

# GREEN THUMB PRINTS

Gardening is our Passion ..... Education is our Purpose

March 2021



**Next Meeting is Scheduled  
for  
Thursday, March 11th**



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## *Reuben's Ruminations*

### *March 2021*

As I write this, the sun is shining, snow and ice are gradually melting, some ducks have found holes in the pond ice, the days are getting noticeably longer. You can sense that Spring is just around the corner, but a quick check of the OSU Phenology Calendar confirms what I suspected – zero GDD so far. Still some time for planning and preparation for gardening, including indoor seed starts.

We had a good turnout of 23 people for the excellent presentation by Dave McPherson on native plants, which you can still see (and get a 1 hr education credit) by following the link that Karl sent out afterwards. A big “thank you” to Tim for making arrangements with Dave and to Karl for making the Zoom file available.

A few more people joined for the February monthly meeting, and I want to thank Tim for handling it in my absence. I am glad that the membership endorsed the possibility to work with the local Habitat for Humanity. I'll keep you posted as this opportunity evolves. The possibility of working with OSU Victory Garden project should become clearer after Ed & Karl attend a meeting in the next day or so.

On a sad note, the wife of Master Gardener Emeritus Jerry Bibler (Ruth) passed away on Feb 12. We have sent condolences and a memoriam to the charity of their choice.

By now everyone should be aware that the VMS system is basically dormant. Reference documents are still available on VMS, but will eventually have to be stored elsewhere. Karl will keep us up to date on when to expect a new system, but until OSU launches it, we will have to track our hours individually.

And we do have opportunities for everyone to gain volunteer hours while still indoors! Writing and/or presenting on timely topics is always welcomed. We need Brown Bag presentations for upcoming months, as well as someone to coordinate the program. Please contact Peggy Biolchini or me to schedule a presentation of your own, or to recommend an outside presenter, or to volunteer to coordinate the program. New presentation opportunities include 50 North, and the Library. Please contact Linda Finsel or Judi Clymer for details or to volunteer a presentation. If writing is more your thing, there are some openings for Courier articles later in the year. Thanks to everyone who has written (Linda Casey, Doris Salis) or signed up for articles, and to Laurie Pressel for coordinating and editing.

Meanwhile, Doris Salis still has openings for volunteers for Ask-a-Master Gardener. This is a great way to garner volunteer hours during OSU's non-contact period – and can be very educational as well.

See you in the Spring!

*Reuben*

**Hancock County Master Gardener Volunteers**  
**Meeting Minutes**  
**February 11, 2021**

At 6:32 pm. Vice President Tim Brugeman introduced the Brown Bag Speaker, Dave McPheron, horticulturalist, owner of Star Farms Native Plants in Kenton OH, and retired Master Gardener Volunteer.

The Brown Bag presentation and following meeting were conducted remotely using Zoom, with 24 in attendance. The meeting was recorded so that those unable to attend could still review the meeting. It is downloadable for those who wish to retain the information from the Brown Bag presentation.

The monthly MGV meeting was called to order by Vice President T Brugeman at 7:31 pm.

Minutes of the previous meeting

The minutes of the January 14, 2021 membership meeting were approved; motion: Peggy Biolchini; second: Lynn Farwig.

Treasurer's Report – Ann Woolum

- There was only one transaction in January for the \$25 memorial.
- \$7132.27 total cash balance, of which \$1203.35 is restricted for the Community Garden, leaving \$5928.92 unrestricted.
- Motion to approve report: Lisa McClain, second: Doris Salis; report approved.

President's Comments

There were no president's comments as President DeBolt was unable to attend the meeting.

Volunteer Coordinator – Karl Farwig

- The VMS system will go away after this weekend. All MGVs should log any educational or volunteer hours into the system immediately. It is unknown when the replacement system will be active. An email with more details will be sent to all MGVs.

Extension Report – Ed Lentz

- The replacement system for VMS is being built by OSU. Master Gardeners are the test case for the software, before it is rolled out to other groups such as 4H.
- The Extension Office is still closed to the public. Call for an appointment if you need into the building for MGV business. This policy will continue until Hancock Co is no longer RED on the Ohio Covid-19 map.
- Discussed newspaper articles in the Courier by E Lentz and other members.
- Question raised whether we can have in person meetings yet – NO

Committees

- Administrative – Lynn Farwig: unsure of what will happen to the documents currently stored on VMS when it goes away. Per K Farwig the new system will not allow document storage.
- Social and Fundraising – No report.
- Service – Tim Brugeman – Committee is looking at what will be done with the various gardens.
- Teaching – Judi Clymer
  - \*50 North is willing to host gardening programs on Zoom; anyone interested in volunteering to give a presentation please contact Judi Clymer or Linda Finsel.

**(CONTINUED)**

**Hancock County Master Gardener Volunteers**  
**Meeting Minutes**  
**February 11, 2021**

-Teaching – Judi Clymer (Continued)

\*Tim Brugeman suggested a possible future presentation could be a tour of the gardens at the new 50 North facility.

\*No info yet on holding library presentations on Zoom.

\*Only a few slots left to be filled for Courier articles this year.

-Education – Peggy Biolchini

\*Lisa McClain is preparing the details about a fall seminar; it will be presented to the Executive Committee for review.

\*Still need a volunteer to head up the Brown Bag program.

Field Trips –field trip scheduled for June 12, 2021 to visit the gardens of Brenda & Joe Stearns in Fostoria. Ed Lentz will submit a request for exemption for an in-person event but it will not be approved if the county is still red on the Covid-19 map.

\*Doris Salis is requesting additional volunteers for the Ask-A-Master-Gardener program.

Old Business

-The fence expenditure for the Community Garden was approved by the Executive Committee at their Feb 4<sup>th</sup> meeting. Volunteers are requested to help install the fence. There is a possibility of a fence being installed around the entire garden making our separate fence unnecessary. Tom Lawrence's property will continue to be used for a second garden. Last year 1/3 to 1/2 of our donated produce came from this location.

New Business

-A minor correction in the Financial Policy was approved by the Executive Committee at their last meeting. Karl Farwig explained what the changes were. The new revision date will be February 2021.

-Tim Brugeman discussed a new opportunity to work with Habitat for Humanity, helping them with landscaping choices for their 2 newest builds and to review any problems with their 45 previously built houses. This would be to advise them on plant choices. There would be no in-person interaction for now. There is a potential teaching opportunity once in-person interactions are allowed. Any volunteers who would like to help advise on the first 2 houses contact Tim Brugeman or Reuben DeBolt. Motion to accept Habitat proposal as presented was approved; motion: Marilyn Beltz; second: Jeri Wenger. Persons volunteering were Jeri Wenger, Marilyn Beltz, Judi Clymer and Tim Brugeman

-OSU/ODA Victory Garden – this will be to distribute seeds for the public to plant Victory Gardens. Concern was expressed about how to do seed distribution when we can't have face to face events. There is an online training being held Feb 26th that Karl Farwig and Ed Lentz will attend and provide details at the next Executive Board meeting

Motion to Adjourn: Jeri Wenger; second: Lynn Farwig. Meeting adjourned at 8:25 pm.

*Respectfully Submitted: Elaine Reynolds-Secretary*

## Habitat for Humanity Project Proposal

### New for 2021

Reuben DeBolt

- \*Habitat for Humanity Cooperation – why do it
  - Opportunity to develop relationship with Habitat
    - \*Community publicity to build awareness of MGV
  - Potential to grow involvement as restrictions are eased
- \*MGV Role to Start
  - Advise on plant selection for landscaping for a 2-house build ( for June installation)
  - No in-person interaction for now
  - Habitat volunteers to do actual planting
  - Typical landscaping per house
    - \*Mulch, bushes, one tree, lawn
    - \*Should be very low maintenance
- \*MGV Role – Potential Future
  - Advise on landscaping for a further 2 houses in 2021
  - Advise on landscaping for Habitat office (Re-Store) building
  - Review and advise on landscaping at existing Habitat houses – up to 45 of them
  - Potential teaching opportunities when we are permitted to do in-person work
- \*MGV Role – 1<sup>st</sup> Step
  - Who would like design landscape(s) for the 2-house build?

Those volunteering to help with this project are  
Jeri Wenger, Marilyn Beltz, Judi Clymer, Reuben DeBolt and Tim Brugeman.

If you are interested in helping please contact Reuben DeBolt

[reubendebolt@hotmail.com](mailto:reubendebolt@hotmail.com)



# *MG Happenings*

Thanks to Dave McPheron-Star Farms Native Plants  
for his great presentation at our last meeting.



**“Tentative” Field Trip Scheduled**  
Brenda and Joe Stearns’ Gardens  
Saturday, June 12th

**Evergreens: Stars of the Winter Landscape**

**By Doris Salis**

**The Courier-February 6, 2021**

## Volunteer Opportunities

### 50N and Findlay Hancock County Public Library

Judi Clymer

50 North and the Findlay Hancock County Public Library would like the Master Gardener Volunteers to share their desire for learning with others. If you are an expert in an area or would like to become an expert by researching a topic, you now have the opportunity to share your knowledge through zoom.

The library would like presentations once a month starting at 6:00-6:30 p.m. followed by a time for questions and answers. The presentation times for 50 North are flexible. First contact Linda Finsel at home 419-424-3213, cell 419-788-1969, or [lindamf@earthlink.net](mailto:lindamf@earthlink.net) to let her know the month and topic you would like to present. Then contact Carolyn Dahms at [dahmsca@findlaylibrary.org](mailto:dahmsca@findlaylibrary.org) or 419-434-1482 to schedule your library presentation time. To schedule a presentation for 50 North contact Harry Stockton at 419-423-8496 Ext. 126. Help will be provided to set up zoom. This is a great way to get your teaching/education hours.

### Brown Bag Presenters

Please consider presenting or sending suggestions  
for Brown Bag speakers to  
Reuben at [reubendebolt@hotmail.com](mailto:reubendebolt@hotmail.com) or  
Peggy at [biolchini@aol.com](mailto:biolchini@aol.com)

### Ask-a-Master Gardener

Believe it or not, Spring will soon be here and people will be needing help with their gardens! If you would like to answer their questions, join the online **Ask-a-Master Gardener** program.

Last year's topics of interest included: Deciduous trees, fruit trees, evergreen trees and bushes, vegetables, insect problems, soils and composts, lawns, perennials and annuals, landscaping, and miscellaneous questions (such as how-to directions and plant identification).

E-mail Doris Salis at [salis@findlay.edu](mailto:salis@findlay.edu) if you are interested in joining the group. State your areas of interest. ( Note that you also learn as you research a client's question!) You will receive a protocol for how to deal with the question process.

**2021**  
***A Year of Gratitude, Delight, and Positive Change***

**By Linda Casey**



Last year was a difficult year, and many of us are looking forward to a new beginning in 2021. With this long-awaited end to the Coronavirus- we anticipate health, happiness, and making the most of life's special moments. Chosen for their positive symbolism and peaceful nature, the sunflower has been dubbed the Flower of the Year, and the Red Maranta Prayer Plant was named the Plant of the Year. Between the sunflower's cheeriness and the Red Maranta Prayer Plant's hopefulness, 2021 is set to be a year of gratitude, delight, and positive change. The Perennial of the Year, Calamintha Nepeta, will bring joy and calm to your garden.

**(Continued)**



# Flower of the Year 2021



Bright, cheery, and providing nutrition for us and for wildlife, everybody knows the sunflower! This flower's name comes from its tendency to reposition itself to face the sun. Its genus, "Helianthus," is rooted in the Greek words "helios," meaning "sun" and "anthos," meaning "flower." They can grow to 12 feet, attracting bees and providing food for birds. Their seeds are something both children and adults enjoy, too. (Apparently dogs like them, too. My puppy taught himself to hit the birdfeeder to make the seeds fall out.) Radiating joy, the sunflower symbolizes optimism of all kinds. The sunflower is most commonly considered to mean adoration and loyalty. It also represents vitality, creativity and happiness—something we can always use!

There are two main types of sunflower varieties: the oil seed type, which has small black seeds, and the non-oil type, which has larger seeds and a thicker hull. Both are grown year-round and prefer full sun. They grow best in spots that get six to eight hours of direct sun per day.

They have long tap roots that need to go several feet into the ground, so sunflower plants prefer loose, well-drained, somewhat alkaline soil with a pH of 6.0 to 7.5. Sunflowers are heavy feeders, so they'll be healthiest and generate the most blooms in nutrient-rich soil that has had compost or other organic matter mixed into it. Growing sunflowers in pots is possible if you choose a smaller variety, like "Short Stuff" or "Teddy Bear." Be sure the pot is deep enough to accommodate their tap root.

If you're growing one of the giant varieties that top 10 feet in height, plant them in a sheltered location or along a fence so they're protected from the wind. Otherwise, a gust of wind could tip them over. Plant seeds after the danger of spring frost has passed and the soil temperature is at least 60 degrees. Plant the seeds no more than an inch deep and about 6 inches apart. Thin the seedlings once they hit 6 inches tall, leaving the strongest plants about 12 inches apart. When the plant is small, water the area around the roots, about 4 inches from the plants. Once the plant is established, water deeply but infrequently to encourage the plant to grow deep roots. Water once a week with several gallons of water per plant, more often if the weather is very dry or very hot.

Caring for cut sunflowers is simple. If any bottom leaves are present, remove them, recut the stems, and place them into fresh water. You should change the water every two days. Stem-blocking bacteria builds up quickly and an odor will occur if the water is not changed regularly. You can improve longevity by using flower food.

**(Continued)**

# Plant of the Year 2021



Symbolizing gratitude and respect, the Red Maranta Prayer Plant gives us hope for a healthy, successful new year.

The Red Maranta Prayer Plant was named for the sixteenth century Italian botanist, Batolomeo Maranta, and is native to the American tropics. This plant got its nickname because it keeps its leaves flat during the day and folds them up like praying hands at night.

When cared for properly, the Red Maranta Prayer Plant is said to have some of the most strikingly beautiful leaves in the plant kingdom. Maranta species are tropical and live in understory areas of the forest. They need moist soil and dappled light to shade, so avoid full sun exposure. They also prefer high humidity, so make sure to mist the foliage frequently, especially during the winter months. When watering, use lukewarm water and make sure to water the soil, not the leaves. Water these plants only when the soil is dry to the touch. A well-grown plant should have full, six-inch-long leaves.

They thrive in temperatures of 70-80 F. In cooler temperatures, the plant will refuse to pray; the colors will not be vibrant; and some leaves may even wither, brown, or fall off. Very bright light also will affect the colors of the foliage. A northern window or in the middle of a semi-bright room will provide enough light without reducing leaf color. The plant's water needs are very specific. The soil must be consistently wet but never soggy. A moisture meter is an essential part of red prayer plant care. Fertilize with a diluted houseplant food in spring.

**(Continued)**

# Perennial of the Year 2021



Photo credit: Stonehouse Nursery

Chosen for its cloud-like confetti, tiny white flowers (sometimes touched with pale blue) that appear from early summer to fall, *Calamintha Nepeta* subsp. *Nepeta* is undemanding and dependable. Its genus name comes from Greek “*kalos*” meaning beautiful and “*mimthe*” meaning mint. *Kalaminthe* means savory. It provides the perfect foil for other summer bloomers and foliage. This full-sun perennial has a low mounding or bushy habit, ideal for the front of the border, rock gardens, and more. *Calamintha Nepeta* should be placed where its delightfully fragrant foliage can be touched and brushed.

While durable and pest-free, Calamint also checks two important boxes for gardeners: bees and other pollinators work the flowers throughout the summer and the aromatic foliage is deer-resistant.

*Calamintha nepeta* is a bushy, rhizomatous, perennial herb of the mint family that is native to Europe and the Mediterranean region. It typically forms a dense, indefinitely spreading, foliage mat with upright leafy flowering stems rising to 12-18 inches tall. Ovate, gray-green leaves (to 3/4” long) are very fragrant when crushed.

Easily grown in slightly acidic to slightly alkaline, dry to medium moisture, well-drained soils in full sun. It prefers evenly moist soils, but tolerates some drought. It will tolerate light shade in the afternoon. Calamint spread in the garden by rhizomes and/or self-seeding to form an interesting ground cover. Stems may root at the nodes where they touch the ground. Shear or cut back plants after flowering to tidy the planting, to remove unsightly foliage and/or to prevent any unwanted self-seeding. Easily started from seed.



After our recent February snowstorms, it's sometimes hard to think of warm sunshine on your favorite sunflower or sitting on your porch inhaling fragrant Calamint. Until then Red Maranta Prayer plant can certainly brighten your day.



## IT'S Time To.....March

### HOME (Indoor plants and activities)

- Begin fertilizing houseplants as new growth appears. Keep spent leaves and flowers removed to improve appearance and encourage more blooms
- Start garden seeds indoors for transplanting outdoors later in spring
- Check stored bulbs and produce for decay; discard damaged items
- Prune, repot and clean houseplants as needed

### YARD (Lawns, woody ornamentals and fruits)

- Prune trees and shrubs, except those that bloom early in spring, while plants are still dormant. If winter injury is a concern, delay pruning until after dieback; desiccation injury can be assessed as plants come out of dormancy
- Plant new trees and shrubs as soon as the soil dries enough to be worked. Plant bare-root plants before they leaf out. Soils may be exceptionally wet this spring as winter snows thaw
- Fertilize woody plants before new growth begins, but after soil temperatures have reached 40 degrees F
- Remove winter coverings from roses as soon as new growth begins. Prune out dead canes and fertilize as needed. Delay pruning into live canes until after winter injury can be assessed
- Apply superior oil spray to control scale insects and mites when tips of leaves start to protrude from buds

### GARDEN (Vegetables, small fruits and flowers)

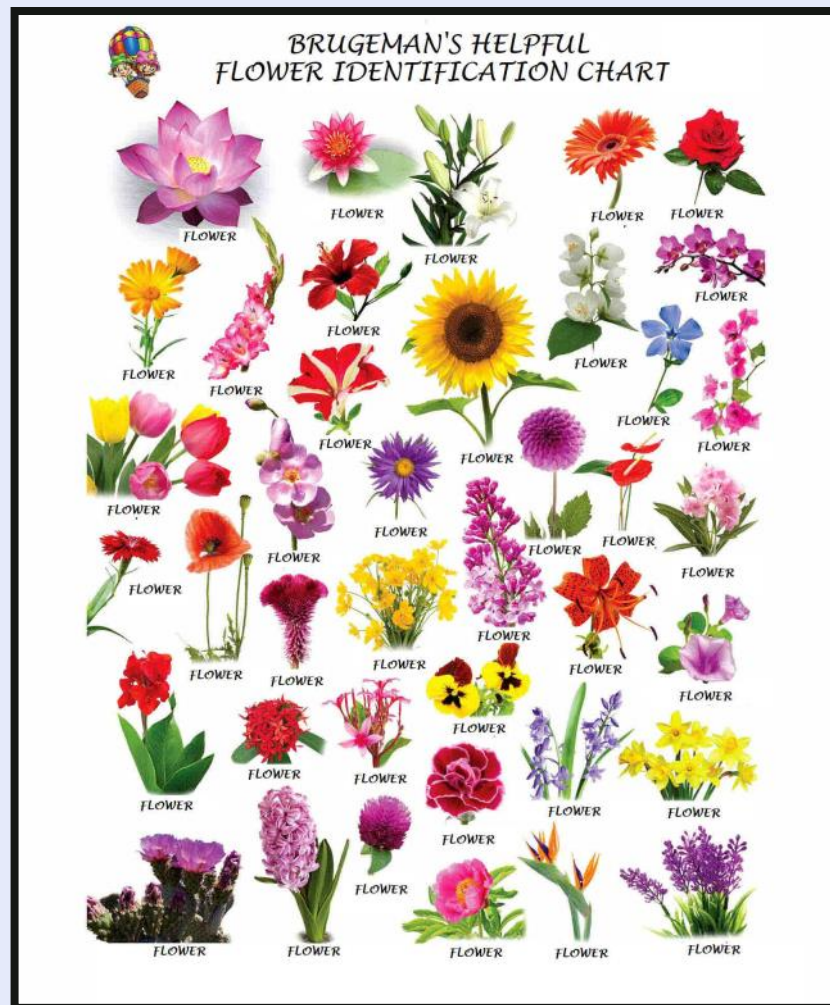
- Plant cool-season vegetables and flowers as soon as the ground has dried enough to work. Do NOT work the soil while it is wet; wait until it crumbles in your hand. If the soil forms a solid ball when squeezed, it's still too wet
- Gradually harden off transplants by setting them outdoors during the daytime for about a week before planting
- Follow last fall's soil test recommendations for fertilizer and pH adjustment. It's not too late to test soil if you missed last year
- Start seeds of warm-season vegetables and flowers indoors; in northern and central Indiana, wait until the end of March or early April. Transplant to the garden after danger of frost has passed
- Watch for blooms of early spring bulbs, such as daffodils, crocus, dwarf iris and snowdrops.
- Remove old asparagus and rhubarb tops, and side-dress the plants with nitrogen or manure. Plant or transplant asparagus, rhubarb and small fruit plants
- Remove winter mulch from strawberry beds as soon as new growth begins, but keep the mulch nearby to protect against frost and freezes
- Remove weak, diseased or damaged canes from raspberry plants before new growth begins
- Remove old fruiting canes if not removed last year, and shorten remaining canes if necessary
- Prune grapevines after winter injury can be assessed



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**COLLEGE OF FOOD, AGRICULTURAL,  
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