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THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY

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Good evening!

This week showed some promise of spring, and then promptly back-tracked! Winter is still hanging on, but those couple of days that reached over 50 degrees gave us a mini-boost in our Growing Degree Day totals. One area, Adams Mills, actually grew by 2 GDDs while the rest of our zip codes grew 1 GDD – not a lot, but it's in the right direction! We now have a 5-GDD difference in range here in Coshocton County. That difference will grow as time goes on and temps increase.

Here is the data by town/zip code and the number of growing degree day units (GDD units) in our county:

Town/Zip code	GDD units
Adams Mills/43821	61
Conesville/43811	58
Coshocton/43812	57
Fresno/43824	56
Walhonding/43843	56
Warsaw/43844	56
W. Lafayette/43845	57

This is a repeat of information, but some phenological events that you may be seeing now or will see soon are:
- Speckled alder, first bloom at 51 GDDs
- Northern Lights forsythia, first bloom at 58
- Japanese pieris, first bloom at 60

Events that should be occurring next are:
- Red maple, full bloom at 75
- Star magnolia, first bloom at 83

You can find the OSU Phenology Calendar at http://www.oardc.ohio-state.edu/gdd/CalendarView.asp. Plug in your zip code and the date and you can see what potential events are occurring in your area. There are pictures of the plants and insects listed and a list of the events in the order they generally appear. Keep in mind that these are general values for a particular zip code and may vary a bit within that area, which brings up the subject of microclimates. Here is a definition from Dictionary.com:

mi·cro·cli·mate [mahy-kr uh-klahy-mit]; NOUN
1. The climate of a small area, as of confined spaces such as caves or houses (cryptoclimate); of plant communities, wooded areas, etc. (phytoclimate); or of urban communities, which may be different from that in the general region.

We use the term to describe any part of an area's conditions: for example, the area around a house foundation is a microclimate that is generally a bit warmer than an area in the middle of the yard. That is because the house and its foundation tend to radiate a bit of heat. Pavements, particularly those in full sun, tend to hold heat so the area nearby becomes a warmer microclimate than an area several feet away. North-facing slopes are generally a bit cooler than south-facing slopes in the winter because they are in the shadow of the top of the slope. I visited Washington DC several years ago in late winter and noticed one cherry tree in

bloom while the rest of the trees in the immediate area were barely in bud. The reason was that particular tree was next to a brick building and beside a vent for the building's heating system. Naturally, it was several degrees warmer there, making its own microclimate! Plants in towns or urban areas tend to bloom a little earlier than plants in rural areas because the houses and pavements in town make the area warmer – thus accumulating GDDs more quickly.

The forsythia in the phenology garden (*Gold Tide forsythia 'Courtasol'*) at Lake Park had its first bloom last week on March 16. It had several flowers open at the bottom of the shrub where the branches were a bit protected, but the buds on the upper part of the plant showed some yellow color – a promise of beauty to come soon. Some of the bulbs there are showing buds too, so it won't be long before they put on a display for us; in town, some bulbs are already in bloom – another indication of the difference in microclimates. One good thing about the cool temperatures is that the blooms will last longer than if we had really warm weather.

Our local forecast at this time shows that we may have some warming in the next week, perhaps a few days over 50 degrees - that may give us a slight boost in our GDD accumulation, but we probably shouldn't expect any big events yet!

The pictures below show our forsythia at Lake Park on March 16.

It's hard to see the buds in the above picture, but you can see a bit of yellow color if you look closely! The pic on the right does show a few open flowers.