

# Digging It!



March 2024



All the Dirt from the Allen County Master Gardeners

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## *Notes from Joanne*

As I write this, Spring is less than 20 days away and I am so ready for it! I am excited to see the grass starting to green up and some of my Spring bulbs poking out of the ground. This will be a busy month with our Art of Gardening Seminar and Easter.

Our spring seminar is just around the corner. We still have several available items on the food list that we need. We ask that you try to contribute in some way to help us keep the cost low. We are also in need of your fancy dishes and serving utensils. We will need tongs, serving spatulas, serving spoons and forks, platters, plates, and bowls. Any items that would please bring, will be greatly appreciated. Please reach out to either me or Roxanne if you have any questions.

The Lima Public Library has once again asked us to present a small talk about gardening. They have been passing out seed packets and have had a huge response. They are open to any talk that we could present. You could easily use something that you have given or will present this year for Brown Bag. Try to think of ideas that are basic gardening, container plants, house plants etc. Feel free to grab a volunteer or two to help you. If you are interested, please contact me and I will give you the library contact information so you can work out a time that fits your schedule. This is a good opportunity for us with the library being our neighbor. They have also asked for a Brown Bag schedule so they can help promote it.

Congratulations to the Baumer Family, Nic and his wife Nicole welcomed a son in February.

Nic will return to work on March 19<sup>th</sup>. I am more than willing to help you with any questions until he returns.

I hope to see everyone this month at the seminar. Happy Spring and Happy Easter.



### *Tidbits from Teresa*

*“Daffodils, that come before the swallow does, and take the winds of March with beauty”.*

Wm Shakespeare The Winter's Tale 1609

Seven ways that winter damages plants:

1. **Extreme cold**: Cold becomes lethal at 28 degrees for most plant tissues. Roots can survive much lower temperatures if they have had time to acclimate. As temps cool in the fall, roots store sugars that resist freezing solid and move moisture out of the cells, so if they do freeze, cell walls have some give and won't burst. Plants native to warmer areas don't always have that mechanism to protect them. Hardy plants can suffer if temps drop too fast before these mechanisms are triggered. To prevent this damage don't prune late in fall, as the new growth is often too tender. If planting in the fall, make sure the plant can get established before the ground freezes.
2. **Temperature fluctuations**: Freezing and thawing in winter can heave roots up and out of the ground where they aren't insulated. Some thin or smooth barked trees will end up with splits in their trunks. These frost cracks make the tree more susceptible to insect and disease damage. To protect your plants, mulch and tree wrap new plantings.
3. **Wind damage**: Dry winter winds cause evergreen trees and shrubs and perennials to transpire more, causing foliage to lose moisture. Roots can't replace that moisture because the water in the soil is frozen, hence dried brown needles or winter burn. Screen your plants, hydrate and or apply anti-transpirant i.e. Wilt Stop that coats the needles and slows transpiration.
4. **Drought stress**: Drought stresses plants when they are growing, but if it continues into winter it can cause effects on dormant plants.
5. **Winter wetness**: Soil that stays excessively wet all winter can cause as much damage as drought. Excess moisture can stifle oxygen exchange to the roots. Snow cover that lasts well into spring can retain this excess moisture. Plants that prefer dry conditions can suffer from crown rot and plants with hollow stems may be damaged if water fills the stem and freezes causing cracked stems or rot.

To prevent this, plant the plant in the right place, plant in raised beds and if the winter is very wet pull the mulch away from the crown and base so it can dry faster.

6. **Salt damage:** Road salt damage can create all kinds of problems for plants, such as yellowing, brown or burned foliage, deformities and delayed growth. The salt used for clearing the roads, if it gets on foliage can cause desiccation similar to winter burn. Sodium Chloride in the soil can tie up the minerals plants need and cause deficiencies. Salts also absorb water, making it inaccessible to the roots, so the plant ends up dehydrated even if the soil is wet. Some solutions are to choose salt tolerant plants near roadways and driveways, use a non-sodium deicer, erect a barrier or rinse and flush.
7. **Snow and ice damage:** Heavy wet snow might bend branches and a thick coating of ice can cause a great deal of damage. To prevent this, lighten the load of the snow, don't shake frozen limbs and or let it melt.

Now for the good news! March is here and in a very short time we will be watching the miracle of Spring. Soon the ACMGV season will start and if any of you would like to present a brown bag or have ideas of topics that interest you, I have 11 more slots to fill for the brown bag. 419-204-7199

Teresa Diehl  
March 2024



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Spring is almost here and so is our conference! Gretchen, Nic and Joanne have the event well organized, and it should be as informative and smooth-running as ever. I hope to see you there!!

Sandy Bindel





## *Greetings from Gretchen*

### ART OF GARDENING – EXCITEMENT ABOUNDS

We are putting all the pieces of the puzzle together to create another fun filled, entertaining and educational seminar again this year!

If you haven't already, please let Roxanne and Joanne know what you are able to contribute to the continental breakfast/snack set up. They need your support to make that happen.

We have access to setting up the Science Building at 3 p.m. on Friday, March 15. If you are available to come help put together the folders and set up the hall and hallway, please let us know. Many hands make quick work.

As an Allen County Master Gardener Volunteer, you are one of the hosts of the event. Please make every effort you can to make the attendees feel welcomed and comfortable. Please

plan to arrive early and stay late to make sure that things are set up and cleaned up.

I will be working to collect door prizes in the coming 2 weeks. If you have a local garden center that you support that you would like me to reach out to for support, let me know. I am happy to request a donation, but would also appreciate help in collecting donations from area places. It's a lot of driving time for me to get to each place.

### CHRISTMAS TREE FESTIVAL SUCCESS

Thanks to your work and support, we earned \$2900 from the 2023 Christmas Tree Festival. This is quickly becoming a primary fundraising event for our organization! Thanks so much to each of you who volunteered your time, talent and treasurers to make the event a success!

### SENDING CARE AND WISHES

Congratulations to Nic Baumer and his wife on the birth of their son this month! Please keep this young family in your prayers as they welcome their little guy home!

Prayers for Sandy Bindel who is recovering from ankle surgery this month, and all who are dealing with or recovering from health issues this winter!

### LOOKING AHEAD

Spring is just around the corner. We will begin our monthly meetings in April. Weather permitting we'll start garden clean up/set up on Saturday, April 26.



## *Volunteer Voices*

*New! – This is new section will have guest articles from our volunteers about anything nature, gardening, or just something that you would like to share. If you are interested in sharing something, just email me your articles the last week of the month and I will be glad to add it. Looking forward to learning more from everyone.*

**We did not have any contributions this month. We would love to hear from you next month.**



## *Happenings from Kay*

### **INVASIVE PLANTS**

Do you have any invasive plants on your property? This week is [National Invasive Species Awareness Week](#) and there are a lot of organizations sharing information about the problems posed by invasive plants.

Years ago we purchased hundreds of trees and shrubs from our local Soil & Water office and planted them to create a windbreak. Unfortunately, several of the shrubs are now on the invasive species list and have become a major problem. The *Russian Olive* is now coming up in the lawn! Mowing them does not kill them, so each plant must be pulled or treated with a herbicide.

We have invested considerable time and money into the windbreak and other trees and shrubs on our property, and now so are invasive. The Bradford Pears that grace the driveway, burning bushes, miscanthus grasses, Rose of Sharon, butterfly bush, Purple loosestrife, are all common landscape plants found in many landscapes. We considered these plants beautiful and enhanced our property, but little did we know that they would become an invasive nuisance. I've had a lot of people say "I have that plant and it isn't a problem", and I understand what they are saying. But after years of scientific study these plants are listed by The Ohio Department of Agriculture as invasive. Evaluate your property and consider removing any invasives and planting native plants instead!