



# Digging It!



All the Dirt from the Allen County Master Gardeners

**NOVEMBER 2019**

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## Tidbits from Teresa

Today I went looking in our woods to see if the pawpaw fruit I had spied earlier had turned yellow yet. The fruit was gone, something...raccoon, squirrel, birds or other wildlife had beaten me to it. Pawpaws are bitter when they are green but a delicious combo of bananas, mangos and pineapple when they are ripe. Then I went looking for bittersweet and found another colony of pawpaw that I had not noticed before. We have lived here 26 years and I never noticed it before!

Pawpaw, a native, (*Asimina, triloba*) is an understory tree that attracts swallowtail butterflies and is deer resistant. The leaves are bright yellow in fall, lending another layer of color to the woods. The plants you find in nurseries are usually grown from seeds although you can occasionally find a grafted tree. You probably won't be successful digging in the wild because the saplings are part of a colony and won't have a root mass on their own. Pawpaw trees can't self-pollinate so you need two different types of trees to produce fruit. Each colony is essentially one tree so you would need a separate colony to produce fruit. The insects that pollinate pawpaws aren't efficient or abundant. Bees don't pollinate them, flies and some beetles do, but they are not as efficient as bees. A faster and smellier way is to hang road kill on the branches to attract more flies and increase cross pollination.

You can also improve fruit set by hand pollination. Most flowers contain several ovaries, so each flower results in more than one fruit. Pawpaws produce purple flowers in spring before they leaf out. The flowers have both male and female reproductive components but cross pollination is needed. They are resistant to pest and diseases so are perfect for chemical free gardening practices. When planted from seed they do not produce fruits for 5 to 8 years and the process is not easy. The seedlings are touchy and can even be killed by direct sunlight. Unless you are very patient, persistent and possibly not advanced in years – buying an established tree might be your best bet.

Hope you can make our November 9<sup>th</sup> banquet, the food and company are always top-notch. It is always sad to end a gardening season. I will miss seeing my Tuesday friends at the CG but feel lucky to have enjoyed another year with them and look forward to seeing them next spring. A friend of mine recently told me "Time is like a roll of toilet paper, the closer you get to the end the faster it goes!"

**Teresa Diehl**

**November 2019**

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## From Sandy Bindel's desk:

With the growing season and our meeting months coming to a close, I'll be signing off for awhile. I hope you found the meetings this year interesting. Sorry about having to cancel the June meeting due to weather! Maybe we can get a look at our members' Fairground Bloomers project another time!

I'd like to take this opportunity to thank those of you who offered suggestions for meeting places and topics. If you have any suggestions for future meetings or wish to host a meeting, please let me know. I'll also take nominations of other member's gardens to visit! Email me at [sanran@bright.net](mailto:sanran@bright.net) or call or text me at (419) 230-5143. Thanks also to Marge LaFollett for providing the delicious refreshments at Elizabeth Eley's house!

See you at the Banquet! Sandy Bindel

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SPEND SOME TIME WITH YOUR GARDENING FRIENDS! **BANQUET RESERVATIONS DUE!**

Please pick up the phone or send an email to Sandy Kennedy today to RSVP for the annual Allen County Master Gardener Banquet on Saturday, November 9 at 6:30 p.m.! We really would like to see you! Whether you've spent loads of time volunteering or have had a challenging year and we haven't seen you in a while, we'd love to share a meal and some fellowship with you!

Email Sandy at: [tkennedy@watchtv.net](mailto:tkennedy@watchtv.net) or call her at: 419-795-3033!

Hope to see you there!

RECORD YOUR HOURS ON THE VMS

Please take a few minutes to update your hours in the VMS! Clint Schroeder is taking on the responsibility of monitoring and reporting in the future so it will be a great help to he and I to make the transition with everyone's data up to date. If you have technical difficulties with the VMS let me know and I will work with you!

THANKS FOR A SUCCESSFUL YEAR!

In spite of the slow start to the growing season, the board and I agree that it was a successful year! Thanks to each volunteer who lent a hand in some way! Thanks, too, to those of you who made tangible donations of goods and

services for the garden! So many of you contribute in ways that others don't realize and your efforts and generosity are greatly appreciated!

SAVE THE DATE

The Art of Gardening Seminar will be held on Saturday, March 14, 2020! Mark your calendars and watch for more information in the coming months!

~ Gretchen