

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

November - December 2019

Volume 16, Issue 6

**THANK YOU to Those Who Visited  
Our Recent Displays!****Fair Booth**

Coshocton County Master Gardener Volunteers put up an informative display about native plants in their booth in the youth building at the Coshocton County Fair. Thank you to all those who stopped by or picked up information!

**Fall Foliage and Farm Tour Display**

MGVs were on hand at the first stop of the Fall Foliage and Farm Tour in October to answer questions about trees and native plants. Many folks (from 4-year

old kids to mature professionals!) enjoyed the demonstration of the nut gathering tool; it worked very well and Margaret reports that it was a wonderful Mother's Day gift! We were glad to see that many folks picked up some pertinent information before enjoying the tour. Thanks to all who stopped by!

**Coming Up...****Contribution to Christmas Castle**

Master Gardener Volunteers will again make a monetary contribution to the Christmas Castle project! This is another way we can make a difference in our community.

**Training Class for New Master Gardener Volunteers Announced**

Do you enjoy gardening? Are you looking for a way to give back to your community? Then becoming a Master Gardener Volunteer may be just the thing for you.

The Master Gardener Volunteer Program trains volunteers for Ohio State University Extension in Coshocton County to help further the mission of engagement and outreach. Volunteers are trained in consumer horticulture topics, including: annuals, perennials, fruits, vegetables, soil, botany, turf, insects, diseases and more! After receiving over 50 hours of education, each intern must complete 50 hours of service to OSU to become a fully certified Ohio State Master Gardener Volunteer.

The next training classes in Coshocton County will be held on Monday evenings from 6:00 to 9:00 p.m. at the Coshocton County Extension office (724 South 7th Street in Coshocton, Ohio) from 6:00 to 9:00 p.m. Training will start on February 10, 2020 and end June 8.

Two informational meetings will be held to answer questions about the 2020 training program. The dates are Monday, November 4 from 6:00 to 7:00 p.m. and Wednesday, November 20 from 6:00 to 7:00 p.m. at the Coshocton County Extension office located at 724 South 7th Street in Coshocton, Ohio.

Attend one of these meetings to learn more about the Master Gardener training program and about the educational outreach the Master Gardeners conduct. The cost for this training program is a \$135 course fee. Attendance at one of these meetings is not necessary to apply to become a Master Gardener but it is highly recommended so applicants can have their questions answered. More details can also be received by contacting David Marrison at 740-622-2265 or [marrison.2@osu.edu](mailto:marrison.2@osu.edu). An application packet can be found on-line at <https://coshocton.osu.edu/> and is due January 8.

*“Gardening simply does not allow one to be mentally old, because too many hopes and dreams are yet to be realized.” ~ Allan Armitage*

# Thanksgiving, Christmas or Easter Cactus?

By Margaret Lowe, Coshocton County Master Gardener Volunteer

Those of us who have a holiday cactus usually refer to it as a Christmas cactus. However, it may not be one; there are Thanksgiving cactuses, Christmas cactuses and Easter cactuses. Which do you have? Here are a few descriptions and a diagram that may help you decide.

Thanksgiving cactuses have sharp-pointed edges and points on the ends of the leaf; the new leaves and blooms grow from the center.

The Christmas cactus leaf is more rounded with small lobes on the end. The flower of this cactus blooms in what I call layers with the stamens and anther growing out of the center.

The Easter cactus has a more rounded, centrally located leaf edge with small notches on the edge. It is more difficult to grow than the Thanksgiving or Christmas types and may also be more difficult to find in stores or nurseries. All these holiday cactuses have leaves that are in segments with flowers growing from the end.

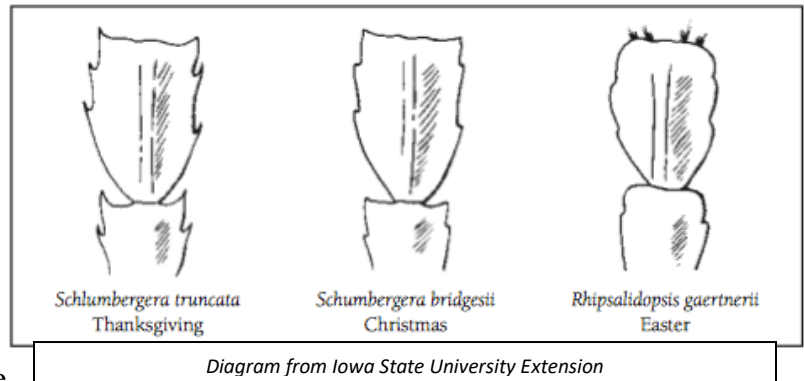
These cactuses are known as short-day plants, meaning that they must have twelve to fourteen hours of darkness per day to bloom. Thanksgiving and Christmas cactuses require six weeks of short days; the Easter type requires eight to twelve weeks.

I have discovered my “Christmas cactus” is actually a Thanksgiving cactus because it has very prominent sharp-edged leaves. It was given to me by a friend as a very small plant and has grown a lot and bloomed several times. Since I have learned it is a Thanksgiving cactus, I am going to keep track of when it blooms to determine if it knows it is a Thanksgiving cactus!

Small kinds of cactuses are grown inside as house plants because they can live in dry heat. Indoor cactuses should be potted in light, sandy soil with good drainage. Summer-type temperatures are suggested and half-shade is recommended; plants can be placed outside in summer, out of direct sunlight.

Many people have a holiday cactus that has been in the family for years; some may even be one-hundred years old or more and there are those that have even been willed to a family member! This may be because they all are plants that require little care and are usually disease-free.

Find more information about holiday cactuses online at: <https://extension.umn.edu/house-plants/holiday-cacti>



## Decorating with Broadleaf Evergreens

The broadleaf evergreens commonly used during the holidays are boxwood, holly, mahonia, rhododendron, pieris, and evergreen euonymus. These dry out faster than the narrow-leaved evergreens and should have their stems placed in moist floral foam or water indoors. An anti-desiccant spray may also prolong their beauty indoors. Most of the broadleaf evergreens will last longer in decorations outdoors; however, do not use rhododendron outdoors because the foliage curls in cold weather. Don't prune broadleaf plants too severely; rather, prune out small stems and use them to create a textured and interesting effect. Some of the landscape vines can be used successfully in decorations. English ivy is a traditional holiday green used in European countries. Pachysandra, periwinkle (myrtle), and some of the creeping euonymus can add interesting textures and colors to decorations, as well.

## Caring for Your Poinsettia

By Alonna Hoffman, Former Master Gardener Volunteer (Reprinted from a previous issue)

When you think of Christmas, you might think of Christmas trees, presents or the poinsettia. A poinsettia can provide you with many years of Christmas beauty if given some extra attention throughout the year. The poinsettia was introduced to the United States in 1825 by Joel Robert Poinsett, first U.S. ambassador to Mexico who obtained

(Continued next page)

plants from the wilds of southern Mexico. The common name for the poinsettia comes from his last name. Botanically, the plant is known as *Euphorbia pulcherrima*. Over the years, various reports have led the general public to believe that the poinsettia is toxic to humans. Research conducted has proved that old wives' tale to be false.

When buying poinsettias, choose plants with fully colored bracts; too much green around the edges indicates immaturity. The small green or yellow berries, which are the plant's true flowers at the center of the colored bracts should look fresh. Choose plants with dense, dark green foliage that extends all the way down to the soil line. Stems should be stiff with no sign of wilting or breaking. Use caution when buying plants wrapped in plastic or foil sleeves, this can distort the true shape of the plant. Check to see how the plant looks without the sleeve before buying. To get your poinsettia home healthy, cover it loosely with a large bag before going outside to protect it from winds and temperatures lower than 50°F.

When watering a poinsettia, examine the soil daily and water the soil when the surface is dry to the touch. Water until it runs freely out the drainage hole in the container. Do not leave the plant in standing water. Overly wet soil lacks sufficient air, which results in root injury. Plants exposed to high light and low humidity require more frequent watering. If wilting does occur, immediately water with the recommended amount, and water again five minutes later. The recommended amount of water is as shown in this table:

Pot Diameter (Inches)	Fluid Ounces of Water/Pot
4	6
5	9
6	12
7	16
8	20

Poinsettias should be placed near a sunny window where they will have the most available sunlight. A window that faces south, east or west is better than a window facing the north. Do not let the plant touch the cold windowpane because it can cause injury to the plant.

To keep a poinsettia in bloom, maintain the temperature between 65 to 70°F during daylight hours and move to a cooler place at night. Root-rot disease can occur if place in a room colder than 60°F. Premature leaf drop can occur if exposed to hot or cold drafts. Poinsettias can re-flower the following Christmas if a year-long schedule of care and maintenance is followed. This schedule is as follows:

December – April	Continue normal watering of the soil until the first of April.
April 1 – Mid-May	Allow to dry gradually but do not get so dry that the stems shrivel. Following the drying period, store the plant in a cool (60 degrees F), airy location on its side or upright.
Mid-May	Cut the stems back to about 4" above the soil, and replant in a pot 1-2 inches larger in diameter or shake old soil off the roots and repot, using the same container. Use a new soilless mix that is finely textured. Water the soil after potting; wait five minutes and water again. Then place plant near the window that has the most sunlight and keep the room at 65 to 75°F. Continue to water when the surface of the soil is dry to the touch. After new growth appears, fertilize every two weeks with a complete, water soluble fertilizer at the rate recommended for flowering plants.
Early June	Leave the plant in the pot and move it outdoors, placing it in a lightly shaded location. Continue watering and fertilizing the plant while it is outdoors.
Early July	Pinch each stem (remove 1" of terminal growth). Continue watering and fertilizing the plant.
August 15	Cut or pinch the new stems completely back, allowing three or four leaves to remain on each shoot. Continue watering and fertilizing the plant.
September 1	Cut or pinch the new stems back a second time, allowing three or four leaves to remain on each shoot. Bring plant indoors and place it near the window that has the most sunlight and keep the room temperature at night at 65 to 75°F. Continue to water and fertilize.
October 1- Thanksgiving	Keep in complete darkness between 5 p.m. and 8 a.m. daily. A closet, opaque box or opaque cloth will keep the plant in darkness during those hours. Continue to place plant near a sunny window during the day. Continue watering and fertilizing the plant.
Late November-mid-December	Continue to place plant near a sunny window during the day Continue to water and fertilizing until mid-December.

Poinsettias are short-day plants, meaning they flower about 10 weeks after daylight shortens to about 12 hours or less. If the above schedule is followed, you should have a beautiful poinsettia in full flower again by Christmas.

More information can be found online at: <https://extension.umn.edu/house-plants/poinsettia>

## 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.
- ❖ Prune grape vines.
- ❖ 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.
- ❖ Prune grape vines
- ❖ Stay off frozen grass.
- ❖ Page through garden catalogues and fill out a wish list.

*Christmas gift suggestion: Gardeners always appreciate gift certificates from local garden centers or nurseries for plant purchases next spring.*

*Did you know? The plural of cactus is either “cactuses” or “cacti” – both are acceptable!*

## Upcoming Events

November 4	Informational meeting for 2020 MGTV Training	6:00 – 7:00 pm
November 8	The Real Dirt on WTNS 99.3	9:00 – 10:00 am
November 20	Informational meeting for 2020 MGTV Training	6:00 – 7:00 pm
November 28	Thanksgiving Day	
December 13	The Real Dirt on WTNS 99.3	9:00 – 10:00 am
December 25	Christmas Day	
January 1	New Year’s Day	
January 8	MGV 2020 Training Class Applications due	



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