

Coshocton County Master Gardener Volunteer Newsletter

KEEP IT GROWING!

March - April 2018

Volume 15, Issue 2

**March 22 – Growing Annuals:
Green Thumb Not Required**

Join the Master Gardener Volunteers for the “Growing Annual Flowers” workshop on Thursday, March 22, 2018 from 7:00 to 8:00 pm. The session will be held in Room 145 of the County Services Building at 724 South 7th Street in Coshocton. The cost is \$5.00 and registration is due on Monday, March 19. For more information, go to our website at: <https://coshocton.osu.edu/program-areas/master-gardener-volunteers> or check our Facebook page: [Coshocton County Master Gardener Volunteers](#). We hope to see you there!

Book Available on Ohio Trees

The book, “Ohio Trees”, is a great asset to identify and care for trees. It is available at the Coshocton County Extension Office for \$17.00.

Career Center Display

We were delighted to have so many folks stop by our display at the Coshocton County Career Center Open House on Feb. 15!

The drawing for the gardening book *Gardenpedia: An A-to-Z Guide to Gardening Terms* was won by Judy Beausoleil. Congratulations! Copies of the book are available at the Coshocton County Extension Office for \$17.00.

MGV Class

The Master Gardener Volunteers are excited to welcome ten interns who are currently taking the MGV course through the Coshocton County – OSU Extension Office!! We wish all of them the best as they complete the course and look forward to having them volunteer with us in the near future!

Time to Start Those Seeds!

By Gail Piper, Coshocton County Master Gardener Volunteer

Thinking about starting your plants from seed this year? Some seeds can be direct sown, which means they can be planted directly in the planting bed as soon as the soil is warm enough, but starting seed indoors earlier can result in a jump-start on blooms or produce. Check the package or catalog for the maturity time and growing requirements to make sure your growing season and bedding space will be appropriate – height, spacing, light requirements, zones, etc. are all important. Remember that some plants need warmth, some need cool temperatures; make sure you are providing the right climate. Some vegetables such as tomatoes should not be planted in the same space every year to avoid disease – crop rotation is good!

If you decide to sow seeds indoors, start with clean pots or flats and moist, sterile germinating mix. Make sure the seeds are placed at the appropriate depth; in general, the larger the seed the deeper it is planted. Very fine seeds may only need to be placed on the surface of the soil and patted in to establish contact. The pots or flats should then be covered with plastic or glass to help retain the moisture; do not let the soil dry out, but do not allow it to be soggy. Keep the plantings in a warm spot, about 65 to 75 degrees, until they germinate.

Seedlings require bright light; remove the cover and place them in a sunny window or under fluorescent bulbs or grow-lights. The new plants can be thinned and transplanted into larger pots when they have at least one set of true leaves. Seedlings can be planted outside after the frost-free date which is May 15 in our area, but that’s not a guarantee – be prepared to cover the seedlings in case of frost! Make sure to “harden off” the plants before planting them outdoors by setting them outside where they are protected from extreme heat, cold, hot sun or wind for a few hours each day for a couple of weeks.

Find a fact sheet “Starting Seed Indoors” here: <https://ag.purdue.edu/hla/pubs/HO/HO-14.pdf>

So – you think the extremely cold weather will lessen the insect population this summer? We hate to burst your bubble, but it ain't necessarily so... by the way, deer ticks are active all winter. Mother Nature is uncanny at taking care of herself and her dependents, as Margaret Lowe, Coshocton County MGV, explains:

Diapause: Suspended Animation

Insects and spiders across Ohio face a life or death decision every winter: go south, crawl into our homes, find a warm place or perhaps freeze to death. Those that stay in Ohio, like we humans, find a way to stay alive and survive until spring. Most of their chemistry just slows down to a crawl and stops right at freezing.

Most creepy crawlers go into a hibernation state of suspended animation called diapause. Almost all species can prevent ice crystals from forming or rupturing body cells. There also are insects that have cell mechanisms to allow freezing without destroying cells. They produce cryoprotectants to lower their freezing points. It is like an antifreeze that lowers their freezing point to about minus 20 degrees.

Some insects such as ants and beetles hide in well-insulated places or go underground. Honey bees huddle to protect the queen and stay warm. Spiders and stink bugs come inside the house and in February you may still find one crawling up the wall. Grasshoppers and crickets die but they leave eggs that are resistant to cold and hatch in the spring.

During winter, many insects are in a dormant state. Should you find any one of these insects on a cold thirty-degree day, it may be coiled up and lifeless. However, if you pick it up and hold it in

your hand for a minute it will warm up and come to life. Find a wooly worm, bring it in the house, place it on one of your houseplants or put it in a container so it will not crawl away; do not cover the container or it may die. A small glass or bowl would be appropriate. You may be fortunate enough to have it develop into a beautiful moth.

Thermogenesis

Blooming in the snow - there are spring plants that do just that. How can a plant bloom in the snow when most would be damaged by the temperature and die? Well, Mother Nature is so fantastic and wondrous that there are plants that do just that!

One of the earliest plants to bloom in the snow is skunk cabbage which gets its name from its distinctive skunk-like scent. It can bloom despite the cold because it can generate heat, a process called thermogenesis. The plant's long medium-green leaves roll around each other as they grow to create a spiraled mound. Short stemmed flowers bloom from the center.

Other wildflowers you may see blooming in the snow are: common blue violet, *Hepatica*, spring beauty, bloodroot, white trout lily, and common dandelion. These flowers often bloom beginning in February. We may not observe this phenomenon of nature because we are still hibernating inside where it is warm and cozy!

Bumblebees in the Arctic, *Bombus polaris*

By Margaret Lowe, Coshocton County Master Gardener Volunteer

Can you believe that from Fairbanks, Alaska, to Prudhoe Bay and back - almost one thousand miles - a University of California professor and her team have been researching an Arctic bumblebee, *Bombus polaris*?

Yes, there are bees in the Arctic and this team wants to learn more about them. The bees are the most important pollinators for the tundra plants. The team is studying a site near the Trans-Alaska Pipeline which is buzzing with bees. Bumblebees are the only bees that live in the high Arctic.

Here in the temperate zone where we live, some bumblebee populations are suffering. In 2016, the United States Fish and Wildlife Service proposed listing the common bumblebee as endangered. England has lost two species of wild bumblebees to extinction and the United States has lost one.

The *Bombus polaris* lives in Arctic areas around the world and has adapted so well to the cold that it can raise its own temperature to 95 degrees by shivering its muscles even when it is 32 degrees outside. Don't I wish I could do that!!! I am a 90-degree summer person and am always cold come fall and winter.

Why are these individuals researching bumblebees in the Arctic? Because we need all of the pollinators! Researchers even study bacteria and viruses to hopefully enable these pollinators, and any others, to continue living and aiding mankind in growing plants.

Watch Out for Another Invasive Insect – Hemlock Woolly Adelgid

By Gail Piper, Coshocton County Master Gardener Volunteer

Do you have hemlock trees on your property? If so, keep an eye out for an insect that is gaining a foothold in Ohio, the hemlock woolly adelgid (HWA). This insect was discovered in Virginia in 1951 and has spread over the years to several other states. It was found in Meigs County, Ohio, in 2012 and is now verified in ten south-eastern Ohio counties, most recently in Athens. Recently HWA was found in Lake and Geauga Counties in northern Ohio, an indication that it continues to spread.

The first action to take is to identify any hemlock trees that may be on your property. Hemlock trees have flat, very short needles that are about one-half inch in length; the needles have pale white stripes on the underside. The needles are slightly wider at the base, narrowing to a rounded tip; the needles of similar evergreen trees have parallel edges. The cones of eastern hemlocks are also very small.

Once you have determined that you have hemlock trees, it is imperative to keep a close watch for the HWA. This critter is very tiny and can be confused with other insects. The easiest clue to look for is the waxy, white, ball of “wool” which is the egg sac of the insect. This is generally found at the base of the needles, most often on the underside although it may also be seen on the top. A free bulletin about HWA is available at the local Extension Office. Click on http://msue.anr.msu.edu/uploads/resources/pdfs/HWA_tip_sheet.pdf for an online Michigan State factsheet which has several very helpful pictures comparing HWA to other insects. To report a possible HWA infestation in Ohio, e-mail: plantpest@agri.ohio.gov

Find more info online at: <http://www.agri.ohio.gov/divs/plant/HWA/HWA.aspx> and http://agri.ohio.gov/divs/plant/hwa/docs/HWA_Quarantine_Map.pdf

Beech Tree Leaf Disease

By Gail Piper, Coshocton County Master Gardener Volunteer

Something is causing beech trees to decline in several Ohio counties, resulting in the death of many beech trees. Unfortunately, this “something” is a mystery and is for now simply called *beech leaf disease (BLD)*. Discovered near the Grand River in Lake County in 2012, the problem has spread to surrounding counties over the years, including Ashtabula, Geauga, Cuyahoga, Portage, Trumbull, and Medina. In 2017 it was found in Summit and Wayne counties. Eight counties in western Pennsylvania are affected so far and the disease has also been found in New York and Ontario. Many trees have succumbed, affecting neighboring plants and wildlife.

The first indication of BLD is striping or banding on the leaves; the area between the leaf veins darkens and may be a little bit thicker than the other leaf parts. This striping is readily seen when looking up at the tree canopy to see the underside of the leaves. Shriveled leaves occur in later stages; buds are smaller, fewer in number, and weakly attached to the twigs. Saplings may die in just a couple of years.

The culprit has not yet been identified, but research is underway through the US Forest Service, Ohio State University, ODNR and other groups. Hopefully, some answers will surface soon.

If you find beech leaf disease, please report it to Program Administrator Thomas Macy of ODNR's Division of Forestry: thomas.macy@dnr.state.oh.us

More info can be found online at: <http://forestry.ohiodnr.gov/portals/forestry/pdfs/BLDAlert.pdf>

Maybe I'm a LITTLE impatient to find the first signs of spring in the garden.



Just a little impatient. Just a tad.

Joseph Tychonievich

“Anyone who thinks gardening begins in the spring and ends in the fall is missing the best part of the whole year; for gardening begins in January with the dream.”

~ Josephine Nuese



Did you know? A hican tree is a cross between hickory and pecan trees.

March Garden Check List:

- ✓ Order seeds! Sow seeds indoors for annuals and warm-season vegetables.
- ✓ Prune shade trees.
- ✓ Wait for buds to break on roses before pruning. Cut out dead wood, trim to shape. For climbing types, only cut out dead wood.
- ✓ Don't be too hasty in removing winter protection.
- ✓ Cut back ornamental grasses and any dead tops of perennials and clean up beds.
- ✓ Apply a weed preventer as directed to prevent weeds in landscape beds.
- ✓ Trim or thin evergreen and deciduous shrubs toward the end of the month *except* spring-blooming lilac and forsythia.
- ✓ Plant bare root trees, shrubs and small fruits as soon as the ground is workable. March to early April planting will start the plants "rooting in" before bud break.
- ✓ Plant onion sets, peas, lettuce seed, asparagus and rhubarb as soon as the ground is workable.
- ✓ Soil test lawn and garden so that you may add amendments *before* the growing season.
- ✓ Apply crabgrass preventer & feed your lawn when the forsythia blooms.

April Garden Check List:

- ✓ Pot new seedlings.
- ✓ Cut the lawn when the grass blades are about 2 inches tall.
- ✓ Prune hydrangea, rose of Sharon, buddleia and abelia.
- ✓ Feed roses, check for aphids on them.
- ✓ Keep an eye out for tent caterpillars.
- ✓ Last call to start tomato seeds indoors.
- ✓ Finish any clean up, trimming, edging, fertilizing and apply weed preventer if desired.
- ✓ Apply a balanced fertilizer to spring flowering bulbs early to promote health and bloom.
- ✓ Apply dormant oils to trees and shrubs when temperatures are above freezing.
- ✓ Divide and transplant perennial flowers as new growth begins or just before.
- ✓ Plant cold weather flowers such as pansy, primrose and violas for some early spring color.
- ✓ Plant needle-leaved evergreens.
- ✓ Resume feeding indoor plants every two to three weeks with half-strength liquid fertilizer.



Upcoming Events

March 9	The Real Dirt on WTNS 99.3	9:00 – 10:00 am
March 17	Happy St. Patrick's Day!	
March 22	Growing Annuals Workshop	7:00 – 8:00 pm
April 1	Happy Easter!	
April 7	Lake Park Clean-up Day	9:00am – to noon
April 13	The Real Dirt on WTNS 99.3	9:00 – 10:00 am

Watch for information about our annual plant sale in late spring!!!

Watch for **FREE** copies of "Keep It Growing" bi-monthly at: OSU Extension Office, Coshocton Public Library, West Lafayette Library, Cantwell Creek, Garden Patch, Clary Gardens, Baker's IGA, Buehler's, and Warsaw ShopWise. Available FREE via e-mail or the OSU Extension website. 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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