



# Digging It!



All the Dirt from the Allen County Master Gardeners

**AUGUST 2021**

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## *Notes from Joanne*

~ Allen Co. OSU Master Gardener Coordinator

Master Gardener Volunteers –

WOW! This summer is flying by. I can't believe it is August already. It will soon be time for fair and back to school for all the kiddos, and I will miss seeing all the children at the garden. The garden has become very busy this summer. If you haven't stopped by the garden lately, Danette shared this video that she took last week after working in the garden. <https://photos.app.goo.gl/He9NmrBKafL99Nwh6> It really shows the garden in full bloom and just listen to the birds sing throughout the entire video. Thank you, Danette! Thanks to everyone's hard work this past couple of months, without everyone the garden would not look so good.

A couple of upcoming events are the I Love Insects Class on Thursday, August 5<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 pm. If you know of any children ages 3 to 7, this would be a fun class to attend. Just email me their names, because the space is limited. Gretchen and Sandy K. could use a couple of volunteers on Thursday to help them out if you are free. Second is a teen group is coming on Tuesday, August 3<sup>rd</sup> to work in the garden and we could use more volunteers to assist them. They will be coming around 10 am and working for about an hour before Brown Bag starts.

If you know of anyone who would like to become a Master Gardener, it is not too late! We will still accept new members to the class. The first lab is August 17<sup>th</sup> before the monthly meeting. Everyone is invited to the labs to get a refresher on MG topics and meet the newbies.

Again, thank you for all the hours that you are contributing, we can't do it without you! Thanks again for all that you do, and if you need anything just email or call.

**Joanne Rex**



# Tidbits from Teresa

“You got to know when to pick ‘em, know when to leave ‘em, know when to walk away, and know when to run (hornets’ nest!).” Now that our veggie gardens are producing, it helps to know when to pick them and how to keep them at their best until they are eaten.

Green beans: Harvest when they are young and tender before the seed develops. When you keep the pods picked you get more “pickins” out of them. If the seeds are planted in a 2 week succession you will have a continuous supply of beans.

Beets: For greens, pick the entire plant at 4-6 inches long and for roots, harvest when between a golf ball and a tennis ball size for the most tender beets.

Broccoli: Pick when the buds of the head are firm and tight and before they start to separate.

Cabbage: Harvest when the heads are firm. You can twist the plant in the ground to break the roots off to keep in the ground until you need them. They will also keep in the fridge up to 3 weeks if you cover them with a damp towel and encase with vented plastic bag.

Sweet corn: When the ears are filled out & a pierced kernel shows milky they are ready. I heard (fact or fiction?) that if you grow pumpkins in the corn it will deter raccoons from raiding your corn.

Lettuce: Pick leaf lettuce as soon as the leaves are big enough to eat. For heading varieties, cut before they reach full size and they will continue to produce.

Melons: Allow them to ripen on the vine. Muskmelons develop a crack at the stem attachment and slip off when they are ready. Watermelon’s underside turns from white to yellow and the tendrils are brown and dry.

Onions: Harvest bulb onions when ¼ of the tops have fallen over and the bulbs have begun to develop a papery skin. Once the tops fall over the onion won’t grow anymore. After a few days pull them and let them dry in a warm airy place out of the sun. An old screen works well to let air get to all sides.

Peppers: Begin harvesting when they reach a usable size. Leave some on to ripen fully. When they change color they develop greater levels of vitamin C. If you leave them all on to ripen, they won’t keep blooming and setting fruit. Tip for banana peppers: the hot varieties grow up, the sweet down. Habaneros turn orange or red when mature and get hotter as they mature to red, if you want the heat avoid picking too early. Jalapenos can be picked at 3” and deep green, they are the crispest when green. They go from green to dark green to red when fully mature and have a sweet/hot flavor at that point. Poblanos can be picked when 4” long and 2 1/2” wide very dark green, maturing to reddish-brown and they get sweeter as they mature. If peppers don’t pull off the plant easily they are not finished growing. Tiny brown lines on peppers indicate they are ready. In general, sweet peppers ripen faster and get sweeter as they mature and hot peppers get hotter.

Potatoes: New potatoes, dig after about 10 weeks planting. Storage potatoes are ready after the vines dies and the tubers have developed a tough outer skin but before the fall frosts.

Pumpkins: Unless frost threatens, leave them on until the vine dies. Don’t hold pumpkins by the stem, if the stem breaks it will soon rot.

Rhubarb: Don’t harvest the first year, it takes 3 years to fully establish. When the stalks become thin, this is a sign not to harvest anymore. Always leave at least 1/3 of the stalks on the plant and don’t allow seed head to form.

Squash: Summer squash (zucchini & yellow) are best at 6-8" long. Scallop or patty pan types pick at 3-4" in diameter. To prolong production keep each plant harvested. Pick winter squash before the 1<sup>st</sup> frost when they are fully mature and hardened. Your fingernail should not be able to penetrate the skin. Leave 2" of stem & handle carefully. In 2020 I washed my 30+ butternut squash in a weak bleach solution and was able to keep them a full year.

your garden can afford you.

Teresa Diehl

August 2021

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## August Notes from Sandy B –

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### August Meeting of ACMGV

This is always a favorite! OUR ANNUAL PICNIC IN THE GARDEN. The members of the new master gardener class will be invited to attend. Let's make it a great one! Tuesday, August 16th at 6:30. Chicken, all service and water and iced tea will be provided. Please bring a favorite salad, casserole or dessert to share. Homegrown is especially appreciated by attendees-go figure! Also bring a chair. See you there!

Sandy Bindel

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### *Greetings from Gretchen*



#### PICNIC

We are looking forward to the fellowship of seeing you all again at the Picnic! We will also have the opportunity to welcome new Interns who are joining the program! I hope you will join us.

#### WONDERFUL SURPRISE

What a great surprise we received yesterday from the kind folks at Lowe's! They are donating new picnic tables, both adult and children sizes, to the garden! Thanks to Danette Swick for facilitating the donation and the delivery! I will be reaching out to some of my contacts to see if they have use

of our existing tables. After that process, if there are any not needed or spoken for we will have a conversation about finding the old tables homes or finding use for the good lumber.

#### LITTLE PIECE OF HEAVEN

Those of us who were able to attend the July meeting at Luginbihl's Blue Moon Blueberry Farm sure had a treat! We had a great lesson from owner, Jeff Luginbihl and then had the opportunity to spend time in the field, visiting, laughing and picking beautiful berries! Jeff generously gave us all the blueberries we picked! If you have a chance in the future to support this family business, we give them a big, blue thumbs up!

Thanks again to Sandy Bindel who has been hitting home runs with interesting meetings! Kudos!

## PAINTING THE DERRICK

Thanks to the hard work of Denise and “Woody” Woodruff, who made repairs to support the structure and Tom Sciranka, who did the pressure washing, the derrick at the garden is ready for a new coat of paint. I will be getting the supplies together and into the shed over the weekend and now that we have a forecast of more pleasant weather ahead, all who are willing and able are welcomed to get started finishing up the project. Your help is welcomed!

## WHAT'S AHEAD

Thursday, August 5      Setup time 6:30 pm      I Love Insects Program      Volunteers welcomed

Tuesday, August 17      6:30 pm      Meeting and Picnic      Guests welcomed

Sunday, September 12      Setup time 1:00 pm      Butterfly Migration Celebration

PLEASE PLAN TO HELP WITH THE BUTTERFLY MIGRATION CELEBRATION!

WE WILL NEED ALL HANDS ON DECK!

*Gretchen Staley, President*



## *Happenings from Kay*

### **PEONY ROAD TRIP**

In June, I wrote about the Van Wert Peony farm and festival. You may remember that the “Queen” crowned at the festival each year is called “Queen Jubilee”, named after a famous peony. Early pictures from the 1930’s show the Queen carrying a huge bouquet of peonies. So off to the Nichols Arboretum at the University of Michigan to find the ‘Jubilee’ peony, which wasn’t an easy task. All the plants were labeled, but in no particular order, try searching for one variety in a field of 800! But we found her! See pictures below, and next June, if you’re a peony lover, go to the Nichols Arboretum, their peony collection is amazing!





## **Floret**

Just a quick shoutout about *Floret*. *Floret*, is a small internationally known flower farm located in Washington, with an Instagram following of over 900,000. Here is an interesting article I thought you might enjoy.

<https://www.floretflowers.com/the-story-of-the-floret-workshops/>

Or if you have the Discovery Plus app on your computer or smart tv, you can watch the four part series “*GROWING Floret*” on the Magnolia channel. Watch closely, you may see several glimpses of my daughter Susan Studer-King.

## **Wiped Out!**

Hand out the crying towel. Hundreds of zinnias, snapdragons, and other flowers..... wiped out! The culprit: herbicide drift. The flowers were planted 35 yards away from the culprit corn field, which was sprayed. Note: if you have flowers growing anywhere near corn or soybeans, talk to your farmer friend early in the season to make him aware of your plantings. Also, if you have a lawn service, make sure they know of your flowers too.