

Coshocton County Master Gardener Volunteer Newsletter**KEEP IT GROWING!**

January - February 2021

Volume 18, Issue 1

Hear MGVs on WTNS

Coshocton County Master Gardener Volunteers continue to present “The Real Dirt” on WTNS radio (FM 99.3) and <https://mywtnsradio.com/> on the second Friday of the month at 9:00 am! Tune in to hear gardening tips and discussions. A huge “thank you” to WTNS for hosting us!

2021 Programming

We cannot have any in-person programming in the early part of 2021 due to Covid 19, but we are hoping that we will be able to resume our activities later in the year. We are making tentative plans for the time when the virus will be more controlled. We plan to continue with our chosen theme of “Good Bugs and Bad Bugs”.

If you have a suggestion for a programming topic, please let us know at the Extension Office! Call (740) 622-2265 or e-mail David Marrison at marrison.2@osu.edu

Extension Office Is Closed but Still Operating!

Effective Monday, December 21, all OSU Extension county offices are closed to the public until further notice. Any meetings are being conducted virtually in formats such as Zoom, etc. Extension employees are teleworking 100 percent and can still be reached for information. Please call our office if you need assistance at 740-622-2265. E-mail addresses for each staff member can be found on the OSU-Coshocton County website at: <https://coshocton.osu.edu/about/staff>

CCCC Construction Technology Class Recognized by State MGVs

The Construction Technology Class at Coshocton County Career Center was one of three entities recognized as a “Friend of Master Gardeners” at the state Master Gardener Conference in late October. The class, taught by Brad Sarchet, provided the labor to build and install the information station at the phenology area at Lake Park.

Time to Plan Our Gardens!

Here we are in the coldest part of winter – this is a great time to get cozy and reflect on our previous gardening experiences as well as to look through recent catalogs and magazines for ideas.

A good starting point is to consider last year’s plantings. Which plants did well and which did not? What physical changes should be made? Did you have pests? Do you plan to start seeds indoors or sow directly? There are any number of factors to consider – perhaps your family could use more vegetables, or a tree has grown enough to shade a previously sunny area.

Catalogs can provide a great deal of information including new varieties, maturity dates, zone hardiness (most of Coshocton County is in zone 6a), and resistance to diseases or pests. Magazines and gardening books can provide inspiration and ideas as well as information. Check out the local library or do some research online. If you have internet available, research-based information may be found by typing the topic plus the words “university extension” into the search bar. Do be sure to use information from a source that is in a comparable climate zone. As always, our local Extension Office is available to help at (740) 622-2265.

It is a good idea to keep a gardening journal or notes during the growing season; jot down successes as well as problems to help plan the next year. Happy gardening!

More information can be found at: <https://extension.umd.edu/hqic/topics/starting-seeds-indoors> and <https://extension.psu.edu/cool-season-vs-warm-season-vegetables>

“A garden is half-made when it is well planned; the best gardener is the one who does the most gardening by the winter fire.” ~Liberty Hyde Bailey

Cast Iron Plant

By Teresa Donley, Coshocton County Master Gardener Volunteer

As life has slowed on our grain farm and vineyard, fellow Master Gardener Volunteer Margaret Lowe challenged me as a cast iron cookware collector to investigate this plant that is worthy of the “cast iron” name.

Cast iron plant is known scientifically as *Aspidistra elatior* and is a great choice for an indoor plant for home or office space receiving little light. Although native to China and Japan, this plant is not invasive and can be grown as a groundcover in the south (USDA Hardiness Zone 7-11). Cast iron plant takes very little care as a potted house plant or in a natural landscape; it only requires periodic watering. It needs little fertilization – an application in spring and summer months is sufficient. Growth habits include a height of 1 to 2 feet with a spread of about that same measurement. The cast iron plant has a rhizomatous root system and will grow to fill a pot over time. Once the pot becomes overgrown, divide and repot the rhizomes.

In southern climates, this plant is often used as a groundcover along shady meandering trails. For about ten years I have enjoyed a “southern outpost” and often see cast iron plants during frequent visits to central Florida’s Leu Gardens or Bok Tower Gardens.

More information can be found at: <https://gardeningsolutions.ifas.ufl.edu/plants/ornamentals/cast-iron-plant.html> and <https://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/pdf/FP/FP05300.pdf>

What’s in a Name?

Juliet, of Shakespearean fame, said, “What’s in a name? That which we call a rose by any other name would smell as sweet”. We all use common names for plants and that can be confusing. Not only are there several common names for the same plant, sometimes there are more than one plant for the same name. We can discuss or research plants more accurately by using the botanical name that is universally recognized.

Margaret Lowe, Coshocton County Master Gardener Volunteer, has researched and written about several plants for this issue that have common names related to animals. As you read, you will see that some of the common names are similar and possibly confusing. Margaret has also included some information about Carl von Linné who developed the system by which we classify organisms.

Foxglove (*Digitalis*)

This well-known plant consists of more than twenty varieties which are biennials or short-lived perennials; some are treated as annuals. *Digitalis* plants are tall, ranging from one to five feet, and may be found in several colors. The flower grows in a spike of many bell-shaped tubes. Size and color make foxglove a beautiful border or background plant but it makes more of an impact when grown by itself. Foxglove will grow in any garden soil, in full sun or partly shaded areas, but avoid areas that are too dry or too wet. Grown in a plot by itself, foxglove seed can ripen and reseed itself year after year making it a very easy plant to raise. The blooms attract bees, hummingbirds and butterflies. The stems should be cut down to the ground to encourage growth of new flowering spikes.

Although this plant has been used medicinally since ancient times and derivatives are still used in the treatment of heart ailments, keep in mind that all parts of the plant are toxic. For that reason, location of this plant should be carefully considered.

For more information: <https://mastergardener.extension.wisc.edu/article/common-foxglove-digitalis-purpurea/>

OXEYE (*Heliopsis helianthoides*)

Oxeye sunflower, also called false sunflower and ox-eye daisy, is related to the true sunflower (*Helianthus spp.*). This native wildflower has yellow blooms with darker yellow centers and grows three to six feet tall.

Oxeye plants prefer full sun; however, they will grow in partial shade in rich, well-drained soil. The dwarf varieties also do well in containers. These plants thrive with little care, blooming from midsummer to early fall. Care for and propagate oxeye as you would sunflowers.

Sunflowers have been cultivated for many years in North America. Seeds are edible and used to make cooking oil and livestock food. Native Americans obtained a dull blue dye from the seeds and a yellow dye from the flower heads. Today there are many sizes of sunflower, from dwarf varieties to plants as tall as twelve feet. There are also more colors, including many shades of yellow, orange and red. The new hybrids make great cutting flowers for vases.

Find more info about Oxeye here: https://plants.usda.gov/factsheet/pdf/fs_hehe5.pdf

Goatsbeard

Two plants are named goatsbeard – one is cultivated in flower gardens and the other grows as a wildflower. The garden goatsbeard (*Aruncus dioicus*), sometimes written “goat’s beard”, is suitable for large gardens as their flowering season is brief and they take up space. The flower spikes resemble astilbe, but are white for about a week before they turn brown. These plants grow in sun or partial shade and prefer moist soil.

The other, yellow goatsbeard (*Tragopogon spp.*), is native to Eurasia but has naturalized on this continent; it grows in fields, along roadsides, and in waste areas. The plant grows from three to five feet tall with yellow flowers about the size of daisies. The seed head resembles a dandelion seedhead but is the size of a softball. Some people eat the leaves in salads or cooked as greens. The root can also be cooked like a potato or roasted and ground to use as a coffee substitute.

However, proper identification is important for safety’s sake.

I really enjoy the wildflower because of the huge seed sphere that reseeds and grows so easily. I found the original seed for my plants growing along railroad tracks at West Lafayette. It grows across most of North America.

Find more information on these plants at: <https://wimastergardener.org/article/goatsbeard-aruncus-dioicus/> and <https://mastergardener.extension.wisc.edu/article/yellow-goatsbeard-tragopogon-spp/>

Spider Plant (*Chlorophytum*)

A spider plant is one of the easiest houseplants to raise and is most satisfying because of its growing habits and production of little ones. The mother plant sends out long stems that produce many small white flowers which then produce miniature plants that resemble a dangling spider. Those young plants are easy to grow and will even take root if they reach soil. Mother plants can remain in the same pot for several years, continuing to send out little ones.

Spider plants are comfortable in warm places with full or filtered sun. Water the plant thoroughly but allow the soil to dry out slightly between watering. The most common problem is brown tips at the ends of leaves; these can be trimmed off. The plant does not grow the long runners that produce baby plants until it is root-bound (the pot is filled with roots) so do not be in a hurry to repot the plant. Let mother kick the kids out!

Because of its growth habits, raising a spider plant is a great way to entice young people to become curious enough to learn how plants grow. Another good candidate for that purpose is the piggy-back plant (*Tolmiea menziesii*) as it also produces “babies”.

For more information: <https://mastergardener.extension.wisc.edu/article/spider-plant-chlorophytum-comosum/>

Spider Plant or Spider Flower- (*Cleome*)

Cleome is one of my favorite plants and is easy to grow. Beautiful and delicate looking, it can grow to four feet tall in all types of Ohio soil, will bloom all summer, and has a pleasant fragrance. The plant produces a lot of seeds and volunteers will cover a bed year after year, regardless of the care they are given. Seeds are easy to gather for sowing new plots wherever you would like. Plants can be started indoors in April or planted outside after danger of frost. The seeds should not be planted deeply; a thin cover of soil will do.

Cleome has been around for many years. Hybrids of this plant have resulted in several colors and make it a very care-free plant, beautiful in many ways. The flowers attract butterflies and do not attract pests. The common names above come from its appearance; when the plant blooms it looks like spiders weaving webs.

Carl von Linné, Father of Systematic Botany

How are plants named? Carl von Linné developed a binomial system in which each plant is assigned a name consisting of two Latin names. The first word is the “genus” and the second is the name of the “species”.

Carl Von Linné was born in Sweden in 1707. His father wanted Carl to follow him into the ministry, but the young man was interested in plants and animals. Carl did so poorly in his schoolwork that his father was going to apprentice him to a shoemaker. A local physician convinced him to send Carl to medical school where his interest in plants won him an appointment in botany at college. While there he supervised a small botanical garden and began collecting insects. Careful notes of all kinds of plants formed the basis of his books. The Academy of Science gave him \$50.00 and sent him on a survey of Lapland. He walked nearly a thousand miles studying plants. Linné supported himself by tutoring and lecturing but did not have the money to pay for his degree. His future wife helped him find financial help and he received a doctor’s degree in medicine.

A position with a Holland banker, who had a botanic garden, led to the publishing of his system of classification. His book “Species Plantarum” (1753) formed the basis for plant classification. Because he wrote it in Latin he became famous as Carolus Linnaeus.

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Linné was appointed as the chair of botany at the University of Uppsala and spent the rest of his life there. Individuals from all over the world came to him with specimens to contribute to his studies. He regarded his system as only temporary, knowing that it would be expanded as more knowledge evolved. Indeed, more classifications have come about but the outlines of Linné's system have been retained.

Read more about this scientist at: <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Carolus-Linnaeus>

January Garden Check List:

- Order seeds!
- Sow seeds of warm-season annuals and cool-weather vegetables
- Cut back on feeding houseplants (do not feed dormant houseplants)
- Check house plants for mites, mealy bugs, and scale
- Plan flower and vegetable beds for spring; consider pollinator-friendly plants
- Brush heavy snow from evergreens with a broom
- Take cuttings of your African violets
- Winter damaged tree and shrub branches should be pruned if hazardous
- Cut branches of pussy willow and forsythia to bring indoors for forcing
- Curl up with a good gardening book or catalog



February Garden Check List:

- Sow seeds of warm-season annuals
- Sow seeds for hardy spring-blooming plants
- Remove and destroy over-wintering egg cases of bag worms from trees and shrubs
- Parsley and other herb seeds can be sown indoors, for use in the kitchen
- Seed of both annual and perennial Canterbury bells can be started indoors
- Sow celery, cabbage and onion seed indoors now for an early crop
- Spray house ferns every other day
- Towards the end of the month, sweet pea seed can be sown in a cool house
- Transplant begonia and coleus seedlings when their second pair of true leaves appear
- Ventilate your cold frames on any warm sunny days
- Prune winter-damaged tree and shrub branches as soon as possible

Upcoming Events

January 1	Happy New Year!!!	
January 8	The Real Dirt on WTNS 99.3	9:00 – 10:00 am
February 12	The Real Dirt on WTNS 99.3	9:00 – 10:00 am

Watch for more programming announcements in the future!

Watch for FREE copies of “Keep It Growing” bi-monthly at: OSU Extension Office, Coshocton Public Library, West Lafayette Library, Sprout Garden Center, Garden Patch Greenhouse, Auer Ace Hardware, Tractor Supply, Clary Gardens, Buehler's, and Warsaw ShopWise. Available FREE via e-mail or the OSU-Coshocton County Extension website <https://coshocton.osu.edu/>. Subscribe for home delivery via USPS for \$5.00 per year.

Have a suggestion or question for “Keep It Growing”? Contact Margaret Lowe and Gail Piper, Coshocton County Master Gardener Volunteers, in care of the Coshocton County Extension Office.

Coshocton County Extension

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Phone: (740) 622-2265

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