



# Through the Vine

A Quarterly Newsletter of the OSU Extension Fairfield County Master Gardeners

Winter 2023

**Mission: To make a difference in the community in which you live through gardening education and knowledge.**

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## Winterizing Plants: A Good Fence is the Best Defense Against Animal Damage

**source: University of Minnesota Yard and Garden News**



Winter weather is tough enough on plants - the wind, dryness and cold. Animals also struggle to survive, searching for shelter and food, sometimes in our

own backyards. The damage caused by animals might only be cosmetic at times, but it can also have long-term effects on plants - even killing them.

Animals such as mice, rabbits, voles and deer feed on the twigs, bark, leaves and stems of shrubs and trees. They may nip off terminal buds, eat shrubs to the ground and girdle trees and shrubs by chewing through bark.

Girdling occurs when an animal chews through the bark and cambium layer beneath the bark, damaging the plant's vascular system. This inhibits the transport of water and nutrients, resulting in partial dieback or plant death.

The best overall strategy to protect plants is to create physical barriers, usually fences. Fence plants with sturdy fencing - enclosing all the branches of a shrub and the lower branches and trunk of a tree. Hardware cloth is a good choice for keeping out smaller animals.

Tree trunks can be protected with tree guards (white corrugated plastic tubes) or hardware cloth around the trunk 12 inches larger than the trunk or shrub diameter. Tree guards also reflect the winter sun and protect tender bark from splitting.

When setting up fencing, bury the bottom 2-3 inches in the soil to keep out small, burrowing animals like mice and voles. To exclude rabbits, ensure your fencing is at least 18-24 inches above the anticipated snow line.

In addition to fencing, make your yard as inhospitable to browsers as possible. Start by eliminating nesting habitat and protective cover like brush piles, and fence off protective and nesting areas under structures like decks. Within 2 feet of young trees, cut down vegetation in late fall to reduce protective cover for mice and voles that might feed on trunks and stems.

Repellents may be a more economical solution to fencing/screens and wraps. They can also be used in conjunction with fencing.



## CONNIE'S CORNER

Dear Master Gardener Volunteers,

Can you believe until just a few short days ago I had pansies still in blooming in some pots at home? It feels like winter is heading our way.

Did you have a favorite container combination, a favorite plant, or even something you would like to try in the new year? Now is the time to write it down! Think about giving the gift of a garden journal to your gardening friends or even sharing some of your gardening secrets with friends and family.

As I look back on 2023, here's a couple of things I have been writing down in my Garden Journal. I have learned from Master Gardener Eric Wood, to enjoy yellow cherry tomatoes and I know I must always have a "Sun Sugar" or a "Sun Gold" in my garden.

I also learned to not be such an impatient gardener and value the gift of garden seeds vs plants. I did not know how much fun it I would have with just "Cut and Come Again" Zinnias in my garden. This is a lesson, I have been watching and learning from my brother.

I also forgot how much joy a small investment in pansies in the Spring and Fall can bring to me, for some reason they seem to brighten any day and make me smile!

Finally, I have saved a few snippets from some of the meetings we have had this past year. We have learned so much about the community that surrounds us, the best tools in our gardens and most especially the fun we have just being together. From each of you I have learned the joy of friendship and community.

I do look forward to our next season of learning, growing and sharing with the Fairfield Master Gardener Program. I am especially looking forward to meeting a new class of Master Gardeners in April 2024.

Best Wishes for a great Holiday Season and a long winter's nap!

Connie Smith  
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Master Gardener Coordinator  
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## MASTER GARDENER NEWS

### OSU Volunteers Love to Give Back...

by Connie Smith, MG Coordinator



With September being National Hunger Awareness Month, Fairfield County 4-H Junior Leaders organized and encouraged local 4-H Clubs and the Fairfield County Master Gardeners to give back to the community through a food drive. Ten 4-H Clubs donated 518 pounds of non-perishable food items and the Master Gardeners donated 76 items too!! The Fairfield County Junior Leaders were able to split their 567 donated items between Maywood Mission, Columbus Blessing Boxes Project, and Vineyard Church to help our neighbors in need.

Special thanks to Farm Credit Mid-America for their generous support of this community giving project by donating cash prizes for those clubs donating the most total pounds of food.



## MASTER GARDENER NEWS

# Congratulations to the Learning Never Ends Project Team!

by **Connie Smith, MG Coordinator**



The Fairfield County Master Gardener Project Team at Learning Never Ends was recently awarded the Community and Backyard Local Foods Award at the State Master Gardener Volunteer Conference on Saturday, October 14. Three Fairfield County Master Gardeners, Jane Eberly, Patty Turner and Mary Kessler have been involved in the project for more than six years.

The Fairfield County MGCV Learning Never Ends “Green Machine” project was started to empower disabled adults to learn more about all aspects of gardening, growing their own food and learning how to enjoy fresh foods. The 10 participants in the project learn through hands-on education, gardening, recycling, and conservation. This MGCV project is so much more than teaching the program participants about growing their own food and enjoying the beauty of a garden, it is a true labor of love.



## Newsletter Wins Award!

by **Connie Smith, Master Gardener Coordinator**

Congratulations to Lisa Stoklosa, Editor of the Master Gardener Newsletter for receiving 3<sup>rd</sup> place in the OSU Extension Creative Works Newsletter category at the 2023 Awards Recognition held December 4 in Columbus. We are very proud of the Through the Vine newsletter and all that contribute to its success.

## Sherman House Master Gardeners

by **Laura Bullock, Master Gardener 2022**



The Sherman House Master Gardeners have had another successful year. First and foremost we maintained our historically accurate gardens, researching and planning our work and making sure the plants are all something the Sherman family could have had when they lived here in the early 1800's.

We had to remove several damaged boxwoods and replace them with more colorful flowering shrubs. Our newest member, Lucy Martin relabeled all plants using white paint on bricks. Then, a group of staff and volunteers replaced the sidewalls along the walkways.

We participated in several community events including wands and wizards, the festival art walk and the scarecrow trail. For wands and wizards, participants planted beans in pots to take home and then played eye spy, trying to find a variety of garden plants. In the art walk, we had garden art, both watercolors and sculptures. Our scarecrow skeletons showed off their OHIO colors.

At special Sherman House activities open to the community we served food and drink all containing herbs grown in the Sherman gardens and hosted Jennifer Bartley who gave a presentation about kitchen gardens. Lastly, we gave several garden tours to individual groups.

We have stayed busy and enjoyed every minute!



## SEASONAL

# Holiday Shopping Tips and Spending Triggers

*by Beth Stefura, OSU Extension Educator, Family and Consumer Sciences, Mahoning County*



The holiday marketing blitz is on! Festive commercials, emails and text messages may put you in the holiday spirit but also affects your holiday budget. The continuous exposure to festive commercials,

fantastic bargains or limited-edition gifts encourages you to spend money.

Marketing techniques trigger spending. During the holidays, retailers will group items together to create overspending. For example, a sweater will have a scarf displayed by it creating the need to buy both the sweater and the scarf. An electronic item, a television for example, will have two models displayed beside each other. One television is a great model and the second one is superior and 30% more in cost. Often shoppers spend the additional 30% without realizing this is a spending trigger. This will quickly ruin your holiday budget. Be aware of these additional holiday triggers:

- Holiday music plays in stores while you shop
- Seasonal scents
- Gift sets
- Mark up prices and offer holiday coupons
- “Back in stock”
- Bulk pricing – 2 for 1 deal

No matter which holidays you celebrate many feel pressured to make them perfect. Social media images of picture-perfect holidays can create unrealistic expectations that are impossible to live up to. It's important to focus on what's important to you and your family. Your decorations, your traditions, and your happiness are more important than photos posted on social media sites.

Make a list - check it twice. Create a holiday spending list. Include gifts, food, and holiday baking in your spending plan. Black Friday and Cyber Monday also may be spending triggers. Often, we forget we are buying gifts and will purchase items for ourselves. Stick to your gift list.

To effectively manage your money this holiday season, unsubscribe from marketing emails and text messages and be aware of holiday ad triggers. Nothing is a bargain if you do not need it, or if it was not on the list. Have a wonderful holiday season!

## This hit me...

You never really know the true impact you have on those around you. You never know how much someone needed that smile you gave them. You never know how much your kindness turned someone's entire life around. You never know how much someone needed that long hug or deep talk. So don't wait to be kind. Don't wait for someone else to be kind first. Don't wait for better circumstances or for someone to change. Just be kind, because you never know how much someone needs it.

- Nikki Banas

## Newsletter Deadlines

Spring Newsletter—submit by **February 1**

Summer Newsletter—submit by **May 1**

Autumn Newsletter—submit by **August 1**

Winter Newsletter—submit by **November 1**

Please email articles and information to Lisa Stoklosa at [lmstoklos@gmail.com](mailto:lmstoklos@gmail.com).

## SEASONAL

# Quick and Easy Potato Soup for a Cold Winter's Day

by **Connie Smith, MG Coordinator**

## Quick and Easy Potato Soup



### Ingredients:

- 4-5 lbs of cubed potatoes..( I like to use good Yukon Gold Potatoes, but is a good way to utilize those end of the bag potatoes)
- 1 finely chopped bunch of celery ( I typically use celery hearts)
- 2 medium onions, chopped
- 1 cup chicken broth
- 3 cups of water and more if needed
- 1 stick of salted butter

### Directions:

Bring all ingredients listed above to a rolling boil and gently boil until potatoes are tender.

Add desired amount of salt and gently stir in a 16 oz package of egg noodles of your choice. Lastly, slowly add 1 pint of heavy whipping cream or half and half and stir in. Cover, turn off heat and let set until noodles cook through. You could also add spinach, if available.



## Easy Suet for a Crowd...

*source: Christine Gelley, Agriculture and Natural Resources Educator, Noble County OSU Extension*

If you are looking an activity to do with conservation in mind, check out this super simple recipe for songbird suet that we made recently at a Deerassic's Wild Wednesday session. It has just three ingredients and can be easily adapted for making batches big or small.

## Easy Suet for a Crowd

### Ingredients:

- 1 part peanut butter
- 1/4 part cornmeal
- 3 parts good birdseed



### Tools:

- Large Bowl
- Large Spoon
- Freezer Safe Serving Sized Containers

### Directions:

Mix room temperature or warmer peanut butter and cornmeal in a large container with a spoon/spatula. Mix in birdseed. When mixture is consistent and can cling together to make a ball, transfer by the spoonful into freezer safe suet molds (loaf pans, muffin tins, take out containers, etc.). If desired, use a straw to make a hole for a twine hanger or make a divot in the center and firmly press in a twine hanger. Cover and place in the freezer until firm. Transfer into sealed storage containers and keep in freezer until ready to use.

Feed to birds on days when temperatures are below 40 degrees F. to prevent melting.

Our family enjoys making suet in January to decorate our cut Christmas Tree after it has been retired from the living room. We place it in a spot outside that is visible from our windows and decorate it with treats for the birds.

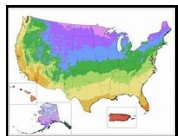
For more information about feeding songbirds in winter, visit: <https://www.allaboutbirds.org/>.





## A New Plant Hardiness Zone Map for the U.S.

source: USDA



With its higher resolution and more accurate zonal information, the new USDA Plant Hardiness Zone Map (PHZM) can be helpful as you plan your garden or landscape.

However, it's good to remember that while the PHZM is a helpful resource, it does not guarantee that your plant will perform well in your landscape based on the hardiness zone alone. A plant's performance is based on other factors like how it was planted, soil type, light, space, wind and overall care.

As a gardener, it's still important to always follow the best practices of plant selection, planting and ongoing care from season to season. A plant's growing requirements should always match the site conditions in your landscape.

Keeping this in mind, here's what to know about the new map and how it was developed.

What's new about the new map?

The new data is based on 1991-2020 GIS data collected from over 13,000 weather stations. Zones 12 and 13 were added in Puerto Rico and Hawaii and can help northern gardeners decide when to bring in/put out tropical plants.

Higher resolution and more accurate zonal delineation, including in and around cities, mountains and bodies of water.

Plant hardiness zones are based on 30-year averages of weather extremes (coldest temperatures). Climate changes are based on overall annual average temperatures over 50-100 years.

To view the 2023 USDA Plant Hardiness Zone Map, go to: <https://planthardiness.ars.usda.gov>

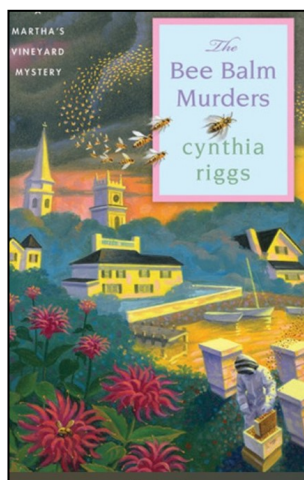
## FEATURED BOOK

### Martha's Vineyards Mysteries

by Cynthia Riggs

Reviewer: *Barbara Kochick, Master Gardener 2013*

Looking for some cozy mysteries to get you through the winter but want to maintain your connection to the gardens? I have a series for you. Cynthia Riggs' Victoria Trumbull/Martha's Vineyard mystery series fills the bill on all counts.



The first novel, *Deadly Nightshade*, was published in 2002 and continues to the 14th in the series *Widow's Wreath* written in 2018. The first installment introduces Victoria Trumbull, a fiercely independent and feisty nonagenarian. She and her family, including her recently divorced granddaughter

Elizabeth, have lived on Martha's Vineyard for generations. This is an idyllic setting but bad things continue to happen throughout the series and the mysteries always in some way involve the local flora and fauna.

As a bonus the covers are beautifully illustrated with the subject plant. This should keep you entertained all winter long!



# Hold the Latte and Pass Me a Maté

## Part 2

by Carrie Brown, ANR Extension Educator



In the central to southern parts of South America, you will find a unique *Ilex* species that not only grows wild as an understory shrub in the Atlantic Forest - a biodiversity hotspot you may recall mentioned in my article on Tree Ferns - but also has a large economic impact on countries in its native region: Brazil, Paraguay, Uruguay, and Argentina. *Ilex paraguariensis*, commonly referred to

Yerba maté (maté for short), is prized not primarily for ornamental reasons but as a caffeinated refreshment! Its leaves and stems are dried and chopped to create a tea that is consumed by millions in the region. The region's indigenous Guaraní people were the first consumers of maté, and its consumption became widespread following European colonization in the late 16th century. Yerba maté remains a popular tradition to this day.

Maté is a versatile drink, and it's not uncommon for it to be infused with other flavorings and herbs to create tasty blends. Mint, citrus, ginger, and anise are all flavors that are commonly introduced. Traditionally, yerba maté was consumed in a hollowed-out gourd. Today, vessels are made out of many different materials including wood, metal, ceramic, and even cow horns.

Maté is enjoyed not only for the caffeine but also for the experience. The cup is filled three-quarters of the way with dried yerba maté leaf mixture and water is added. When

seeped in hot water, the beverage is referred to as maté. However, it is often also enjoyed on warm days, especially by Paraguayans, and is termed tereré when infused with cold water. Yerba maté is enjoyed by drinking through a bombilla, a metal straw with a built-in strainer at the bottom to filter out the loose leaves and stems while drinking.

Something else that makes yerba maté consumption different than, say coffee or other teas, is the rate in which it is consumed. Just enough water is added to fill the small cup, topping the leaves, and the sip of infused tea is enjoyed through the filtered straw. Ready for another drink? Add another bit of water to the cup. Though this takes a bit more commitment than drinking a latte from Starbucks, it does ensure that each sip is nice and hot.

And what's more fun than drinking yerba maté by yourself? Drinking it with a friend! Maté has a rich history of being enjoyed in a social setting, and it's not uncommon for its consumption to be a communal ritual among friends and family members. The "brewer" pours a sip for each person, typically passing the container around in a clockwise circle, refilling the cup before passing it to the next person.



Stay tuned for the next newsletter and Part 3 where we will explore efforts that combine sustainable maté production and forest restoration.



## Forcing Bulbs for Winter Joy

by **Barbara Kochick, Master Gardener 2013**



After the holiday decor is put away and the outside color is severely reduced, forcing bulbs can be an interesting way to bring growing things and color into your winter life.

Forced bulbs are by far the best decor fix to perk up dreary winter days. In any style home, flowers go with everything. This information is for soil forcing bulbs. Get your bulbs now from garden centers or online. Choose reputable companies and firm bulbs.

All bulbs except amaryllis and paperwhites need a reminder that they have been through winter. Those two don't get cold in their native tropics so they don't need it where we live. How long to chill the others depends on the variety.

If you have a refrigerator that does not store other fruits and vegetables, that is the ideal place to store bulbs that have been clearly marked as to variety and date to be removed. The most efficient way to do this is with a brown paper bag. Do not place bulbs in the freezer. If you have an unheated garage or outdoor storage area where the daytime temperatures stay below fifty, that works also.

Once chilling time is over choose a pot with drainage that is deep enough to have at least two to three inches of soil beneath the bulbs.

Take into consideration the finished size of the flower and allow enough bottom room to support top heavy types. Fill with a lightweight potting soil. It's okay to crowd bulbs if you choose. Place pointy side up and fill with soil up to the neck of the bulb. Keep the soil slightly damp. Place the container in a cool spot until growth starts to show and then move to a warmer spot with indirect light. You are attempting to simulate gradual warming. Keep watered; the roots should always have moisture. Do not fertilize.

Bulb Name	Minimum Chill Time
Tulips	12 Weeks
Daffodils	13 Weeks
Crocus	12 Weeks
Hyacinths	12 Weeks
Snowdrops	8 Weeks
Glory of the Snow	10 Weeks
Muscari	10 Weeks
Dutch Iris	8 Weeks

If this preparation timing is all too much for you, prechilled bulbs are also available from the usual sources. After the bulbs have bloomed, they can be allowed to die back naturally and planted outdoors in the fall. Keep them watered and be aware that they typically do not rebloom the first year.

## Don't Forget to Record Your MGV Hours

by **Connie Smith, Master Gardener Coordinator**

Writing it down and recording your Master Gardener hours should be on your "to do" list. Please try to find a few minutes to record your hours by December 20, 2023. Don't worry if you are having trouble getting them entered. We will help at our December 14 Meeting at the Ag Center. You should be very proud of your efforts and your dedication to the Master Gardener program. Each of your projects were a great success with lots of learning, sharing and hard work.

## In and Around the Garden—You Won't Want to Miss It!

Mark your calendars with these important dates and upcoming activities and events!

### UPCOMING EVENTS

#### **Master Gardener Holiday Gathering**

**December 14 (Thurs.), 12 p.m.**

Ag Center

Assistance with 2023 hours input and recertification. *Please bring your favorite holiday appetizer or cookie*

#### **Winter Wellness with Shannon Carter**

**January 16 (Tues.), 6:30–7:30 p.m.**

Wagnalls Memorial Library, Lithopolis, Ohio

**January 23 (Tues.), 6:30–7:30 p.m.**

Fairfield County District Library

For details, contact OSU Extension in Fairfield County

#### **Slow Cooker Workshop**

**February 13 (Tues.), 6:30–7:30 p.m.**

Wagnalls Memorial Library, Lithopolis, Ohio

#### **Basics of Electric Pressure Cooking**

**March 19 (Tues.), 6:30–7:30 p.m.**

Wagnalls Memorial Library, Lithopolis, Ohio

#### **Dig Into Gardening**

**March 23 (Sat.), 10 a.m.**

Christ United Methodist Church, Baltimore, Ohio

#### **Fruit Tree Pruning Program at Hugus Fruit Farm**

**April 5 (Fri.)**

1900 Old Rushville Rd., Rushville, Ohio

#### **Master Gardener Training Begins**

**April 5 (Fri.)**

#### **Fairfield County OSU Extension will be closed:**

Christmas Holiday—December 25-26

New Year's Day—January 1

Martin Luther King Day—January 15



***Through the Vine*** is a publication of the Ohio State University Extension Office in Fairfield County

Lisa Stoklosa, Fairfield Master Gardener Volunteer Editor

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For the latest information and news about OSU Extension in Fairfield County, including the Master Gardeners of Fairfield County, visit <http://fairfield.osu.edu/>



#### **Ohio Master Gardener Program Mission**

*We are Ohio State University Extension trained volunteers empowered to educate others with timely research-based gardening information.*