

MGV NEWSLETTER

All Things Master Gardening

Spring, 2020

Arboretum Update

“Be calm, be patient and do what you must.” This is the mantra that is guiding Jason Veil and his staff at the Arboretum during this time of uncertainty. Although all programming is on hold for the time being, there are important tasks that must be completed.

If you have been to Secrest recently, you may have seen the results of the second wave of pruning. Plants that were damaged or diseased have been removed and some that were planted in the wrong place will be transplanted. All of this work is done for long-term sustainability. Jason said he likens this process to “cleaning your attic.” Where only one or two kinds of plants exist, nothing of value is removed.

They are now moving to the planting/transplanting phase. A new air knife tool has been very helpful in this process. It can remove all of the soil around a plant exposing it to the bare root for transplanting. For trees that were planted too deeply, it can expose the root collar and level the ground around it, insuring better growing conditions. This has to be done on a tree-by-tree basis.

The staff works with a triage method, first dealing with plants that are under imminent threat or have been neglected for years. They are looking toward a stability phase for each zone of plants. When they are stable, then a management plan can be developed.

Staff wise, there are changes on the horizon. Starting on April 5, Paul Snyder will assume his new position as Program Manager. When the Program Coordinator and Plant Material Specialist positions are decided, the Arboretum will be back up to four full-time positions, which, after going through the winter with only three full-time people, is like adding 25% to the staff. This will be helpful with essentials like the greenhouse that cannot be put off.

With the concerns about the corona virus, the demands on the IT department at the Wooster Campus have naturally slowed down the process of identifying and recording all of the plants at Secrest. The completion of this project will probably not happen until May or June.

Since every program has had to be postponed, the staff has come up with some back-up plans, especially for the Plant Discovery Day. Since this is a major fundraiser for the Arboretum, Jason feels that a virtual plant sale could be organized. A webinar talking about the plants for sale is possible. Then arrangements for ordering, scheduling payment and pick-up/delivery of the plants could also be made available on-line. He encourages anyone who has suggestions for things that they want to see or help with to contact him or his staff. There could be opportunities to help with this project.



Teamwork---Master Gardener Volunteers at the Wayne County Fairgrounds

When the aroma of sausages and onions sizzling in deep fryers and the warm sugared scent of Lerch's Donuts drift along Vanover Street, and as whinnies waft from the horse barns, children's faces peek above billowing pink clouds of cotton candy, and a roar resonates from the Grandstand as the Midway's lights illuminate the sky over Wooster, Ohio, Wayne County natives know it is the second week of September. Surely, the Wayne County Fair is in their DNA. Although he grew up in Guernsey County, Master Gardener Volunteer (MGV) Tom White, who describes himself as a farm boy, attests to the importance of the yearly fair in the lives of many Wayne County residents.

Because of his involvement with the fair since moving to Wayne County nineteen years ago and his love of gardening, White recognized a need and an opportunity. As he began the 2018 Secrest Arboretum MGV Class, his leadership became apparent when he asked class members to consider forming a team to upgrade and maintain gardens at the Wayne County Fairgrounds. Classmate Ruth Bishop, who had already been planting flowers around the fair's Veteran's Memorial since 2006, immediately volunteered.



Those who joined him began the process of restoring and building beautiful gardens for the community to enjoy at fair time and throughout the year. Current team members include MGVs Kathy Batchelder, Ruth Bishop, Sally Call, Ed Gasbarre, Nancy Lilburn, Linda Palombi, Beth Taylor, and Tom White.

The project is large and includes numerous gardens and cement raised gardens throughout the fairgrounds. Kathy Batchelder suggested 12 hanging baskets be added, and members babysat them at their homes last summer until the fair. All team members work together to plant the gardens in the spring and to clean-up in the fall. During the growing season, three teams weed, deadhead, mulch and maintain the gardens at different times during the week. One of the groups meets in the evening to accommodate those who work, and Ed Gasbarre waters on the weekend.



The team obtains annuals and perennials from their own gardens, other MGVs, nurseries, the Orrville Public Library Plant Exchange, Secrest Arboretum, and available donations. Cannas, zinnias, nasturtiums, coleus, impatiens, and spring bulbs are among the contributions. New gardens always present challenges and the fair gardens are no exception. During the first year, carting water was a challenge until the team obtained access to water. Weather and disease have presented other challenges. After the team planted last spring, rain flooded the gardens at Gates 5 and 6 and replanting was required. However, through trial and error and patience, the team has learned which plants work best in the various gardens. The project has grown to include the

Buckeye Agricultural Museum and Education Center where the team planted a Three Sisters Garden that includes corn, beans, and squash.

Throughout the gardens, the team's design mantra "The thrill, the fill, and the spill" can be witnessed in plant choices and placements. Recently, team members exhibited their enthusiasm as they discussed their project. They agreed that their philosophy is "We fill a need, and we have fun!" Beth Taylor and Sally Call concurred that they have been inspired by recognizing how the group came together to achieve a goal, and how they have

had great fun doing so even when it involved spreading 90 yards of mulch. Tom White advises others who may wish to start a similar project, “Have a passion for what you do!”

Wayne County Fair Manager Matt Martin praised the team stating, “The Secrest Arboretum Master Gardener Volunteers have been a real blessing not only to the Wayne County Fair and the Buckeye Agricultural Museum and Education Center but also to everyone who visits us throughout the year. Over the course of the last few of years, I have continued to receive many compliments in regard to the flower beds and boxes. These individuals have truly invested in our part of the community bringing a welcoming environment full of beauty to our grounds all season long. We are grateful to be able to benefit from our friends who are dedicated to showcase their passions and talents.”

Anyone who wishes to become involved in the project can contact any team member.

There are always bulbs to plant and mulch to spread! Ruth Bishop sums it up well stating, “I really enjoy the group of MGVs I work with at the fairgrounds and am proud to be a MGV.”



Arboretum Happenings



Because of the uncertainty of the times, we are not publishing an events list in this issue. To get the most up-to-date information about what is on and what is off, go to the Secrest Arboretum website.

Tips from MGVs: *Favorite Gardening Blogs*

Thanks to Judy Nicely for suggesting that we include some favorite gardening blogs that Master Gardeners frequent. Some Master Gardeners recently shared some garden blogs that they have found useful. Enjoy!



Judy Nicely follows Margaret Roach in her ‘A Way to Garden’ blog and podcasts. According to the website, Margaret Roach, is a leading garden writer for 25 years—at ‘Martha Stewart Living,’ ‘Newsday,’ and in three books. She also hosts [a](#) public-radio podcast.

Lynn Bauer also follows Margaret Roach’s “A Way to Garden”, but she adds that her “addiction is you-tuber ‘Garden Answer’ Laura LeBoutillier. She inspires me to get out in the garden!” <https://www.gardenanswer.com/>

Julia Wiesenbergs favorite gardening blog is The Garden Professors. "It has excellent science-based gardening information. The authors of the blog are several horticulture professors and Extension educators--they are really funny and their advice is solid!"
<http://gardenprofessors.com/>

Featured Plant of the Season



One of our earliest splashes of garden color comes from the familiar yellow blooms of forsythia. This deciduous shrub in the olive family (Oleaceae) is probably one of the most common landscape plants in the Midwest.

Also blooming at about mid to late March is the white or false forsythia (*Abeliophyllum distichum*). It has many of the same characteristics of the popular yellow forsythia but has very fragrant white flowers on arching stems. The false forsythia is considered endangered in its native Korea and is only found in a few sites.



At Secrest we have a nice larger example of a false forsythia located on the edge of our walkways. When entering from the parking area, take the right or south paved path into the arboretum. You will walk past the small shelter and the spur leading to the road. As you walk beyond the spur, the false forsythia is on the right side of the path. You can't miss the large shrub with the white flowers.

Secrest Adds a Moon Gate

One of newest additions of garden architecture at Secrest has a rich history that goes back thousands of years. Our new moon gate near the amphitheater entrance has its origins in the gardens of Chinese emperors and other nobility. Since closed doors were not considered courteous, the rounded openings of the moon gates promoted a sense of openness and welcome.

A moon gate is simply a circular opening that is placed at the entrance to a garden. Often these circular entrances are placed as openings in garden walls. In China these gates were often quite elaborate and made of stone, with each stone carrying a special meaning. In Chinese gardens, the stones or tiles often had spiritual meanings.

In Bermuda the moon gate has become a national symbol. The island has at least 40 moon gates and promotes them as a part of its wedding destination focus. There is a legend in Bermuda that if "newlyweds" step through a moon gate hand-in-hand happiness will endure". It's most appropriate that our Secrest moon gate is placed near where many weddings take place in the arboretum.



Contributing to this newsletter: Herb Broda, Janet Broda, Paul Snyder, Jason Veil and Pat Warner