



Digging It!



All the Dirt from the Allen County Master Gardeners

MARCH 2019

Tidbits from Teresa

When Spanish explorers saw the hills of California blazing with flowers they called the country the land of the “Golden West,” not because of the wealth that was later sought there, but because of the golden poppies. The California poppy was called by the Spaniards “copa de ora” or cup of gold. Its scientific name came from a Russianized version of Dr. Elsholz’s name and became *Eschscholzia*, Papaveraceae. Dr. Elsholz was a Prussian doctor on the ship carrying the plant to Russia.

The California poppies are hardy but look fragile. One simply sprinkles the seeds on the ground, and the reward is a carpet of gold.

Witch hazels are deciduous shrubs that give us encouragement that spring is on its way. The genus name, *Hamamelis*, means “together with fruit”, referring to the simultaneous occurrence of flowers with the maturing fruit from the previous year. *H. virginiana* blooms in the fall while the other species bloom from January to March. The fruit is a two-part capsule with a single black seed in each of the capsules, the capsule splits explosively at maturity in the autumn about 8 months after flowering, ejecting the seeds as far as 30 feet. The witch hazel most common is the variety *H. mollis* which has bright yellow flowers that bloom in late winter. This plant has been used as a supposed remedy for psoriasis and eczema, in aftershave and ingrown nail applications, for dry skin and insect bites and poison ivy. There is no scientific proof of its efficiency but it was used by Native Americans and is sold in pharmacies as witch hazel water, salves, creams and gels. Another use for witch hazel is as a cleaning solution for linoleum, tile or vinyl floors.

Witch hazel likes well drained, moist and slightly acidic soil and is hardy to zone 3. It can be grown in full sun, part sun and part shade. Prune to remove suckers from the base if they start to crowd the branches. It is a slow growing plant so give it room to fill in. ‘Arnold Promise’ is a popular yellow flowering variety that blooms in late winter. ‘Primavera’ has very fragrant yellow flowers in late winter and attractive golden leaves in fall. ‘Diane’ has red-copper colored late blooming flowers. Little Susie and Harvest Moon are more compact varieties. Sandra and Autumn Embers are hardy to zone 4, have a strong fragrance and are more tolerant of clay soils than the autumn varieties. I am ready to see some evidence that spring is on the way.

IN LIKE A LION, OUT LIKE A LAMB



I hope this finds you all surviving this wild and wacky winter and looking forward to the joys of Spring! I have been relishing the lengthening of the days and the glimpses of sunshine on occasion.

I have watching for the early signs of life peeking from the ground and have been seeing the daffodil greens poke through the mulch and today had the joy of seeing some small yellow blossoms of Winter Aconite in bloom in Sandy Bindel's garden! What a joy to see!

Here's hoping for a gentle and sunny transition to a bright and glorious new gardening season!

ART OF GARDENING

Excitement is mounting for the 20th annual Art of Gardening seminar! Margie has been hard at work collecting wonderful door prizes, Mary Kay

Koch is making lots of favors for our guests and Sue Lyon is making her lists for breakfast and snacks.

If you have not contacted Sue yet to let her know what you will contribute to the breakfast and snack tables, please take a moment RIGHT NOW while you are thinking about it to contact her! Making sure that there is are sufficient quantities and a nice variety of items available is a HUGE task and it is really challenging for Sue when she doesn't know who's bringing what. You can reach her at: lslyon45@gmail.com or by calling: 419-999-2591 – leave a message if needed. If you would prefer to make a monetary donation please let Sue know that too so that she can make sufficient purchases.

DO YOU HAVE ACCESS TO LARGE PERCOLATOR(s) – We no longer have access to the 24 – 30 cup percolators that we have used for coffee in the past. If you have access to one or two, please let Sue know and arrange with her or me to get those to the campus on Friday, 3/15.

PACKET PREP – We will meet at Teresa Diehl's home at 6:00 p.m. on Wednesday, 3/13 to fill folders and gift bags. See the VMS to sign up to help with this task.

FRIDAY SET UP – We will be meeting at the Science Building on campus to haul in supplies and set up the rooms and tables at 2:00 p.m. on Friday 3/15. If you are free and would like to help we can always use a couple extra hands.

SATURDAY HELPERS NEEDED – As an ACMGV you are a host of this event, not merely a guest. Please be prepared to arrive early (doors open at 7 a.m.) and stay late (with enough help we can clean up in about 15 minutes) for set up and tear down. If you don't have a direct assignment or responsibility, then when you arrive and throughout the day please keep an eye on the various tables and booths and be sure to ask those working if they need a hand or a break. Remember to greet any guests you encounter throughout the day and welcome them to the event.

I get innumerable complements from other counties about the teamwork that occurs at our event. You all make me proud to be an Allen County MG.

DUES ARE DUE!

If you are coming to the seminar remember to bring a check for \$20 payable to the Allen County Master Gardener Volunteers for your 2019 dues! Treasurer Mark Simmons will be on hand to collect your payment.

MASTER GARDENER TRAINING

Unfortunately, the training class has been cancelled again this year. We had 4 candidates but neither Hardin County or Van Wert County were able to find interested recruits for this year's class. We will continue to try to recruit for new members

throughout the growing season and will also work together with our neighboring counties to try to create a training plan that might make it easier for folks to commit to the training and volunteer time.

PLANNING AHEAD

2019 ACMGV Meetings – VP Sandy Bindel is putting the finishing touches on a diverse and interesting monthly meeting schedule. Please mark your calendar now for the 3rd Wednesday of each month beginning on April 17 and continuing through October. We will have a complete list for you in April but can tell you that we will have a fun and interesting meeting at the Lauer Family Farm Park, the newest installation by JAMPD, and we will be hosted by Chris Fetzer who was instrumental in creating this authentic homestead.

2019 Plant Sale – As you start your seedlings and begin dividing plants in your own gardens, please remember to pot up some treasures for the Plant Sale. We will hold the sale at The Children’s Garden on Saturday, May 18th from 9 a.m. until 2 p.m.

Work for Food – Saturday, April 27 – This will be the first big clean up and set up day at the garden. I have invited the Kohl’s crew back but won’t know until closer to the date if they get sufficient volunteers signed up to participate. Please mark your calendar to plan to come help “wake up” the garden!

~ Gretchen

Witch Hazel Hamamelis ~ Teresa Diehl



<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Witch-hazel>