

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

May - June 2018

Volume 15, Issue 3

**June 2 - MGV Annual Plant Sale**

The annual Master Gardener Volunteers Plant Sale, the group's major fund raiser, will be held June 2, 2018, in the Rotary Pavilion at the Coshocton County Fairgrounds. Demonstrations will start at 8:30 am and the sale will run from 9:00 am until noon or the plants are gone, whichever comes first. It is a good idea to arrive early for the best selection as the plants sell quickly. There are **NO EARLY SALES** of plants before 9 am.

The plant sale will offer some of the nicest plants from the gardens of the MGVs and their friends. You may find assorted tree seedlings, vegetable plants, annuals, many perennials, herbs, house plants and garden related accessories. The plants are reasonably priced and many are ready to plant directly into your garden. All plants are labeled with their common and proper names, growing conditions, and size. Please bring your gardening questions and ask any of the Master Gardener Volunteers.... we LOVE to talk about plants, bugs and anything garden related!

**MGV Program Wrap-up**

Coshocton County Master Gardener Volunteers would like to thank all who attended our programming or presented information over the last couple of months!

In March, a program on growing annuals was very well-attended. MGVs presented info on growing annuals and Deb Gaumer and Kristy Leindecker from The Garden Patch Greenhouse spoke about growing petunias.

In April, MGVs discussed and gave informational hand-outs to several folks at Clary Gardens about caring for roses including site preparation, fertilizer, pruning, and proper pesticide application. Hands-on training was also provided. Later in April, MGVs had a display on solitary bees at the Earth Day celebration at the Career Center. Many folks dropped by to ask questions and get information.

**"Solitary Bees"** will be the focus at most MGV displays this year; contact us for information!

**Phenology Reports Are Online**

Phenology is defined as the study of cyclic and seasonal natural phenomena, especially in relation to climate, plant, and animal life. Our local Master Gardener Volunteers monitor a phenology garden at Lake Park and watch for first bloom, end of bloom, and the pollinators that visit during the bloom span. We then report our findings to the OSU Phenology Network to watch the trends across the state.

We post a report weekly on the Coshocton County-OSU Extension website with the data posted for each Tuesday. It includes data and observations for several zip codes in Coshocton County as well as some timely gardening tips and pictures of plants and pollinators. Find the report at: <https://coshocton.osu.edu/program-areas/master-gardener-volunteers>

**Amazing Hummingbirds**

By Margaret Lowe, Coshocton County Master Gardener Volunteer

The ruby-throated hummingbirds are the only species we have the privilege to attract into our Ohio gardens. Once in a while another species of hummingbird flies through Ohio; however, the ruby-throated is the one most of us feed during the summer. Here are ten facts you may not know about these amazing birds:

1. There are at least 319 known species of hummingbirds in the world. Ten species occur in the U. S., but only the ruby-throated birds breed east of the Mississippi.
2. They prefer nectar, but also eat tree sap, pollen, spiders, beetles, flies, mosquitoes, aphids and gnats.
3. A hummingbird can fly at speeds of 25 - 60 miles per hour.

*(Continued on next page)*

4. Hummingbirds' wings beat 53 to 200 times per second.
5. A hummingbird's heart beats 1,260 times a minute during exercise.
6. Each fall and spring they migrate approximately 500 miles.
7. Females build nests of moss, lichen and spider webs; they rear their young 20 - 40 days without male help.
8. Hummingbirds sit on their eggs for twelve to fourteen days, the shortest incubation time for any bird.
9. Adult ruby-throats weigh 3-4 grams, measure 3 to 4 inches long and live an average of three years.
10. In flight, hummingbirds burn 8 times the energy they use while at rest, feeding constantly during the day.

Hummingbirds are attracted to the color red and to tubular-shaped flowers. If you choose to feed them, you can make your own nectar: mix 4 parts of water to 1 part of sugar and bring to a boil; let cool and pour it into a clean hummingbird feeder. Red dye is NOT necessary. **Never use honey or a sugar-substitute!** Make sure to clean the feeders often – every few days – especially if the nectar becomes cloudy.

## Herbs

Reta Grewell, Coshocton County Master Gardener Volunteer, contributed to this article

*According to "dictionary.com", an herb is a flowering plant with a stem that is not woody and is valued for its flavor, scent, medicinal characteristics, etc. Herbs are used to flavor many cooked foods and condiments and their scents are found in potpourris, oils, perfumes, and more. Many modern drugs contain herb extracts.*

*Many of our commonly used herbs are originally from the Mediterranean region and thus require well-drained soil and bright sun. Go to: <https://content.ces.ncsu.edu/growing-herbs-for-the-home-gardener> for more information on many popular herbs in a factsheet from North Carolina State University Extension.*

### **Chamomile (*Chamaemelum nobile*)**

Chamomile is a well-known herb with a yellow daisy-like blossom, feathery foliage and a pretty apple fragrance and flavor. Its flowers last from late spring till late summer. It thrives in a location where it gets direct sunshine. It is low-growing, usually less than ten inches in height. German chamomile is an annual; Roman chamomile is a perennial.

In Egyptian times, this herb was used to treat agues or malarial chills that plagued the ancient civilization and herbalists recommended baths or poultices of chamomile to relieve headaches. In medieval England, chamomile was used as a stewing herb. It also removes odors in the house. In Spain it is used to flavor fine sherry. Also, women use it for a hair rinse and it can be used as an insect repellent.

Chamomile tea is still used today as a soothing drink. Chamomile's apple fragrance makes a wonderful addition to potpourris and aromatic dried flower arrangements.

### **Oregano (*Origanum vulgare*)**

Wild marjoram or what we call today, oregano, is a hardy garden perennial with flowers on spikes that are white or purplish. Grow the plant in full sun in well-drained soil. Oregano should be cut to four inches to improve plant production. If planted in a container it can last one or two years. It grows to a bushy shrub sometimes two feet tall; replace it when it becomes woody. Oregano has a pungently aromatic flavor. It can be used in tomato, pizza and spaghetti sauces. It also is an ingredient of Mexican chili powder. It can be used in salads, soups, casseroles, poultry dishes

and more. Oregano combines well with garlic, thyme, parsley and olive oil.

Greeks and Romans used oregano. It grows wild in the mountains of Greece and its name means "joy of the mountain". Many of its early uses were medical rather than culinary ones.

To make a popcorn seasoning combine one teaspoon of oregano, one teaspoon of parsley, one-half cup basil, dash of garlic powder and dash of onion powder. Mix with melted butter or margarine and pour over hot popcorn.

### **Coriander or Cilantro (*Coriandrum sativum*)**

Coriander is a green annual with slender, erect, finely grooved stems. It grows one to three feet high and flowers in the spring and into late summer. Fruit and seeds are brownish yellow, one-half inch long and have a musty odor. Seeds have been found among the funeral offerings in ancient Egyptian tombs. Greek and Roman physicians, including Hippocrates, made medicines from coriander. It is also prized as a spice and has been used in vinegar to preserve meat.

Mature coriander seeds are used as a spice in baking and cooking. In North and South Americas, the leaves are called cilantro and are sold in most markets. Fresh and sometimes dried cilantro leaves are used in Mexican and Asian cooking - it is a favorite herb to cook with black beans.

### **Parsley (*Petroselinum crispum*)**

Parsley is an easy-to-grow biennial that grows in partial sun and prefers the morning sun. Parsley has pale green leaves and stems radiating from (*Next page*)

center rootstock. Flowers are minute, borne in clusters between spring and autumn. It can be grown in window boxes, in containers, or in a garden.

By the Middle Ages, parsley made its appearance in herbal medicines. It also was used against the plague. Parsley was revered by the Greeks and Romans and is used today in every country of the world. Today, parsley is used on plates as a decorative green garnish and as a flavoring in cooking. Parsley contains iron, calcium, vitamin A, and vitamin C. It is high in chlorophyll which is a natural breath sweetener.

Harvest parsley by hanging in a cool dry area, like a garage or barn. After it is thoroughly dry, crush the leaves by hand; place them in an air tight container marked with the date.

### **Chives (*Allium schoenoprasum*)**

Chives are a perennial, native to the Orient, first used by the Chinese and then ancient Greeks. Fresh leaves are excellent for making herbal vinegars and butter. Chives are also used in salads, soups and with cheese as a spread or dip. A favorite use of chives is on baked potatoes with salt, pepper and butter. They can be used to add a mild onion flavor to foods.

For germination, chive seeds require darkness, constant moisture and a temperature of sixty to seventy degrees. Sow seeds one-half inch deep in pots or flats. Germination will occur in two to three weeks. Transplant seedlings to the garden when they are four weeks old.

Chives reach a height of eighteen inches and a width of one to two inches the first year and spread ten to fourteen inches in subsequent years. Chives have beautiful purple blooms. They require full sun and well-drained soil. Chives will reseed prolifically if

allowed to go to seed. To harvest chives, cut leaves two inches above the ground.

### **Spearmint (*Mentha spicata*)**

Spearmint or garden mint is a commonly grown hardy perennial that has a milder flavor than peppermint (*Mentha piperita*). It has leaves that are pointed, toothed and lance-shaped. Its flowers are small, bluish-purple in color, and grow in clusters on spires. Uses for fresh mint leaves and leafy stem tips include flavoring drinks such as tea and making mint sauce or jelly; mint can also be dried.

Mints need full or part sun, with good air circulation and somewhat moist soil. They can reach between one and three feet in height. Mints are aggressive growers with spreading rootstalks and can easily get out of hand; to prevent them from taking over a garden, keep them in a large pot. They can be productive for 6 months or more.

### **Tarragon (*Artemisia dracunculus*)**

Tarragon has an anise-like flavor and is chiefly a French culinary herb, although there is a Russian variety. The leaves stimulate the appetite. Past uses included relief of colic, toothaches and rheumatism, and as a local anesthetic. Tarragon can be found today in perfumes, soaps, cosmetics, condiments, vinegars, and liquors.

Tarragon plants can be harvested two times, around 6 weeks apart, each season. Plants like rich, sandy, well-drained soil, in full or partial sun. Mulch the plants in winter or bring them into the house.

Tarragon's name is derived from the French estragon meaning "little dragon". The coiling roots may strangle the plant if not divided often.

## **Robotic Drone Bees**

By Margaret Lowe, Coshocton County Master Gardener Volunteer

Published on March 8, 2018 with the United States Patent Office, Walmart is seeking a patent for robotic drone bees that pollinate crops just like real bees. The patent outlines how tiny autonomous "pollination drones" would use sensors to locate crops, transport pollen and verify which crops have been successfully pollinated. Drones would be programmed to go from plant to plant, collecting and depositing pollen; a second drone would follow to see if pollen is properly applied. The patent suggests this would be a significantly more efficient way to pollinate crops than crop dusting but it has not yet been approved.

In total, Walmart has filed six patents for drone farming technologies. Walmart files hundreds of patents each year, many of which never go beyond the "what if" stage, so it is not clear how serious the company is in pursuing the dream of a robotic bee. Walmart says, "We don't have further details at this time."

Other organizations have already developed or drafted ideas for similar robot bee technologies, including a team at Harvard University. Japan is already using drones to pollinate. Some experts say such drones are too inefficient and expensive. They also think it is better to spend resources protecting the real bees we have today. As Master Gardener Volunteers, we think it is better to help real live bees in any way we can. That is why we are working to educate the public of ways to learn about various bees, particularly solitary bees, and creating bee nests to aid in bee population.

## May Garden Check List:

- ✓ Set out seedlings of warm-season annuals.
- ✓ Visit a local garden center.
- ✓ Set out summer-flowering bulbs.
- ✓ Plant fall-blooming bulbs.
- ✓ Divide and replant crowded spring-blooming bulbs after leaves yellow.
- ✓ Avoid spraying fruit trees with insecticide until after the petals have dropped.
- ✓ Cut faded blooms from daffodils and tulips to prevent seed formation- leave the foliage until brown.
- ✓ Remove flowers from newly planted strawberry plants to encourage development of runners.
- ✓ Remove suckers from fruit trees, lilacs, maples and magnolias.
- ✓ Train your lawn to grow deep roots; mow often at a high setting.
- ✓ Pinch side buds for larger flowers on peonies.
- ✓ Keep up on pulling weeds!

## June Garden Check List:

- ✓ Sow sweet alyssum where spent pansies have been.
- ✓ Finish pruning spring-blooming shrubs by the end of this month.
- ✓ Set tropical water-lilies in garden pools and ponds.
- ✓ Prune suckers from tomato plants.
- ✓ Prune dogwoods this month as correct shaping now will encourage a nice display next spring.
- ✓ Remove top leaf buds from chrysanthemums to encourage bushy growth.
- ✓ Attend a Summer Lunch & Learn session!
- ✓ Pinch bedding plants to encourage branching.
- ✓ Plant another row of lettuce before the summer heat arrives.
- ✓ Take some time to enjoy the beauty of your garden.

## Attend the MGV plant sale - June 2!



### Upcoming Events

May 11	The Real Dirt on WTNS 99.3	9:00 – 10:00 am
June 2	MGV Plant Sale at Fairgrounds	8:30 am – noon
June 8	The Real Dirt on WTNS 99.3	9:00 – 10:00 am
June 21 & 22	MGVs at Nature Study at Clary Gardens	9:00 – 11:00 am

### Watch for news releases about this year's Lunch & Learn series!



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, 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.

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