

March 11, 2019

Good afternoon!

A quick visit to the phenology garden this weekend verified that spring is indeed coming – we just have to be patient! A little bit of poking through the leaves on top of the Lenten Rose (*Helleborus*) revealed some burgundy-colored buds that will be opening soon. The buds on the star magnolia and the Gold Tide forsythia are swelling slightly but need some warmer weather to open. It's still too chilly for much pollinator activity, but the bulbs in our area have grown a few more inches – they must be impatient to bloom too. Have you noticed catkins on birch trees or a reddish tint to some trees branches?

To repeat from the last report (February 18), phenology is the study of cyclic events of nature and their relationship to weather. Many plants and insects respond to weather changes, especially temperature, in the same general order every year. Studying this phenomenon can help us watch for and deal with events or potential problems on our own property. Growing Degree Day units are a measurement of cumulative temperatures that affect plant and insect development and are posted by date on the OSU Phenology Calendar at <http://www.oardc.ohio-state.edu/gdd/CalendarView.asp>. You will find a place to plug in your zip code and the date in order to see what potential events are in your area and pictures of the plants and insects listed. The calendar lists phenological events in the order they generally appear.

Coshocton County Master Gardener Volunteers maintain and collect data from a garden at Lake Park, located behind the office between the walkway and the ballfield. We monitor plants for first bloom and end-of-bloom and record what kind of pollinators visit each plant. Our bloom findings are then reported to the OSU Phenology Network, which includes about 30 gardens all over the state of Ohio.

Here is the data by town/zip code and the number of growing degree day units (GDD units) in our county as of March 10, 2019:

Adams Mills/43821	26 (+4 GDD from 2/18/19)	59 GDDS for 3/10/2018 (last year)
Conesville/43811	25 (+4)	57
Coshocton/43812	23 (+3)	56
Fresno/43824	21 (+3)	55
Walhonding/43843	21 (+3)	55
Warsaw/43844	22 (+3)	55
W. Lafayette/43845	23 (+3)	56

The first phenological events that you will see locally are:

- Silver maple, first bloom at 34 GDD units
- Corneliancherry dogwood, first bloom at 40
- Silver maple, full bloom at 42
- Red maple, first bloom at 44
- Speckled alder, first bloom at 51
- Northern Lights forsythia, first bloom at 58

We have a range of 21 to 26 GDD units across the county, disregarding micro-climates, so most areas of our county are at about the same point as far as waiting for plants to start to bloom. Those 4 GDDs in difference are not really important at this point, but the ranges will expand as the season goes on. As you can see by looking at the GDDs listed for the same date last year, spring is arriving a bit slower! Looking at the weather forecast, we may see a small increase in GDDs in our area in the next several days; although our nightly temps

will remain chilly, we may have some days in the 50's and even the 60's. Temps between 50 and 86 degrees F. are the range that affects that measurement. The formulas for determining GDDs can be found online at <http://www.oardc.ohio-state.edu/gdd/glossary.asp>

One way to get some "spring" in our homes is to "force" some of our spring-budding branches into flowering inside before the plant is ready outside. Basically, cut some branches that have flower buds that are starting to swell, put them in water, and wait for them to bloom. In-depth information on this process can be found at: <https://ag.purdue.edu/hla/pubs/HO/HO-23.pdf>

If you would enjoy getting out in the fresh air and helping the community at the same time, mark your calendars for **Lake Park clean-up day on Saturday, April 6**, 9:00 am until noon. Volunteers are needed to help rake, spread mulch, pick up trash, and more. Friends of the Park will serve a simple lunch for all who attend.



The buds on the Lenten Rose, (*Helleborus x hybrida*) are getting bigger and showing color!



We hung a simple feeder for the birds on Feb. 27 – it was an empty toilet tissue roll spread with peanut butter and rolled in bird seed. The birds must have enjoyed it because the cardboard was totally bare when we checked this weekend.



The "information station" has info posted about upcoming events, identification charts, and a list of prohibited invasive plants. There are also fact sheets for you to take - feeding birds, bed bugs, hairy bitter-cress (a weed), and more!

