"A garden is a grand teacher. It teaches patience and careful watchfulness; it teaches industry and thrift; above all it teaches entire trust." ~

Gertrude Jekyll

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Licking County Master Gardener

Volume XI, Issue 2 March 2021

Master Gardener Sale Items

Nancy McClary

Master Gardeners, how are you set as far as gardening accessories are concerned? As you know (and Interns if you don't know) I am in charge of gardening items to sell as a small fund-raiser within our membership and also to the public, generally at our Conference and Plant Sale. See below for what is offered. However I caution you that prices might be higher if you wait and more inventory is ordered. The soil knife is a very handy tool – ask anyone who has used it! If you would like any of the supplies listed below please let me know. Cost is $22. To find out more about it and how it is used, view this Youtube video:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dDIbBZtEJ2w&t=27s&ab_channel=A.M.Leonard

The gloves are nitrile and hold up well when doing gardening chores. They can also be washed successfully many times. Colors are pink, green, blue and purple in sizes S-L. There are also black gloves in size XL. Cost is $8

How is your organization for gardening tools? I have a limited supply of garden tool organizers. It made of heavy duty material and can wrap around your 5-gallon bucket. Perfect for keeping your tools where you can find them. These are in limited supply - 4 only - and probably will not be selling them anymore. Cost $18.

Coordinators Column

Lori Swihart

Spring is here and I couldn't be more excited!

This winter seemed so long and dreary, but the sunshine truly uplifts the spirit!

Anyone plant pansies yet? That is one of my first spring chores in my landscape to add color till the warmth of the season begins to stimulate the production of photosynthesis. Be sure to purchase pansies sitting outside as this indicates that they have acclimated to the colder temperatures.

The polyhouse is open and ready for production. April will bring with it a few events like Earth Day, Arbor Day and MGV's getting into the garden to begin spring maintenance. May Plant Sale is being planned and some of our educational events are on the calendar. It may look different from years past, but we will be able to function as a group again! Looking forward to seeing you all in person.

"The polyhouse is open and ready for production. April will bring with it a few events like Earth Day, Arbor Day and MGV's getting into the garden . . ."

The 17 interns have begun their online training and will conclude in mid-May and I am asking those that feel comfortable with mentoring them to reach out to Diana RowLee to find out where you can help them feel connected. Once again, we have a dynamic group of individuals coming on board!

I will receive training on March 22 for the new VMS type of system called Hands-On Connect (HOC) and hopefully afterward, we will be able to begin training for all of you to start using it. I had a little preview of it on Wednesday and I have to say, I am quite impressed! Remember, embrace the change, LOL.

Happy Spring and see you in the garden.

President's Column **Kathryn Bierley**

Seeds

" We domesticated seeds like we did animals. The Utne Reader printed an article 'A Brief History of Seeds and Plant Domestication . . .' "

The need for seed starts in January for me. The seed catalogs arrive in my mail and, increasingly, in my e-mail. The number of companies trying to sell me seeds seems to be growing faster than my garden's weeds. But I've never stopped to think about who, what, where, why, when and how of seeds.

Originally, seeds came from your own plants - seed saving of non-GMO, heirloom plants we call it today. And you probably traded seeds with family and friends. Then people noticed some plants had traits they wanted - sweeter, bigger, deeper color, more disease resistant. The Seed catalogs arrive in my mail and, increasingly, in my e-mail. The number of companies trying to sell me seeds seems to be growing faster than my garden's weeds. But I've never stopped to think about who, what, where, why, when and how of seeds.

Originally, seeds came from your own plants - seed saving of non-GMO, heirloom plants we call it today. And you probably traded seeds with family and friends. Then people noticed some plants had traits they wanted - sweeter, bigger, deeper color, more disease resistant - so development of hybrid seeds began. We domesticated seeds like we did animals. The Utne Reader printed an article "A Brief History of Seeds and Plant Domestication" (1) that, while not up to our MGV standards for researched information, is an easy read. It points out how the hybridization and genetic manipulation of our crops has resulted in a less diversified and more vulnerable food supply. Historically, we all were responsible for seeds and a part of the food chain. Now just three grains (corn, wheat and rice) dominate our food choices, for example.

Which brings me back to seeds. While huge agribusinesses grow just a few varieties, we back yard gardeners can keep the diversity alive when we select our seeds. One of my favorite catalogs is Tomato Growers Supply. The 2021 catalog has 380+ varieties of tomatoes alone. Talk about variety and diversity. There are the big seed companies - Burpee and Park, for example. But there are increasing numbers of smaller, focused seed sellers - Ohio Heirloom, Seed Savers, Baker Creek, Sustainable - whose names say it all. When choosing varieties of tomatoes to grow for the plant sale, I tried to focus on Ohio-developed. Think about what your choices of seed say about you and your garden this year.

1.https://www.utne.com/environment/history-of-seeds-plant-domestication-ze0z1208zwar

A New Way of Gardening

Cheryl Campbell

In 2019 Licking County Master Gardeners embraced the idea of allowing our Food Pantry team to have its own space in the Learning Gardens. The Raised Row concept developed by Jim and Mary Competti gave us a model for the project assigned to the Intern Class about to graduate. The project was a great success as it gave us the space and the ability to grow more produce and to reduce maintenance time.

As we worked on this project, I would think about my own large garden and all the work it entailed. In the Fall of 2019 I asked my husband to take down the picket fence around the garden, till it up and plant grass seed. He more than happy never to have to maintain or paint it again but loves the veggies I grow. Is she giving up?

I had a plan! Create a smaller space (1/3 the size) using the Raised Row methods and see if that would work for our needs! Warren had built me a greenhouse earlier in October 2019. It blew away! He built it again in November. Another storm took it down! By March 2020 he decided to scrap the bent metal framing kit and use 2x4's. Third time is a charm! I would attach the garden to the greenhouse! I could use the water from the gutters to my rain barrel and water the garden. That feature was added this Fall. We will continue to tweak this as we always do! I may even try to add fertilizer to the rain barrel! Hmmmm!

Back to my story!

April and May of 2020, we marked off a 16'x16' space, ordered deer fencing from the internet, bought fence posts, two loads of wood chips, a load of soil and compost and weed barrier. Within three days, the garden was ready to plant.

I will attest to the fact that I have spent less than 15-20 minutes a week maintaining the new garden. I was able to grow the same amount of plants and did my usual sauces and relishes on four 12' rows. I used cattle fencing to allow my tomatoes and cucumbers a sturdy support. Vegetables were clean, nothing fell over, nothing grew under my feet and my back never got tired. Hallelujah! I was surprised how pretty that space stayed all Summer! And the deer never got in!

I already looking forward to Spring! Can't wait to do this again!

Fully Grown New Garden

(Cont'd on Pg. 5)

A New Way of Gardening (Cont'd from Pg. 4)

My Old Garden

Old Garden (later in season)

Newly planted new garden

Newly planted new garden (later in season)

Master Gardener Intern Profile — Todd Deavers

I was introduced to gardening at a young age. My maternal grandparents always had large gardens at their Junction City, OH home. As children we learned to be respectful of the garden and that if you wanted to visit my grandparents between March and November that you would find them in the garden. Their simple and dedicated approach to gardening reflected their lives, raising 10 children during the Depression didn't leave much time for nonsense!

Their love of gardening rubbed off on me. During summers and Christmas breaks from school I worked at a garden center in my hometown of Lancaster, OH. My gardening now consists mostly of potted herbs and vegetables as well as a large collection of house plants. My fulltime work schedule and other obligations have limited the extent of my gardening.

I first became aware of the MGV program a few years ago. I wanted to participate but couldn't make the time commitment. However, earlier this year I left the world of fulltime employment and have begun consulting. This was in part to allow me to finally make time for MGV. The fact that the course work is now offered online was also an enabler.

My wife Beth and I relocated from New Albany to Newark to be closer to my aging mother six years ago. I attended school at Ohio University with undergraduate degrees in Zoology and Economics and a Master of Business Administration degree. Beth is a federal judge in the Southern District of Ohio. I grow the herbs and vegetables and she does the cooking, it's a straight forward division of labor at our house. We enjoy the Newark and Granville farmers markets and look forward to resuming an active travel schedule soon.

Get Ready . . . — Nancy McClary

Get ready for butterfly migration by growing these Proven Winners introductions. According to the Proven Winners website, growing native plants with sweet nectar like 'Pardon My Purple' Bee Balm is one of the best ways to ensure you'll get a great view as our flittering friends, such as Monarchs, make their migrations across North America this summer. A petite variety is 'Pardon My Purple' is perfect for the front of the border, and butterflies adore it! Hardy in zones 4-8. Other butterfly favorites are below.

"Cinderella" Swamp Milkweed

"Luscious" Lantana

"Pardon My Purple" Bee Balm

Master Gardener Intern Profile — Amy Vohsing

Hello!

My name is Amy Vohsing and I wanted to become a Master Gardener because I have always loved to garden and I also love to teach! Gardening has been a lifelong challenge for me beginning about 35 years ago with perennials. I morphed into vegetables when my kids were young, but with little guidance, my efforts produced little. As time progressed, my efforts started to pay off. There is such a thrill to see seeds sprout that is hard to describe!

My passion for teaching Life Sciences for 40 years also brought me to this Program. While teaching an Environmental Class I was able to encourage the administration to give them a 4' x 8' plot of which we grew lettuce/spinach/and peas. The students were able to have salads they had grown, while I taught!

Learning is ongoing and I am always anxious to get my brain stimulated to acquire new material. Because of Covid, I retired from teaching High School last year. This was a few years earlier than I wanted to retire. Becoming a Master Gardener has been on my bucket list and so this was a good time to begin!

I have three children who are 30'ish who want me to teach them what I learn about gardening as they set up their first homes. My husband (Bill) and I moved to Licking County in 1986 and love it. I have a BA in Biology from Kent State and MA in secondary science education from OSU. For a decade or so I taught at the branch and also have taught decades at Newark Catholic.

Bill and I live in Granville on a 5-acre meadow lined with some woods. We have only a little grass near the house and about 4.5 acres is mowed, but really a meadow if let go. About seven years ago we decided to not mow about an acre and see what happens. Wow! The flowers came back up and now we are obsessed with our little meadow. The wildlife that comes to this area has been thrilling to watch! This year we plan to let more land become part of the meadow as well as physically plant some native pollinator plants. The grandchildren (three) love to walk through it and see the flowers and wildlife.

Master Gardening fits my urge to learn, my passion for the outdoors, and hopefully, my fill my love of teaching. I am so thrilled to be a part of this organization!

Monarchs in Mexico: People Care — Kaye Alban

The Monarch Butterfly Fund presented a webinar in January that I watched. It was a first-hand account of the return of monarchs to the Mexico wintering sites each year, and the people who study and work to save them.

It presented yet another aspect of how the forest protects the overwintering monarchs. It described how monarchs are counted at the Mexico sites. And how several organizations work together with local communities on sustainable development and forest conservation.

As normal, the monarchs this year began arriving in late October and were seen in large groups flying around the sanctuaries and feeding in neighboring agricultural fields. By mid-November, colonies were well established and on the last weekend of November butterfly sanctuaries Sierra Chincula and El Rosario were open to tourism. But Cerro Pelon and La Mesa sanctuaries would not open this season. Due to Covid-19 health rules were enforced in these sites and no children and the elderly were allowed. And because of Covid-19 "The Day of the Dead" festivals were all celebrated virtually.

Much was talked about how important the tree "canopy" which provides a blanket for the monarchs in the forest. Outlying areas can get to 32 degrees or get very hot and the blanket keeps the monarchs at a survival temperature. Also acts like an umbrella to keep the rain and wind off them. As wet and cold can kill the monarchs.

It was discussed about why some butterflies hang on the trunks of the trees or hang from the pine

(Cont'd on Pg. 12)

RVC Plant of the Month

Grizz Smith

False Cypress 'Golden Mop'
(Chomaecyparis pisifera)

This garden star is native to Asia (Japan) as well as North America (Zones 4-8). While both true and false cypresses are of the same botanical family, they are of different genus (a class of life having common characteristics). False cypresses typically (not always) have flattened foliage, are smaller and tend to be winter hardier than true cypresses. They also have smaller rounded cones with fewer seeds. False cypress 'Golden Mop', also known as thread-leaf or mops, gained its name from the ground hugging, weeping, string-like yellow foliage. When selecting your planting site, keep in mind that while this evergreen can thrive in light shade, the golden varieties need full sun to develop their brightest golden color. They are also susceptible to winder die-back when not protected from our northern cold winds.

Before you start pruning, keep in mind that false cypresses DO NOT readily bud-out from leafless wood. The majority of your pruning should occur in late winter to mid-spring before new growth emerges. First, remove dead or damaged branches, then cut back to a side or lateral branch any odd stray branch growth that detracts from the plant's natural form. If it has outgrown its designated space, cutting back to side branches will also be necessary. Bear in mind that no more than one-third of a plant's live material should be removed annually.

To control its size and desired form, you can prune in late summer after the current season's growth has matured. Fall pruning may cause winter die-back. False cypress are rarely bothered by deer or rabbits and become more drought and heat tolerant as they mature. They are adaptable to most soil types but require a well-drained location. Remember to deeply water new plants for root growth.

In our landscapes, false cypress "Golden Mop" adds year- round brightness and texture to rock gardens, slopes and walkways. With their rounded pyramidal form they are inspiring directional guide plants. In mass plantings or as single specimens, they serve as a natural screen to camouflage undesirable views. As you walk our village, be looking for this artistic charm in our landscape.

Seed Starting 2021

Alice Schaegel

I read about Cornelian Cherry and became interested in planting some. As I looked into this I found a tree seed company in Michigan “Oikos Tree Crops”. I had planned to purchase the plant but I was drawn to their seed collection. I purchased Hungarian Cornelian Cherry seeds and Black Haw Viburnum seeds. Each seed needed cold stratification for 90 - 120 days. They are planted and located on the bottom shelf of my refrigerator. The Cornelian Cherry needed scratched, so I used a nail file to disturb the outer seed coat. They will be planted outside in early summer. I won’t see anything this summer but I hope to in 2022.

This exercise in planting lead to another purchase from Oikos Tree Crops. This time it was Pink thimble berries, Wine Raspberry, and Glaskins Perpetual Rhubarb. The berries are planted and refrigerated with the first group. The rhubarb will be direct sown.

I’m not sure of my success with this but I enjoy the process.

Blackhaw Viburnum

Pink Thimbleberry

Wine Raspberry

Perpetual Rhubarb

Botanist Marie Clark Taylor

Tara Gill

Note: This article and the next were written by Tara for the Newark Advocate for Black History Month

Marie Clark Taylor was an American botanist. Born in Sharpsburg, Pennsylvania not much information is available about her before her graduation from Dunbar Highschool in the District of Columbia with honors in 1929. Received her Bachelor (1933) and Master of Science (1935) from Howard University in botany .

During the 1930's and 40's she taught science at Cardozo Highschool. While still engaged in teaching high school she enrolled in the PhD program at Fordham University.There she researched plant photomorphogenesis, the influence of light on plant growth. She became the first African American woman to gain a PhD in botany and the first woman of any race to receive a PhD (cum laude) from Fordham University.

This botanist was also a veteran who served in New Guinea during World War 2 in the Army Red Cross. After the war she returned to the District of Columbia where she was an assistant professor at Howard University. Her dedication to teaching was so well known, her students joked to avoid any interference between the two she planned the delivery of her child to be after university final exams. She succeeded the Chair of the Botany Department in 1947 and remained the head of the botany department until her retirement in 1976. While there she was greatly involved in the construction of a new biology building featuring the Howard University botanical greenhouse laboratory on its roof.

Marie's legacy includes the organization of summer science institutes for high school biology teachers. The purpose was to introduce them to new methods of teaching science. She advocated for the use of real botanical plant matter (cheaper than animal specimens) and light-microscopes to study living cells. Grants from the National Science Foundation helped grow these institutes. Under the National Science Foundation Marie helped put together 16mm instructional films that teachers could use. Video subjects ranged from plant growth time-lapse videos to biographies on researchers such as Louie Pasteur. President Lyndon B. Johnson in the mid-1960's request for her to expand her efforts both nationally and overseas

Margaret Strickland Collins, civil rights activist and collegue to Dr. Taylor called her "a powerhouse who worked tirelessly to improve teacher training in the sciences."

Marie Clark Taylor died in December of 1990 at Walter Reed Army Medical Center. Following her death an auditorium at Howard University was named in her honor.

The History of Vanilla

Tara Gill

The Totonac indigenous peoples of VeraCruz, Mexico cultivated the tlixochitl vine (Vanilla tlixochitl), an orchid whose fruits give us vanilla beans. The vanilla pods were used for medicinal uses. Medicinal in this instance meaning as an aphrodisiac, or mixed with tobacco. 1480 brought the Totanac under the control of a rival empire, The Aztecs, to whom they would then pay thousands of vanilla pods in tribute. The Aztecs mixed their now locally sourced vanilla, with cacao sourced through trade. November 1519 the Aztec emperor Montezuma, greets Spanish conquistador Hernan Cortez with a beverage called xocolatl. Cortez was so taken with the flavor he demanded to know the ingredients. August 1521 brought the Aztecs the conquer of their capitol by Hernan Cortez who took the vanilla plant back to Europe. Europe then spent over 300 years unable to coax their vanilla to fruit.

A vanilla vine was smuggled from Mexico to the Bourbon Island of Réunion in 1793. Vines were successfully grown but very rarely resulted in the coveted fruit. French entrepreneurs began shipping vanilla to the islands of Réunion and Mauritius by 1819. Sainte -Suzanne, Bourbon (modern Reuinion) 1829, a bondservant named Edmond (no last name, as bondservants were not allowed to have them) is born to a mother who died in childbirth and a father he never knew. When Edmond was a few years old, the holder of his bond sent him to live with Féréol Bellier Beaumont. Edmond spent the majority of his time following Féréol while he tended to his plants and simultaneously schooled the child in horticulture, then botany. Féréol's plant collection included a vanilla vine.

1841 Féréol and Edmond are on their usual walk when Féréol notices that his regularly barren vanilla vine had produced fruit. Emond then told Féréol that he had pollinated the plant himself. Skeptical at first that a 12-year-old had indeed solved this puzzle, Féréol watched a bit longer. Once the vine continued to fruit, a demonstration was requested on how pollination had been intentionally and successfully achieved. Hand pollination was accomplished using a bamboo stick to lift the plant tissue separating the anther and stigma, followed by a thumb gesture to smear pollen from the anther onto the stigma. Edmond was then sent to travel the island teaching this technique to other bondservants.

French botanist, Jean Michel Claude Richard briefly pretended to have taught this technique to Edmond three years earlier. Féréol who had once said of Edmond, "this young black boy became my constant companion, a favorite child always at my feet", was able to lend credence concerning the veracity of Edmonds story.

France outlawed enslavement in 1848 and Edmond was awarded with the last name of Albius. Edmond Albius left the plantation a free man, then working as a kitchen servant in Saint-Denis. There he found himself convicted of stealing jewelry. His ten-year sentence was commuted by the governor after five years considering Edmond’s contribution to vanilla production.

Edmond never financially benefited from the contribution he made which made a fortune for the French economy. He died in poverty in 1880 in Sainte-Suzanne.

There is a 1900 article from the Journal Officiel de la Republique Francaise acknowledging Edmond as a black bondservant whose keeper had them study botany. Not long after, the French press began claiming Albius was white.

Northeastern Madagascar now the world’s largest producer of natural vanilla at the same time it is one of the poorest countries on the planet. The vanilla growing region of Madagascar is not immune to this poverty. The fertilization period for vanilla lasts for a few hours each season - if this window of time is missed there will be no fruit. Beans are hand-stamped as they mature on the vine to deter thieves. Vanilla farmers sleep in their fields at night with machetes guarding their vines through rain, heat, and malarial mosquitoes.

Vanilla and its stories are anything but bland.

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Monarchs (Cont'd from Pg. 7)

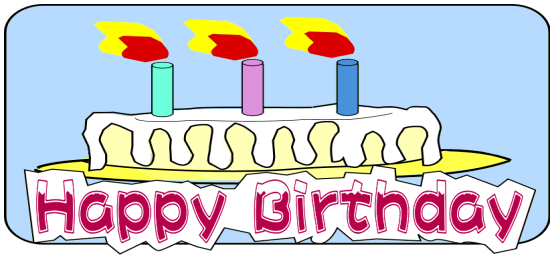
branches. They have researched many years trying to find out which is the better protection. Found that the trunk of the trees is a much better option because the trunk of trees stays warmer longer. So, it's a "thermal advantage" on the trunks. Found clustered in branches in the warmer weather but when it's colder they are clustered on the trunks. How smart are these insects!

Oyamel forests are 10,000 feet high so clouds provide humidity which they need. They stay in colonies, millions of them at each site. Now on to just how do they count the monarchs each year. Actually, these counts are really only an estimate…really how could you count a butterfly? These days, drones are used to fly high over the forest and do this at different times of their overwintering stay. They measure how large a colony is from the air and estimate the actual size of the population. When they first arrive to the sites they cluster in the highest point and gradually move down the mountain. By this time, they need to seek out water for their survival.

By March the butterflies are close to the floor of the forest. January and February are when they "count" the colonies. There are ten colonies in Mexico now. I learned also this is when predators in Mexico can attack them. Birds, black-headed orioles and black-headed grosbeaks can kill large numbers without getting poisoned. Also on the ground waiting are mice.

The last part of the webinar was devoted to the replacement of trees called the "Biosphere Reserve." This is to transform this large area with four programs. The reforestation projects have been going on for many years and are community based. Local nurseries are providing the trees to be planted by kids to adults in each of the areas of the overwintering sites and are training locals to train others in saving this precious area. Still some logging is done, but are giving farmers areas to farm and also plant trees to be used later for wood.

I was very happy to see that much of this is going on to help save our beloved monarch. But we have to help in the by planting more milkweed and to plant many perennials to fuel them in the Fall to make that long flight to Mexico.



March
Kathryn Bierley 3rd
Lori Swihart 9th
Joe "Grizz" Smith 16th
Maribeth Stover 18th
Karen Jackson 21st
Don Grube 26th
Gloria Popovich 28th

April
Jim Williams 3rd
Barbara Boone 4th (intern)
Abi Morton 7th
Carol Svatora 23rd