take the job, they would help me. They were true to their word. In addition, in 2001, Bill Jones joined the group. His knowledge, expertise, and desire to educate the public has been key to our success. Bill doesn't get paid the big bucks (ha!) like I do, but there is no way I could have done my job without his assistance. Over the years many mgvs have stepped up to fulfill our mission and vision. Thanks to all of them both past and present members. I would be remiss if I didn't mention Gary Wilson who not only guided us but let us create our own program. Gary leaves August 31.

I have enjoyed working with everyone and will truly miss you. I am looking forward to the next phase of my life while I'm young enough to enjoy it!  
See you at the Picnic!

**We have a terrible problem with yellow jackets in late summer. They are nesting in the ground and when I mow, they come after me! How can I get rid of the nest?**

Yellow jacket populations can build up in late August or early September to annoying levels. Most homeowners become aggravated when wasps arrive in great numbers at picnics or when mowing disturbs a ground nest. Yellow jackets are actually a beneficial insect through most of the summer, feeding on caterpillars and flies. However, in late summer, their diet switches from high protein needed for developing larvae to high carbohydrates needed for the adults.

The Eastern yellow jacket has been common in Ohio, but in the past few years, has been displaced in large part by the German yellow jacket, which is more aggressive. Destroying a yellow jacket nest is difficult to do, and can be dangerous. Because nests do not overwinter and are not used the next season, it is best to leave them alone unless they present a serious hazard. Only the fertilized queen



survives over the winter, and she begins a new nest in a different location the following spring.

If you must destroy a nest, treat it with a dust formulation of the insecticide Sevin (carbaryl). Do this at dusk, when the insects are all in the nest, and carefully approach the opening to the nest. Drop in a tablespoon or so of Sevin, then slowly move away from the nest. As the yellow jackets track over the insecticide as they go in and out, they will track some into the interior of the nest, eventually killing all the adults.

Source: Plantfacts, OSU Edu

## **Which lawn grass for Ohio is the most drought tolerant?**

Of the four cool season grasses grown in Ohio, tall fescue and the fine fescues are the most drought tolerant and will remain green through most summers, while Kentucky bluegrass and perennial ryegrass will go dormant during prolonged hot, dry weather. Dormancy protects the grass by concentrating moisture in the crown and roots. Dormant grass will initiate new growth with the return of adequate rainfall and moderate temperatures, which usually arrives in September.

Source: Plantfacts, OSU

## Drought Resistance in the Home Landscape

In most landscapes there are plants that survive periods of drought. Placing these plants in the garden reduces the need to supply extra water during periods of inadequate rainfall. While cacti and succulents may have a place in some drought-tolerant gardens, they are not the only alternatives. There are other choices available and appropriate for dry areas. With careful selection, planning and execution, drought-tolerant landscapes can be as pleasing as those needing heavy irrigation.

### Select Plants for the Growing Conditions

Select plants for the growing conditions in a given area when planning and designing the landscape. These growing conditions create microclimates. Define the microclimates. Create a site plan that groups plants according to similar water needs. Strive for three basic divisions: very low water zone, low water zone, and moderate water zone. Each area should be irrigated separately, according to specific water needs. Incorporate leaf size and color, bloom period, and size and shape of plant, to create visual interest.

Soil type, wind, and exposure to sun can create a dry microclimate in an area that receives heavy rainfall. Sandy, well-drained soil will dry out more quickly, while heavy clay soils are likely to remain moist much longer. Mixing humus into the soil will improve water-holding capacity of sandy soils and water penetration in clay soils. Sandy soils with humus will hold larger amounts of water. Clay soils amended with humus will absorb more water, reducing runoff. In locations with poor drainage and heavy soils, many drought-tolerant species may suffer during years with average or abundant rainfall. Wet winters and spring rains may also cause problems for some drought-tolerant plants growing in heavy soils.

### Limit Turfgrass

Turfgrass requires more water than other plants in the landscape. By isolating turf from gardens, trees and shrubs, a gardener can separate irrigation zones and waste less water. Limit turf to areas that are regular in shape and easily irrigated. Cultivar selection should be appropriate to the climate, site, level of maintenance, intended use and reduced water con-

sumption. Although coarse in texture and appearance, tall fescue mixes offer good heat and drought tolerance. Cut the grass at a height of 2 1/2 to 3 inches. Longer leaf blades help to shade and cool the ground, reducing evaporation from the soil and lessening the need to irrigate.

### Irrigate Efficiently

Efficient irrigation may mean including an irrigation system. The least efficient system is the sprinkler. It delivers a large amount of water in a short period, but loses excessive amounts of moisture to evaporation. Sprinklers are the only choice for turf areas. Low-volume trickle or drip irrigators and soaker hoses deliver moisture over a long period, losing little water due to evaporation or runoff. Check all systems regularly. An improperly calibrated, clogged or leaking system can waste a great deal of water. Carefully probe the root zone to help determine the moisture content in the soil. With some low-volume systems, the surface of the soil will not appear to be saturated, while the root zone will receive the proper amount of moisture.

In times of drought, utilizing recycled household or graywater helps ease water usage. Graywater should be free from oils, food scraps and bleach. Mixing graywater and fresh water (half and half) is ideal. Graywater should not be used on root crops or potted plants or be a plant's sole source of water. In addition to graywater, saving rainwater from roofs in cisterns and rain barrels will lessen the need to use community or well water. The need for irrigating an area will depend on all the factors of culture and microclimate. Well established gardens will require less supplemental irrigation during drought than newly planted areas.

### Use Mulch Properly

Properly mulching an area lowers the soil temperature and decreases the loss of moisture due to evaporation. In addition to creating texture in the landscape, organic mulches decay, adding nutrients to the soil. Appropriate depth of the mulch is important: 2 to 3 inches for trees and shrubs, and 1 to 2 inches for

*(Continued on page 4)*

# Drought Resistance in the Home Landscape—Continued

(Continued from page 3)

vegetables, annuals and perennials.

Carefully planned landscapes and sound cultural practices reduce water needs. Controlling weeds will lower moisture competition with other plants. Lessening competition will strengthen existing plants and make them less susceptible to disease, insects and drought. By carefully preparing and meeting plant requirements, a gardener can develop a landscape full of color and texture, while reducing water requirements.

## Irrigation Zones

### Very Low Water Zone

This area is typically farthest from a source of water. Plants in this area must be chosen carefully, requiring little or no supplemental irrigation. Some of these plants may show problems in years of abundant rainfall.

### Low Water Zone

Plants chosen for this area will require more water than that which is available naturally. During severe drought, supplementing the water supply will become necessary.

### Moderate Water Zone

This zone will use the greatest ratio of water in the landscape. Keeping this area small will help limit water needs. It is possible to grow drought-intolerant plants in this area.

## Plants Selected For Low And Very Low (\*) Water Zones

Hardiness may be microclimate dependent. This is not a complete list, but rather a sample of drought-tolerant species.

Many species (1) require well-drained soils and will not grow well in poorly drained, clay soils. Some species resistant to drought may perform more vigorously when grown in ideal conditions.

## Trees and Shrubs

- *Acanthopanax sieboldiana*, Five-Leaved Aralia\*
- *Acer campestre*, Hedge Maple
- *A. ginnala*, Amur Maple
- *Amorpha canescens*, Lead Plant
- *Aralia elata*, Japanese Angelica-Tree
- *Arctostaphylos uva-ursi*, Bearberry1
- *Berberis thunbergii*, Japanese Barberry
- *Betula populifolia*, Gray Birch
- *Buddleia alternifolia*, Butterfly Bush
- *Caragana* spp., Peatree
- *Carya glabra*, Pignut Hickory
- *Celtis occidentalis*, Hackberry
- *Chaenomeles* spp., Flowering Quince
- *Cotoneaster* spp., Cotoneaster
- *Crataegus phaenopyrum*, Washington Hawthorn
- *Elaeagnus angustifolia*, Russian Olive\*
- *Genista* spp., Woadwaxen
- *Gleditsia tricanthos* v. *inermis*, Honey Locust\*
- *Gymnocladus dioica*, Kentucky Coffee Tree
- *Juniperus* spp., Juniper
- *Ligustrum* spp., Privet
- *Maclura pomifera*, Osage Orange\*
- *Myrica* spp., Bayberry\*
- *Physocarpus* spp., Nine-Bark
- *Pinus banksiana*, Jack Pine
- *Potentilla* spp., Cinquefoil
- *Prunus besseyi*, Plum
- *Quercus macrocarpa*, Burr Oak
- *Q. prinus*, Chestnut Oak
- *Rhus* spp. (esp. *R. typhina*), Sumac\*
- *Robina pseudoacacia*, Locust\*

## Perennials

- *Rosa rugosa*, Hedge Rose\*
- *R. virginiana*, Virginia Rose
- *Sophora japonica*, Sophora
- *Tamarix* spp., Tamarix
- *Vaccinium pallidum*, Dry-Land Blueberry
- *Viburnum lentago*, Nannyberry
- *Achillea* spp., Yarrow\*
- *Aethionema* spp., Stonecress1
- *Alcea rugosa*, Hollyhock
- *Alyssum montanum*, Alyssum1

(Continued on page 5)

## Drought Resistance in the Home Landscape—Continued

(Continued from page 4)

- *Amsonia jonesii*, Amsonia
- *Anacyclus depressus*, Anacyclus
- *Antennaria* spp., Pussytoes1
- *Anthemis* spp., Camomile\*1
- *Armeria* spp., Thrift1
- *Artemisia* spp., Wormwood, Mugwort\*1
- *Asclepias tuberosa*, Butterfly Milkweed
- *Aster divaricatus*, White Wood Aster
- *A. ericoides*, Heath Aster\*
- *Baptisia australis*, False Indigo
- *Belamcanda chinensis*, Blackberry-lily
- *Callirhoe involucrata*, Low Poppy Mallow1
- *Campanula poscharskyana*, Serbian Bellflower1
- *Caryopteris x clandonensis*, Hybrid Bluebeard
- *Centaurea* spp., Bachelor's Button
- *Cerastium tomentosum*, Snow-in-Summer1
- *Chrysopsis villosa*, Hairy Goldaster\*1
- *Chrysothamnus* spp., Rabbitbush
- *Comtonia peregrina*, Sweetfern
- *Coreopsis verticillata*, Tickseed
- *Dictamnus albus*, Gasplant
- *Dracocephalum* spp., Dragonhead
- *Echinacea purpurea*, Coneflower\*
- *Elymus glauca*, Blue Lyme Grass
- *Erianthis ravenae*, Plume Grass
- *Eriogonum umbellatum*, Sulfur Plant
- *Eryngium* spp., Sea-Holly1
- *Eupatorium* spp., Mistflower, Joe-Pye- Weed
- *Euphorbia* spp., Spurge1
- *Festuca* spp., Fescue\*
- *Gaillardia* spp., Blanket Flower
- *Guara lindheimeri*, Guara1
- *Goniolimon tataricum*, Tatarian Statice1
- *Helianthemum nummularium*, Common Sunrose1
- *Helictotrichon sempervirens*, Blue Oat Grass1
- *Hypericum cerastiodes*, St.-John's-Wort\*
- *Hyssopus officinalis*, Hyssop
- *Knautia* spp., Pincushion Flower
- *Lavandula* spp., Lavender1
- *Liatris* spp., Gay-Feather1
- *Linaria* spp., Toadflax
- *Malva moschata*, Musk Mallow
- *Marrubium* spp., Horehound
- *Nepeta cataria*, Catnip
- *Oenothera* spp., Sundrop1
- *Opuntia* spp., Prickly Pear\*1
- *Origanum* spp., Oregano1
- *Penstemon caeapitosus*, Mat Penstemon1
- *Perovskia* spp., Russian Sage\*1
- *Potentilla* spp., Cinquefoil1
- *Ratibida columnifera*, Prairie Coneflower\*
- *Rudbeckia fulgida*, cultivars (i. e. Goldstrum)\*
- *Ruta graveolens*, Rue1
- *Salvia* spp., Sage
- *Santolina* spp., Lavender-Cotton1
- *Scutellaria* spp., Scullcap
- *Sedum* spp., Stonecrop\*1
- *Sempervivum* spp., Hens-and-Chicks\*1
- *Silene frivaldskyana*, Campion
- *Solidago* spp., Goldenrod
- *Stachys* spp., Lamb's Ears1
- *Symphytum* spp., Comfrey\*
- *Thermopsis fabacea*, Carolina Lupine1
- *Thymus* spp., Thyme1
- *Verbascum thapsus*, Mullein\*1
- *Verbena bipinnatifida*, Dakota Verbena1
- *V. canadensis*, Rose Verbena1
- *Waldsteinia ternata*, Barren-Strawberry
- *Yucca* spp., Adam's Needle\*
- *Cosmos bipinnatus*, Cosmos
- *Eschscholtzia californica*, California Poppy\*
- *Gaillardia pulchella*, Blanket Flower
- *Gazania rigens*, Treasure Flower
- *Gomphrena globosa*, Globe Amaranth
- *Helichrysum bracteatum*, Strawflower
- *Helipterum roseum*, Strawflower
- *Ipomoea* spp., Morning-Glory
- *Portulaca grandiflora*, Rock-Rose\*
- *Sanvitalia procumbens*, Creeping Zinnia
- *Tagetes* spp. and vars., Marigold
- *Tithonia rotundifolia*, Mexican Sunflower\*
- *Tropaeolum majus*, Nasturtium
- *Zinnia* spp. and vars., Zinnia

**Source: HYG 1643-94**

# Where are my flowers?????

Source: Excerpts from a Proven Winners Article

My plant was flowering and now it's stopped. Why did it stop? How do I make it start flowering again?

“If a plant has a problem flowering there are a few things that are the likely suspects. When a plant stops flowering we need to adjust the simple variables that we have been juggling in the garden: soil, light, water, temperature, and nutrition. We need to look the conditions in the garden or container (using our diagnostic knowledge), to look for clues as to what is going wrong.

Understanding why plants flower in the first place will provide clues to help you diagnose why your plants are no longer flowering. At its simplest, a plant's whole purpose is to live and procreate. They are concerned only with survival. Making us happy is a side effect! Flowering is necessary for plant survival. Flowers attract pollinators, get pollinated and set seed.

We include annuals and perennials in our landscapes for color, structure and duration, but mostly for flower color. When the plants don't perform as expected, we (the experienced gardeners) start looking for reasons. Environmental conditions such as moisture, nutrition, temperature (both day and night), and even soil and soil volume all impact the flowering of most plants. Since all of these factors interact to affect garden performance, this makes it difficult to pinpoint what factor(s) is causing the problem. Adding to the confusion, if one factor is changed, it may well impact several other factors.

## Stress:

Plants react to stress by shifting from vigorous growth to simply trying to survive. If the environmental factors are optimum for plant growth (right temperature, right moisture level, right nutritional level and a great root zone, free of obstructions) and there is no stress on the plant or its environment, there would be minimal need for pollination and seed set. In contrast, look at a plant growing in poor soil, or in an over crowded pot, where it hasn't rained in a month, where there is minimal nutrition in the soil, and it is hot and dry. The plant is stunted due to lack of both nutrients and water. Maybe its foliage is grey or olive grey color, and the plant has flowered and begun to die. Why? The plant is threatened and survival of the species is the triggering response: flower, attract a pollinator, set seed, and survive.

## Fertilizing:

You have probably seen lush tomatoes and impatiens with thick green leaves yet no fruit or flowers. These plants have been given everything they need, and there is minimal need to flower or fruit because there is no risk of death. Overly lush plants are often a product of **over fertilization**. Over feeding puts that plant in a heavily vegetative state, under feeding produces flowers but not many and not very pretty. You have also seen plants where the foliage is turning yellow and the plant simply looks sickly, although it is probably pushing out at least a few flowers. This is likely the result of **under fertilization**. The best practice is to apply a balanced fertilizer about every three waterings for containers and about once a month in the garden. Look for slow release formulas of fertilizer for you garden as they last longer, let you fertilize less, are more environmentally friendly, and in general give more constant supply of food.

## Watering:

Too much water causes rapid growth and fleshy, weak branches and poor roots. Not enough water causes restricted growth, stimulation of the flowering cycle, and grey green foliage color with tough brittle stems. Re-

*(Continued on page 7)*

# Where did the flowers go????? - Continued

*(Continued from page 6)*

member that it is best to water in the early morning hours rather than at dusk. Water sitting on the leaves and flowers overnight helps diseases get a foothold in your garden. In order for your plants to be truly happy, their basic needs to be met without over indulging.

## **Pot size:**

Give your plants lots of room to grow. Plants that are root bound are much more likely to use up all their fertilizer, and their water; quickly becoming both nutrient starved and stressed from drying out. Plants need a lot room in a pot to grow new roots. If they remain crowded too long, they simply stop, set seed and decline. Always plan for a summer's worth of growth in the pots you plant in spring. This is not only better for your plants, it is also better for you because the plants will need less care in larger containers. This is part of the reason for a national trend in larger containers, less care and everyone benefits.

## **Sunlight:**

Sunlight is the source of all plant energy, especially those really colorful annuals and perennials that expend so much energy putting out big beautiful flowers. In most cases, flowering plants need about 6 hours of sun a day. Often gardeners underestimate how much sun an area gets and only find out later that the situation doesn't provide enough light. Even hanging baskets of flowers usually look better on one side than they do on the other because one side receives more light (you can counteract this by turning your baskets once a week or so.)

Does your plant just look weak? This could be a problem with not enough sun. If your plant needs full sun make sure it is getting at least 6 hours of direct sun a day. Too much of a good thing? Does the foliage on your plant look silvery or coppery? This could be too much sun. Your plant has literally gotten a sunburn (shade plants need less than 4 hours of direct sun a day and it is best if they don't get mid-day sun). Move it to an area with more shade. If the amount of sun is correct this could also be an indicator of a need for fertilizer or micro nutrients being out of balance

## **Temperature:**

Many times we see gardeners having problems in the heat of summer, when night temperatures remain high, and humidity rises. This causes some plants to slow down or stop flowering because they cannot rest and recuperate when night temperatures are too high. In this situation, an early morning watering is the best way to help the plants; it cools them down a little and makes sure they have enough water to elevate some stress during the day.

## **Deadheading:**

Does your plant have all dead flowers and not new flowers? This could indicate that your plant needs dead-heading. If a plant has already set a bunch of seed it may decide that it has done its job of procreating and stop producing new flowers. Remove the old flowers to help it re-bloom.

## **Insects and Disease:**

Is your plant just not flowering but all of these conditions seem to be right? Check for insects and disease. Treat as needed, following the label instructions.

**A beautiful garden is the result of analyzing many factors, some diagnostic work, and your choice of plants. The proper balance will result in good flower and foliage development. “**

**Congratulations  
and Best Wishes to  
Gary Wilson  
On his early retirement.**



The MGVs have appreciated Gary's helpful attitude and excellent horticultural knowledge. He has been an asset to the MGV program and the community.

His last day will be August 31st.

Gary, we will miss you!!!! Good luck with your new endeavors!

Retirement Celebration Sunday, September 18 Details in next newsletter

**Come to the  
MGV Picnic**

Date: Thursday, August 11

Time: 6:00 PM

Location: Tracey Pierce's Home  
12931 Twp. Rd 108, Findlay

Please bring your own chair, table service, a hot or cold dish to share, and a friend/spouse if desired. Tracey will provide burgers and brats. Mix, mingle, eat, and enjoy!

Sign-up:

[www.doodle.com/guygdih52gmra836](http://www.doodle.com/guygdih52gmra836)  
or e-mail/call Tracey

**2011 Hancock County Fair**

Wednesday, August 31 - Monday, September 5

Same location as last year -  
East end of Grange building -  
center section next to  
Garden Club booths

MGVs needed to staff 3 shifts each day  
10 am - 1 pm, 1 pm - 4 pm, 5 pm - 8 pm  
Counts as workstation hours!

Call Ruth if you can assist OR sign up at:  
<http://doodle.com/6rtty2skhs9h52t6>

Sign up sheet will be available at the picnic also.  
You can sign up for as many shifts as you like. If  
times don't fit your schedule, come anytime that  
does fit! Wednesday has usually been a very busy  
day with lots of questions.



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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