



Digging It!



All the Dirt from the Allen County Master Gardeners

FEBRUARY 2023

INTRODUCTION BY NIC BAUMER

Hello! My name is Nic Baumer and I am the new Agriculture and Natural Resources educator for Ohio State University Extension here in Allen County. I am extremely excited to be here and to get the opportunity to work with each of you in the agriculture community and the horticulture community through Master Gardener Volunteers. I was born and raised on a small farm in Shelby County. I graduated from Anna High School in 2009 and from The Ohio State University in 2013. I then spent nine years as a high school agricultural education instructor and FFA advisor at Benjamin Logan High School (three years) and Bradford High School through the Upper Valley Career Center (six years). I now reside in Hardin County with my wife Nicole who is the agricultural education instructor and FFA advisor at Riverdale Local Schools. I am looking forward to begin meeting you all through the many winter programs and many other events. It is my goal to live out the land grant mission by being a resource for you for information and to answer your questions to make what you are doing better. Again, I am excited to be here and I will hopefully see and meet many of you soon!



Nic Baumer

Agriculture and Natural Resources Educator

baumer.15@osu.edu / allen.osu.edu



Notes from Joanne

Next month...



Tidbits from Teresa

February is a good time to plan for spring 2023. We have the time to survey what worked or what need to be replaced. I suggest looking into a holding bed in 2023 if you don't have one. Here are three reasons why a holding bed makes sense.

Propagation projects:

This is a handy spot for seeds that need winter chilling or that take months to germinate. Sink the seed pots up to their rims into the holding bed and you won't have to water them as often. If you take cuttings of perennials or woody plants, planting them in a holding bed for a few months after they start rooting gives them a chance to develop a sturdy new root system. This works for perennial divisions that are too small to go back into the garden.

Temporary Housing:

If you come home with impulse buys, and who hasn't, you may not know where to put them. Plop them in your holding bed and they will grow and thrive until you find them a home. A mail order plant smaller than you expected or a sad specimen you want to save can recover and bulk up and then have a better chance of surviving. Holding beds work well for tree seedlings that would get lost, mowed over or not survive without some extra TLC until they grow larger. I like to put the tree seedlings in pots and plant the pots up to the rim in the bed and have had good success with this method. I went from a 10% success rate to a 60% or more success rate by giving them a year to root well. They have the opportunity to develop a sturdy root system and grow larger.

Test Plots:

Move that mystery plant into your holding bed and figure out if it is a keeper or not. We all have pampered plants that turned out to be weeds. Unlabeled plants can be examined for their merits. Invasive plants can be found out before they take over valuable garden space.

All you need to do is pick a spot and build a simple frame and fill it with soil. It doesn't have to be a raised bed but they work better. A raised bed will warm up earlier in the spring, less likely to get waterlogged and easier to protect from critters. Locate close to a water source or near enough so you can keep an eye on it. If you have room for more than one, place one in sun and the other in shade. This gives you more options for different types of plants and many struggling plants do better in semi-shade. An organic mulch will cut down on your work to keep it watered and weed free.

Teresa Diehl

February 2023



February Notes from Sandy B -

I hope you are off to a good start in this new year. It's certainly fun to pour-over the seed and plant catalogues that are arriving weekly. I find the anticipation of a new growing season to be very exciting!

I am working on setting up the meetings for this year. Several members have graciously offered to host a meeting. It's always a pleasure to see how our fellow members garden! I have received some suggestions for meetings and always appreciate any input!

Stay warm and cozy!

Sandy Bindel



Greetings from Gretchen

FOR THE LOVE OF GARDENING

As February turns our hearts to thoughts of love and the slightly increasing day length turns our minds to Spring, I want to take a minute and thank you for sharing your love of gardening and your time, talents and treasures with me, our fellow MGV's and our community! Happy Valentine's Day and Happy Gardening!

THE ART OF GARDENING



We are attaching the flier for the Seminar for those of you who have yet to register and also for you to feel free to share with your gardening friends and family. There are still seats available so feel free to spread the news!

We will of course be in need of your support in numerous ways, as always! Please keep an eye on your emails in the coming weeks as we start compiling the "to do" lists for the seminar. Thanks in advance for all you do to make our seminar a success!

ANNUAL DUES

Many of you who have registered for the seminar have included your dues of 2023. Thanks! If you did not include your dues in your registration you will have the opportunity to pay them at the seminar or you can make your check payable to Allen County Master Gardeners and mail it directly to our Treasurer, Lynn Ellerbrock at:

3262 Bonnieview Dr., Lima, OH 45801

If you are wondering what the annual dues are all about here's how they work: In late December when you recertified as a Master Gardener Volunteer for 2023 the OSU Master Gardener Program statewide compiles the total of volunteers for Allen County and bills our organization \$10 per volunteer which we pay in bulk. That money is used at the state level to fund things like the computer software that runs the Hands on Connect System and other program management functions statewide. When they have excess dues available, they sometimes use those dues to provide the counties with materials such as the OSU MGV table cover that you may have seen at the Christmas Tree Festival and other branded materials. The other \$10 of your dues stays locally and is used by us to fund various general expenses that our organization has such as a State of Ohio annual fee to stay a 501(c)3, for postage, printing, the service charge to keep the Children's Garden website online and similar business expenses.

Hope that makes sense and that you appreciate the value of your contribution!

~ Gretchen Staley, President

Happenings from Kay

Orchids

Recently, I was shopping in one of our big box stores and stopped to admire some beautiful orchids. I had an orchid for several years, one with gorgeous white blooms and it bloomed for months. Then nothing, just a lonely little plant with a few leaves, and it refused to bloom again. So after several years it went to the compost pile. But it got me thinking about the many varieties of orchids.

Did you know that the vanilla you purchase comes from the vanilla orchid?

Although much of the vanilla used for flavoring today is produced synthetically, natural vanilla comes from the seed pod of an orchid plant. The vanilla orchid is a vigorous vining plant that can reach up to 300 feet in its native tropical environment.

The vine produces 2 inch green flowers that must be hand pollinated to ensure a good set of pods. The pods grow to about 6 to 9 inches long and are harvested when fully ripe. The vanilla flavor is then further developed by curing and fermenting the pods.

Today, most cooks purchase vanilla in extract form, but occasionally one can find the whole seed pod, often called a vanilla bean. Most commercial production of vanilla takes place in the tropical regions of Mexico and Madagascar, where the climate is warm and humid, the soil rich with organic matter, and the plant provided with constant shade from other tropical plants. *From: Possum in the Pawpaw Tree*

I can see why my little orchid plant was not thriving in my living room environment. If you run out of vanilla, try *MOLINA* - a Mexican Vanilla Blend,

It's available on line, just google it. I discovered it several years ago on a trip and I'll never use vanilla extract again!

Submitted by Kay Studer



<https://www.allaboutgardening.com/vanilla-orchids/>