

The Greene Leaflet

News for Greene County Master Gardeners
Greene County Extension



January 2016

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Happy New Year to all fellow Master Gardeners! We hope you all had a wonderful holiday season with your family and friends and look forward to a bright New Year. According to the National Weather Service, December 2015 for the Dayton area was the warmest on record since 1893.

A special "Thank You" to Judi Engle, our 2015 President, for all of her hard work and dedication to Greene County Master Gardeners. We truly appreciate all of her support during our transition into 2016.

Another reminder that our business meetings will be held at the Greene County Fairgrounds OSU Extension office (Buckeye Room) this year starting on January 12th. Please help remind your fellow Master Gardeners given this is a change in location from 2015.

At the start of each New Year, our mailbox begins to fill with catalogs full of enticing seeds and plants. As the pile grows, ordering day draws near. With a warm cup of coffee, or tea, the adventure of planning our spring garden begins. What an exciting prospect...a fresh garden full of new varieties, classic favorites, and beautiful design. We still get excited at the first sprouts that will yield a delicious dinner (albeit for family or wildlife, depending upon who gets there first!).

Beginning a New Year is like starting a new garden; it takes planning and preparation, plenty of cultivation, and reflection on the joy of the journey. We are excited to be on this journey with you and want 2016 to be a wonderful year for us all.

“One touch of nature
makes the whole world
kin.”

William Shakespeare

CALENDAR

January 1, 2016: Rose Bowl

January 7: Board Meeting at Peace Lutheran Church, room 13, 6:30 p.m.

January 12: MG Meeting, 6:30 p.m. Extension Office

January 18: MLK, Jr. Day

February 2: Groundhog Day

February 4: Board Meeting, 6:30 p.m. at Peace Lutheran Church, room 13

February 9: MG Meeting 6:30 p.m. at Extension Office

February 15: President's Day

February 29: It's a Leap Year!

March 3: Board Meeting, 6:30 p.m.

March 8: MG Meeting 6:30 p.m. at Extension Office

March 13: Daylight Saving Time Begins "Spring Forward"

April 22: Earth Day

CONTINUING EDUCATION

2016 Education*

January 16, 2016, 10:00 a.m. to noon: All About Evergreens. Wegerzyn Gardens Metro Park, 1301 E. Siebenthaler Ave., Dayton, OH 45414. Fee: \$10. Register by calling 937-275-7275 or go to www.metroparks.org.

January 23, 2016, 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.: Revising Your Landscape. Wegerzyn Metro Park. Fee: \$10. See above phone number and website.

February 2, 2016, 8:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.; Southwestern Ohio Fruit, Vegetable & Specialty Crop Conference. Oasis Conference Center, 902 Loveland Miamiville Road, Loveland, OH 45140. Fee: \$50; \$60 after January 22. Register at: regonline.com/swfriuvegconf. By mail: print a registration form at www.go.osu.edu/swohfvsc and send to OSU Warren Co. Extension, 320 E. Silver Street, Lebanon, OH 45036.

February 27, 2016, 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.: Clark County presents, "Managing Wildlife on the Homefront". Fee: \$40. Class held at Heritage Center in Springfield, OH.

March 3, 2016 8:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.: Clark County presents, "the 17th Annual Perennial Flower School". Fee: \$70. Classes held at Hollenbeck Bayley Conference Center in Springfield, OH.

March 5, 2016: The 21st Annual Miami Valley Gardening Conference held at Ponitz Center, Sinclair Community College in Dayton, OH. Usually a \$50 fee

March 17, 2016, 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.: Stark County presents, "MG Diagnostic Update". Classes held at Tallmadge Community Center.

May 18, 2016, 10:00 a.m. to noon: Spring Garden Prep. Wegerzyn Gardens Metro Park, 1301 E. Siebenthaler Ave., Dayton, OH 45414. Free one-time session. Register by calling 937-275-7275 or go to www.metroparks.org

* details available as information is received

Did You Know.....

That Ukraine has one third of the world's richest topsoil? Chernozem or black soil makes up 68% of arable land in Ukraine, Europe's second largest country. The most prevalent crops are cereals and oilseed. Chernozem is one of 30 soil groups in the classification system of the Food & Agriculture Organization (FAO). Manitoba, Canada also has a very high black soil content.

How did the soil get so rich? Chernozem soils develop under dry grasslands (grassland/forest transition) in neutral to slightly basic conditions in areas with equal rainfall and evaporation rates (seasonal rainfall 18 – 22 inches). The climate is usually cold winters with short, hot summers. Equally important soil conditions include very active soil fauna – specifically worm casts and small burrowing animals acting as decomposers and aerators. The vermiculture activity and pH of 7.0 help maintain a stable mix of calcium ions and organic matter in the soil.

Sadly, Ukraine is experiencing massive soil erosion of 500 million tonnes of topsoil annually with a loss of fertility over 32 million hectares of soil due to poor soil management and deforestation. (One hectare is equal to 2.471 acres or 10,000 square meters; one tonne is equal to 2,205 pounds or 1,000 Kilograms.)

ANNOUNCEMENTS

2016 Board Members: Beginning January, 2016 board meetings will be held the first Thursday of the month at 6:30 p.m. at Peace Lutheran Church, room 13.

Important Reminder: The 2016 Master Gardener Business Meetings will be held in the Buckeye Room at the Greene County OSU Extension Office beginning January 12, 2016 at 6:30.

A “Thank You” gesture to Peace Lutheran Church: As a gesture of thanks to our gracious hosts at Peace Lutheran Church, we are collecting gifts of canned goods, non-perishable food items, and monetary donations for the church food pantry. Items may be brought to the January 12th business meeting. Jerry Haun and Jan Fix will help coordinate delivery of the items to the church food pantry.

2016 Intern Class: Applications for the 2016 Intern Class are due by January 11th, so if you know someone that is interested in becoming a Greene County Master Gardener...there's still time to apply. Application details can be found at greene.osu.edu, or contact Kim Hupman for additional information.

Historian: We are pleased to announce that KeeKee Schuh is our new historian for Greene County Master Gardeners. Our historian maintains materials and information that are important for our past activities.

Culinary Corner

Do you enjoy trying out new recipes? Do you ever wonder what exactly is the definition of certain ingredients? Besides trying out Escargot while my daughter was still taking High School French class, I picked up a recipe that required capers. So....what is a caper anyway?

Simply put, capers are the young flower buds from the caper bush. Capers have been used as a condiment for over 5000 years so they must be good – right? No piece in a gardening newsletter would be complete without a little history on the plant in question.



The caper bush, Capparis spinosa (aka Flanders rose), grows very well in sandy soil and hot dry conditions. It especially grows well along the Mediterranean coastal regions of France, Italy, Spain, and Algeria. The bush will also grow well in Mexico, Southern California, and Florida. It is a perennial that bears rounded fleshy leaves and large white to pink flowers, is drought resistant, needs very little fertilizer, and only occasional pruning. Once established, the caper bush grows to three feet tall and is also tolerant of the salty sea spray. The lower branches create their own mulch because they are so low to the ground, and the flowers grow on long petioles between the leaves. The best growing conditions are full sun and planted on a mound of well drained rich soil to get the plants started. Starting the caper bush from seed may be a little frustrating since the germination rate is so low; about 10%. The most reliable propagation is by cuttings or transplanting

volunteers. The caper bush, according to my sources, is actually very easy to grow. I am sure that much soil amendment should be used here in this Southwest Ohio clay however!

Harvesting is very time consuming because the caper buds must be picked by hand. Small buds are called nonpareil and have the best flavor. Larger more mature buds are called capote and are eaten like olives. The buds can be picked every other day. Processing involves washing and drying in the sun for about 12 hours. Processing is completed the next day by completely covering the capers in a salt and white wine vinegar solution. Allow the capers to marinate for a few weeks.

Capers are best used in Hors d'oeuvres, salads, as a garnish or in sauces for fish and chicken dishes. Rombauer and Becker (The Joy of Cooking) recommend chopped gherkins or nasturtium seedpods as caper substitutes. The nasturtium buds are pickled in much the same way as capers and have a mustard like flavor. Buds of the marsh marigold have also been pickled and used as caper substitutes.





THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY

COLLEGE OF FOOD, AGRICULTURAL,
AND ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCES

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Next Newsletter Deadline: January 25th

We welcome all suggestions, thoughts, calendar dates for this newsletter.

Please e-mail your comments, articles, photos, and dates to:

The Greene Leaflet Editor – Christine Nelson-McComb at squarneedl@yahoo.com or cbmccomb81@gmail.com
and Karen Reed at kreed001@woh.rr.com

Greene County Master Gardener 2015 Officers:

Co-Presidents – Steve and Karen Reed (374-3289 and 623-7618)

Past President – Judi Engle (937) 427-3063

Vice President – Marirose Sindoni (937) 427-0696

Secretary – Susan Wagers (767-7801)

Treasurer – Connie O'Brien (937) 431-0738

ExOfficio Board Member:

TBA, Agriculture and Natural Resources Educator (937) 372-9971 Ext. 114

Board Members At Large:

Marcia Hilty (878-1111)

Robbie Nash (937) 426-1706

Erin O'Brien (937) 371-5578

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