

'THE COMMPOST' NEWSLETTER

CLINTON COUNTY MASTER GARDENER VOLUNTEERS



THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY
COLLEGE OF FOOD, AGRICULTURAL,
AND ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCES

Jan + Feb 2021

Ohio State University Extension - Clinton County

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Next *COMMPOST*

Deadline: February 19, 2021

Please submit items in MS Word
Format to Nicole Alexander at:
nicolejanealexander@gmail.com

MARK YOU CALENDAR:

**** Due to the Covid-19
restrictions, all meetings and
gathering have been
cancelled until further notice.**

Master Gardener Program OSU Extension Mission:

The Ohio State University Extension Master Gardener Program provides knowledge to and develops the leadership abilities of volunteers who, in turn, enable others to improve the quality of their lives by enhancing their home and community environments through horticultural education and activities.

(Haiku)

Everything changes;
Summer gives way to Winter.
Nothing ever lasts.

dailyzenhaiku.com

All educational programs conducted by Ohio State University Extension are available to clientele on a nondiscriminatory basis without regard to race, color, creed, religion, sexual orientation, national origin, gender, age, and disability or Vietnam- era veteran statue.



Tony Nye, OSU AG Extension Educator

Hello and Happy New Year,

I hope each of you are staying safe and you are looking for a better new year. It was sad to hear of Mary Harris passing in December, I ask that each of you keep in your heart Loved Ones and Friends during these challenging times.

In search of a 'silver lining' I look to the fact that it is a new year, and we will be able to see each other in-person hopefully in the coming weeks. I am hopeful that we will be able to have our plant sale and hopefully some workshops as well.

Speaking of the Plant Sale. I have had a couple of conversations with the Wilt Family at Patchwork Gardens and they said they would be able to work with us if and when we know we can have our plant sale. I have a couple of ideas on how we can do this and spread things out for us and our public that support us each year.

One idea of course, is to hope we can still hold the event at our facility. The other idea is to have it at the Fairgrounds so that we can spread out and manage people flow. I have just started talking with the Clinton County Fair Board about the possibility of such an event.

We may not have quite the selection of plants as we would have in a normal year, but Stacey at Patchwork thought we could have a good variety of flowers and vegetables. Think on this, and hopefully in February some time, some of us can meet by phone or via the internet to discuss what we would like to try.

I encourage you all to think of some really good topics for my weekly News Column that I/We can put together and provide good gardening information to our community by way of the news column, Face book and on our Clinton County Extension Website.

I suspect many families will be growing gardens again this year and we have an opportunity to help them be successful. I look forward to hearing some of your ideas for Consumer Horticulture information we can share with the public.

Until next time, be safe and healthy,

Tony

Clinton County MG 2021 Meeting Dates:

Meetings are on the 3rd Thursday of the month. All regular meetings begin at 6:30 pm. (Meetings currently postponed due to Covid-19)

Minutes: *Clinton County Master Gardeners Association.* In Attendance: No new minutes to report. Meetings cancelled due to COVID-19

Hours Needed for Interns:	50 Hours total 1 st year
Hours needed for established MGV:	20 Volunteer Hours per year
Continuing Education Hours:	10 Continuing Education Hours per year

From Jeff Drapalik, President

Yesterday we took a walk along the Miami river near King's mill. We enjoyed getting out on a crisp and sunny afternoon. There were several other people walking their dogs and riding bikes. A couple squirrels were jumping from trees to the ground, digging in the leaves searching for nuts.

It was quiet as we walked. The river flowed slowly, the sunshine reflecting off the surface.

Occasionally we would hear the cyclists call out "On your left" as the rode by. They would continue their ride and it would be quiet again.

The solitude provided time to reflect. Winter is a silent time of the year. The trees are bare of their leaves waiting for the warmer weather and sunny days to come. Enjoy the pause. Reflect. Soon we will be planning our gardens, digging in the dirt, and planting.

Questions to Ask Before Ordering Seeds

Submitted by Faye Mahaffey

OSUE Brown County Master Gardener Volunteer

The basket beside my chair is filling up quickly with a variety of seed catalogs, and I have yet to start my list! If I don't get my order together soon, the new varieties will already be sold out and I will be disappointed. Armchair shoppers need to be cautious. It is always wise to have a plan and try to stick to it. It's time to get out your garden journal and think about what you want to plant and where. Remember to consider crop rotation to lessen disease and insect problems. Sharpen that pencil and pull out some graph paper and start designing your 2021 gardens!

Here are some questions to consider before purchasing seeds and plants:

1. What exactly is the plant in question? Common names may vary, so look for Latin or scientific names to be listed, in particular with ornamental plants. If not given, you may not get the plant you think you are ordering!

2. Will it grow here? Plant hardiness is a very important selection factor for trees, shrubs, and ornamental plants. Be sure you know your zone and check the information given the catalog. Related to hardiness is the length of the growing season. Again, be sure to check the catalog for how many days to maturity for vegetables and know your average last frost date for your area.

3. What are the needs of the plant? Needs include things such as fertilizer, water, light, pruning, and space. Again, consider whether the plant is really a good fit for your yard and garden and the amount of attention you plan to give. A "needy" plant has no place in my flower beds. I become ruthless as the dry, hot days of summer come, and that flower that likes "wet" feet is definitely doomed since I hate to pull out the garden hose!



4. Last, but not least, do I really need it? (This question is the toughest for most gardeners.) Remember that the plant needs to fit the site where planted. (Right plant, Right place) If you are planting a vegetable that no one in your family enjoys eating, you are wasting valuable space in your garden! Before you mail that seed/plant order, spread the catalogs out on the counter and compare descriptions and prices. And lastly, be sure to check what seeds you have left over from last year!

If you keep turning back to that one plant that makes your heart “flutter”, go ahead.... order it! Most gardeners would probably admit that they have done exactly the same thing! Last evening, I attended an online class titled “Gardening 101” and the biggest tip I came away with was PLAN YOUR GARDEN BEFORE YOU ORDER SEEDS! Other tips included: Grow what you eat, consider how much time you will spend in the garden, and most importantly, if you are a new gardener, KEEP IT SIMPLE!



Get out your garden journal and some graph paper and start planning your 2021 garden!

Carnation

PLANT OF THE MONTH

Dianthus caryophyllus, commonly known as the **carnation** or **clove pink**, is a species of *Dianthus*. It is probably native to the [Mediterranean region](#) but its exact range is unknown due to extensive cultivation for the last 2,000 years

[Peter Binoit](#), *Stilleben, frukt* – Still life with carnations, 1618

Carnations were mentioned in Greek literature 2,000 years ago. The term *dianthus* was coined by Greek botanist Theophrastus, and is derived from the Ancient Greek words for divine ("dios") and flower ("anthos").^[5] The name "carnation" is believed to come from the Latin *corona-ae*, a "wreath, garland, chaplet, crown",^[6] as it was one of the flowers used in Greek and Roman ceremonial crowns, or possibly from the Latin *caro* (genitive *carnis*), "flesh",^[6] which refers to the natural color of the flower, or in Christian iconography *incarnatio*, "incarnation", God made flesh in the form of Jesus.



The legend that explains the name is that Diana the Goddess came upon the shepherd boy and took a liking to him. But the boy, for some reason, turned her down. Diana ripped out his eyes and threw them to the ground where they sprouted into the dianthus flower.

Dianthus caryophyllus is a herbaceous perennial plant growing up to 31 ½ in tall. The leaves are greyish green to blue-green, slender, up to 6 in long. The flowers are produced singly or up to five

together in a cyme; they are around 1 ¼–2 in diameter, and sweetly scented; the original natural flower color is bright pinkish-purple, but cultivars of other colors, including red, white, yellow, blue and green, along with some white with colored striped variations have been developed.

The wild carnation is found in the Mediterranean countries of Croatia, Albania, Greece, Italy and Spain.

Colors

The transgenic cultivar 'Moondust'

Carnations do not naturally produce the pigment delphinidin, thus a blue carnation cannot occur by natural selection or be created by traditional plant breeding. It shares this characteristic with other widely sold flowers like roses, lilies, tulips, chrysanthemums and gerberas.



Around 1996 a company, Florigene, used genetic engineering to extract certain genes from petunia and snapdragon flowers to produce a blue-mauve carnation, which was commercialized as *Moondust*. In 1998 a violet carnation called *Moonshadow* was commercialized. As of 2004 three additional blue-violet/purple varieties have been commercialized.

Why living with and tending plants is good for you

Millennials and Gen Z love caring for indoor plants. But why? Lindsay Baker speaks to the ‘plantfluencers’, and explores self-care – and the perennial appeal of the houseplant.

‘In Cacti We Trust’ is the motto of one of the many passionate plant lovers to be found on **social media**. In fact, according to a survey by HomeHow, the cactus is the most Instagrammable houseplant by far, with an extraordinary 23 million posts dedicated to the spiny plant. Following in second place is the photogenic Hoya, and then the Monstera, also known as the Swiss Cheese plant. And not forgetting the also popular air-purifying plants, notably the Snake plant, the Chinese Evergreen and the Spider plant.

This overwhelmingly Millennial and Gen Z obsession has exploded in recent years. But why do these particular generations love tending plants so much? It’s a question explored in British author Alice Vincent’s recent book **Rootbound: Rewilding a Life**. A ‘nature memoir’, which follows real events in the life of the author during her mid-20s. “When a lot of things took different directions in my life to that I had expected, I found solace in gardening and plants,” she says.



The author says she has a “strong emotional connection” with plants. “There’s something deeply moving about seeing something germinate, flower or even go to seed,” Vincent tells BBC Culture. “There’s a real joy to be found in new growth or the return of a favorite perennial plant through the soil after a long, dark winter. I find the seasonal change of plants and the wider natural world around is something that helps to guide me in my everyday life. Gardening is also something very meditative for me.” And *Rootbound* struck a chord with readers of around her age, who, she says, “found resonance” with her experiences of “finding the life they were told to achieve and expect to be somehow lacking”. Vincent says she also received feedback from many readers who found her book “a solace and a calming read” during lockdown.

Both Millennials and Gen Z grew up in a landscape that was increasingly obsessed with living online, and the introduction to *Rootbound* recalls a clear memory of Windows 95 arriving in Vincent’s family home. “From then on, we clamoured for technological advance –

Gameboys, mobile phones, MSN messenger. Everything was expected to be faster, slicker, more connected than its predecessor.” This then continued into adulthood. “We took jobs that were increasingly online and expected instant gratification from apps on our phones: dating, takeaways, cabs, handymen – everything could be gleaned swiftly.”

Wild interiors

Paradoxically, although tending plants acts as an antidote to digital life, it is the online world that has helped the plant-tending Millennials and Gen Zers find each other, and to form their own global community. Vincent was self-taught but says that she learned from more experienced growers and gardeners on Instagram. In 2015 she started her own account [@noughtculture](#). And there is a whole world of so-called ‘plantfluencers’ like Vincent. Notable among them is Baltimore-based Hilton Carter ([@hiltoncarter](#)) who has written several books on the subject of houseplants. His latest, *Wild Interiors*, is a lavishly illustrated volume that showcases how plants can enhance the home.



You have to be ready to commit to something that's living – Hilton Carter

Carter has been called a “plantfluencer”, “the plant daddy” and “the plant doctor”, he tells BBC Culture. Any home, he says, is “more calming and inviting” with plants in it, “particularly in a space that has a lot of hard edges, it makes it more breathable and airier having green life around”. Featured in his book are the homes of, among others, an Antwerp-based couple Sofie Vertongen and Yannick De Neef (“they do an amazing job connecting design with plant life,”) and Joel Bernstein in London (“he’s a maximalist when it comes to art and objects, but a minimalist when it comes to plants”).



The love of plants “grabbed” Carter suddenly several years ago, and he “went from 10 plants to 50 or 60 plants within a few months”. He soon transformed his home into an “indoor jungle” he says with a laugh – a situation that his long-suffering wife has now accepted, he adds. Can he describe the feeling that sparked his obsession? “I felt like a kid in a candy store. And having this living thing in your home, making you focus on the daily caring of something that you’re now bonded to. There’s something in the caring process that’s therapeutic, you can use it to meditate or escape, and for two hours once a week completely zone out.”

In a sense, having plants is like having pets – they bring you joy, but they also need love and attention. “Plants are not a prop,” agrees Carter. “They need light and food. You have to be ready to commit to something that’s living. It’s like if you visit an animal shelter, you don’t bring home every puppy or kitten, you bring one dog not 10 dogs. If you get a ton of plants not knowing how to care for them, you end up very sad, and wasting a lot of money.” Carter points

out that plants “make gestures to you, if they have zero light for instance”. And if he had to give one bit of advice for tending plants? “Follow the light, and it’ll be easier to become a plant parent.”

“Emotionally, they are helpful to mental wellbeing. And plants can also be a way to reflect on your cultural origins or remember holidays.” She cites the recent book *The Well Gardened Mind* by Sue Stuart-Smith. “The author quotes a study that found that being in the presence of indoor plants – or looking at scenes of nature – prompted people to make decisions that showed higher levels of generosity and trust, and had a sociability effect. She describes one woman who started looking after some cacti and found the process very healing and therapeutic, and she writes that ‘plants are like people, they need your help. Without you they don’t live’.”

Wild Interiors by Hilton Carter is published by CICO Books; *Rootbound: Rewilding a Life* by Alice Vincent is published by Canongate; *The Garden Museum* Houseplant Festival runs from 23 to 25 October 2020.

Story found at: <https://www.bbc.com/culture/article/20201022-why-living-with-and-tending-plants-is-good-for-you>

Clinton County 2020 MG Projects:

Annual Plant Sale + Educational Classes

- ✓ Fund Raiser
- ✓ 2nd Saturday of May each year 5-9-2020 (Cancelled this year)
- ✓ Set up + sale of vegetable and flowers to the public
- ✓ Present one-hour educational programs for the public

Pollinator Acre

- ✓ New 2020 project – headed by Jeff Drapalik
- ✓ Acreage tilled, planted and maintained

Community Pollinator Educational Program

- ✓ Pollinator week: June 14th – 19th (Cancelled this year)
- ✓ Usually children oriented
- ✓ Educational to raise awareness of need of pollinators

Backyard Food Demo Garden @ Denver Park, by walk path. Contact: Debbie or Judy

- ✓ Permanent food demo site at park
- ✓ Show what perennial food can be grown in home backyards
- ✓ Set up educational programming

WIC garden at extension office. Contact Jeff

- ✓ Work with the WIC office program
- ✓ Education of growing food for families

Master Gardener booth Contact Judy

- ✓ Once or twice a month table at the Farmers Market, to meet public/answer questions.
- ✓ Project to make public aware of MG

Chad Mason's Youth Summer Program and Gardens:

- ✓ Chad Mason's Juvenile Youth Program
- ✓ Cover 6 weeks of 1-hour programs on food and gardening

Habitat for Humanity: Contact Judy or Nicole

- ✓ Project we have supported for 11 plus years with Habitat
- ✓ Design Front Landscapes, purchase plants and set workday to install them.
- ✓ Present educational on home care of landscape

Planting two urns @ Denver Park entrance. Contact: Judy

- ✓ Seasonal 4 times year
- ✓ We purchased and donated the urns, keep them planted, seasonal

Elementary School Sensory Garden Contact: Beverly

Work in office: as asked by Tony/ and hotline questions from public.

