

## Coshocton County Master Gardener Volunteer Newsletter

**KEEP IT GROWING!**

May - June 2021

Volume 18, Issue 3

**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 on May 14 and June 11. A huge “thank you” to WTNS!

**Extension Office Is Open M-W-F**

The Coshocton County-OSU Extension Office is now open on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays from 8:00 am to 5:00 pm; employees are still working from home the rest of the week. Masks are required, but appointments are no longer necessary. 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>

**2021 Programming**

MGVs hope to be able to have some outdoor programs when the weather is suitable and some Covid restrictions are relaxed. Tentative plans are in the works - we will of course announce events as we can.

We invite you to view some educational sessions online. <https://mastergardener.osu.edu/lnlhh> lists some scheduled and recorded sessions while some more previously recorded events can be found at: <https://mastergardener.osu.edu/SpringWebinarSeries>

We often post links to other online sessions on our Coshocton County Master Gardener Volunteer page on Facebook.

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

**Build A Raised Garden Bed**

By Margaret Lowe, Coshocton County Master Gardener Volunteer

If you want to try gardening but you do not have a large area to devote to a garden, try a raised bed - you can make the size to fit any space. A raised bed can be used for years or dismantled whenever. It is simple, quick to build, and can be done at a relatively low cost. Other benefits include improved soil and drainage issues.

Think small. We humans have a tendency to go big and we defeat ourselves almost before we begin. Let's use a four-by-eight feet size just as an example of a wooden bed. You will need two four-foot boards and two eight-foot boards. *Do not use treated wood because it has chemicals that can affect your soil and plants.* Some nails or screws are needed to hold the corners. Naturally, you will need an amount of soil to fill the bed; the ideal mixture should include compost.

A good idea is to lay the lumber out on the lawn to help get an idea of where you want the bed. After the area is chosen, you can till the area or lay a large piece of cardboard or landscape fabric down to help with weed control. Place the nailed frame down, fill it with soil, and you are ready to plant.

This is a simple explanation of a raised bed. You can add more to this by reinforcing the corners of the frame or using rebar to hold it in place. Other possible materials include cement blocks, bricks or stone. Amend the soil with fertilizer, peat, sand, worm castings, etc. as needed. I laid some boards down, filled the space with soil and have been using it for years. I add to the soil whenever it is needed and have added another section by using small tree limbs as the frame. I also have fenced the area. Remember simple and small!

For more information, go to: <https://extension.osu.edu/how-to-construct-a-raised-bed-in-the-garden>

# Watering Basics

By Margaret Lowe, Coshocton County Master Gardener Volunteer

Plants need water to live and grow. Watering wisely will save water and still deliver adequate moisture. Mulching will also help reduce watering by keeping moisture from evaporating.

Water deeply but infrequently so moisture penetrates the roots. Deep watering encourages deeper roots, which in turn need less water. Young plants have shallow roots and may need more frequent watering until they are established. As a general rule, one inch of water or rain per week is an adequate amount. Naturally, the weather plays an enormous part in this process: excessive heat and drought mean more watering is necessary while rain may eliminate the need periodically. One of the biggest mistakes when watering is using too much; excessive water can block oxygen from the roots and will also promote disease. Plants need good drainage whether they are houseplants or outside in a garden or container.

Water plants in the morning before the sun rises high in the sky. This will allow any moisture on the leaves to evaporate, reducing the chance of mildew and other foliage diseases. Try watering only the soil, keeping the leaves dry.

There are many methods and tools for watering. Laying soaker hoses, burying jugs, or using timers, sprinklers, wands and ditching may be used. My choice is a rain barrel and a bucket which provides free water whenever and wherever it is needed. You will be amazed how much water you can collect from rain spouts or even a drip in your spouting. A bucket placed there will surprise you with the amount saved. Just try it.

For more information: [https://www.canr.msu.edu/news/smart\\_watering\\_in\\_the\\_vegetable\\_garden](https://www.canr.msu.edu/news/smart_watering_in_the_vegetable_garden)

## Mantids: Not All Are Created Equal

By Jandi Adams, Coshocton County Master Gardener Volunteer

I love finding praying mantises in the garden or on walks. They are such fascinating creatures and great predatory insects. Females are known for the quite disturbing feat of decapitating and cannibalizing their mate after copulation. When you come upon a mantid, they often turn their distinct triangle-shaped head in your direction which is another characteristic specific to them - their ability to turn their heads 180 degrees.

There are three species of mantids found in Ohio: the Chinese mantid (*Tenodera sinensis*); the European mantid (*Mantis religiosa*); and the Carolina mantid (*Stagmomantis carolina*). The Chinese mantid is the most commonly found - probably because it is easier to see. It is by far the largest, growing up to 5 inches in length. The European mantid can grow to nearly 4 inches; the Carolina (native) mantid only up to 2 - 2.5 inches long.

Mantids, until recently, have been known as beneficial. They take care of many nuisance insects that can cause heartache to a gardener. The problem is that they are non-discriminatory, eating anything they can catch! This includes our beloved monarch butterfly and native bees. The Chinese mantid has also been known to take down red-throated hummingbirds when available in the habitat.

The biggest issue is that these larger, non-native species can out-compete the native Carolina mantid rather easily and have even been known to cannibalize them. (Many native species of other families have gone extinct due to similar situations.) This monopoly of the competition is quite likely to disturb the balance of the habitat.

Mantids lay hundreds of soft eggs in the fall which immediately harden into a case that protects them through the cold winters so they can hatch in late spring. Although all mantids have similar-looking egg cases, the native Carolina variety has a specific, darker coloration that forms a line down the side of the case. Watch for egg cases in the spring while cleaning up planting beds. If you can discern which cases belong to the native Carolina mantids, some sources advocate protecting them while removing the non-native egg cases. Bringing a non-native egg case inside to observe can be very educational and entertaining – but be sure to keep it contained if the eggs hatch!

For more information: <https://ohioline.osu.edu/factsheet/ent-67> and <https://bygl.osu.edu/node/556>

***"The world's favorite season is the spring. All things seem possible in May."***

***~ Edwin Way Teale***

# Family Fun with Nature

It's been a long year for all of us and we are looking forward to getting outside as the weather improves and spring melts into summer. While there are still a few restrictions on activities due to the pandemic, we can get outside and enjoy nature. Margaret Lowe, a Coshocton County Master Gardener Volunteer, has a few suggestions to involve adults and children. (4-H and Scouts also have gardening projects!)

## Gardening Fun for Children

Make gardening fun for children by allowing them to plant their own pumpkin or gourd patch. Growing, drying and cleaning gourds and pumpkins is somewhat easy. Afterward, the imagination takes over to create whatever comes to mind.

There are many kinds and sizes of pumpkins. Seeds can be purchased for various sizes, from tiny to gigantic. It might be wise to try the smaller ones for the first time. A nice one for carving in October is the variety "Connecticut Field" which, according to the packet, is the original Halloween pumpkin - an heirloom that produces large, bright orange fruit that can weigh from fifteen to thirty pounds. It also makes great pie and the seeds can be dried for snacking later.

Seeds are available for various kinds of small ornamental gourds. I like planting the snake gourd, mainly to see how long they will grow. I also like the apple gourd which looks just like a huge apple; it can be painted to resemble a golden or red delicious or any other kind of apple. These gourds are fun to paint and give away; for example, an apple for the teacher. Naturally, gourd bird houses are always fun to make and decorate - and then see if the birds approve of your creation.

Of course, once the fruits are harvested, saving seeds for next year is a must. Gourds and pumpkins provide fun for all the family.

*For more information, go to:*

[https://www.canr.msu.edu/news/pumpkin\\_is\\_not\\_just\\_for\\_decoration\\_and](https://www.canr.msu.edu/news/pumpkin_is_not_just_for_decoration_and)

<https://extension.wvu.edu/lawn-gardening-pests/gardening/wv-garden-guide/growing-pumpkins-in-west-virginia>

## Butterfly Mud Puddle

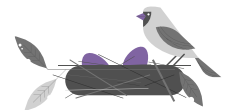
Butterflies seek mud puddles to obtain minerals that they require. These minerals are not provided in a diet of nectar alone but are found in standing water or mud puddles. You can make a butterfly puddle in your garden by sinking a shallow container, like a pie pan, into the soil in a sunny location. The container could also be placed on a railing, fence post or anywhere it will sit. If you have a porch or deck, you may want to place it close by so you can enjoy watching and identifying any butterflies, insects or other creatures that may visit.

Add one-half cup salt to one gallon of coarse sand and moisten it well with water. Some butterflies like the addition of manure or garden soil to this mix. Fill the container with the mixture and add a few flat rocks for the butterflies to rest on or bask in the sun. Don't forget to replenish the water as it evaporates.

Some butterflies are also attracted to soft or moist fruit such as bananas, apple peelings, or a piece of watermelon. These can be placed near the garden but be aware that they may attract unwanted "guests" as well. You may have to bring the container inside at night if you have large visiting critters such as raccoon.

*For more info on butterfly habitats, go to:*

<https://extension.illinois.edu/blogs/good-growing/2017-04-06-building-butterfly-oasis>



## Tin Can Birdhouse

Items Needed: 1 large tin can (tomato juice-size)  
1 piece wood board (can size)

1 small nail  
2 small screws  
Spray paint

Cut one end completely out of the can. Draw a circle around the cut-out end on a piece of wood and cut out the circle with a saw. Use a drill to cut a small circle about the size of a quarter out of the center to make an entrance hole. Pound in a nail below the entrance for a roost. Fit the wood circle into the end of the can and secure it with small screws on opposite sides. This allows the birdhouse to be cleaned out. Paint or decorate the outside of the house as desired.

## **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.
- ✓ Prune spring-blooming shrubs as soon as the blooms are finished.
- ✓ 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.
- ✓ 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.



## **Upcoming Events**

May 14	The Real Dirt on WTNS 99.3	9:00 – 10:00 am
May 15	Frost-free date – NOT GUARANTEED!	
May 31	Memorial Day	
June 11	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**

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

Phone: (740) 622-2265

Like **Coshocton County Master Gardener Volunteers** on Facebook

CFAES provides research and related educational programs to clientele

on a nondiscriminatory basis. For more information: [go.osu.edu/cfaesdiversity](https://go.osu.edu/cfaesdiversity)



Learn more at  
[coshocton.osu.edu](https://coshocton.osu.edu)  
or use this code



**THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY**

COLLEGE OF FOOD, AGRICULTURAL,  
AND ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCES