

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

January - February 2022

Volume 19, Issue 1

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 January 14 and February 11. A huge “thank you” to WTNS!

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>

2022 MGV Program Planning

MGV activities are being planned for the 2022 season – watch for announcements.

Anyone interested in becoming a Master Gardener Volunteer in the future should contact the Extension office at (740) 622-2265.

What’s in a Name?

By Gail Piper, Coshocton County Master Gardener Volunteer

We often use common names for plants – they roll off the tongue much more readily than the botanical names! However, common plant names can be very confusing; the Latin botanical names are more useful and accurate. Shakespeare wrote “A rose by any other name would smell as sweet”, but he evidently wasn’t thinking about all the plants that have the word “rose” in their common name! One might think that a Lenten rose (*Helleborus orientalis*), moss roses (*Portulaca grandiflora*), and ‘About Face’ roses (*Rosa Grandiflora* ‘About Face’) are related, but they really are not. The proof is in the botanical names.

The names we wrote here in parentheses and italics are the botanical names for those plants; the first word is the genus and the second word defines the species. Species in the same genus are closely related and share many characteristics; one can tell that the plants named above are not in the same genus and thus are not too closely related. Plants may also have variety, cultivar, or commercial names included in the botanical name; for example, the ‘About Face’ rose mentioned above is the cultivar of a grandiflora rose.

A good example of a misleading common name is the mountain ash tree which is not related to the ash trees that were recently decimated by the emerald ash borer. Ash trees are in the genus *Fraxinus*; mountain ash trees are in the genus *Sorbus*. Because of the common name, some people thought the borer would affect their mountain ash trees and needlessly removed them. To compound the issue further, there is a prickly-ash tree that is also not related; its genus is *Zanthoxylum*.

Common names can be regional as well; research of a particular plant may show several different common names. For example, a weed known as “creeping Charlie” in one area may be called “ground ivy” somewhere else. Most of us know a “mango” is a tropical fruit (*Mangifera indica* L.), but in some places the term may refer to bell peppers (*Capsicum annuum*).

The moral of the story is that it is best to use the botanical name and not the common name when purchasing or researching plants – it will save a lot of confusion!

Find more info in this article by Jim Chatfield, Associate Professor and Extension Specialist, Ohio State University Extension:

<https://www.amerinursery.com/growing/propagation/why-names-matter/>

Irvin Williams, White House Gardener

By Margaret Lowe, Coshocton County Master Gardener Volunteer

Irvin Williams served as White House gardener from 1962 to 2008; he was the longest serving gardener.

Born in 1926, Mr. Williams was the son of a West Virginia farmer. While he had very little formal training in the field, he had great horticultural skills, high standards and a good work ethic. He became a gardener with the National Park Service in 1949 and started to work on several landscaping projects at the White House in the 1950's. When the rose garden was designed for President Kennedy, Williams was chosen to supervise the installation. He remained in that position for forty-six years, serving under nine administrations from John F. Kennedy through George W. Bush.

Irvin Williams passed away in November of 2018 at the age of 92, having retired only 10 years before.

White House Gardens

By Margaret Lowe, Coshocton County Master Gardener Volunteer

The following facts were taken from a fantastic book by Marta McDowell, *All the Presidents' Gardens*, which can be checked out at the Coshocton Public Library. Learn why bushel baskets of peanuts were tied to trees; what was trapped and transported to West Virginia; when "War Gardens" were changed to "Victory Gardens"; and much more interesting information about the White House grounds.

1. The rose is the one flower that unites all the occupants through the history of the White House. They have been grown there for more than two hundred years. In 1986, Ronald Reagan declared the rose as the national floral emblem of the United States of America.
2. Early United States presidents were very interested in what was grown in the gardens because the expense of feeding guests was paid out of their own pockets.
3. John Ousley, a White House gardener, grew prize winning strawberries, artichokes, and a cabbage weighing eighteen and one-half pounds in the gardens for an annual horticultural exhibit in the 1830s.
4. Andrew Jackson brought magnolia seedlings from Tennessee as a memorial to his wife, Rachel.
5. President McKinley loved carnations; the White House gardener supplied a basket of them to the president each morning.
6. John Quincy Adams planted acorns, nuts and other tree seeds in the nursery beds behind the White House.
7. Sheep grazed on the White House lawn during World War I, keeping the grass short when workers were hard to find.
8. Brown spots on the White House lawn have been painted green before important guests arrived.
9. President Carter planted pine, maple, and other trees from his Georgia farm around the White House. He took cuttings and seeds home to Plains Georgia when he left.
10. President George W. Bush planted a disease-resistant American chestnut on the north lawn to mark the 133rd National Arbor Day.

MGVs' Favorite Gardening Books

We asked our Coshocton County Master Gardener Volunteers to tell us their favorites in several gardening categories. Here is a list of some of their favorite gardening books – a great way to spend the winter inside!

1. *Monet's Cookery Notebooks*; it is a cookbook with information about his gardens.
2. *Backyard Fruit Production Guide*; packed with great information.
3. *Perennials for Ohio* and *Garden Insects*; both have good photographs and information, one for planning landscapes and the other for identifying insects.
4. *Uncommon Fruits for Every Garden* by Lee Reich
5. *Weeds of the Northeast*; this MGV also loves books on bees
6. *Heirloom Country Gardens* by Sarah Heffner, a Rodale book that gives the history of flowers and vegetables. Also, *100 Flowers and How They Got Their Names* by Diana Wells; myth and legend, sex, death, war and conquest, hope and fear - all are used to describe this book, all to name flowers.
7. *The Complete Garden Flower Book*; it is not wordy but is quick and easy to use.

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8. Plant and seed catalogs when they first arrive
9. *The Gardening Book of Ohio*; has lots of information for my growing region.
10. One MGVS had several, and a couple couldn't pick their favorite book. Mentioned were: *Taylor's Master Guide to Landscaping*; *Encyclopedia of Garden Plants*; *Martha Stewart's Gardening: Month by Month*

Benjamin Franklin and Kohlrabi

By Margaret Lowe, Coshocton County Master Gardener Volunteer

January 17 is Benjamin Franklin's birthday. He was born in 1706 in Boston, Massachusetts, the fifteenth child and youngest son in a family of seventeen children. He attended school in Boston for only two years because his father could not afford to keep him in school. After age ten, he worked in his father's candle and soap shop, helping to cut wicks and melt tallow.

Most of us know that Franklin was a very intelligent individual and that he was a statesman, scientist, and public leader. He was the only individual to sign all four of the key documents that established the United States as a country. He was an inventor of many objects; experimented with electricity; was a publisher and civic leader; and lived eighteen years in Great Britain as an unofficial ambassador and spokesman for the American point of view. However, not many know that Benjamin Franklin introduced kohlrabi to colonial America, although some books describe him as concerned with different matters, such as growing cabbage. Kohlrabi, like the turnip and rutabaga, is a closely related species of cabbage.

Kohlrabi (*Brassica oleracea*) begins to grow like cabbage, but instead of forming a head it thickens its stem to form a turnip-like globe that sits on top of the ground. Leaf stalks grow from the globe. It is eaten raw or cooked. Kohlrabi is native to Europe; the vegetable's German name originated from the Italian words "cavolo rapa" meaning cabbage turnip.

I like to eat kohlrabi raw when it is young, tender, and sweet. Like celery, carrots and turnips, kohlrabi is great dipped into a vegetable dip or cooked if you like. Thanks to Benjamin Franklin for his many, many interests.

Add Some Time to Your Growing Season!

By Gail Piper, Coshocton County Master Gardener Volunteer

January and February are good months to plan for the next gardening season. Of course, we can't get into our gardens, but many of us make use of this time by poring over seed and nursery catalogs, reading gardening books, or searching online for inspiration and information. Some folks are getting ready to start seeds indoors to get a jump-start on growing vegetables or flowers. Now is a good time to investigate methods of extending the growing season – either to be able to start plants outside earlier than our frost-free date (about May 15) or to add more days after the fall frost (usually around Oct. 10).

There are several methods and products that can help us find a few more growing days; the idea is to provide a warmer environment for the plants than Mother Nature can provide at the time. It can be as simple as using milk jugs or soda bottles to make "mini-greenhouses" or as elaborate as building a structure. Water walls placed around tomatoes can allow them to be planted earlier than normal; the water walls absorb heat during the day and release it around the plant at night. Covering the soil with a layer of plastic can increase the soil temperature by several degrees and allow for early planting. Row covers can trap heat around plants and protect them from cooler temperatures. A cold frame can be built from wood, cement blocks or even old window frames; the addition of a heat mat turns the frame into a hot bed.

If you decide to extend the growing season with these methods, be aware that you will need to monitor moisture, light, and temperature for your "babies". Cold frames and row covers need to be ventilated so they do not become hot enough to cook the plants. Be sure to water the plants as needed!

This fact sheet from the University of Minnesota discusses many of these methods:

<https://extension.umn.edu/planting-and-growing-guides/extending-growing-season>

"There are two seasonal diversions that can ease the bite of any winter. One is the January thaw. The other is the seed catalogues." ~ Hal Borland

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 14	The Real Dirt on WTNS 99.3	9:00 – 10:00 am
January 17	Martin Luther King Day – Extension office closed	
February 11	The Real Dirt on WTNS 99.3	9:00 – 10:00 am
February 21	Presidents' 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.

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