

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

November - December 2021

Volume 18, Issue 6

**Fair Time!**

Thanks for visiting our Master Gardener Volunteer booth in the Youth Building at the county fair – we hope our visitors learned something about “Good Bugs, Bad Bugs”.

Some of our members entered items for judging at the fair – and even won some ribbons! Former member Reta Grewell received some ribbons for her herbs and flowers; Teresa Donley won best of show for her homemade wine. Congratulations!

**MGVs on WTNS, FM 99.3**

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 on November 12 and December 10. A huge “thank you” to WTNS!

**Bird Alert Canceled**

Early in September, the Ohio Dept. of Natural Resources canceled the alert to stop feeding birds that was issued last summer. However, ODNR’s Division of Wildlife does emphasize that feeders should be cleaned regularly as we resume feeding birds this winter. Find the update at:

<https://ohiodnr.gov/wps/portal/gov/odnr/home/additional-resources/division-of-wildlife/bird-disease-reporting>

**Extension Office Hours**

The Coshocton County-OSU Extension Office is open Monday through Friday from 8:00 am to noon and 1:00 to 5:00 pm. Please call the office at 740-622-2265 for more information. In addition, e-mail addresses for each staff member can be found on the OSU-Coshocton County website at:

<https://coshocton.osu.edu/about/staff>

**Congratulations to Teresa Donley and the Coshocton Co. MGVs!!**

OSU Extension and the Coshocton County MGVs recently announced that Teresa Donley was selected as one of five recipients of the Outstanding Ohio Master Gardener Volunteer of the Year award. She received this recognition during the virtual Ohio MGV awards ceremony held on October 14, 2021.

Teresa has served as a Coshocton County MGV since 2004 and has volunteered over 700 hours in helping to provide horticultural outreach to the Coshocton County community. Some of her activities over the years include: MGV gardens; writing articles for the newsletter; our WTNS radio program; the local diagnostic clinic; public workshops; and much more. Most recently, she spearheaded the Victory Garden seed giveaway in 2021. In addition to working on many volunteer projects, Teresa has spent tens of hours educating herself about horticultural practices.

Congratulations to Teresa for being selected as one of Ohio's outstanding Master Gardener Volunteers!

Coshocton County MGVs were also awarded the 2021 OSU Extension Outstanding Master Gardener Volunteer Project for the Year in the Environmental Horticulture Area for small groups (1 to 25 members). This award was received for the “Keep it Growing” newsletter which is published and distributed bi-monthly across Coshocton County.

Additionally, the Coshocton County MGV group was recognized as a Platinum Standards of Excellence Award winner. This award is the highest recognition a county MGV program can receive from the state Master Gardener Program and is based on criteria for volunteerism, continuing education, and program management.

***“November... leads the months their wintry round...” ~Anne Hunter***

## **Fall Foliage and Farm Tour Wrap-up**

By Margaret Lowe, Coshocton County Master Gardener Volunteer

Of all the events the Master Gardener Volunteers participate in throughout the year, I enjoy this tour most of all - even more so this year since the 2020 tour was canceled. No other project provides as high a number of individual participants; almost 1,400 people toured Coshocton County on October 16 and 17, including many from outside the county and several from outside Ohio.

Our MGV display was in the Army Corps of Engineers building at Wills Creek Dam, a big, beautiful facility. We displayed forty-six plates of items that represented nuts, berries, weeds, trees, lima beans, tomatoes, gourds, hornet nests, wasps and more. Stink bugs got a lot of attention because so many of us must deal with them; Osage oranges reminded many of spiders. Hopefully all those folks with whom we shared butternuts, buckeyes, and Tiny Tim tomatoes will have good luck in growing their own.

I am always so thankful that several tour participants want to share something they have at home with us. As Master Gardener Volunteers we learn a lot from tour participants; I really appreciate that part of our display.

Also displayed were posters on trees, native plants, butterflies, and insects. I am always pleased when many individuals read the information on these posters and then ask questions or make comments to us. This year we also displayed replicas of eighty-six insects which received much attention from children and adults. Some like insects, some dislike insects immensely!

Another enjoyable learning experience at our display was the demonstration of a nut gatherer (a Mother's Day gift to me from a few years ago). We taught folks from toddlers to senior citizens how to use it and the device was a hit with everyone. This tool will gather hickory nuts, butternuts, chestnuts and burrs, buckeyes, and more. If you do not know what a nut gatherer is, you may want to investigate. I love mine - it really saves bending and back pain. (Even Crankshaft of the comic strips has one.)

Thanks to all who visited us on the tour! We extend a special thanks to the tour organizers and to the Army Corps of Engineers for allowing us space at their facility.

*More info on Osage oranges may be found at: <https://extension.psu.edu/the-osage-orange-useless-or-useful>*

## **Sweet Potatoes and Yams**

By Gail Piper, Coshocton County Master Gardener Volunteer

With Thanksgiving and the December holidays quickly approaching, many folks are thinking about food. One item that often graces the table this time of year is the sweet potato... or perhaps the yam. Is there a difference? And if so, what is it? Here in the good old USA, we tend to use the two names interchangeably; you will notice that cans labeled "yams" also have the words "sweet potatoes" listed as required by USDA. Most "yams" that are sold here really are sweet potatoes.

In actuality, the two plants are not related at all – and neither are related to the other vegetable we call potato. Sweet potatoes are native to the Americas, often grown in the United States, and are members of the morning glory family; true yams are native to Africa and Asia and are related to grasses and lilies. Sweet potatoes usually are ready to harvest after about 100 days, while yams take 6 to 12 months to mature. The sweet potatoes that we most often see have an orange-colored flesh; yams often range from white or yellow to purple. The skin of sweet potatoes is thin, but the skin of yams is scaly and tough. While the flesh of sweet potatoes is moist and sweet, yam tubers are dry and starchy. Sweet potatoes are generally found in our local food markets, but one may need to shop at an ethnic market for true yams.

Another term that may be seen in regard to sweet potatoes is "kiln-dried"; this indicates that they have been cured with some heat and humidity for a few days. This process aids in converting the starch to sugars so that the potatoes taste sweeter; it also toughens the skin of the vegetable for durability.

There are many ways to serve sweet potatoes – baked, mashed, as fries, in pie – what is your favorite?

*For more info: <https://extension.illinois.edu/blogs/good-growing/2019-11-25-whats-difference-between-sweet-potatoes-and-yams> and <https://www.chicagotribune.com/news/ct-xpm-1995-11-22-9511220275-story.html>*

## Wreaths from Nature

By Gail Piper, Coshocton County Master Gardener Volunteer

A wreath on the door is welcoming any time of year but seems especially festive in the fall and winter. Wreaths are available for purchase in many places, but have you considered making one yourself from natural items from your own backyard? There are many videos online and books in the library that give instructions.

Start with a base for the wreath. Craft stores sell wire frames as well as styrofoam, straw, and grapevine bases, or make your own from plywood, lath, vines, or even heavy cardboard. Use floral wire, twine, or a glue gun to add decorations. Some of the many natural items to add include evergreen sprigs, holly, pinecones, sweet gum balls, lily or milkweed seed pods, nuts, dried berries, teasel, bittersweet, dried flowers – all can make a great-looking wreath. Use a little spray paint, ornaments, or bows to add a little “bling” – use your imagination!

Please note that real evergreens need moisture to keep their color and not dry out; mist the cut ends of the sprigs every few days. Another tip – real berries could attract birds; some people use artificial berries to discourage them. One last thing: when searching for natural materials, one should gain permission before gathering them outside of one’s own property. Wreaths of non-deteriorating dried natural materials can be stored to enjoy in future seasons by placing them in a plastic bag with some moth balls to deter critters.

## MGV Favorite Gardening Tips

We asked our local Master Gardener Volunteers to submit their garden-related likes and dislikes along with the reason why. We would like to share their answers with you, starting with “My favorite gardening tip”. What tips do you have? Do you agree with some of these tips?

- Plant only what you love so it does not become a chore.
- Try to pace yourself, don’t try doing everything at once.
- Just try it, what do you have to lose?
- Stay ahead of the weeds.
- Use Epson salts on roses.
- A little bit [of gardening] everyday goes a long way and it is cheaper than therapy.
- Use eggshells on plants, even water that eggs or potatoes are cooked in. Cool and use. Crush the shells and lay around plants.
- Leaves of three, let it be!
- Use newspaper or cardboard to control weeds.
- Use a five-gallon bucket to keep tools together - and it can be turned upside down to sit on.

## Add Winter Color to Your Yard

By Gail Piper, Coshocton County Master Gardener Volunteer

While the leaves are off the trees and shrubs this winter, it’s a good time to think about adding some winter color to your yard and garden. No, it may not be the right time to set out new plants, but you can look around to see where you could add interest against the bleak ground, be it bare or snow-covered and start to make plans for adding some appropriate plants next spring. Some characteristics to consider are color of foliage and fruits, blooms, and texture. It’s a good idea to research the varieties of each species to make sure the plant is right for your selected location.

Evergreens retain their color all year, but there are many other plants to consider for winter interest. For example, red-twig or redosier dogwood (*Cornus sericea*) has red or yellow stems that will show up nicely against a snowy background; winterberry (a deciduous holly) bears bright red berries that are quite showy and add a food source for birds as the berries soften over the winter months. Witch hazel (*Hamamelis spp.*) has blooms ranging from yellow to orange that open in winter or very early spring. Some shrubs and trees have bark or shapes that remain interesting even without foliage; Harry Lauder's walkingstick (*Corylus avellana* 'Contorta'), also known as contorted or corkscrew filbert, has a very interesting form. Paperbark maple trees

*Continued next page*

(*Acer griseum*) have a curling, exfoliating bark that is coppery in color; the leaves are also very bright in the fall. Japanese maples can have an interesting shape but may need a little protection in our climate.

These are just a few of the interesting plants that can enhance your yard in the winter – enjoy!

More info on witch hazel can be found at: <https://bygl.osu.edu/node/633>

## November Garden Check List:

- ❖ Cut down perennials after foliage browns.
- ❖ Plant spring bulbs until ground freezes.
- ❖ Inspect euonymus and lilacs for scale.
- ❖ Rake lawn to remove fallen leaves and debris.
- ❖ Remove fallen leaves from beds of ivy, pachysandra, myrtle or euonymus.
- ❖ Drain gas and oil from mower before storing.
- ❖ Stay off frozen grass.
- ❖ Make sure hoses are drained, disconnected and stored to prevent winter freezing.
- ❖ Clean and sharpen tools before storage.

## December Garden Check List:

- ❖ Set Christmas trees securely in a holder that will hold water and **fill daily**.
- ❖ Start pansy seeds under grow-lights.
- ❖ Brush heavy snow and ice off trees and shrubs.
- ❖ Stay off frozen grass.
- ❖ Page through garden catalogues and fill out a wish list.



## Upcoming Events

November 2	Election Day	
November 11	Veteran's Day – Coshocton County Extension Office closed	
November 12	The Real Dirt on WTNS 99.3	9:00 – 10:00 am
November 25	Happy Thanksgiving!!	
December 10	The Real Dirt on WTNS 99.3	9:00 – 10:00 am
December 25	Christmas Day	



**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

724 South 7th Street, Room 110, Coshocton, OH 43812

Phone: (740) 622-2265

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