

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

September - October 2020

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Extension Office Is Operating!

The OSU – Coshocton Extension Office re-opened with some restrictions in July. Limited staff will be available on Monday, Wednesday and Friday so it is a good idea to call ahead if you would like to speak with a specific person. Staff members are still working from home when not in the office.

Some changes in protocol remain in effect:

- Hand sanitizer (provided) and face coverings (can be provided) are required before entering the office
- The first hour of each day (8:00 to 9:00 am) will be for immune-compromised clients only
- Only one person or family is allowed in the office at one time
- Please ring the doorbell and wait to enter
- There will be separate doors for entering and exiting the office
- Other criteria will be posted on the office door.

Questions can be addressed by calling (740) 622-2265; e-mail addresses for each staff member can be found on the OSU-Coshocton County website at:

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

Covid 19 = Changes

So many face-to-face events have been changed over the past several months – sports, education, social gatherings, life events – and our Extension and MGCV programming has been affected as well.

At this time of year, we normally would be planning our fair booth and our display for the Fall Foliage and Farm Tour; those have been cancelled. Our display at First Farm Friday was cancelled; our MGCV meetings have been held online via Zoom; our monthly “The Real Dirt” sessions on WTNS are now conducted by phone instead of in the studio; and even our gardens have suffered as we could not hold work sessions until mid-summer. We have missed seeing each other and all of you in person!

Meanwhile, we continue to compile this newsletter and are starting to catch up with our gardens. Your questions can still be answered by contacting the OSU-Coshocton County Extension Office.

Please let us know if there are topics you would like to see addressed here. And - you might want to keep the newsletters for future reference!

Plant Math

By Gail Piper, Coshocton County Master Gardener Volunteer

Dividing and multiplying may seem to be complete opposites, but they can be equal when it comes to plants. Many perennial plants can be divided which in turn multiplies the number of plants in the garden. Many plants do well when divided in the spring, but several also do well when divided in the fall. It is best to divide a plant while it is not blooming so that its energy is diverted into establishing roots and foliage. The key to fall division is to act at least 4 to 6 weeks before frost – therefore early September can be a great time.

How does one know when to divide a perennial? The plant itself will often give clues: perhaps the number of blooms has diminished or there is a “dead” spot in the center; many plants are rejuvenated by division. This is also an economic way to gain more plants of a particular species.

Several plants that do well when divided in the fall include: coral bells, daylilies, hostas, Oriental poppies, peonies, rudbeckia, Siberian iris, & yarrow. Do not divide plants with woody stems or a single taproot. Make sure to replant the divisions at the proper depth; keep them watered and do NOT fertilize at this time. It is a good idea to mulch the new plantings in November to help prevent winter injury and then remove the mulch as the new growth emerges in the spring. Fall is also a good time to divide bulbs – if you have marked their location! You will also notice many bulbs are on sale at this time of year. They can be planted anytime in the fall until the ground freezes.

For more info online: <https://extension.osu.edu/a-guide-to-dividing-perennials>

Do You Know: Wasps

By Margaret Lowe, Coshocton County Master Gardener Volunteer

1. Wasps are among the wisest of all insects and true friends of man.
2. Wasps are the original paper makers. Hornets are also paper makers. They chew leaves and wood fiber into pulp with their strong mandibles.
3. A wasp nest is active and lasts only one season. Nests are built new each year, one cell at a time. Females have the ability to determine the sex of the young; she has females first to do all the work.
4. Wasp species can live as “social insects” (many live together) or as “solitary insects” (one nests alone).
5. Wasps have the ability to paralyze their food for later use. The potter wasp makes a small mud pot, lays an egg in the pot, and places a paralyzed insect inside so that there is fresh food available when the egg hatches.
6. Solitary wasps are masons, carpenters, excavators or diggers. They work and sacrifice for their young, but never see them.
7. It is believed that the Chinese invented paper after watching wasps make it.
8. Cicada killer wasps grow up to two inches long; they are non-aggressive and cannot sting.
9. Become a wasp watcher; plant dill and mountain mint to attract many wasps.
10. A female Ichneumon wasp has an ovipositor which she can use to lay eggs directly into a hosts’ body. The egg hatches and feeds on the host.

Find a downloadable field guide “Common Bees & Wasps of Ohio” here: https://ohiodnr.gov/static/documents/wildlife/backyard-wildlife/Pub5488_Bees%20and%20Wasps%20of%20Ohio%20Field%20Guide.pdf

Mockingbirds – A Great American Experience

By Margaret Lowe, Coshocton County Master Gardener Volunteer

During the summer of 2018 PBS Television listed one-hundred books from which viewers and readers could choose the number one best-loved book in the United States; individuals were encouraged to read the books and vote for the one they liked best. To Kill a Mockingbird by Harper Lee was chosen number one. I agree with the choice and would also like to say the movie of the same name is one of my favorites. A quote, “Remember it’s a sin to kill a mockingbird.” inspired the name of the book and the movie. Starring Gregory Peck as Atticus Finch, the American Film Institute named that character as the number one hero in “AFI’s 100 Years... 100 Heroes & Villains”.

While you are gardening, mowing lawn, or just being outside, you are very fortunate if you hear a mockingbird in the neighborhood. For many summers, these birds have been heard in my area. They not only mimic other birds but imitate human sounds and inanimate objects like doorbells. Some people who have studied them have recorded over four hundred songs from one bird and they have also been known to sing all night long.

The mockingbird is the same size as a robin, much sleeker with a longer tail, gray in color, and shows some white color while flying. At one time they were sold as caged birds for pets, much like canaries. So many were caged that they nearly vanished. Thomas Jefferson once had one named Dick that went with him to the White House. Mockingbirds are now protected under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act of 1918.

Mockingbirds have been the subject of books, songs, paintings, and poems. Audubon says they range from southern Canada through most of the United States and migrate south during winter. Three other birds we once had in the area are the meadowlark, quail and whippoorwill. I no longer hear nor see any of these and would be very sad to not hear nor see the mockingbirds anymore.

Speaking of Birds... and Bees...

Have you noticed those pretty yellow birds flitting about? Goldfinches are often seen perching on coneflower and sunflower seed heads while they have a snack. Hummingbirds are still visiting local feeders and are “tanking up” for their long journey south. Keep supplying them with nectar - they will leave of their own accord as the days get shorter, usually around the beginning of October. Cardinals will stay through the winter and visit backyard feeders. A few people have noticed some cardinals with more black color on their heads than normal; this is because they are molting, not due to a disease.

As we clean up our gardens this fall, let’s think about helping the birds and bees! Although we should destroy any diseased plants or foliage, we can leave some seed heads for the birds. Instead of cutting all the stalks to the ground, leave a few for beneficial insects to use for winter homes. A little leaf litter is also a good place for some insects to nest and a couple of brush piles will provide cover for overwintering bees and butterflies.

Insect Pests to Watch...

By Gail Piper, Coshocton County Master Gardener Volunteer

There are 2 insects that are in the headlines these days – both of which warrant a watchful eye...

You may have heard reports about a new tick in Ohio. The Asian longhorned tick is native to Asia, New Zealand and Australia and was first discovered in New Jersey in 2017. Since then it has been found in 13 states and was spotted in Gallia County OH in July. This tick can attack humans and a wide variety of animals including dogs, cats, chickens, cattle, goats, horses, sheep, raccoons, skunks, foxes, possums, deer, geese, hawks, and others. A disconcerting fact is that the female tick does NOT need a male tick to reproduce and can easily overwhelm a host animal. This tick may spread the protozoan parasite *Theileria* in cattle (theileriosis is similar to malaria in humans) and has the potential to carry Rocky Mountain spotted fever.

Asian longhorned ticks are light brown in color and are often smaller than a sesame seed, making them difficult to find. Weeds, grasses and brush should be cleared from pastures and other areas of use and animals should be checked often. More info from Tim McDermott DVM, an OSU Extension Educator in Franklin County, can be found here:

<https://u.osu.edu/williamsag/2020/08/12/asian-longhorned-tick-a-new-tick-known-to-attack-animals-in-large-numbers/>

Another pest that is active now is the sunflower headclipping weevil – in fact, it has been found locally in our educational gardens at Lake Park. This insect “clips” the stems of sunflowers, coneflowers, and asters so that the flower head hangs down; it then lays eggs on the bud or flower. When the bud later falls to the ground, the eggs hatch and the larva burrow into the earth to overwinter; they become adults and start the process over the next year.

Watch for stems that look as though they have been cleanly cut almost completely through, just a few inches below the bud. In fact, you may find adult weevils in freshly clipped buds or flowers. Damaged stems and buds should be removed and destroyed, not composted, in order to interrupt the cycle.

Find more info here: <https://bygl.osu.edu/node/1635>

Planting Short Season Vegetables in the Fall

There are a few crops that can be planted and harvested in the fall to extend your vegetable garden! Consider planting some lettuce, radishes, mustard or spinach early in September. Check the “days to maturity” on the seed packet to make sure the variety will produce before the first frost which is usually around the second or third week in October in our area. Garlic bulbs do very well when planted in the fall before the soil freezes; fall planting allows for earlier, better growth in the spring which produces a better quality of heads.

Soil Testing – Now Is A Great Time!

Testing the soil in your garden or lawn can help you determine a course of action to improve soil conditions and improve plant growth. Testing in early fall will tell you if your soil has any deficiencies and give you time to apply amendments correctly – some are best applied in the fall and others in the spring.

There are a couple of places in Coshocton County that handle soil tests; our Extension Office is one of those. Testing kits are available in the office at 724 South 7th Street, Room 110, in Coshocton. Call (740) 622-2265 for more info!

A fact sheet about soil testing can be found here:

<https://ohioline.osu.edu/factsheet/hyg-1132>

Did Witchcraft Go A-rye?

By Gail Piper, Coshocton County Master Gardener Volunteer

As Halloween approaches and we start to tell tales of ghosts, witches and other supernatural beings, the topic of the Salem witch trials in 1692 will sometimes surface. More than one person has wondered how the people of that town could have believed that some of their own were witches.

A plausible theory presented in 1976 by Dr. Linnda Caporael is that several people in Salem had developed ergotism from eating rye bread which was made from grain that was contaminated by the fungus ‘ergot’. Ergotism can cause convulsions, muscle spasms, hallucinations and other symptoms. Several young girls exhibited these symptoms; many thought they were victims of witchcraft and the accusations began. Although there is no definite proof that this scenario is the actual truth, it is theorized that the trials ended in 1693 when the town ran out of ergot-contaminated grain.

For more information: <https://www.britannica.com/story/how-rye-bread-may-have-caused-the-salem-witch-trials>

September Garden Check List:

- Place orders and plant spring-blooming bulbs and add bulb fertilizer to soil when planting.
- Plant peonies now, but make sure the crowns are buried only one and a half to two inches below ground level. Planting them deeper than two inches may keep them from blooming.
- Do not prune roses now. Tall canes can be loosely tied to keep them from being damaged from winter wind.
- Divide daylilies and other spring-blooming perennials.
- Cut off and dispose of diseased foliage. Leave seed heads on your black-eyed Susans and coneflowers; they are a great food source for goldfinches. Keep some hollow stalks for insects to use for hibernation.
- Destroy all diseased leaves and plants to prevent spreading disease.
- Finish planting new lawns or reseed thin patches and apply fertilizer to lawns.

October Garden Check List:

- Sow seeds of perennials in cold frames now for next year's blooming plants.
- Rake leaves and add them to the compost pile.
- Keep cutting the lawn until it stops growing.
- Cut to the ground blackberry and raspberry canes that bore fruit this year.
- Divide overgrown clumps of rhubarb.
- Plant garlic bulbs for next year's crop.
- Add manure, compost and leaves to increase the organic matter content of the soil, as fall is a good time for improving your garden soil.
- Mark your perennials with permanent tags, or create a map showing their locations so you'll know where and what they are when they die back at the end of the season. This will help you avoid digging up something you intended to keep when you plant bulbs and plants this fall and next spring.
- One last effort at weeding will help to improve the appearance of your garden throughout the winter.

"Autumn ... the year's last, loveliest smile." - William Cullen Bryant



Upcoming Events

September 7	Labor Day	
September 11	The Real Dirt on WTNS 99.3	9:00 – 10:00 am
Oct. 2 to Oct. 8	Coshocton County Fair – Jr. Fair Only	To be announced
October 9	The Real Dirt on WTNS 99.3	9:00 – 10:00 am
October 17 & 18	Fall Foliage and Farm Tour Cancelled	
October 31	Halloween	

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

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