

# Green Thumb Prints

Newsletter of the Hancock County  
Master Gardener Volunteers



May 2011

*Gardening is our Passion  
Education is our Purpose*



## WHAT'S INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

- GGD and Phenological Events
- Butterfly Presentation
- Forsythia
- Microclimates

## *Dates to Remember!*

**Mondays:** 9:00-noon, workstation (see page 8) **VOL-UNTEER NEEDED!**

**Fridays:** 9:00, demonstration garden

**Saturday, May 7:** Let's Go Gardening, 4 garden centers. Contact Tracey Pierce. See page 6. **VOLUNTEERS NEEDED!**

**Saturday-Sunday, May 7-8:** Recycling at the Feasel Group, 2330 Bright Rd. Bring clean, empty plant containers & flats.

**Tuesday, May 10:** Rain Garden Workshop, native grasses: installation techniques & long-term management. 6:30 pm Ag Service Center

**Thursday, May 12:** Plant Exchange, see Coordinator's Corner for details

**Tuesday, May 17:** All About Veggies, by Cathy Zernechel, Hancock Library, Free, but call & make reservation. 7 PM

**Wednesday, May 18:** WFIN Phone Club, 9:00-11:00, Bill Jones, Jeannette Miller, Marilyn Beltz.

**Thursday, May 19:** Wellness, Safety, & Environment Fair, 3rd Floor, Marathon Building, 10-2 pm, MGVs have table with containers & other items of interest. Ask Ruth!

**Saturday, May 21:** Fostoria Farmer's Market, Ask the Master Gardener. Contact Carol Kinn and Mary Miller.

**Saturday, May 21:** Container Gardening, Feasel's, 10 am, Marilyn Beltz.

## *Coordinator's Corner*

*—By Nancy Kronberg*

Check the calendar for all the events happening this month. Opportunities abound for all mgvs to assist. Chairpersons are listed for each event if you have questions.

We had a great field trip to Four Star Greenhouse in Carleton, MI. Maybe Marty can recap the event at the Plant Exchange which is Thursday, May 12. Time is 6 pm at Bill Jones' home. Come even if you don't bring plants. There are always enough plants that need new homes. Enjoy ice cream sun-dae's also.

The First Tuesday workshops were successful despite the weather. There will be another series this fall only if someone steps up to coordinate the project. We have cancelled the May 3 butterfly gardening due to the speaker being unavailable.

Another project that will need volunteers is the gardens on the south side of the Job & Family Services building. Several mgvs met with JFS volunteers and now know what they would like to plant. As I will be out of town much of the month of May, I would like someone to coordinate with JFS. They will supply the labor to plant and I will try to have all the plants purchased. Contact me if you can assist.

When we finally get some decent gardening weather, get out and plant in the dirt (soil)!

*Nancy*

## Growing Degree Days and Phenology

Data from OSU website: <http://www.oardc.ohio-state.edu/gdd>

**GGD for Findlay as of 5/1/11: 143**

### Quarter

#### Ending

	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986	1987	1988	1989	1990
31-Mar	24	87	13	50	83	55	51	77	115
30-Jun	1107	1036	1071	1162	1169	1281	1145	1001	1127
30-Sep	2745	2993	2781	2892	2863	3132	3122	2759	2841
31-Dec	3113	3226	3105	3157	3091	3297	3256	3011	3144

Cooler than average

Warmer than average

	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000
31-Mar	62	34	24	33	99	40	69	122	106	129
30-Jun	1498	881	1009	1120	1149	1096	918	1379	1285	1187
30-Sep	3350	2300	2835	2790	3103	2818	2525	3260	3140	2759
31-Dec	3636	2468	3028	3080	3342	3037	2759	3544	3420	3144

	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	Average
31-Mar	13	46	62	60	35	52	94	36	90	58	24	61.4
30-Jun	1159	1139	997	1160	1128	1108	1317	1126	1265	1418		1153.0
30-Sep	2899	3166	2547	2792	3088	3013	3192	3031	3092	3413		2939.3
31-Dec	3202	3361	2805	3009	3399	3226	3591	3323	3327	3682		3199.4

Note: Year 2010 was the warmest on this chart!

## Summary of Phenological Events

SPECIES	PHENOLOGICAL EVENT	GDD	SPECIES	PHENOLOGICAL EVENT	GDD
Silver Maple	first bloom	34	Northern Lights Forsythia	full bloom	94
Cornelian cherry Dogwood	first bloom	40	Speckled Alder	full bloom	97
Silver Maple	full bloom	42	Cornelian cherry Dogwood	full bloom	98
Red Maple	first bloom	44	Norway Maple	first bloom	116
Speckled Alder	first bloom	52	Border Forsythia	full bloom	116
Northern Lights Forsythia	first bloom	58	Chanticleer Callery Pear	first bloom	123
Japanese Pieris	first bloom	60	Sargent Cherry	first bloom	127
Red Maple	full bloom	75	Larch Casebearer	egg hatch	128
Star Magnolia	first bloom	83	Japanese Pieris	full bloom	129
White Pine Weevil	adult emergence	84	Saucer Magnolia	first bloom	133
Border Forsythia	first bloom	86	Common Flowering Quince	first bloom	137
Eastern Tent Caterpillar	egg hatch	92	Bradford Callery Pear	first bloom	142
Manchu Cherry	first bloom	93			

# Whittier School Monarch Butterfly Presentation

Christa Gupta, Sandy Reinhardt, and Sharon Hammer Baker enjoyed doing a presentation on Monarch butterflies for 18 primary classes ( K thru 2 ) at Whittier Elementary school on Wednesday, April 6. Sandy says, "The nine 20 minute sessions 'flew' by."

Christa shared her beautiful handmade book of the Life Cycle of the Monarch Butterfly. Sharon Hammer Baker and Sandy talked about a basket of flowers butterflies might like. Sharon and Sandy also shared small plastic replicas of the Monarch's life cycle that everyone liked to touch. The children were quite attentive with lots of questions and answers. Each of the 405 children were happy to receive a neat paper Monarch butterfly of their own attached to a stick that could be used as a bookmark. The teachers were glad to receive three butterfly raising kits -- one for each grade. Both the kits and paper butterflies with sticks were purchased using Master Gardener Volunteer funds. This was definitely a fun educational experience for all involved.



Dear Mastric Hardware, Sandy, Christa, & Sharon, 4-7-11  
All the staff and students at Whittier  
Primary School were thrilled and impressed  
with your butterfly presentation. It was a  
perfect fit for a special activity during our  
Read to Read Week. It has created a lasting  
memory for everyone.

Thank you so much for the butterfly kits  
and bookmache. That was so generous and  
a wonderful surprise.

We appreciate all your time and efforts  
to make this program a success.

Sincerely,  
Linda Leland, Whittier



# Forsythia

After a long, drab winter, most gardeners anxiously await the arrival of spring. One sure sign that spring has truly arrived is the bright yellow flowers of the forsythia. Below are answers to questions about this deciduous shrub named after William Forsyth, an 18th century Scottish horticulturist.

## **My forsythia shrubs are vigorous and healthy, but don't bloom well. Why?**

Forsythias bloom on old wood. Unfortunately, the flower buds on some varieties are not reliably cold hardy. For example, the flower buds on 'Lynwood Gold' and 'Spring Glory' are hardy to minus 10 degrees Fahrenheit. Since most areas experience winter temperatures below minus 10 F, these cultivars often don't bloom well in this area.

Improper pruning is another possible cause. Flower buds on forsythias begin to develop by early summer. Pruning the shrubs anytime from mid-summer until just prior to bloom will drastically reduce flowering. To achieve the best floral display, forsythias should be pruned immediately after flowering.

## **What are some good forsythia varieties?**

When selecting a forsythia, choose a cultivar that reliably blooms in our plant zone. The flower buds on some varieties are not reliably cold hardy. Again, 'Lynwood Gold' and 'Spring Glory,' typically don't bloom well in Ohio as their flower buds are often killed by cold winter temperatures.

Forsythia varieties that grow well and bloom reliably in Ohio include 'Meadowlark' (bright yellow flowers, grows 8 to 10 feet tall, has arching spreading form), 'Northern Sun' (medium yellow flowers, grows 8 to 10 feet tall, has arching spreading form, University of Minnesota introduction), 'Sunrise' (medium yellow flowers, grows 5 to 6 feet tall, dense growth habit, an Iowa State University introduction), and 'Northern Gold' (yellow gold flowers, grows 8 to 10 feet tall).

## **When is the best time to prune forsythias?**

Since they bloom on old wood, forsythias should be pruned immediately after flowering. Pruning the shrubs anytime from mid-summer until just prior to bloom will reduce flowering in spring. When pruning mature forsythias, it's best to remove one-fourth to one-third of the oldest (largest) stems at ground level every other year. New shoots will emerge from the ground and bloom in following years. Old, neglected forsythias can be rejuvenated by pruning them back to within 3 to 4 inches of the ground in late winter or early spring. The shrubs will grow back quickly and should begin blooming again in one or two years.

## **What would be a good planting site for forsythias?**

Forsythias grow and bloom best in areas that receive at least six hours of direct sun. They will grow in partial shade, but won't bloom as heavily. Forsythias adapt to a wide range of soils. However, they do not perform well in wet, poorly drained sites. The forsythia is an excellent plant for mixed shrub borders. It can also be utilized as an informal hedge. Low-growing cultivars can be used as groundcovers.

## **How do you propagate forsythias?**

The forsythia is easily propagated from softwood cuttings. Softwood cuttings should be made from the current season's growth in late June or early July. Using a sharp knife, cut off 4 to 6 inch long shoots. Pinch off the leaves on the lower half of the cutting. Dip the base (cut end) of the cuttings in a root-promoting compound. Root the cuttings in a large pot or flat containing coarse sand or perlite. Insert the bottom two inches of the cuttings into the rooting medium and firm the material around the base of each cutting. After all the cuttings are inserted, water the medium and let it drain. Cover the container and cuttings with a clear plastic bag or dome to reduce water loss. Then place the cuttings in bright light, but not direct sunlight. Forsythia cuttings should root in six to eight weeks. When the cuttings have well developed root systems, remove them from the rooting medium and transplant into individual pots using a well-drained potting mix.

Source: Iowa State University, Extension, Richard Jauron, Willy Klein

# Dealing With Tree Damage After the Storm

We recently experienced very high winds and damaged trees. Stormy weather frequently damages trees throughout Ohio. In most cases, the extent of tree damage isn't due to the luck of the draw.

Certain tree species are much more susceptible to storm damage than others. For example, some Callery pear cultivars, silver maple, Siberian elm, willow and green ash are quite vulnerable to strong winds. Oaks, lindens and sugar maples are less susceptible to storm damage. In addition to tree species, the age of the tree, its condition and maintenance history also determine the extent of storm damage. Large, old trees with a structural weakness, such as some trunk decay and those with narrow branch angles are particularly susceptible to damage. No tree species can withstand the fury of a tornado.

## Assessing storm-damaged trees

Carefully examine trees to determine the extent of damage. Give immediate attention to trees that are hazards to people or property. If a power line is involved, utility company personnel are the only ones who should be working in the area. After the elimination of hazardous situations, individual tree care can be assessed.

Storm damage to a tree can vary from a few small broken limbs to complete destruction. Severe damage to the main trunk often warrants removal of the tree. Trees that have sustained major trunk damage are no longer structurally sound and may come down completely in the next storm. Trees that have the majority of their crown destroyed are probably not salvageable.

## Caring for storm-damaged trees

When pruning damaged trees, use correct pruning techniques to minimize the size of the wound and avoid flush cuts. Remove stubs by pruning back to an undamaged side branch, main branch or trunk. Generally, pruning paints are not necessary. However, wounds that occur on oaks between March 1 and July 1 should be painted to reduce the potential



transmission of the fungus responsible for oak wilt. When painting pruning cuts on oak trees, use a latex house paint rather than asphalt or creosote-based paints.

The pruning of large branches and damaged branches high in the tree canopy should be left to trained arborists. Cabling and bracing may be appropriate if the cost involved can be justified. Cabling and bracing do not save trees that have suffered extensive structural damage.

## Tree removal and replacement

If tree removal and replacement ends up being your only alternative, select tree species and cultivars with a sturdy reputation. Excellent maple species include black and sugar. Oak species for Ohio include white, swamp white, bur and red. Linden (both American and littleleaf), American hophornbeam and ginkgo are other possibilities. Selection of a sturdy tree species alone will not ensure a strong tree. Proper pruning when small is imperative.

Source: Iowa State University, Extension

Thanks so very much!!!!

Marilynn Beltz would like to thank all the MGV friends and awards committee for naming her as Master Gardener Volunteer of the year. This is very humbling and Marilynn is very appreciative of this recognition. She (as all of us) is proud to be a member of such a great group of people!

Other winners include:

Educator of the Year: Ruth Furiate

Golden Trowel: Sharon Hammer Baker

Green Thumb: Tracey Pierce

Certificates of Appreciation: Bob Campbell, Dick Deerhake, Linda Laux, Marj Miller, Barb Phillips, Sandy Reinhardt, Norma Smith, Dianne Solis, & Patty Woodard.

A new award, Coordinator's Special MGV, was presented to Bill Jones. Thanks Bill for all you do to make our program successful.

## How to Spot, Stop Invasive

### Species: May 13 Workshop

You may have invasive species on your land and not even know it. Learn about the harm they do, how to spot them and how to fight them in a workshop in Dayton on May 13, 8:30 AM—4:00 PM

The Ohio Woodland Stewards Program's [Invasive Species Workshop](#) looks at such bane as purple loosestrife, common buckthorn and hemlock woolly adelgid -- plants and pests that aren't native to Ohio but are here now and causing problems. Invasive species come in all shapes and sizes and include insects, woodland plants and aquatic plants.

Speakers will cover the identification of those species that are giving landowners the most difficulty along with some control options -- from mechanical removal to the more complex chemical options.

Troublemakers also include common reed, tree-of-heaven, emerald ash borer, Asian long horned beetle, Japanese honey-suckle and some looming new threats.

Location is at [Cox Arboretum MetroPark](#), 1375 E. Siebenthaler Dr.

Registration costs \$35 per person, includes lunch and materials, and is due by May 6.

Register online at <http://woodlandstewards.osu.edu>. For more information, call 614-688-3421 or e-mail [ohiowoods@osu.edu](mailto:ohiowoods@osu.edu).

# Let's Go Gardening

## Schedule

Saturday, May 7th

9:00—3:00

Chairman: Tracey Pierce

Questions: Call 419-304-3160 or

E-mail [TraceyRx1@aol.com](mailto:TraceyRx1@aol.com)

## VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

### Brinkman's

9 AM - Noon: Linda Dyar, Sandy Reinhardt, Barb Sherman

Noon—3 PM: Bill Jones, Lyn Maa, **OPEN**

### Menard's

9 AM - Noon: Cathy Grossman, Marilynn Beltz, Nancy Kronberg

Noon—3 PM: Marjorie Miller, Norma Smith, Donna Johnson

### Feasel's

9 AM - Noon: Ruth Furiate, Bob Campbell, **OPEN**

Noon—3 PM: Terrie Cortez, Mary Jane Bowland, **OPEN**

### Lowe's

9 AM - Noon: Dianne Solis, Jeannette Miller, Pam McCloud

Noon—3 PM: Marty Davis, Marilynn Beltz, Nancy

**Someone from each location will need to bring signage and display items back to extension office. Please let Tracey know if you can do this.**

Note: Since we do not have a definite date from DeHaven's, those who signed up for that location have been reassigned.

(Thanks for volunteering!)

# Microclimates

A microclimate is the climate of a small area that is different from the area around it. It may be warmer or colder, wetter or drier, or more or less prone to frosts. Microclimates may be quite small - a protected courtyard next to a building, for example, that is warmer than an exposed field nearby. Or a microclimate may be extensive - a band extending several miles inland from a large body of water that moderates temperatures.

When you use the [USDA Hardiness Zone](#) and [spring and fall frost-date](#) maps, you need to be aware that your microclimate may make where you garden very different from the information found on the maps. If you are in a cold valley, your minimum winter temperatures may be lower than what the map indicates. As a result, you may actually be in a hardiness zone that is colder than that shown on the map, and some marginal plants may not survive your winters. Cold valleys may also be prone to late spring frosts and early fall frosts, making your growing season shorter than indicated by the [frost-free season map](#). If you put out tender plants too early, you might lose them. If you plant long-season heat-loving plants, they may not mature before fall frost.

## Large-scale microclimates

Some microclimates are much larger, extending for miles because of the effects of:

- **Large bodies of water**, such as the Great Lakes, the Finger Lakes, Lake Champlain, Long Island Sound and the Atlantic Ocean, tend to moderate air temperatures of adjacent inland areas. Low temperatures in winter are not as extreme, and these areas are less prone to late spring and early fall frosts. Smaller bodies of water also have the same effect, usually to a lesser extent.
- **Urban areas** tend to have less extreme low temperatures than the surrounding countryside. Buildings and paved surfaces absorb heat during the day, then radiate it back into the air at night, reducing the chances of frost and moderating low temperatures during winter. Buildings also offer protection from wind in many places. Urban areas may be a full Hardiness Zone warmer than

rural areas just a few miles away. These warming effects carry over into summer, as well. Urban microclimates can trap heat, creating a scorching environment that can damage plants.

- **Topography** has a profound effect on microclimates. Cold air is heavier than warm air. So on cold winter nights or nights when frost threatens, the cold air flows downhill and collects in low spots -- just like water flows down hill and collects in puddles. On winter nights, some valleys may be 10 degrees or more colder than neighboring slopes. These valleys may also be more prone to frost.

Hilltops may not suffer as much from frost or cold temperatures on nights with radiational cooling. But if they are exposed, winter winds can often wreak havoc. Winds dry out plants, and are particularly hard on evergreens, which cannot replace moisture lost through their needles or leaves when the ground is frozen.

The slopes between cold valleys and windy hilltops can have different microclimates depending on their aspect (which direction they slope). North-facing slopes are slow to warm up in spring because they receive less direct sun, compared with south-facing slopes. But gardening on a south-facing slope can be a mixed blessing, especially when early spring warmth causes plants (fruit trees in particular) to begin flowering prematurely, only to have the blossoms killed by a sudden frost.

## Microclimates in your yard

There is little that you can do to affect these large-scale microclimates, other than to be aware of them and let them guide your plant selection and timing. But you can find very similar microclimate effects at work even in the smallest yard, and you can take advantage of them and even modify them to a certain extent.

- **Your house** and other buildings create many microclimates around your yard. Just like urban areas, your house absorbs heat during the day and

*(Continued on page 8)*

# Microclimates—Continued

(Continued from page 7)

radiates it back at night. If your prevailing winds are from the northwest, this creates a warmer, more sheltered microclimate on the south and east sides of your house. While the north side of your house may receive harsh winds and no sun during the winter, keep in mind that in summer - when the sun rises north of east and sets north of west - these areas can be baked by heat and dried out by the same prevailing winds. Keep in mind, too, that when wind hits your house, it creates turbulence and higher wind speeds along the wall and as the wind goes around the corners of the building. These areas may not be good places to plant broad-leaved evergreens or other plants that can be easily dried out by winds. Bark on young trees planted on the south or southwest sides of buildings are more prone to cracking in winter.

- **Balconies and rooftops** -- because they are above ground level -- may escape frosts that kill tender plants at ground level on nights with radiational cooling. But cold, drying winds may be an even bigger factor depending on the location, orientation and exposure of the balcony or rooftop..
- **Fences, walls and large rocks** can protect plants from wind and radiate heat, creating sheltered spots. Sometimes, if fences block cold air drainage through your property, the cold air can pud-

dle behind them causing very localized frost damage on near-freezing nights.

- **Raised beds and terraces** -- like hillside slopes - - can warm and drain earlier in spring, especially if they are oriented toward the south.
- **Paved surfaces** - such as patios, driveways and sidewalks - can absorb heat and reradiate it at night, moderating night-time temperatures. Such impervious areas can't absorb water, and may create wet spots if the water that flows off of them is concentrated in one area. Watch for similar wet areas where water flows off roofs or out of downspouts. Buildings can also create "rain shadows" on the lee side of a house if rains are accompanied by winds. Trees can also prevent rain from reaching the ground. That, coupled with competition for water and nutrients from the tree's roots, may make it difficult to grow less-competitive plants around the base of larger trees.
- **Soil types** can also affect frost. Heavy clay soils can act much like paved surfaces, moderating the temperature near ground level. Lighter soils that have many air pockets in them can act as an insulating layer on top of warmer sub-soils, trapping that heat below ground and are hence more prone to frosts at ground level.

Source: Cornell Gardening Resources, Dept. of Horticulture

Study nature, love nature, stay close to nature.

It will never fail you.

-Frank Lloyd Wright

## Workstation Schedule:

**Mondays 9:00—Noon**

May 2: Norma Smith, John Andrews

May 9: Cathy Grossman

May 16: Bill Jones

May 23: Dick Schweitzer, Bob Campbell



The Master Gardener *Green Thumb Prints* 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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