



Digging It!



All the Dirt from the Allen County Master Gardeners

JULY 2020

Tidbits from Teresa

This month rhubarb is the subject of my choice. Mine has not been doing well; it has diminished the past few years. So here is the skinny on rhubarb. It is a long-lived perennial so place it in a well-drained sunny spot that has been cleared of perennial weeds. Plant rhubarb in spring in a large sized hole with compost or well-rotted manure. The root, not seeds, should be planted so the buds are 1 to 2 inches below the soil surface. Space them 4 feet apart and mulch to retain moisture through summer. Fertilize in spring with well-rotted manure, compost or 5-10-10. Side dress the plant after the main harvest of stalks. Dig and split every 3-4 years (something I did not do!) Harvest the year after planting, taking ½ or less of the stalks. If the stalks become thin it is a sign that the plant needs to build its reserves. The petioles (leafstalks) are edible; the leaves are poisonous. Rhubarb freezes well and is a component of some of my favorite desserts.

Topic two; clematis....it needs its roots shaded (cool and moist) but foliage and flowers require 4-6 hours of sunshine. They can tolerate semi-shade but it will produce most of its leaves and flowers in sun and near the end of its stems. The flowers are made up of sepals, petals are nonexistent. Jackmantii is a well-known deep purple variety blooming on new growth. The hybrids Henryi (white) and Ramona (lavender) produce sepals on both new and old growth therefore bloom earlier.

Pruning is a little confusing, but a key to remember is that the earlier they bloom the less pruning they require. Group 1: old wood, light grooming after flowering. Group 2: For example, Nelly Moser and Jackmantii, bloom midseason. The first flush that appears in late spring and early summer is on new shoots from old wood, the second flush is on the current years' growth. After blooming, cut back spent first blossoms and this will promote the second flush. Reshape but don't prune hard. Group 3: Late flowering ones bloom on new wood, Princess Diana, Ville de Lyon, on these cut back to 8-16 inches in late winter early spring.

Being susceptible to cedar rust they should not be planted near evergreens like junipers that suffer from the disease. Clematis prefers a loamy, neutral to slightly alkaline soil. Young plants are tender and may fail so it is best to purchase stock at least 2 years old. Root tops should be 2 inches below the surface. Make sure the

plant doesn't dry out its first year after planting. Fertilize in spring and fall its first year and once during its bloom.

A thank you to the faithful who have worked to make the Children's Garden beautiful despite the issues we face due to COVID-19. Your dedication and hard work are an inspiration. On July 1st we should find out what restrictions on our programs will remain. Keep your fingers crossed - when they aren't pulling weeds!

Teresa Diehl July 2020



July Meeting

As I type this on Monday, June 29th, we still are not able to schedule any meetings for our group. Our July meeting date would be on the 15th. We were hoping to kick-off a shortened season with our annual picnic at the garden. There is a slight possibility we may be able to do something then and there, but it wouldn't be our traditional picnic. Please keep checking your email for any updates. BTW, the Garden looks great!

Sandy Bindel



from the desk of Gretchen

SLOW REOPENING OF MASTER GARDENING PROGRAM IN PROGRESS

I had the opportunity to spend some time with Clint at the Children's Garden last evening and talk about OSU starting to slowly begin allowing some gardening to begin. Clint and Joanne will be sending out a letter within the week outlining their responsibilities and how we can help them meet the requirements without being too burdened by new requirements. In the last 4 months we've all learned to be more flexible and cooperative in every aspect of life, so I know this won't be difficult.

The first item we will be able to help with will support Joanne in 2 ways; planning work days and documenting attendance for social distancing requirement. So, we are working on the simplest way to "sign up" for the team work days so she will know who and how many of us plan to come. If you sign up that you plan to come but something comes up and you can't make it, it won't be a problem! But getting in the habit of letting her know will be a courteous and supportive.

The second item will be very much like what you have experienced already in many places you've already been and that will be documenting that you aren't having coronavirus symptoms, haven't been around anyone with symptoms. We are working on a quick fill document that hopefully we can leave in the shed and you can sign and Joanne can keep to meet her requirements. They will have more details on that.

Next, we will be reminding ourselves about good hygiene and tool care practices by providing appropriate hand and tool sanitizing products in the shed. Stuff we should be doing anyway.

Lastly, the conversations about the love/hate relationships with masks aren't going away. Ultimately if you are in close proximity to another volunteer or a garden visitor you are encouraged to have a mask ready to wear. If you are working independently in a garden area, you can breathe the fresh air. Just a common sense/common courtesy situation.

Joanne and I will be at the garden on Tuesday, July 14 from 9 to noon.

I have posted that work day on the VMS. If you are planning to work that morning, please go to the VMS and sign up. If you are unable to access the VMS and you plan to work on Tuesday morning, please email Joanne at rex.87@osu.edu.

Joanne will be posting more work days and times on the VMS schedule soon.

Remember, OSU is like a small country. They have requirements that are designed for major industries like football games that seem like getting hit by a velvet hammer to small companies like us. But when you fish through the intent instead of the letter of the law, not much is changed.

Please make some time in July to come to meet Joanne. She's a peach! We are excited that she can come out to start this "new season" with us!

Gretchen