



# Digging It!



All the Dirt from the Allen County Master Gardeners

**AUGUST 2019**

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## ***Tidbits from Teresa***

It is tomato season so I thought I would research some tomato tips. The difference between a “store bought” tomato and a fresh off the vine one is huge. Tomatoes are the #1 plant for home vegetable plots. Varieties are labeled determinate (D) or indeterminate (I). The “D” varieties grow to a certain height, produce a set amount of tomatoes and tend to ripen all at once. The “I” variety has no limits on size and length of production time. If you want to restrict plant size and the fruit to ripen at the same time then the “D” is right for you. The “I” is my preference since I have the room and don’t want the tomatoes to ripen all at once. If you select plants with different maturation dates you can extend your harvest.

Know how you want to use your tomatoes before you select from the large number of varieties available. Look for short stocky plants with dark green leaves and avoid plants that are blooming. Pinch off the lower leaves and set the transplant deep, up to the remaining leaves. The portion in soil will develop roots along that stem portion. Tomatoes are “hungry” plants so don’t neglect feeding them at planting and every 3 weeks or so thereafter. Go easy on the nitrogen, (5-10-10) is good as too much nitrogen will produce leaves at the expense of the fruit.

Once they are up and growing watch for pests and diseases. The tomato hornworm can decimate your plants in a matter of days. It is hard to see them on your plants as they blend in really well, look for bare stems and follow that to the leafy area. My son sprays the plant and looks for movement to find them. Blossom end rot (probably a lot of that this season) is caused by uneven moisture levels affecting the calcium the plant receives and usually is seen on the earlier fruits to a greater degree. Cracking is another result of too much rain, followed by low rainfall. Serious diseases like fusarium wilt, verticillium wilt and others can be avoided if you select varieties that are VFW resistant, info that is usually on the tag. Leaf curling is caused by too much moisture but does not affect the plant production or health. Oh there is so much more info available on tomatoes that I omitted, but I am busy taking a bite out of my delicious fruits!

Lobelia or cardinal flower with a scientific name of *Lobelia Lobeliaceae* is a scientific name easy to remember. The blue lobelia we use most often, *Lobelia erinus*, was imported from South Africa in the 1800's. *Erinus* may be from the Greek *eri*, "early" meaning spring flowering. *Lobelia cardinalis* is a North American plant supposedly called *cardinalis* by Queen Henrietta Maria, wife of Charles I, because the color reminded her of a cardinal's robe. *Lobelia siphilitica* also from North America was described as a cure for the pox (*syphilis*). *Lobelia* was named by Charles Plumier for Matthias de l'Obel, a writer who wrote about leaf characteristics, roses, cereals and how to brew beer. Think I will have a beer and contemplate my lobelias.



~~~~~Teresa Diehl August 2019~~~~~

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## August Meeting

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### August meeting

It's time for our annual picnic! The main dish (chicken) and service as well as drinks will be provided. Guests are welcome. Please bring chairs and a covered dish to share: August 21st at The Children's Garden. Picnic begins at 6:30 (note earlier start time). This is always a crowd favorite!

Sandy Bindel



### THE GARDEN IS IN MID-SEASON

It's hard to believe that the gardening season is half finished! The cold, wet spring and slow arrival of summer sun make it seem nearly impossible!

How are you coming with your volunteer commitment? I know the rainy spring set a lot of us behind.

We have 3 months of gardening, learning, teaching and planning ahead and we still need your help!

Please join us on Tuesday's at the garden and review the upcoming events that require your support!

Thanks for your commitment to the Master Gardener Volunteer program!

### **KID'S CLASS – Volunteer Opportunity**

We will be hosting a Kid's Class that will be free and open to the public on Saturday, August 10 at 10 a.m. at the Children's Garden. The title is "Tops and Bottoms" and it is a vegetable class based on a children's book of that name. We will be harvesting vegetables from the garden and offering tastes of the veggies to the kids to try. We will also be planting lettuce seeds in containers for the kids to take home. The enrollment will be limited to 20 children and their parents. Set up will be at 9:15 a.m. and the event will end at 11 a.m. Sign up on the VMS or by emailing me separately.

### **BROWN BAG**

The last four weeks of Brown Bag will offer an interesting array of topics! Come by and enjoy 30 min. of CEU's!

### **FAIRGROUNDS PROJECT – Volunteer Opportunity**

Please watch your email for a special group work session to prep the Fairground Project for the county fair. They Fairgrounds Bloomers team has been struggling to get access to the area and also struggling with health issues so we will be planning a group effort to get caught up!

Watch your email and the VMS calendar for the time and date – we are working with the Fairgrounds to arrange access to the area.

### **PICNIC – Monthly Meeting**

I am already looking forward to the food at the annual Picnic at the Children's Garden! I hope you've marked your calendars and started dog-earring pages in your recipe book for the event! Hope to see you there!

### **BUTTERFLY RELEASE – MARK YOUR CALENDARS!**

Time to start planning for the Butterfly Migration Celebration on Sunday, September 8<sup>th</sup>!

As always this event TAKES A VILLAGE to accomplish! Please plan to work this event if at all possible!

### **SPECIAL THANKS**

The team of Victoria Zeits, Larry Gruber, Allison Doerter and Nanci Mistovich deserve special thanks for their display and educational presentation at the Living History Day at the Allen County Museum again this year! I hear amazing things about their display from the museum staff every year! Thanks!!

Sandy Kennedy presented another fun and fabulous kids lesson on Spiders to a group of 19 kids and their grown-ups in July! So fun! Thanks to Sandy Kennedy, Allison Doerter and Jan Krueger for your help!

*Gretchen*

Short note addition:

ACMGV Deb Lyle has found comfort and relief from her multiple battles with cancer. She was the most positive and least complaining person I have known. Her bravery and determination throughout her illness was extraordinary. God Bless her and keep her!