

DOWN AND DIRTY



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As I begin writing for this edition, it is mid-June, and we are now beginning to reap some rewards for our hard work this spring. I must have harvested 15 or more quarts of strawberries from what started as 8 plants last summer, and there are more to come.

Spring flowers have long ago faded. Daisies, veronica, coreopsis, lavender, and daylilies, among many other perennials, are beautifully blooming in my second-year-old garden. A filled jar of dried oregano sits on the kitchen counter, and mint is next to fill the dehydrator. New trellises await the recently-planted morning glories and clematis.

Although spring is my favorite season, early summer has its positive points, too. As we reflect on the first half of 2014, the Seneca County OSUE Master Gardeners have a lot to feel proud about. In spite of the tough winter, we managed to complete the training for our large class of new master gardener interns, all of whom have a lot of enthusiasm and skills to share with the rest of us. The annual plant sale was a rousing success, in spite of a rainy start. Our many projects and activities are keeping most of us busy. It is the season for educational field trips.

All too soon it will be time to think about the State Conference in October,

and get signed up for sessions and the Friday evening banquet. Let's have a large turnout for this event, and show the other MGVs what a great group we have!

Thank you all for everything you do, with very little fanfare. It is appreciated so much!

You can get information and register for the conference at the following website:

<http://www.2014omgsc.com/>

Rates are cheapest if you register before July 15th.

Jan

2014 Plant Sale Another Huge Success



A Beginning Gardener By Sue Wightman-Rochester

There's nothing quite like helping someone set up their first garden. I'm working with an Army veteran who is planting ahead for the good of her family and the community.

I met Andrea through The St. Francis Outreach Program designed to improve nutrition and foster the sense of self-

sufficiency. Master Gardeners statewide educate the public about organic garden practices. The Outreach program has a few rules that coincide with that goal – no pesticides or chemical fertilizers allowed at St. Francis.

Job 1: We talked and emailed to refine her list of veggies. With a bit of guidance, Andrea chose to plant tomatoes, peppers, onions, zucchini, squash, potatoes, and herbs. I said I would bring the tools we needed. I asked her to bring gloves, a hat, and plenty of water. We had a great conversation about 'companion planting' while we worked on Job 2.

Job 2: Clear the thick weeds in the 20' by 30' plot. Hot work! We hugged each other when the excellent soil was revealed. Andrea made plans to be vigilant. We agreed that choosing a regular time and day to work (hoe, rake, hand pull) in the garden was the way to go on weed control.

We also talked about the layout of the garden focusing on ease of maintenance. We walked the plot and marked off areas where each veggie would go. She asked questions to follow up on our 'companion plant' discussion.

Job 3: Thanks to plant donations,

tomatoes were the first veggies she planted. Andrea quickly saw the benefits of spacing the plants alternately for ease of cultivation and harvest. She asked questions about how to plant (separate roots gently, stem tied to stake, shallow trench around each plant for watering etc.) We searched the barn to find the stakes and any extra tools we needed.



2014 Plant Sale

I also suggested an alternative to keeping water hungry tomatoes going. Collect plastic bottles. Pokes small holes on each side of it. Bury it next to the tomato plant with just the top showing. Fill

the bottles with water when a dry spell hits. Slow drip irrigation on the cheap!

This may seem trivial but Andrea's reaction upon seeing her first tomatoes in the ground was anything but. I had the feeling that she was already picking juicy reds in her mind!

We also looked at Sister Barbara Jean's method of mounding squash seeds and decided to follow suit.

Sister set up a triangle pattern for the mounds. She inserted a stick into the center of each mound to center the watering. Andrea continues the work in this section of the garden with seeds that were on hand in the greenhouse.

Job 4: Throughout the process Andrea was focused and attentive. She often spoke about how she "wanted to give back to the community." I encouraged her to take photos of the progress. I also suggested that she think a bit about what she's learning along the way. My hope is that she will continue to enjoy gardening and share her newfound knowledge with others.

Job 5: I will be tracking her progress as well. We agreed to meet again in early July and keep in touch by phone or email. I let her know she could call with any questions. I also sent an email reviewing what we did and the ideas we have for keeping the garden growing.

"Pray for a good harvest but continue to hoe."



The Ohio State University Extension Master Gardener Volunteer Program from a Participant's Point of View

by Pat Bowers

Having heard about the Master Gardener program over the years, I thought that now, being retired, was my chance to participate. I very quickly learned that it was not the Master Gardener program, but rather it was "The Ohio State University Extension's Master Gardener Volunteer" program.

We started the end of January and, little did we know, we would not be done until mid-April due to two snow days (just like school). The participants came to the program with all levels of knowledge and experience, though I do believe that I can claim, with no problem, the least of both. Not part of the formal program was the knowledge received during informal discussion with participants, especially one from Tim Mannas, on how to take moss off the roof. The instructors for the various classes and the experienced Master Gardener (now known as Perennials) readily and easily shared their knowledge and experiences. We learned quickly the first day that we play in soil, not dirt, and with a small ball of the soil how to determine its texture by rolling it out with our fingers. The amount of information in the manual and handouts from the presenters and their actual presentations can be overwhelming, but all this information gradually starts to come together, even the proper botanical names. The days in class flew by. Our presenters were definitely well versed in their topics, and little did we know about pesticides and invasive

insects, so the presenters just poured the information on us with the hope that it would soak in. The best example of this was Linda

Rose's presentation on composting. A short handout was given and we thought this would be a short presentation. Three hours later, Linda was going strong, no one was bored and I believe we were only seeing the tip of her knowledge in this area.



Jim Chatfield's and Erik Draper's discussion on plant pathology and diagnostics built on what we had learned and showed how we needed to apply this knowledge. The diagnostic process started out as 20 formal questions for diagnosing plant problems, but the number of questions rapidly grew.

The final "open anything" exam was 100 multiple choice questions, which forced all of us to go through our manual. A group of us got together to go over what we thought were the answers, but even then there was room for discussion.

The review of our exam was followed by another low calorie potluck lunch. We were almost done with the formal class hours of the program, actual plant pathology presentation was completed two weeks later.

Now began the volunteer hours which were primarily directed at preparation for our plant sale at the fairgrounds. It did not seem possible the amount of time one can

spend cleaning and bleaching 185 pots, but now I know. The Sprouts, as we are known, helped the Perennial Master Gardener digging up plants, many of which were donated, potting, pricing and taking to the fairgrounds.

The actual sale at the fairgrounds was a two-day class experience. Helping people find the plant they wanted and finding the answer they had regarding a particular plant through the excellent reference books that were available was fun and rewarding. The plant sale was over too quickly.

In summary, little did I know when we started this program that two towers on the Ohio State University, Lincoln and Morrill, were named after the two people who really got this program started, but now we do and are glad they did.

Being a Master Gardener is a most excellent community volunteer education program.



God made
RAINY DAYS
so gardeners
could

get the
HOUSE-
WORK done!

What's Been Eating My Gooseberries

By Vince Kirchner

I am behind on my usual duties in the garden, no excuses except I started late this year, the weather did not help, and I always try to accomplish more than I can possibly get done by myself. The last few weeks, I have been happily moving through the garden cutting weeds, staking a plant here or there, performing usual maintenance on the garden. The north side of the house always gets neglected, that is part of the design so I do not have to worry about those plants and bushes as they are basically self-sustaining, a combination of Jostaberrys, Currants, and Gooseberry's.

So when I finally did pay a little attention to the forgotten little things, I was upset with myself to find out that something has been eating away at my Gooseberry's. Not the entire plant, just about every single leaf on the plant, leaving only the naked stems of the leaf similar to the eerie trees sticking up in the moonlight in a cheesy horror movie. The Gooseberry's looked fine for now, but I knew that they would not survive long without the nourishment that the leaves provide, I could lose my entire crop in a matter of a few short days. I had to act fast, I could "Ask a Master Gardener", or I could set out on my own to find this sinister fiend.

Gooseberries are not a common fruit crop in the area, a minor fruit that is a member of the Ribes family. Although the Gooseberry is indigenous to many parts of Europe and western, south

and Southeast Asia, my memories of the Gooseberry revolve around the British countryside, provided in novels dating back to William Turner, the naturalist in his notes around the middle of the 16th century. He noted that the common pests are the magpie moth (*Abraxas grossulariata*) caterpillar, (*Macaria wauaria*) and Gooseberry sawfly (*Nematus ribesii*). Many of the early varieties of Gooseberry's are susceptible to white pine blister rust, but that is not the problem that I am experiencing. Checking the previous

Severe defoliation of the bushes can be caused by the caterpillar-like larvae of one of three species of sawfly

Larvae of the common gooseberry sawfly are up to 20mm (almost ¾in) long, pale green, with many black spots, and black heads. The adult females are 5-7mm (up to ¼in) long and are yellow with black heads and black markings on the thorax; males are similar but more extensively marked with black, including the upper surface of the abdomen



Larvae of the pale spotted gooseberry sawfly are smaller than those of the common gooseberry sawfly and have pale green heads

The small gooseberry sawfly can have up to four generations of pale green larvae from late April onwards. The larvae of some moths may also eat the foliage of gooseberries and currants

Methods of treatment include picking them off by hand, not an option I plan to execute. Chemicals are available, but my first choice is always an organic option if I have one. My course of action is to place Diatomaceous earth around the base of the plant to try and catch them before they drop to the soil and form a cocoon from which the next generation emerges, there may be three or four of these a year. I also used an application of Neem oil spray which will cause the sawfly to drop from the bush so they can be easily

gathered and disposed of. Round one for the sawfly, but round two went to me, round three and all future rounds are within my control. Thank you to William Turner.

mentioned pests, the Gooseberry sawfly was a perfect match for what I saw growing in front of me. The details of the pest are shown immediately below. The documents also show that this pest will attack Currants, the sawfly had not gotten to my Currants next to the Gooseberry's and I did not want them to get there.

How Did I Ever Get Into The Dirt By Janet Cole

I grew up in Columbus, Ohio, in an older neighborhood called the Hilltop. Single family homes, with, at most, 1/10 an acre lot. My mom liked flowers, but was not a gardener. She had one tea rose, which she kept alive for 15 years even though it never bloomed. Our next door neighbor had flowers everywhere, and I was amazed to listen as she named them all.

One year, at age 12, I decided to grow some vegetables. I planted a beefsteak tomato plant and some carrots under the shade of a huge maple tree, which shaded not only our yard, but all that touched ours. By the end of summer, I had harvested a 1" diameter tomato, and three 2" carrots. I was hooked. Trips to farms as a child also fed my curiosity.

Finishing college during the "back to earth" movement of the early 70s, I read up on gardening, and planted a larger garden with my new husband in our rented backyard. The green beans came up beautifully, and then were consumed one morning by 6 hungry rabbits in 15 minutes.

Each year, I improved my knowledge, and my garden. I learned how to deal with heavy clay soil. I froze, canned and dehydrated the bounty. I planted shade trees, shrubs and fruit trees. I planted perennials, then moved them when they did not thrive. I enjoyed working outside, getting down and dirty, and seeing the results of my labors.

When I became a Master

Gardener Volunteer in 2010, people assumed I had all the answers. Instead, I probably had more questions the more I learned. But now, I know where to look for the answers. I now know how to correct most of the mistakes I have made over the years, and I would like to help others improve their knowledge base, too.

I have also made many friends, and value each and every one of them. Becoming a Master Gardener has been a major highlight of my life.

A Visit to The 577 Foundation

By Ann Risner

On June 12th sixteen members of the Seneca County Master Gardeners made their way to Perrysburg, Ohio and the 577 Foundation. There they were greeted by Vicki Gallagher, also a Master Gardener, and given a tour of the 577 Foundation grounds.

First we were shown the community gardens. We entered through trees that were gayly decorated with fabric art done by many artists at a recent fabric art festival at this location. These gardens are provided to interested people at no charge to them. Each one was unique. Seeds, plants, compost, and water were also provided at no charge. The only cost to each gardener is that they must return at least 10% to various needs in the community such as soup kitchens.

We were shown then geodesic dome which is the pride of Ms. Gallagher. It had unusual plants growing in a computer controlled environment. It also had a Koi pond with plenty of large and somewhat old Koi fish present. After that we were shown a unique children's play garden. Everything there was available for children to touch and enjoy. A little Hobbit house,

a tunnel to crawl through, an area with musical instruments to play. Another area with a Fairy garden where all elements were movable to be arranged to the child's imagination. There was also a stage and a cooler full of puppets to provide puppet shows.

We then moved on to the Stranahan backyard which overlooks the Maumee river. Of course we all would have loved a tour of the house but that was not to be. We moved across the yard and took in the well planned compost bins adjacent to an outdoor kiln. From there we headed to a wonderful log cabin which had moved onto the site. There was also an area to dig for fossils where there were two little girls hopefully digging away.

We then went to the bee room and learned about the importance of bees in the world today. There were lots of visual displays to see and learn from. Onto the pottery room which is one of the main activities of the 577 Foundation. Makes one want to sign up for a class! This was all followed by a quick

TIP OF THE DAY



REUSE YOGURT CONTAINERS FROM YOUR LOCAL SUPERMARKET, THEY MAKE A STURDY HOLDER FOR SEEDLING CONTAINERS. PLASTIC BOTTLES, ROLLED NEWSPAPER AND CARDBOARD TUBE CUPS FIT EASILY IN THE READY CUT OPENINGS.

SENECA COUNTY MASTER GARDENERS

question and answer period and we were free to roam. Some of us decided to do the River Walk. The path took us down, down, down to the river. Areas are numbered and the provided brochure explains the importance of each area.

We then left and took a quick spin around the Perrysburg Flea Market. There we ate our fill of lots of tasty food. Many bands we recognized from our trip to Naturally Native last summer. Yum! Finally it was time to head for home. All in all a wonderful day!

If you are interested in the 577 Foundation it is open 365 days a year from 9-5. It offers many, many interesting classes starting in Sept and running through May. Just walking the grounds is certainly worth the drive.