



Digging It!



All the Dirt from the Allen County Master Gardeners

FEBRUARY 2022

Notes from Joanne

As I write this, tomorrow is February 1st and there are 48 days until Spring! I hope that everyone is well and staying warm this Winter. Our next big project will be the Art of Gardening Seminar. I will be sending out more information soon for sign ups for food donations. Please be on the look out for my emails with more seminar information as soon as finalize all the details and figure out what our needs will be. We no longer have some of our committee chairs from years past to assist us, so we are working out the details. Please stay healthy and warm and remember only 48 more days until Spring.

Joanne

Tidbits from Teresa

Cleaning out my "gardening drawer" I found a few "tidbits" to share with you for February. It's only 48 days until the first day of spring and sunsets are increasingly later in the day. Keep the faith and we will soon be excited about seeing a new season of growth.

Your "PERFECT" garden

Know what you want from a garden:

- ❖ Style, maintenance level, lifestyle of your family, kind of architecture of your house, budget, winter interest

Specific needs you have:

- ❖ Cover eyesore, draw attention to entrance, property value, enjoyment, cut flowers, veggies

What are you working with?

- ❖ Sun, shade, type of soil, existing plants, drainage, exposure, house views

Do consider:

- ❖ Focal points, distance for your views, curves, odd numbers of plants, seasonal appearance, mature size, fit for your conditions

Don't:

- ❖ Plant too close, expect a perennial bed to be maintenance free, forget to water in new plantings, plant varieties that have "health" issues, skip steps when you start a new bed, volcano mulch around trees.

Do:

Look for annuals for instant color, perennials for the backbone of your garden.

Monochromatic can be beautiful even all green.

Use texture to create interest.

Plan in winter when you can see the “bones” of your garden.

Balance the elements so your eyes flow from one area to another.

Try new plants and design ideas – there are no failures in gardening only learning opportunities.

Be selective about accepting gift plants—you don't want a Trojan horse!

Use ground covers to cut down weed maintenance and a need for mulch.

Be patient and have fun! Perfect is what you like and many times serendipity is “perfect”

Soil “TIDBITS”

1 tsp of soil contains:

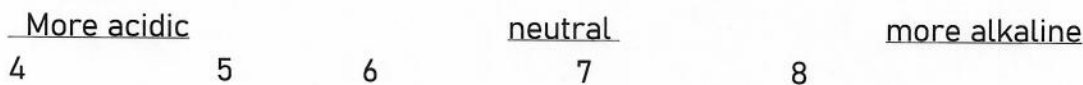
- More microbes than there are people in the US
- More species than all the vertebrates on earth
- Several yards of fungal filaments
- Several thousand protozoa
- Several dozen nematodes

CEC measures the soils ability to hold onto and distribute nutrients in forms plants can use because of their + or – charges. Cations = (+) Ca, Mg, K, NH₄, H, Na, anions (-) Cl, NO₃, SO₄, & P₂O₅. Low CEC (sandy or low in O.M.) can't hold on to N & P. Clays have high CEC, and are packed so tightly that some nutrients are inaccessible to plants. When you add organic matter this makes nutrients more available. NO₃ moves easily through the soil, especially in sandy soil, if not intercepted by plant roots or denitrified (returned to the air) by bacteria. NO₃ moves easily, NH₄ (ammonium) does not move easily.

Soil organic matter (OM) is water conserving, dead stuff recycling, contains life sustaining organisms and is a carbon storage. Soil pulls CO₂ from the atmosphere & sequesters it and turns it into humus. Soil rich in OM (ie carbon) is more fertile, has better texture and is able to buffer pH.

Systematic tilling reduces carbon stores by 50-70%.

pH, a measure of acidity or alkalinity, affects what you can grow and how nutrients are utilized by the plant. Iron deficiency almost always occurs when the soil pH is above 7.5. (add aluminum sulfate)



Each unit is a factor of 10 to the next one.....6 is 10X more acidic than 7, 5 is 100x more acidic, and a pH of 4 is 1000x more acidic. This is why it is so difficult to change your pH.....say to grow blueberries on a soil with a pH of 7.3. You need to change the pH for the entire soil profile, not just the top inch or two.

Teresa Diehl

February 2022



February Notes from Sandy B –

Ah February! I actually LIKE turning the calendar to this month! To me it means that spring will soon be in the air. Besides, I ordered my seeds this week and they will be arriving soon. I can't wait to start pouring over them and planning my garden for this growing season!

Planning for our seminar is in full swing. I'm keeping my fingers crossed that nothing comes along to derail those plans.

Sandy Bindel



Greetings from Gretchen

IT'S FRENCH TOAST WEATHER!

Why is it that the milk, bread and eggs always go first?!? Hope this finds you stocked up and ready for this week's snow event!

I love the accuracy of science of Meteorology – we are seeing forecasts from 3 – 30" of snow. It brings to mind the old adage about "hitting the broad side of a barn"! Stay safe and warm!

ART OF GARDENING READY TO GO!

January was a challenging month on many fronts at the Staley house. Thanks for your patience regarding the registrations for the Art of Gardening! We are finally

ready to go! Hopefully you received your email from Joanne with the registration form yesterday. We are starting with the email list of past participants today. There should also be a link in the email. We expect to sell out again, so please, **DON'T WAIT** to register! Looking forward to seeing you in March!

BREAKFAST AND SNACKS FOR THE SEMINAR

A HUGE thanks to Roxanne Shoffstall and Joanne Rex who will be picking up Sue Lyon's role in organizing the continental breakfast and snacks for the Seminar. We rely on each of you to contribute to the food in order to make our event the best in Ohio! Please **watch for** an email from Joanne, coming soon, with the list of items needed and **respond** promptly with the items you can commit to bringing. If you are attending the seminar, you are expected to make a contribution to this important part of the event.

If you are unable to attend the seminar, please consider a cash donation to help offset the expenses of the paper goods and beverages.

WINTER SOWING

I am using these early February days to start my Winter Sowing! I have my milk jugs prepped and ready and plan to pick up more seed starting mix on my trip to town today. I love how easy this process is. If you haven't ever tried this process, there are several great instructional videos on YouTube to check out! Happy Gardening!

~ Gretchen Staley, President

Happenings from Kay

Mexican Petunia.....a disappointment.

Several years ago I saw this planter at Easton in Columbus. It was huge and so beautiful, but what were those bright blue flowers? I snapped a photo and showed it to Kayla at Kayla's Greenhouse. She shared the photo with her flower supplier, he identified the plant as Mexican Petunia. Kayla agreed to order some, and I was excited to try something new, so bought 10 plants. The plants were shared with friends while promising them beautiful bright blue blooms. Then, we waited, and waited, and waited. Finally in mid-August, a single bloom appeared that lasted one day. I checked with my friends and their plants were doing the same, very few and far between blooms. What a disappointment!

I had given a plant to Sue Hamilton who now lives in Columbus and everyone who knows Sue, knows what a green thumb she has. In October she sent me a photo of beautifully blooming Mexican Petunias. Wow, then she added she was in Florida, where it is considered highly invasive.

Lesson learned.....no blue flowers. To learn more go to: <https://www.hgtv.com/outdoors/flowers-and-plants/mexican-petunias-plant-with-caution>

Submitted by Kay Studer





The Allen County Master Gardeners present
the 21st Annual

Art of Gardening" Seminar

Saturday, March 19, 2022

8:00 a.m.—3:30 p.m.

Ohio State University, Lima Campus — Life Sciences Building
4240 Campus Drive, Lima, Ohio

\$50.00 Includes Continental Breakfast, Snacks, Lunch and Handouts

Program Schedule:

- | | |
|-------------------|---|
| 8:00 - 8:50 a.m. | Doors Open—Registration and Refreshments |
| 8:50 a.m. | Welcome |
| 9:00 — 10:15 a.m. | <i>Problem Solving Perennials for Sun and Shade from Proven Winners</i>
With Josh Roggenbuck, Regional Product Manager, Walters Gardens |
| 10:15—10:30 a.m. | Break |
| 10:30—12 p.m. | <i>Trees and Shrubs for Small Spaces</i>
with Janet Macunovich, Garden, Author, Speaker |
| 12:00 —12:45 | Lunch |
| 12:45 —2:00p.m. | <i>5 Essential Herbs and How to Preserve Your Harvest</i>
with Amanda Ferguson, Ohio Herb Center Coordinator |
| 2:00—2:15 p.m. | Break |
| 2:15 —3:30 p.m. | <i>You've Convinced me to Plant Natives: Now What?</i>
- <i>Adding Native Plants to your Landscape</i>
with Dave McPheron, Owner, Star Native Farms |
| 3:30 p.m. | Adjourn |

MG CEU Credits 6 hours

Register Early! Seating is Limited! We Sell Out Every Year!

To register, complete form and send a check for \$50.00 payable to:

Allen County Master Gardeners

Mail registration to:

Gretchen Staley

407 E. Sycamore St.

Columbus Grove, OH 45830

Please note that your checks will be held and processed the week of the event—you will receive confirmation via the email address you provide below only.

We will follow current recommendations of the Health Department and the Campus in place at the time of the event.

As of February 1, 2022 there is a recommendation for wearing masks indoors at public events is in place.

Please be prepared to cooperate with the recommendations in place at the event.

We have no control over the HVAC system on campus. Please dress in layers for your comfort.

If you do not have access to a printer, please hand write all of the following information to include with your check.

Please complete separate registration form for each guest. Thank you!

Order Form:

Name: _____

Seminar Registration Fee Enclosed: \$50.00

Address: _____

Optional Gluten Free Wrap Lunch Additional \$2.00 fee: \$ _____

City/St/Zip: _____

Total Payment Enclosed: \$ _____

Phone: _____

Check payable to: **Allen County Master Gardeners**

Email: _____

Mail to: Gretchen Staley

Note: Confirmation via email ONLY.

407 E. Sycamore St.

Are you a Master Gardener? Y / N

Columbus Grove, OH 45830

If yes, what County? _____