

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

November – December 2022

Volume 19, Issue 6

MGV Fair Booth

MGVs had a display in the Youth Building at the Coshocton County Fair again this year – thanks to all who stopped by to pick up fact sheets, fun sheets, ID cards, and seeds! We hope everyone learned a bit about the pollinators that are so important to our gardens!

Fall Foliage and Farm Tour

MGVs were delighted to see so many people on the Coshocton County Fall Foliage and Farm Tour! We had a display at The Venue at Hidden Spring Farm and hope the public enjoyed seeing the natural specimens we had - and had some questions answered. Many thanks to MGVs Margaret Lowe, Brenda Bush, Brenda Junkin, Marsha Duling, and Teresa Donley for being on hand for the 2 days of the tour.

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 11 and December 9. A huge “thank you” to WTNS!

Extension Office Hours

The Coshocton County-OSU Extension Office at 724 South 7th Street, Room 110, 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>

State Awards for Mike Bechtol of WTNS and the Coshocton Co. MGVs

Each spring, Master Gardener Volunteer groups across the state of Ohio are asked to nominate projects and people who have contributed to their program in the previous year. Awards are announced several months later at the annual MGV state conference and awards program. OSU Extension and the Coshocton County MGVs recently announced that Mike Bechtol of WTNS radio was selected as one of three recipients of the 2021 Friend of the Master Gardener Volunteer Program for the state of Ohio. Mike has hosted Coshocton County MGVs and coordinators in a monthly program, “The Real Dirt”, since 2002, shortly after the MGV program was established in the county. Over the years, Mike has helped our volunteers feel at ease on the air and aided in clarifying on-the-air questions and information. He has also contacted MGVs and the Extension Office for answers to questions from callers. An avid gardener himself, he has promoted our program and encouraged gardeners throughout the listening area. To our great pleasure, Mike has mentioned that he has learned quite a bit from our local group.

Congratulations to Mike on this well-deserved state award! And “thank you” to WTNS for hosting our program and for serving the county for 75 years (the station went on the air in the autumn of 1947).

The Coshocton County Master Gardener Volunteers also received a state award. Their annual display at the Fall Foliage and Farm Tour was awarded the 2021 Outstanding MGV Project in the Environmental Horticulture category for small MGV groups (1 – 25 volunteers) and was named the overall winner for small group projects. Although the display changes from year to year due to space and availability of specimens, it always focuses on hands-on items of interest to the public. MGVs are on hand to explain specimens or answer questions.

Congratulations to our local MGVs!

***“Every gardener knows that under the cloak of winter
lies a miracle.” — Barbara Winkler***

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.

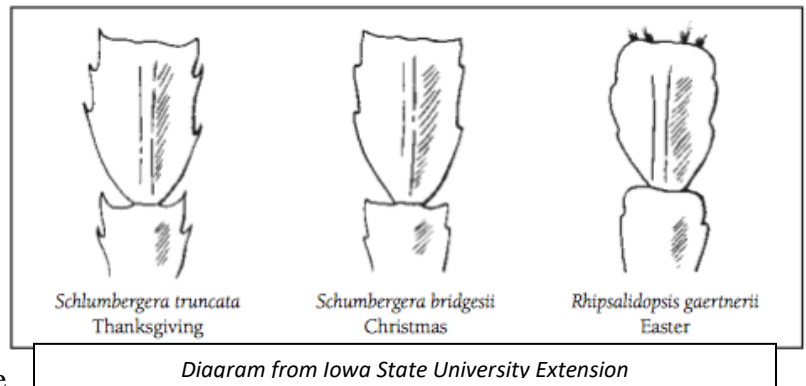
These cactuses are known as short-day plants, meaning that they must have twelve to fourteen hours of darkness per day to bloom. Thanksgiving and Christmas cactuses require six weeks of short days; the Easter type requires eight to twelve weeks.

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.

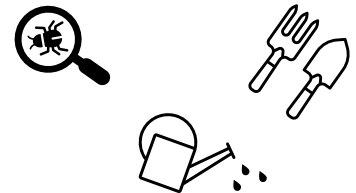
Find more information about holiday cactuses online at: <https://extension.umn.edu/house-plants/holiday-cacti>



What Is Your Favorite Gardening Tool?

Do you have a gardener on your Christmas shopping list? Need some suggestions? Here are the answers our local Master Gardener Volunteers gave when asked about their favorite gardening tool – what would your special gardener like?

- My shovel - I use it for everything
- A weeding fork with a long handle
- A wide, sharp trowel and long gloves
- My Mantis tiller - it works great, gets in small spaces, and is light weight
- A double-pronged hoe
- Ratchet pruners - they are handy and trim just about everything
- Hand trowel - the most useful and handy tool I use
- My serrated soil knife – it's good for getting under difficult weeds, cuts through tough vegetation, and its orange handle is easy to see if I leave it laying on the ground
- Hoe - it does everything you need to do in the garden
- My three-pronged cultivator – it's extremely effective at working the soil



Keep Your Poinsettia Looking Great Through the Holidays!

By Gail Piper, Coshocton County Master Gardener Volunteer

Many of us will purchase or be gifted a poinsettia plant during the holiday season. Today it is possible to find poinsettias in a range of colors; some are natural, some are dyed – and you may even find some with glitter added. Here are some tips to keep your plant looking its best!

If you are buying the plant yourself, be sure to select a healthy plant with just a few open yellow flowers in the center of the colored bracts and dark green leaves that are not wilted. Make sure to protect the plant from cold weather (chilly winds and temps below 50 degrees can damage the leaves and bracts) while transporting it home; many are sold with a plastic sleeve that can be pulled around the plants. Make sure to unwrap the plant once it is inside your home. Place the poinsettia in a warm location (the plants prefer a temperature between 60 and 70 degrees) where it will have 5 or more hours of bright, indirect light, but keep it far enough away from windows that it won't receive chilly drafts. It is also good to keep the plant away from heating vents to avoid drying out the leaves. Water the plant when the soil is dry to the touch but be careful not to over-water it! Many poinsettias are sold with a sheet of mylar or foil covering the pot – it is a good idea to remove that covering or to poke holes in the bottom to allow excess water to drain away from the plant's roots. Place the pot on a plant saucer or plate to catch any drainage.

You may have heard that poinsettias are toxic to people and pets. While there is a mild toxicity in the plants, a research project at The Ohio State University in 1971 showed that it is not lethal. Ingestion may cause vomiting or drooling, but a great number of leaves would have to be consumed. Hopefully that is reassuring to many folks who wish to enjoy the beauty of this plant.

For more information: <https://www.canr.msu.edu/uploads/files/PoinsettiaCare.pdf> and <https://www.poison.org/articles/poinsettias>

Do You Know: Joel Poinsett

By Margaret Lowe, Coshocton County Master Gardener Volunteer

1. Joel Roberts Poinsett lived from 1779 to 1851.
2. The son of a physician, Poinsett attended medical school for one year in Scotland.
3. He served in the South Carolina State Legislature.
4. He was a member of the United States Congress.
5. Poinsett served as United States Secretary of War under President Martin Van Buren.
6. He was a co-founder of the National Institution for the Promotion of Science and the Useful Arts, now the Smithsonian Institute.
7. He was the first United States Ambassador to Mexico.
8. While serving as Ambassador to Mexico Poinsett found a plant that the Aztecs called *cuetlaxochitl*. He brought cuttings back to his Greenville SC plantation and began propagating it.
9. He gave plants to friends and botanical gardens; about 1836, they became known as poinsettias.
10. In Mexico and Central America, the poinsettia grows from two feet to ten feet or more.



Informational Webinars Available

The recent pandemic with its restrictions on in-person meetings created a real problem for Master Gardener Volunteers – we could no longer attend educational sessions to gain information to share with our clients! To fill the gap, the Ohio State University Extension program arranged several webinars online. Called Horticultural Lunch & Learns and Happy Hours, these webinars featured experts in several areas pertaining to horticulture. The sessions were recorded and are available to our volunteers and the public in general. The webinars cover many topics: herbs, native plants, lawn care, pest management, roses, bugs, wildlife, and much more!

There are also many webinars scheduled over the next several months; they can be viewed in real time or as recordings several hours after the session ends. To register for coming sessions and to see the lists of webinars and recordings available, go to: <https://mastergardener.osu.edu/HortWebinars>.

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.



**Interested in becoming a Master Gardener Volunteer?
Contact the Extension Office at (740) 622-2265!**

MGVs Are Contributing to the Christmas Castle Project

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.

Upcoming Events

November 11	The Real Dirt on WTNS 99.3	9:00 – 10:00 am
November 11	Veteran's Day – Extension Office closed	
November 24	Thanksgiving Day – Extension Office closed Nov. 24 & 25	
December 9	The Real Dirt on WTNS 99.3	9:00 – 10:00 am
December 23	Christmas Day – Extension Office closed Dec. 23 - 26	
January 1, 2023	Happy New Year!	

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/>

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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