

GREEN THUMB PRINTS

Gardening is our Passion Education is our Purpose

December 2023

Upcoming Events

December 2, 3....Wreath
Classes

December 5, 6....Rose's
Mugs of Joy

December 14.....Christmas
Celebration

December 15....Courier Arti
cle Due

January 11.....January Meet
ing

2024 Officers

President-John King
Vice-President-Patrick Flinn
Treasurer-Karl Farwig
Secretary-Linda Finsel

In This Issue

President's Comments....Pg 2
Goal Surpassed.....Pg 3
Rose's Mugs of JoyPg 3
November Minutes.....Pg 4
Courier Article.....Pg 8
Rain Gardens.....Pg 10
It's Time To.....Pg 12
Today's Quote.....Pg 14



Betsy DeFrancesco gave an informative brown bag at the November meeting on an MGv holiday tradition - the annual wreath making workshops.

Christmas Celebration

Come join us on Thursday, December 14th at 6:00 PM for our annual Christmas Celebration!!!
This year's event will be catered by The Dark Horse. Hancock MGv's and their spouses are welcome!
Please RSVP to Marilynn Beltz by Monday, December 4th at 419-306-7470.



President's Comments...

By Lisa McClain

December 2023

A Time to Reflect...

I hope everyone enjoyed a Happy Thanksgiving and that all of you are ready for the 2023 Holiday Season. Not only is this a time to reflect on our own personal successes and struggles, but also a time to reflect on our Master Gardener Volunteer successes and things we could have done better.

What went well for us this year? What goals did we achieve or approach? What did we feel good about this year? Our successes this year are too many to mention, but I am truly grateful for all of the effort our members put into our organization in 2023. Our Public Programs were in full swing with well over 500 participants at our speaking engagements. Our other large group events such as Let's Go Gardening, Seminars, Native Plant Event, Hancock Co. Fair, Ask-A-Master Gardener, Rose's Mugs of Joy and Wreath Classes will total close to 1,000 participants when all numbers are totaled. I'd say we had a very successful year!!!

The end of the year is also a time to look at what we could have done differently. Where did we stumble? Was there room for improvement? With the insight gathered from our members our new 2024 goals reflect ways we might do things differently. Please don't ever hesitate to reach out to the chairs or executive committee with suggestions. We are only as strong as all of our members.

On a more current note:

- Congratulations to our newly elected 2024 executive committee members. There is no doubt they will lead us well into the new year.
- Remember you must RSVP to Marilynn by December 4th at 419-306-7470 if you are attending our Christmas Dinner on December 14th. It will be catered so we need an accurate number.

Since this will be my last article for the Green Thumbs Print, I want everyone to know that it has been a pleasure leading this group of incredible people. I thank you all for the support and assistance you have shown over this past year. One of the best parts was getting to know each and every one of you better.

Wishing you all a wonderful holiday season and all the best in 2024.

MGV NEWS...

Educational Programs Surpass Goal!

Thanks to our Master Gardener presenters, committees and their chair-people who really stepped up, to add up our educational reach to the public this past year. While a few programs are still underway, a SNEAK PEEK PREVIEW shows a very good year confirming our motto, "Gardening is Our Passion, Education is our Purpose".

21+ programs were planned this year, reaching 1345 people so far (MGVs not included), completing seminars, workshops, activities where contacts were recorded at County Fair, Let's Go Gardening, Native Plants Event and Ask-A-Master Gardener, Library events and 50 North Gardening in Our Golden Years, along with other classes for Holiday Wreath Making and Keeping Your Vegetables Healthy.

Over the holidays and into the new year, in our spare time thinking about SPRING and getting excited to get past winter and back outside, consider new and popular topics for presenting programs in 2024. Monthly Courier articles and Brown Bag presentations at our meetings can quickly be turned into a program. Help is available!

Thanks again from all of us for being our best gift of Christmas, our Master Gardener Volunteers!

—Tim Brugeman and Linda Fensil

Rose's Mugs of Joy planned for Dec. 5th, 6th

Want a chance to spread Christmas cheer and participate in a feel good holiday project? Rose's Mugs of Joy might be just what you're looking for.

Each year several area senior care facilities are selected for visits by MVGs who provide Christmas mugs, greenery and decorations for each resident and assist them to fill and decorate their mugs, and sing Christmas carols with the group.

This year the event is scheduled for two senior care facilities, The Heritage and Taylor House. The events will take place at Taylor House on December 5 and at The Heritage on December 6. Both events will be at 12:45 p.m.

According to project leader Denise Smith, anyone who wants to participate is more than welcome!



**Hancock County Master Gardener Volunteer
Meeting Minutes
November 9, 2023**

Brown Bag talk began at 6:08 pm

Betsy DeFrancesco presented plans for Christmas wreath classes:

- Sign-up sheets were circulated for providing greens and for assisting during wreath-making sessions on November 26, 27, 29, 30 and December 2,3).
- Greens are to be dropped off outside at the south entrance of the Ag Center on either Friday Nov. 24 or Sunday Nov. 26 during the times provided on the sign-up sheets.
- All greens are to be cut at 12 to 13 inches in length. This will allow the greens to be placed directly in bundles and then onto wreaths.
- All sorts of evergreens are accepted. Bags of evergreens should be labeled (e.g., blue spruce, juniper, cedar, white pine, fir etc.)
- Betsy asked for someone to provide dried orange slices, like last year. She also plans to collect teasel and requested help to paint it.
- Jeff Wingate is providing ornaments.
- Other decorative items such as pinecones will be accepted.
- 12" clamp-on wreath rings have been provided in past years and we have some remaining to be used this year. The preferred brand of 12" rings are now out of stock, so 16" rings were ordered for this year. As a result, participants will have a choice of making either 12" or 16" wreaths.
- Participants can sign up on Evenbrite.com for all sessions except Monday November 27th, which is for Cornerstone church, and is only for Cornerstone members.

Break for snacks and socializing.

Meeting began at 6:41 pm.

President Lisa McClain thanked Randy Greeno and Denise Smith for providing the snacks.

Minutes of the Previous Meeting:

Motion to approve the minutes from the September meeting: Patrick Flinn, Second: Peggy Biolchini.
Motion passed.

Financial Report:

Beginning Balance \$7,486.96 (From ending balance reported in October Meeting Minutes)
Ending Balance \$7,375.71 (Total Assets as of 10/31/23 listed in Account Balances report)

Motion to approve the financial report for October: Marilyn Beltz, Second: Barb Phillips. Motion passed.

(Continued)

OSU Report: Ed Lentz

- We received a Thank You card from MG Emeritus Bill Lanning. Master Gardeners sent Bill a 90th birthday card and \$50 gift card in accord with a motion passed in our October meeting.
- We are updating our bylaws and constitution and must decide whether this can be accomplished with an amendment or require a major revision.
- The upcoming MGV training class is now scheduled to start on Thursday February 1st and will be held on 5 consecutive Thursdays in February and 3 in March. The class has been moved forward by one week to avoid Maundy Thursday, March 28th. Ed has received feedback from people requesting that classes be held during the evening to allow working people to attend. Other counties have done this, but the percentage of the attendees that go on to become master gardeners is very low from night classes. Ed feels that if people can't commit to daytime classes, they typically can't spare time to become master gardener volunteers. We will advertise the class in December and early January. The minimum number of participants is set at 10. The cost remains at \$150, with a \$50 non-refundable deposit upon sign-up. The class will be taught from a new revision of the OSU MGV Training Manual, due out in January 2024.
- Ed stated that we are the most active Master Gardener Volunteer group in Northwest Ohio and thanked everyone for their participation.

President's Report: Lisa McClain

- John King was recognized and congratulated as the incoming President as of January 2024.
- Ohio Master Gardener State Conference - We were recognized as the overall medium-sized "Outstanding MGV Project" winner for our 2022 Native Plant Sales Event. We received a plaque and a \$100 voucher for being the winner in the medium-sized Environmental Horticulture category and a \$500 voucher for being the overall medium-sized winner.
- Elaine Reynolds is updating our bylaws including incorporation of our new committee structure. This was also mentioned by Ed.

Committee Reports:

- Lisa distributed the 2024 list of Committees and reviewed major changes:
 - The list reflects the newly adopted structure
 - The Education and Teaching Committees have been combined into one.
 - We need a Service Committee chairperson.
 - Brint is no longer going to lead the community garden. We may or may not have a community garden next year so the position will remain open until a decision is made.
- Ed is still waiting for the county commissioners to approve funding for the Education Coordinator position. He hopes to have approval in early 2024 so that a coordinator can be installed and work with the new officers.
- Lisa also distributed the proposed 2024 Committee goals listed for each committee. Each committee chair then discussed their current activities and 2024 goals.

(Continued)

- Administration – Lynn Farwig mentioned that we do not currently have a good database for storing historical information. We have a stated goal of developing a strategy to document history by June 1 2024. Lynn reminded us that 2024 is the next time to order new apparel. This occurs during each year that we have a MGCV training class.
- Service – Tim Brugeman reiterated that we need to decide whether to have a community garden next year. The garden has become less of an educational tool, which is our primary goal, and more of a work project. Volunteer attendance was poor at times and Brint did a lot of the work himself. The location at the Lawrence Place this year was good from an agricultural standpoint, but it did not lend itself to public access for educational use since it might conflict with Tom Lawrence's operation. Tim praised the other Service Committee ongoing projects and coordinators. Tim also said that we have enough funding to host additional Community Service projects, which he would like to do.
- Social – Lisa pointed out that we are no longer planning a Summer Picnic, but rather a Summer Gathering in July. We had low relatively low attendance this year at the picnic and will try something different next year. One idea is to have a "garden crawl".
- Education/Teaching – Tim reviewed goals 1 through 5 and Peggy Biolchini reviewed goals 6 through 10. Tim stated that Laurie Pressel will continue editing our newspaper articles and does a wonderful job and makes everyone's writing look good. He encouraged more participation next year since we had to recycle some previous articles this year. Tim reviewed our goals which will go mostly unchanged for next year. One change suggested by Peggy would be to combine the native plant sale with an education session. Tim mentioned that it is hard to gauge how many people will attend our presentations. Sometimes there are 30 to 40 people and sometimes only 5 or 6. Peggy asked John King if he would continue as Brown Bag coordinator while serving as President. He agreed to continue as coordinator. We are going to have only one education session next year due to also having the MGCV training class and assisting with the Doug Tallamy event. We do not want to spread ourselves too thin. Peggy stated that we are down to 9 people on the Ask-A-Master Gardener team and our goal is to get it back to 15 people in order not to overload anyone. We are still planning on two field trips. We will be assigning each MGCV trainee a mentor. Tim will team with someone to assign mentors with the intent of handing that task off to his teaming partner for future classes.
- Coordinator – Lisa reviewed the goals which are to conduct a training class and keep our online membership current.
- Executive – Lisa reviewed these goals which consist of carryover, ongoing activities with one new item. The new item is to examine projects to ensure they are sustainable. Our group is very active and we tend to overcommit.

Unfinished Business:

- Wreath Classes – covered by Betsy in the Brownbag session.

(Continued)

- Rose's Mugs of Joy – Denise Smith reported that we need about 10 additional mugs. We already have 40 and she would like to have a total of 50.
- Christmas Celebration – Marilyn reported that the dinner will be catered by Dark Horse with pies by Brinkman's. A sign-up sheet was provided. Marilyn needs a final count for the caterer by December 4th.

New Business:

- A motion to approve the proposed 2024 committee goals was made by Reuben Debolt and seconded by Peggy Biolchini. The motion passed.
- Lisa has investigated procuring a new Retractable Roll Up Banner to be used at our events. The banner is 33" x 80". We have received bids for \$265 and \$300. A motion to approve the banner purchase, not to exceed \$325, was made by Linda Finsel and seconded by Tim Brugeman. The motion passed.
- Election of 2024-25 Vice President (2-year term) - Lisa announced that Patrick Flinn has accepted nomination and asked for additional nominations from the floor. Hearing none, a motion to close nominations and elect Patrick was made by Tim Brugeman and seconded by Judi Clymer. The motion passed.
- Election of 2024-25 Secretary (2-year term) - Lisa announced that Linda Finsel has accepted nomination and asked for additional nominations from the floor. Hearing none, a motion to close nominations and elect Linda was made by John King and seconded by Barb Phillips. The motion passed.
- Tim announced that we have one last program this year. Tim will make a presentation to Fostoria Kiwanis on November 28th regarding Christmas tree farms and cutting greens for Christmas.
- Karl Farwig mentioned that we received a tablecloth at the state coordinator meeting.
- Karl requested that the Ask-A-Master Gardener question and answer spreadsheet be distributed to the group. Peggy will provide it in pdf format to Ed for distribution.

Motion to Adjourn: Patrick Flinn, seconded by Lynn Farwig. Motion passed. Meeting adjourned at 7:50 pm.

Respectfully Submitted: Rob Biolchini for Elaine Reynolds

From The Courier Nov 18

Grow bulbs indoors for the holidays

By Laurie Pressel

Looking to brighten your home with natural beauty and fragrance for the upcoming holiday season? Try growing amaryllises or paperwhites.

Both these flowers are grown indoors from bulbs. Amaryllises bear big, bold flowers on tall, stiff stems. The flowers mainly come in shades of red, pink, and white, making them popular during the Christmas season and Valentine's Day. Paperwhites bear tiny, fragrant white blooms on tall stems and flower for about two weeks.

If you've seen amaryllis or paperwhite bulb kits in the store and have been curious about growing them, here are some tips to help you be successful.

Most amaryllis varieties begin blooming 6-8 weeks after planting; but some can take as long as 10 weeks. So, if you are looking for blooms around Christmas, plant in early November. Bulbs you plant around Christmas or the New Year should bloom in time for Valentine's Day.

Local garden centers and online suppliers offer a greater variety of amaryllis bulbs than the local box store. Why not try some amaryllis varieties with interesting color patterns?

Many amaryllis bulbs come pre-potted, but if not, plant them in a heavy pot, approximately 6-8 inches in size. Amaryllises are top heavy, so a heavier pot can help prevent tipping as the flower grows. Using regular potting soil, plant the bulb pointy side up, with approximately 1/3 of the bulb above the soil line. Pack the soil firmly around the bulb.

Put your pot in indirect sunlight. Water lightly until you see about 2 inches of growth, and then water regularly. Be sure to turn your pot periodically to prevent the stalks from growing at a slant toward the light. Also, you may need to use a plant stake to keep the amaryllis upright.

(Continued on following page)

(Continued from previous page)

In recent years, stores have started selling waxed amaryllis bulbs. Waxed bulbs are ideal for people who do not have a green thumb. They do not require planting or care because all the water and nutrients the flower needs to grow and bloom are enclosed in the wax. You simply set the waxed bulbs in indirect light and do nothing. They will grow and bloom without any help from you. However, waxed bulbs are single-use only, and are discarded after the flower blooms and dies.



Paperwhites bloom about 4-6 weeks after planting. For Christmas blooms, get the bulbs started in mid- to late-November. For a fuller display, plant about five to eight bulbs closely together in a pot or container. Each bulb will produce 20-60 small flowers, and the fragrance varies according to variety. Three of the most popular varieties are Ziva, Grand Soleil d'Or, and Nir.

You do not need to plant paperwhites in soil. Grow them in a shallow container at least four inches deep filled with stones, pebbles, or glass beads. Add only enough water to touch the bottom of the bulbs' roots. Do not immerse the bulbs in water or they will rot, however, always maintain a little bit of water in the bottom of the container.

Place the container in a cool, dry place, and once the bulbs begin to grow, place the paperwhites in indirect sunlight. Paperwhites tend to be floppy, so you will likely need to stake them.

Combined with poinsettias, evergreen boughs, holly berries, branches and other natural elements, pots of amaryllis and paperwhites can elevate your centerpieces and décor for the holidays.

Amaryllises symbolize determination, beauty, and love, and paperwhites symbolize purity and beauty and the hope for spring.

Be sure to follow us on Facebook, "Master Gardeners of Hancock County Ohio" for information on upcoming events, classes and gardening tips. You can also call our "Ask a Master Gardener" phone line with any gardening questions at 419-422-3851.

Spring is Coming—Think Rain Gardens

By Jodi Sulpizio, educator, Penn State Extension

Jodi Sulpizio

There is no denying that humans alter the landscape, leading to more stormwater runoff. More impervious surfaces such as roads, roof tops and sidewalks are created, increasing the amount of stormwater. Stormwater picks up pollutants such as fertilizers, pesticides, road salt, trash, sediment, animal waste and grass clippings carrying them to local streams and rivers. Pollutants are major stressors to the fragile, aquatic ecosystem. Increased stormwater also increases the risk of flooding, decreases infiltration and groundwater recharge and increases the cost of water treatment. Everyone impacts the land, but property owners can make small changes to help curb the growing stormwater problem.

Homeowners can install best management practices (BMPs) on their property to help lessen the impact of stormwater. Rain gardens, bioswales, rain barrels, pervious pavement and green roofs are examples of various BMPs. Today's focus is rain gardens.

Rain gardens are bowl-shaped gardens designed to capture water, allowing it to soak into the ground. They can drain water from roof downspouts, driveways, walkways or other impervious surfaces. They slow and reduce the amount of runoff from your property, while adding a lovely garden feature that reaps the following benefits: flood reduction, pollutant removal, groundwater protection, enhanced wildlife habitat and improved aesthetics.

A rain garden must be designed and installed with careful consideration or you may create more problems. First look at the topography, take a walk in the rain and study water flow on your property. Look for low, flat areas with a maximum slope of 10-12%.

Choose a location that gets runoff from a roof downspout or other impervious surface and ask your municipality for specific ordinances. A rain garden should be constructed at least 10 feet from a foundation, 50 feet from a septic system, and 100 feet from a well. If you install a rain garden within 10 feet of your foundation, it should be underlined and underdrained. Before you dig, always call PA One Call at 8-1-1 or 800-242-1776 to locate underground utility lines. Be sure to avoid tree roots, utilities and engineered stormwater management structures.

(Continued on next page)

Rain Gardens... (Continued from previous page)

Know your soil type. Avoid areas with soils that are permanently or periodically waterlogged. Once constructed, ponding depth should be less than 12 inches; 4-8 inches is best. Water should drain from the site in less than 24 hours after a rain event. Drainage in 2-4 hours is preferred. A percolation test should be done to ensure adequate drainage. If the site does not drain well, the soil will need to be amended.

How do you determine the size of your rain garden? It's important to place your garden where it will collect as much runoff as possible. If you are directing a downspout into the garden, there is a simple calculation you can use. Measure the footprint of your house. Estimate how much of the roof area is actually draining into the downspout. Then, divide the area by six. This sizes the garden to hold one inch of roof runoff into a garden that is six inches deep.

Before you plant, outline the shape of your garden. Remove or kill the turf grass and dig the garden to the desired depth. Hand digging is recommended so you don't compact the soil. Remove the topsoil and return it once you reach desired depth. The bottom of the garden should be flat. If the garden is on a slope, a berm should be built on the downhill side. An overflow or small indentation should be added to the berm so excess water can flow out of the garden during large storm events. Protect the overflow with an erosion control net or mat topped with gravel or stone.

Choose native plants suitable to the area based on soil, sunlight and location in the garden. The plants must be able to tolerate variable moisture conditions. The lowest part of the garden is the settling basin. For this area, choose plants that can tolerate inundation. The transition zone includes the lower and upper slopes of the garden. Soil dries out faster on the slopes, so plants in this zone should be able to tolerate drier conditions. Select plants with a variety of shape, color, height and bloom time to maximize the benefits for wildlife, including pollinators. Also consider choosing a plant with some evergreen leaves to prevent soil erosion in winter months. Check out our webpage on a [list of native rain garden plants](#)

Mulch the garden the first year to help retain moisture and limit weed growth. Water the garden until plants are established or during drought conditions and remove weeds and sediment as needed. Vegetation should remain through winter months to provide both a seed source and shelter for wildlife. Cut vegetation back in early spring as new growth emerges. Continue to monitor the garden, provide necessary maintenance and replace plants as needed.

It's Time To...

By Rosie Lerner

Check houseplant leaves for brown, dry edges, which indicates too little relative humidity in the house. Increase humidity by running a humidifier, grouping plants or using pebble trays.

Extend the lives of holiday plants such as poinsettias and Christmas cactus by placing them in a cool, brightly lit area that is free from warm or cold drafts.

Houseplants may not receive adequate light because days are short and gloomy. Move plants closer to windows, but avoid placing foliage against cold glass panes. Artificial lighting may be helpful.

Because growth slows or stops in winter months, most plants will require less water and little, if any, fertilizer.

If you are forcing bulbs for the holidays, bring them into warmer temperatures after they have been sufficiently precooled. Bulbs require a chilling period of about 10 to 12 weeks at 40 degrees F to initiate flower buds and establish root growth. Precooled bulbs are available from many garden suppliers, if you did not get yours cooled in time. Then provide two to four weeks of warm temperature (60 degrees F), bright light and moderately moist soil to bring on flowers.

When shopping for a Christmas tree, check for green, flexible, firmly held needles and a sticky trunk base – both indicators of freshness. Make a fresh cut, and keep the cut end under water at all times.

Evergreens, except pines and spruce, can be trimmed now for a fresh supply of holiday greenery.

YARD (Lawns, woody ornamentals and fruits)

Prevent bark splitting of young and thin-barked trees, such as fruit and maple trees. Wrap trunks with tree wrap, or paint them with white latex (not oil-based) paint, particularly on the south- and southwest-facing sides. Remember to remove trunk wrap at the end of winter.

Protect shrubs such as junipers and arborvitae from extensive snow loads by tying their stems together with twine. Carefully remove heavy snow loads with a broom to prevent limb breakage.

(Continued on the following page)

It's Time To... (continued from previous page)

Protect broadleaves, evergreens or other tender landscape plants from excessive drying (desiccation) by winter sun and wind. Canvas, burlap or polyethylene plastic screens to the south and west protect the plants. Similarly, shield plants from salt spray on the street side.

Provide winter protection for roses by mounding soil approximately 12 inches high to insulate the graft union after plants are dormant and temperatures are cold. Additional organic mulch such as straw compost or chopped leaves can be placed on top.

To protect newly planted or tender perennials and bulbs, mulch with straw, chopped leaves or other organic material after plants become dormant.

Store leftover garden chemicals where they will stay dry, unfrozen and out of the reach of children, pets and unsuspecting adults.

Once the plants are completely dormant and temperatures are consistently below freezing, apply winter mulch to protect strawberries and other tender perennials. In most cases, 2 to 4 inches of organic material such as straw, pine needles, hay or bark chips will provide adequate protection.

Check produce and tender bulbs in storage, and discard any that show signs of decay, such as mold or softening. Shriveling indicates insufficient relative humidity.

Clean up dead plant materials, synthetic mulch and other debris in the vegetable garden, as well as in the flowerbeds, rose beds and orchards.

Make notes for next year's garden.



THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY

COLLEGE OF FOOD, AGRICULTURAL,
AND ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCES

Ohio State University Extension
Hancock County
7868 County Road 140 Suite B
Findlay, OH 45840
419-422-3851

Facebook: Master Gardeners of Hancock County Ohio
hancock.osu.edu



The Master Gardener "Green Thumb Prints" is a publication of the Ohio State University Extension, Hancock County, 7868 County Road 140 Suite B Findlay, OH 45840 419-422-3851.

CFAES provides research and related educational programs to clientele on a nondiscriminatory basis. For more information, visit cfaesdiversity.osu.edu. For an accessible format of this publication, visit cfaes.osu.edu/accessibility.