

November 2015

Green Thumb Prints



Newsletter of the Hancock County
Master Gardener Volunteers

Gardening is our Passion . . . Education is our Purpose

WHAT'S INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

- Overwintering mums
- Hardnecks vs Softnecks
- Flower of Month—Miscanthus
- Straw Bale Gardening, Just Picked, More

Dates to Remember!

Monday, November 2: “Holiday Table Decorations” presentation by Cheryl Miller, Hancock County Library, 6:30.

Friday, November 6: Artwalk, downtown Findlay, 5:00-9:00. See page 8.

Thursday, November 12: Brown Bag presentation by Ed Lentz on phosphorus management, Extension Office, 6:00.

Thursday, November 12: MGv monthly meeting, Extension Office, 7:00. Note: This is also our **annual planning meeting**.

Monday, November 30: Wreath Making Workshop, 6:30—8:30. Hancock County Senior Center. See page 6.

December 2, 6, 7, 9: Wreath Making Workshops, Hancock County Library. See page 6.

Thursday, December 17: MGv Christmas Potluck, 6:00 p.m., Extension Office.

Coordinator's Corner

by Bill Jones

Now is the time to put the gardens to bed and to get those new spring bulbs into the ground. We know that it won't be long until the snow flies and the garden catalogs will begin coming in the mail.

While we hear that 2015 was the hottest year on record around the earth, it certainly wasn't for our area. Our accumulated growth degree-days for the years 2010 to 2015 are: 3622, 3278, 3573, 3174, 3163.

Thanks to Lyn Maa for her informative article in the Courier in October. I had a lady in church tell me she was motivated to clean up her beds because of Lyn's article. Ann Woolum will have our next article on Saturday, November 21. Remember to look for it in the Weekend Section.

We will allow some time at our November 12 meeting to review our year's activities and consider areas where we would like to concentrate our efforts next year.

We, of course, will be holding training classes from Feb. 2 – March 22 and that will keep us involved in the late winter months. Dr. Ed Lentz will provide

(Continued on page 2)

Coordinator's Corner - Continued

(Continued from page 1)

our Brown-bag training in November with a discussion on phosphorous in our gardens and in our waterways.

The requirements for inactive members to become active again have been updated. A person may remain inactive for up to 3 years without retaking the training classes. They, however, must complete at least 10 hours of education during those 3 years.

Please try to have all of your volunteer hours reported to Linda Dyar by December 31. The State MGCV Coordinator runs her report the first week of January. We want to make sure our hours are included in the report of all the hours provided by Master Gardener Volunteers across the state. We each must have at least 30 volunteer hours with 10 of them being education and 3 being teaching in order to remain an active MGCV.

We have 5 MGCVs who were trained in 2003 and who are scheduled to be fingerprinted again but there has not been a determination as to when this should be done yet.

Many of us have taken part in the Specialization programs conducted by the State Master Gardener Program. There is a specialization in Community Gardens being developed and this will likely be of interest to several of us when it is available.

Please be sure to review the Standards of Behavior, Position Description, and Pest Management Information Policy before the end of the year. I will send these out by email and if you need a copy, please let me know.

-Bill



***Have a
HAPPY
THANKSGIVING***

Reminder —

Turn in your MGCV hours before the end of 2015. These are important in tracking your "active" status and show our contributions to OSU Extension and to the State MGCV program!

Wishing You Well

JoAnn Reeds

We're thinking about you, caring about your health, and sending many thoughtful wishes your way!

Thanks and Reminder

Thanks to **Barb Sherman, Barb Phillips, Sharon Hammer Baker, and Christa Gupta** for the refreshments at the October MGCV meeting.

Thanks to **Marilyn Beltz and Randy Greeno** for providing refreshments for the November MGCV meeting.

The refreshments are always tasty and GREATLY appreciated!!

Note:

Classes for new MGCV recruits begins February 2nd. Volunteers to supply food are needed. Any suggestions on a Saturday field trip for the students would be appreciated.

Thursday, December 17

Christmas Potluck

Mix & Mingle: 6:00

Set-Up Crew: 5:30 pm: Need Volunteers. Please Help!!

Clean-up: Everyone please assist!!!

Location: OSU Extension

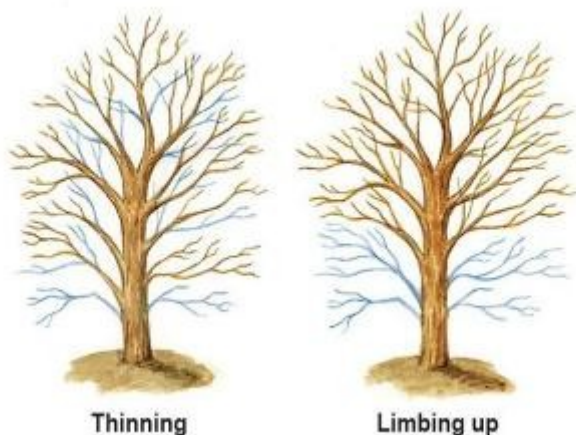
Bring a dish (soup, salad, sandwiches, desserts, etc.) to share with others.

Special thanks to Marjorie Miller who chairs this event. Also, thanks to Marilynn Beltz and all Marjorie's helpers who make this event so special.

Let the light in

Are your trees casting too much shade over the garden? Thinning or limbing up deciduous trees allows more light and moisture through a tree's canopy. This should be done when trees are dormant and you can clearly see the branches.

To **thin**, carefully remove a few large branches from the canopy as you see in the illustration at far left. To **limb up**, simply take off the lower branches so the canopy is higher, like you see at left. For safety, it's probably best to hire a professional arborist to take on these tasks with a large tree.



Source: gardengateenotes.com

For those who have greenhouses:

SPRING CLEAN YOUR GREENHOUSE

Since you are already cleaning the outside of the greenhouse, it makes sense to tackle the inside as well to help reduce overwintering pests and diseases.

- Replace damaged glass before the worst of the winter weather sets in.
- Remove the plants before sweeping out any plant debris.
- To kill any overwintering pests and diseases, disinfect the greenhouse paths and staging, and the inside of the glass too. Use a hot solution of garden disinfectant. You will need to ventilate your greenhouse well over the next couple of days to dry it thoroughly.
- Install solar lights in the greenhouse so that you can still get out there on dark winter evenings to check your plants.
- As the winter approaches, take special care to not over water plants that remain in active growth in the greenhouse. Little and often is the key.

Throughout the quiet winter months make an effort to wash out pots and seed trays in preparation for the spring sowing and planting.

Tricks for Overwintering Potted Mums

***Don't throw away those inexpensive fall mums.
Overwinter them for next year***

If you are like me, you succumb to the pleasure of buying a few fall mums early each fall. We enjoy placing them near front entryways and around the driveway and yard as a welcome to the new season. We love their vibrant colors and their plentiful blooms. And mums are affordable – some stores sell small garden mums for around a dollar.

The trouble is many people treat these hardy plants as throwaway fall decorations. Did you know you can successfully overwinter fall mums both in the ground and in pots? Here's how.

Outdoors in the ground

The first step to successfully overwintering garden mums is to plant them in the ground early. Many gardeners purchase mums to replace fading annuals in their garden in late summer. Since mums are one of the last perennials to bloom, this is a good idea. A key to the mum's survival of the winter is to plant it in the ground well before the first frost. Mums that are planted in late summer or very early fall have a better chance of surviving harsh temperatures because their roots will have some time to establish in the ground.

Choose a sunny somewhat sheltered spot that drains well. Work about an inch of chopped leaves or other organic matter into about a foot of loosened soil. Also, work in a granular fertilizer that is formulated for mums. Water your transplants well and cover them with about two inches of mulch (chopped leaves or bark mulch work well) for protection.

As fall progresses, the leaves of your mum will start to turn brown. As the foliage dies, cut it back. You can trim the stems to about three to four inches above the ground. Provide more mulch, such as leaves or straw, after the first freeze. If any additional foliage has been killed by the cold, do not trim it away until spring. It will help provide insulation to the plant throughout the winter.

In the spring, remove some of the extra mulch as the mums begin to grow again. Carefully divide the plant when new shoots reach about four inches tall. Plant these new plants about 18 to 24 inches apart.

Bringing mums indoors

Another way to overwinter mums is to bring them indoors for the cold months. Choose a mostly dark cool area, such as an unheated garage shed or basement, which has temperatures between 32 and 55 degrees Fahrenheit. If temperatures could fall below freezing, wrap the pots with several layers of newspaper.

Water your mums so that the soil is slightly moist. Repeat throughout the winter once a week or so when the soil feels dry about two inches down. About a week or two before the last expected frost, take the pot outdoors to a sunny location for a few hours of afternoon sunshine each day. Then bring it back to its winter location for the night. After the threat of frost has passed, leave the pot in its outdoor spot. Water thoroughly and apply a granular fertilizer. Within a few weeks, you should start to see some new growth.

Garden mums are "photoperiodic," which means they bloom in response to the shorter days and longer nights of autumn. Individual flowers can last from three to six weeks depending on how much water the plant receives and the temperatures to which the plant is exposed. The flowering period is shorter with high temperatures and little water.

Garden mums range in size and shape from low, tight mounds to tall plants. Popular cushion mums, which have a mounded, pincushion-like look, usually grow no more than 20 inches. These mums are available in a wide variety of colors from traditional fall golds, reds and purples to soft pastel colors. With a little care, mums can add a great splash of color to your garden – both this fall and in coming years.

Source: Tricia Drevets, davesgarden.com

Hardnecks vs Softnecks

There are two general types of garlic to choose from: hardneck and softneck. Each has its own strengths, and each is more suited to certain situations than others.

Hardneck Garlic Varieties (*Allium sativum* var. *ophioscorodon*)

Hardneck garlic varieties are generally hardier than softneck varieties. They are the best option for northern gardeners. They are also the best option if you want to enjoy garlic scapes (see end of article for definition of scapes) in early summer, since hardnecks are the only type that send up a strong central stalk (scape) in spring. Hardneck varieties tend to form fewer cloves per bulb than softneck varieties, but they also are usually a bit larger.

Within the hardneck family, there are nine sub-types of garlics: Purple Stripe, Marbled Purple Stripe, Asiatic, Glazed Purple Stripe, Creole, Middle Eastern, Turban, Rocambole, and Porcelain. The Purple Stripe and Rocambole types are the hardiest, best for gardeners who live in the northeastern U.S. and Canada. Gardeners who live in mild climates will have good luck with Porcelain varieties.

Softneck Garlic Varieties (*Allium sativum* var. *sativum*)

Softneck garlic varieties are the best ones to grow if you live in a milder climate. They don't form scapes, and generally form several small cloves per head.

They mature quicker than hardneck varieties.

Softneck varieties tend to store better than hardneck varieties, so this is the type to grow for long-term storage. Sub-types within the softneck family include Silverskin and Artichoke

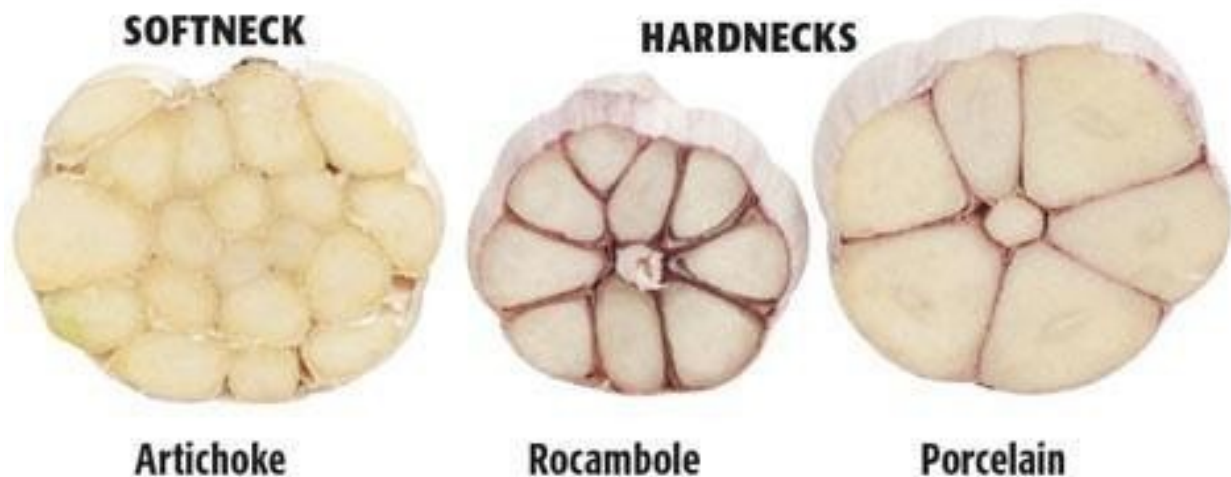
What are garlic scapes?

Garlic scapes are the "flower stalks" of hardneck garlic plants, although they do not produce flowers. These stalks start to appear a month or so after the first leaves. They are usually cut off of the plant, since leaving them on only diverts the plants strength away from forming a plump bulb. If left on, they eventually form small bulbils that can be planted to grow more garlic, but it takes 2–3 years for them to form large bulbs. Many gardeners simply toss their scapes in the compost, but garlic scapes are both edible and delicious, as are the bulbils.

Along the same lines, young garlic plants that are pulled to thin a row are referred to as "green garlic". Used in the same manner as green onions, these too make excellent eating.

When to plant?

Garlic can be planted in the spring as soon as the ground can be worked, but fall planting is recommended for most gardeners. Planting in the fall results in bulbs that are bigger and more flavorful when you harvest the next summer. Plant garlic 6 to 8 weeks before the first hard frost.



2015 Wreath Making Workshops

Please arrive 15 minutes before start time to help set-up

Please plan to stay afterwards to help clean up

Tentative Cutting Dates: Monday, 11/30 and/or Saturday, 11/28. Contact Marilynn Beltz or Cathy Grossman if you can help. We will be meeting at the Extension Office prior to cuttings.

Bow Making: Provided by ???(Volunteers needed). Contact Cathy or Marilynn if you can make bows.

Materials Needed: pine cones (baked if possible), dried flowers, holly (with berries if possible), ornamental grasses, euonymus (all varieties), and other interesting greens such as blue spruce, juniper of all kinds, arborvitae of all types.

Please sign up to help! The number of helpers will be adjusted as necessary and will depend upon class enrollment.

Monday, 11/30 6:30—8:30 Hancock Senior Center	Wednesday, 12/02 6:00—8:00 pm Hancock Co.	Sunday, 12/6 2:00 – 4:00 pm Hancock Co. Library	Monday, 12/7 6:00—8:00 pm Hancock Co. Library	Tuesday, 12/9 6:00 – 8:00 pm Hancock Co. Library
	<i>Please volunteer!</i>			

November Flower of the Month-Miscanthus

By Bill Jones

Miscanthus sinensis is an ornamental grass with upright growth and arching habit with vertical stems that arise later in the season. The inflorescences somewhat resemble corn tassels in their appearance, but are usually much more dense and arch to one side of the stalk. These grasses may be used as a specimen or focal point and provide a nice vertical and moving element to the design. These grasses are usually permitted to remain in the garden during the winter to add interest to the landscape.

Miscanthus sinensis is also known as Maiden Grass, Eulalia or Chinese Silver Grass. It grows best in full sun and is relatively pest free. It requires yearly maintenance in early spring with the shearing and cleanup of dead foliage, stalks, and seed heads. The name , *Miscanthus*, translates from the Greek as “flowing stem” and *sinensis* translates as “of China” where the species form exists.

The common cultivars of *Miscanthus sinensis* among the many that are available include the following:



Miscanthus sinensis



Miscanthus sinensis 'Gracillimus'



Miscanthus sinensis 'Variegatus'



Miscanthus sinensis 'Strictus'



Miscanthus sinensis 'Purpurascens'



Miscanthus sinensis 'Morning Light'

Artwalk



“Just Picked”
by Sharon Hammer Baker

On Friday, November 6, ARTWALK will take place in downtown Findlay and the studios in the Jones Building (including those of our own **Sharon Hammer Baker**) will be open from 5-9 pm. Sharon will be showing pastel, acrylic and oil paintings made during her travels to Colorado and around Ohio. Most were completed *en plein air*, outdoors on site. Some were done in gardens and garden centers. Sharon looks forward to seeing everyone and sharing her summer travel adventures. This is also the beginning of her series of small paintings called "Just Picked" which feature portraits of produce from the garden. Above is one of the “Just Picked” paintings.

Gardening Tips

Store breakable items, like terra-cotta pots, rain gauges, and other garden art before hard freezes settle in. Terra-cotta overwinters fine in an unheated shed or garage. Make sure pots and saucers are dry before storage.

Pull stakes and plant supports. Store where they'll freeze to help destroy overwintering pests and diseases.

Overwintering geraniums

Several options are available to overwinter a favorite geranium. The first is to cut it back and pot it up as a houseplant for the winter to replant outside in the spring. The second is to pull it up, brush off any clinging soil, and hang it upside down in a cool, humid basement until replanting in spring. Or, you can cut 4-inch lengths of new stem and put them in water or damp vermiculite to root. Once rooted, transfer to individual pots and treat as houseplants.

Master Gardener Volunteers

Monthly Meeting Minutes

Thursday, October 8, 2015

Ann Brickner of The Perennial Plant Peddler presented our brown bag training. She taught us how to start seeds the Winter Sown way by using opaque or clear containers like milk jugs as mini greenhouses. Plants that are started this way do not need a hardening off period since they have been grown outdoors to begin with. You can learn more about the winter-sown method at www.Wintersown.org and www.agardenforthehouse.com. Ed Lentz will present the November brown bag training on phosphorus management.

Marilynn Beltz called the meeting to order at 7:23 pm.

Bill and Anita Lanning announced that they would be stepping down from Treasurer duties for 2016. Bill Jones stated that Lauri Inkrott was asked and accepted the position of treasurer for 2016. Lauri will not continue as secretary in 2016 so a new secretary will be elected.

Bill Jones reported that there are still some of the new MGV shirts available if anyone wants the new style.

The MGV classes will begin on February 2. They are looking for suggestions for a Saturday field trip for the students.

Lauri is beginning to work on advanced training for 2016. Sharon Baker will present the brown bag training in Feb. She is also looking into a potential field trip or training through Schooner Farms in Weston.

A chairperson is still needed for the speaker's bureau.

Christa Gupta volunteered to have the MGV picnic next summer. It is tentatively scheduled for July 14th.

The Christmas potluck is December 17th at the Extension Office meeting room. Bring a delicious dish to share.

The first wreath class will be November 30th at 6:30 at the senior center. Help is needed to cut greens the week before. All other classes will be at the library on December 2nd, 6th, 7th, and 9th.

The last day for the community garden will be October 24th.

Linda Laux has volunteered to be the chairperson for Mugs of Joy.

Cheryl Miller stated that the front portion of the office gardens has been cleaned up and they will be working on the rest soon.

Pam McCloud suggested sending cards to JoAnn Reeds to let her know we are thinking about her and praying for her.

Barb Sherman, Barb Phillips and Sharon Hammer Baker provided refreshments. The pumpkin bars, pumpkin cake and cheeses were delicious! Christa also brought her hair curling, face melting salsa. Ay Caramba!!!

The meeting was adjourned at 7:52pm.

Respectfully submitted by Lauri Inkrott

Coming soon:

REQUIRED FINGERPRINTING

Like last year, a few of us will have the privilege of getting fingerprinted. To those who need to obtain the required fingerprinting, (John Andrews, Anita Lanning, Linda Dyar, Barb Sherman, and Noreen Walters), this must be done in the near future (date to be determined) in order for you to continue your service as a MG. Any questions or concerns should be directed to Bill Jones. You will receive a letter from OSU. Remember to take the letter with you along with the required documents listed in the letter.

Fingerprinting locations include:

Hancock County Sheriff's Office
200 West Crawford
Mondays 10:00—12:00
Fridays 1:00—3:00
Cost for BVI: \$35

Hancock County BMV
8210 County Road 140, Suite A
Mondays 8:00—6:00
Tuesday—Friday 8:00—5:00
Saturdays 8:00—2:00
Cost for BVI: \$32

Owens Community College
3200 Bright Road
Mondays—Thursdays 8:00—5:00
Fridays 8:00—4:30
Cost for BVI: \$35

Something to consider for your next gardening season – Straw Bale Gardening

Poor soil, no soil, trouble bending and kneeling: all this matters not when you use the straw-bale gardening practice. Bales or bundles of straw are used as individual planters, or they can be used to create a raised bed. Here are some tips:

- Position the bale in a sunny location.
- Layer newspapers where the bale will rest to reduce weed germination. Once the bale is wet, it will be very heavy, so pick your location with care.
- Place the bale so its twine runs horizontal, and wraps around the sides, not the top and bottom.
- Place bale with the straw's cut end facing up. (If you flip the bale over, you will see bent lengths of straw.)
- Condition the bale: The bale will begin to breakdown, which is good, but the heat generated in the process will kill new plants. Therefore, for three days water the bale so it stays wet. On days 4 through 9 water with liquid fertilizer to condition the decomposing straw. On day 10 start watering with plain water until the core temperature of the bale is the same as that of the ambient air. (Use a compost thermometer to check the temperature.)
- Plant! Pull aside straw to plant your veggies. Use some of the displaced straw to cover the soil.
- Fertilize and water. Since you are not adding compost or garden soil to the bale, you will need to fertilize.
- End of the season: The straw will be gray and on its way to decomposing. Simply turn it over and leave it to sit. Come spring you will have compost for gardens and containers.

Source: hortmag.com

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

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Keith L. Smith, Associate Vice President for Agricultural Administration; Associate Dean, College of Food, Agricultural, and Environmental Sciences; Director, Ohio State University Extension; and Gist Chair in Extension Education and Leadership.

For deaf & hard of hearing, please contact Hancock County Extension using your preferred communication (email, relay services, or video relay services). Phone 1-800-750-0750 between 8 am & 5 pm EST Monday-Friday. Inform the operator to dial 419-422-3851.