

# DOWN AND DIRTY



Volume 1, Issue 1

MARCH/APRIL 2014

## 2014 OFFICERS

- PRESIDENT Janet Cole
- VICE PRESIDENT Charles Huth
- SECRETARY Sandy Zoller
- TREASURER Sharon Losey
- VOLUNTEER COODINATOR Sharon Riffle
- STATE ADVISORY COMMITTEE Susanne Wightman-Rochester
- ASK A MASTER GARDENER LINE Betty Kizer, Nancy Grandillo, Charles Huth

## PRESIDENT'S SCOOP

I am very excited about this first issue of the newsletter for Seneca County Master Gardeners. It has been a goal for the past several years. Thank you so much to Susan Nighswander for bringing it to fruition!

After talking with Master Gardeners from other counties and states, I have come to appreciate our group for all we accomplish. We have a great, energetic new member class learning

the basics right now. There is a new partnership in the works with the Franciscan Earth Literacy Center to mentor a new community garden. We are formalizing a speaker's list to distribute in the area, so we can share our knowledge and passion with the community.

We are getting ready for spring, anticipating the renewal that comes with it.

It is my hope all members continue to come to meetings, and volunteer as you are able. Together, we can continue to be strong, for ourselves and our community.

Janet Cole

President, Seneca County OSU Extension Master Gardener Volunteers

## Gardening & Lawn Care Chores for USDA Zones 5 & 6

By Albrecht Powell

### Inside this issue:

- HOW DID I EVER GET INTO THE DIRT 2
- GARDEN READINGS 2
- NEW CLASS 2
- GARDENING CHORES CONTINUED 3

Timing is everything when your goal is a beautiful lawn and garden. These March gardening tips and chores apply to USDA Plant Hardiness Zones 5 & 6,

### Flowers & Vegetables:

- If you'd like to try your hand at growing your own plants, March is the time to start indoor seeds of tomatoes, peppers, eggplant, and other warm-season veggies. Tomatoes are best started late in the month to avoid ending up with leggy plants come May.
- When your garden is dry enough (feels crumbly like chocolate cake, not squishy like Play-

Doh), it's time to till and prepare it for planting. Take a soil sample to your county extension office to be analyzed, and work in fertilizer and other nutrients as indicated.

- St. Patrick's Day is the traditional time to plant peas and potatoes, but you may have to wait a few weeks until the ground dries out unless you prepared the soil last fall. Rhubarb, asparagus, and onion sets can also be planted now.
- Remove mulch covers from roses, azaleas, clematis vines and other tender shrubs once

nighttime temperatures rise into the 30s (be prepared to recover if a late cold-snap hits). Leave mulch around spring flowering bulbs and tender perennials, however, as it will provide protection to emerging shoots against cold, drying winds.

Trim back winter-killed rose canes to one inch below blackened area and all rose canes to about six inches above ground level. Cut back any perennials that weren't cleaned up last fall, as well as ornamental grasses.

CONTINUED PAGE 3

## Garden Readings

By Susanne Wightman-Rochester

Some of my favorite articles are on websites! I heartily recommend the following for up to the minute ideas that will chase away the winter blues

[www.midwestgardentips.com/index.html](http://www.midwestgardentips.com/index.html) (more than we ever want to know)

[www.finegardening.com/design/articles/the-only-shrubs](http://www.finegardening.com/design/articles/the-only-shrubs) (design articles especially good)



[www.webgarden.osu.edu](http://www.webgarden.osu.edu) (revived & friendly with T. McNutt videos)

[www.statebystategardening.com/oh](http://www.statebystategardening.com/oh) (Ohio gardener magazine is a treasure trove of ideas)

[www.northwest-gardening.com](http://www.northwest-gardening.com) (basics and beyond)

[www.ehow.com/facts\\_753966\\_ohio-planting-guide.html](http://www.ehow.com/facts_753966_ohio-planting-guide.html) (how to videos and articles)

### NEW CLASS

Despite the weather, the 2014 Seneca county master gardener volunteer class is well underway. A huge thank you goes out to Jean and Ora Preston and Betty Kizer for their tireless effort and countless hours to pull this enormous accomplishment together. Big thanks also to all master gardener volunteers for all the yummy snacks and support at the classes.

## How did I ever get into the dirt?

By Betty Kizer

Growing up on a farm in the Old Fort area, I enjoyed nature and far preferred being outside rather than inside. It seemed that I could see God in nature. Some of my earliest memories were working in the garden with an aunt who lived with us or working with Dad in the garden or with the livestock.

My aunt, my mom's sister, would take me out with her to pick the strawberries: and as we picked, she would tell me stories about my mom and her other brothers and sisters growing up in Georgia (Yes, I grew up with the Southern accent which to this day still means home to me). I had never met her parents, my southern grandparents. However, I so enjoyed the stories she told about these relatives and somehow these never met relatives came alive for me. So working in the garden was fun.

Also, Dad would send me out to

cut the rhubarb. There were 6 rhubarb plants on the farm; there are now approximately 50. Those 6 plants were there my dad's entire life (born in 1913) and my entire life. These are the same plants that I keep dividing to expand the patch. As a child I had no idea there were varieties of rhubarb. Later I learned that pulling rhubarb was much better for the plant and for the yield.

As a child, I did not know there were different soil types. This farm that has now been in the family for at least 4 generations has sandy loam soil. I had no idea that this was one of the best types of soil to have.

I loved to put seeds or plants in the ground and watch them grow. I saw so much in nature—the cycle of life, and, yes, even the facts of life. Decades later when I married and moved off the farm to Tiffin with my hus-

band, I came to realize how much I loved the farm, the land.

That love of the land was somehow intertwined with my love and respect for my parents (who were also my heroes), and somehow to this day when I am on the farm (which is several times a week), I can still look in the garden or across the fields and see Mom and Dad and remember "how I got into the dirt."

P.S. Yes, Master Gardeners know it is soil, not dirt.



◆ ◆ ◆ ◆ ◆ ◆ ◆ ◆  
**PLANT  
 SALE  
 MAY  
 17 & 18**

**DIVIDE THOSE PLANTS**

## March Gardening & Lawn Care Chores for USDA Zones 5 & 6 continued from page 1

### Trees & Shrubs:

- Prune fruit trees, bramble fruits, and grapes (except peaches and nectarines, which are best pruned before they flower) before the buds swell.
- Prune summer and fall blooming shrubs now (wait to prune spring blooming shrubs such as azaleas until after they bloom). Delay pruning evergreen shrubs and hedges until early summer.
- Apply dormant oil spray to any trees and shrubs (except blue spruce) that are plagued by scale insects or mites.
- Now's the time (before it gets too hot and dry) to plant deciduous and evergreen trees and shrubs, weather and soil condi-

tions permitting.

Fertilize established rhododendrons, azaleas, roses and other ornamental trees and shrubs, as well as fruit trees. Follow the recommendations on the fertilizer bag.

### Lawn Care:

**Fertilize** your lawn with either an organic or a chemical fertilizer and treat lawns, as necessary, for crabgrass or annual bluegrass problems with a pre-emergent preventer (watch for air temperatures above 60° F for 4-5 consecutive days for the right timing). Consider a product that combines the two to save on application time.

- When weather conditions permit, remove excess thatch from your lawn and aerate it, if neces-

sary. Fertilize established lawns.

### RADIO INTERVIEWS



Don't forget about the radio interviews on the first Thursday of the month. April 3 Charles Huth and Janet Cole will be attending. The link to the station is:

<http://senecacountyradio.com/>

Keith, the host keeps podcasts for several months so people can listen at their leisure.

## April Gardening & Lawn Care Chores for USDA Zones 5 & 6

By Albrecht Powell

Timing is everything when your goal is a beautiful lawn and garden. These April gardening tips and chores apply to USDA Plant Hardiness Zones 5 & 6.

### Flowers & Vegetables:

- Weed, weed, weed! Now is the time to dig or hoe weeds from your gardens and yard. This will save you a lot of work later on.
- Continue removing protective mulches from roses, clematis, azaleas and other tender shrubs.
- Fertilize spring-flowering bulbs. Also fertilize other ornamental fruit and berry plants that were not fertilized in March, and spring-blooming shrubs after flowering is complete. Fertilize perennials when you see 2-3" of new growth.
- Cultivate garden beds as soon as soil is dry enough to work. Plant roots need loose soil twelve inches deep. Mix in a few inches of peat moss or organic material.
- April is a good time for planting roses, and perennial flowers and herbs. You can also sow seeds

of carrots, greens, beets and other root vegetables.

Plan, design, and create new landscape and garden beds, if desired.

### Trees & Shrubs:

- Finish up your pruning chores from March if you haven't already, including summer and fall blooming shrubs and deciduous trees.
- Continue applying dormant oil spray to any trees and shrubs (except blue spruce) that are plagued by scale insects or mites until they begin leafing out. There is still time to transplant or plant new deciduous and evergreen trees and shrubs this month.

### Lawn Care:

- April brings in warmer temperatures and spring rains, so now is a good time to seed, over seed, or sod the lawn. Be aware that newly seeded lawns may take two or more weeks to germinate in the cooler spring weather. If you have used a crabgrass pre-emergent, you will need to wait a few months before over seeding.
- If you didn't fertilize your lawn

in March, do it this month. April is also a good time to put down a spring pre-emergent to control crabgrass, if you haven't already. Again, watch for air temperatures above 60° F for 4-5 consecutive days.

- Have your lawn soil tested if you haven't already, and apply lime or nutrients if needed. Get your mower blade sharpened. Mowing with a dull blade tears the ends of grass blades, leaving ragged ends which later turn brown, and also encourages the spread of fungus disease.

"A weed is a plant that has mastered every survival skill except for learning how to grow in rows."  
- Doug Larson