

# SECREST NEWSLETTER

All things Secrest

August 2022

## From the Curator--Signs of the Times

With a little luck, Secrest may soon greet visitors with large, colorful welcome signs at each of the main gateways to the gardens. This week I am working on a grant proposal for the Stanley Smith Horticultural Trust (SSHT) requesting just over \$10,000 to fund signage that provides essential visitor information. SSHT ([smithht.org](http://smithht.org)) is a foundation created in 1970 to support education and research in the areas of public gardens and ornamental horticulture. Secrest fits their funding interests perfectly.

Each of three signs will consist of three 4' tall by 3' wide panels featuring a large, detailed arboretum map with a comprehensive list of all facilities and gardens, rules and garden etiquette, upcoming events, and other important information. I expect to place one sign near the large parking lot, the second near the east end of the Welcome Center, and the third near the parking area for the Taylor Pavilion and slide area ("Adventure Garden"). At this point our lone map panel across from the Seaman Orientation Plaza lacks the scope and detail to be a reliable wayfinding tool.

In addition to providing basic information that our visitors deserve and expect, the signs will be a medium for creating context for those who may not understand the purpose and function of botanical gardens. They will help dispel the conception that Secrest is a park or a pretty backdrop for prom photos. The arboretum is a living museum that serves multiple purposes within the university, collaborates with the horticulture industry, and provides knowledge and inspiration to many others. For example, one portion of each sign panel will feature an image of a sample plant label and how to decipher the somewhat arcane names and numbers. By creating this frame of reference, we hope to instill a perception of value within those who are never asked to pay an entry fee--and also help them find a restroom.



The text, map, and graphics for the new signs will come largely from a recent overhaul of Secrest's visitor brochure--thanks to a very patient graphic designer at Murr Printing. Speaking of which, the new brochures will be printed soon for an early fall debut. As for the sign project, we should have a decision from SSHT in November. If successful, our goal is to have the signs installed in early spring. Wish us luck! --Jason Veil

## Volunteer Linda Palombi --The Treasure of a Seed

A gardener treasures the hope and possibilities represented by a single seed. She tends it with care, nudging it to fulfill its promise. As the plant unfolds and blossoms, the world seems a better place. For Secrest Arboretum Master Gardener Volunteer (MGV) Linda Palombi, a single seed launched her love of nature and gardening.

Linda warmly recalls her grade school days when a teacher instructed the students to place a paper towel in a jar with some water, pressing the paper to the glass. Next, they placed lima bean seeds between the glass and paper towel. The jar was placed by the window and as the water wicked up through the paper, the seeds began to expand forming roots and eventually leaves. Magic was in that jar, and Linda was enchanted. She states, "I just found it so fascinating that I think it piqued my interest right there, how a tiny seed can grow into a plant. From then on, I was interested in flowers and gardening." Although she did not know her grandfather or her own father, who died when she was young, their reputations as avid gardeners convince her that gardening is in her blood.

Secrest Arboretum has deep roots for Linda. Her mother, who was not a gardener, first introduced Linda to Secrest which in those days was known as The Experiment Station by Wayne County residents. She and her mother would go there in the spring to gather dandelion greens for salads. Her mother believed that the dandelions were healthier there than elsewhere.



Linda has had a vegetable garden every year since she was 21 and had her own place with land. Trial and error experiences have taught her the ins and outs of gardening. She enjoys working in the garden, calling it her therapy. For Linda gardening enables her to put aside the negativity in the world as she concentrates on the smell of tomato leaves, the songs of the birds, and the feel of the soil as she plants. Her senses create a peaceful zone encompassing the smells, sounds, and textures of nature. On her property she has both flower and vegetable gardens. Currently, she has a 30' by 30' vegetable garden enclosed by a picket fence. For the past three years, she has raised her root crops in pots. She has had great success with carrots and beets because she can use loose soil, can control the watering, and can move the pots to control light exposure.

Living across Madison Hill from Secrest Arboretum for 43 years, Linda has enjoyed watching Secrest change and grow. When her children were young, she took them there to ride bikes and go for walks. Over twenty years ago, Linda attended a Secrest Plant Discovery Day where she visited with volunteers Lynn Bauer and Sue Ellen Slabaugh. She expressed her interest in volunteering at the arboretum, and they referred her to Secrest Program Director Ken Cochran. When she contacted Ken, he immediately put Linda to work, and she has volunteered at the arboretum ever since.

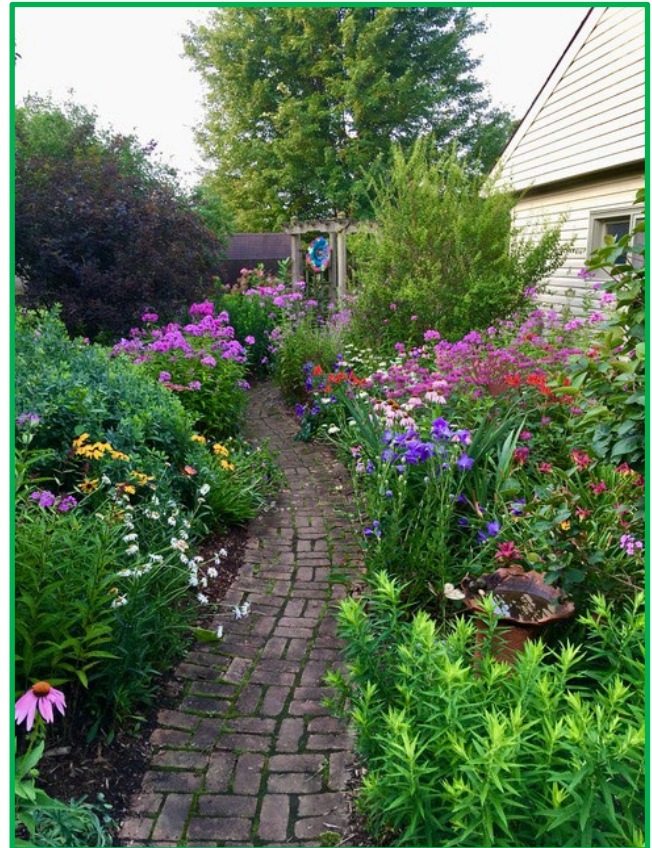


When you visit Secrest Arboretum on Tuesday mornings, you will find Linda cheerfully weeding, pruning, deadheading, planting, or cleaning up gardens. She enjoys talking with arboretum visitors as she works, answering their questions, and hearing them extol the beauty of the arboretum grounds. You will also find her working at the spring and fall plant sales. In 2018, Linda went through the Secrest Arboretum MGVC Class which she credits with increasing her confidence in her gardening skills.

Secrest Operations Manager Paul Snyder commends Linda's contribution to Secrest stating, "Linda is a long-time volunteer. Linda has always been willing to help wherever she is needed, from helping to maintain the gardens to assisting with our plant sale. Linda is always ready to lend a helping hand. She is also part of the team that creates the beautiful annual displays at the Wayne County Fairgrounds, helping to plant, water, and maintain the beds in top condition for fair visitors year-round."

The Wooster tornado of September 16, 2010, devastated Secrest Arboretum and had a personal impact on Linda as she was close to ground zero for the event. On that date at around 5:30 as she headed home from her job at Wooster Brush, a line of traffic forced her to stop at the foot of Madison Hill. Looming over the hill was what appeared to be a menacing dark shelf cloud. As traffic eased, Linda proceeded slowly up Madison Hill only to discover the road was blocked with debris. Anxious to get home, she turned down Station Drive onto the OARDC campus. Here she was horrified to see downed trees, a car upside down in a parking lot, damaged buildings, and collapsed greenhouses. Once she made her way past Fisher Auditorium and back on to Madison Avenue, she was forced to leave her car on the lawn of St. Mary's Cemetery as her street was impassable. She climbed over trees to discover great devastation in her neighborhood. Linda was among the more fortunate residents on her street as her loss included a small hole in her roof, a yard full of metal roofing, a destroyed screened porch, and 12 huge, downed trees.

Today Linda's photos of her yard do not reveal the damage her property suffered. Instead, her gardens reflect the beauty and magic she first discovered in a lima bean seed and throughout her years at Secrest Arboretum. Her flower gardens are full of perennials and annuals in the cottage garden style. She has created a winding brick path on the side of her house which leads to the back yard where the path continues through an arbor, opening into a sunny area with annuals, daylilies, and milkweed for the monarchs she tends. The path winds through the yard to stone steps surrounded by a rock garden and leads to her lower yard where she has a small pond backed by cannas. Linda's artistic vision extends to her basement stained-glass workshop where she creates nature inspired pieces as gifts. Currently, she is working on leaf castings an art she has recently learned. In



addition, Linda has found inspiration from her many travels to natural areas, including over 20 visits to National Parks, three trips to Alaska, and two trips to Italy.

A bean seed opened the world for Linda Palombi. She has made good use of that early lesson and continues to garden and learn.

--Pat Warner

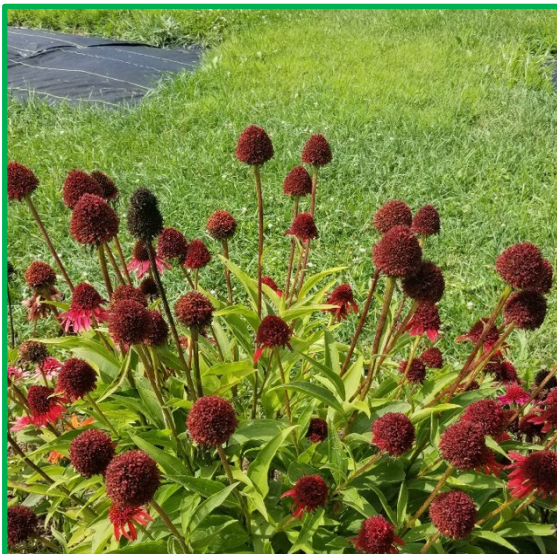
## **Secrest Plant Trials Volunteering: A Learning Experience**

When I started the Cone Flower data collection project, I viewed it as a service to the Arboretum. It was a bit tedious at times, it was hot and humid at times, and it took about 3-4 hours each week. However, what surprised me was how much I learned along the way.

Susan Heady (MGV Class of 2022) and I were a team. She gathered the data, and I was the scribe. Susan, being Susan, was very specific about the identity of the pollinators. I learned about several varieties of bees, flies, and beetles, and discovered several other pollinators. She was quite a teacher.

Another thing I learned was how to recognize the signs for the Coneflower Rosette Gall Mites. The tufted protrusion at the tip of the cone is an indication that the mites are munching away. Take a look at the picture below.

We often hear about choosing plants that are interesting throughout their growth cycle and across multiple seasons. Some of these coneflowers had striking cones long after the petals fell. Consider choosing some of these varieties for interest in your garden.





Next time the opportunity to participate in a plant trial comes around I recommend that you consider participating. You will not regret it.

--Pat Matthews

## Monitoring Monarch Butterflies – Citizen Science

I few years ago I began a personal study of monarchs. My husband and I have a farm in Wayne County Ohio where we grow small grains and non-GMO crops. This limits our use of glyphosate for weed control. We also have several large drainage ditches running through the place allowing areas for common milkweed to thrive. I hoped my unique situation might be statistically helpful and joined the Monarch Larvae Monitoring Project:

<https://monarchjointventure.org/mlmp>.

I registered an area of ditch bank with the group and dutifully counted eggs, larvae and adults found there according to instructions and filed a weekly report. Information was sent by Internet.

That first summer my grandkids and I found, fed, and released over 100 monarchs. We witnessed adults emerge and parasites pop out of pristine chrysalides.

The ditch banks are growing more brambles each year and the old failing hips were both replaced in 2021 so I have not participated for the last two summers.



I still get the newsletter from Journey North ( <https://journeynorth.org> ) sent by the University of Wisconsin-Madison that is responsible for the program. They have other projects for citizen scientists beyond Monarchs and are worth a look.

As a side note, the current thought on raising monarchs indoors is that the insect is weaker and less viable than its wild raised counterpart but raising a few for fun does not hurt. Enjoy.

--Ellen Grimes



## Featured Plant of the Season

### --*Lagerstroemia* x

Crape myrtle, *Lagerstroemia*, is a plant that is native to parts of China, the Himalayas, and parts of Korea. It is widely planted as a landscape plant throughout the United States yet is uncommon in the northern United States. If you travel south to Tennessee and North Carolina, the plants are everywhere. From tree lawns to boulevards, from fast food restaurants to homes, these plants dot the southern landscape. Some would say that they are perhaps over-used in the south

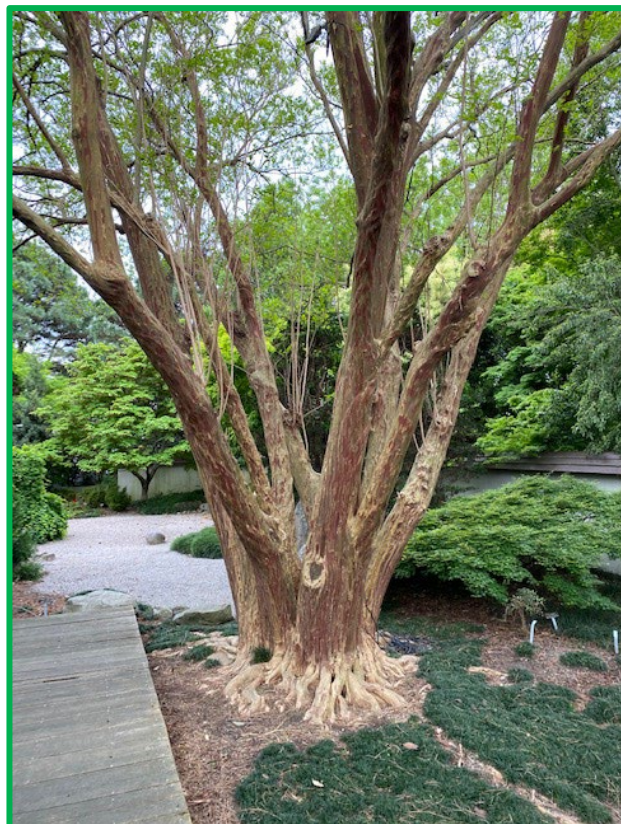
But who could blame them. The plants boast beautiful cinnamon colored exfoliating bark and brilliantly colored flowers. Yet, for many northern gardeners, having a crape myrtle remains a dream.

However, plant breeders have been working to create smaller hybrids for northern climates. Such hybrids may not be stem hardy, that is the above ground portion of the plant cannot survive our winters, but the root system can. Prior to the new hybrids, you could plant a southern crape myrtle selection in your landscape and the roots would survive to produce shoots and leaves, but they would rarely produce flowers. Now, the compact selections currently on the market can produce shoots and flowers in a single season. If you're expecting to have the exfoliating bark on these plants, you will be disappointed as the stems get killed back each winter, not allowing them to reach the stage where the bark begins to peel (**at right:** Mature *Lagerstroemia fauriei* at JC Raulston Arboretum in North Carolina).

Think of the new crape myrtles like butterfly bush. They should be cut back to six to eight inches above the ground in the spring once growth begins. The plants grow quickly and usually begin producing flowers by July and continue through August. There is limited information on whether these plants can produce a second flush of flowers if deadheaded immediately after the first flush of flowers. However, the University of North Carolina cooperative extension mentions this practice being used on larger selections to encourage a second flush. This is something we are trying for the first time this summer. Stop by in a month to see if it worked.

Expect compact selections to mature between 2-4' in the summer. These plants flower best when planted in full sun but will still flower in partial shade if they receive more than 6 hours of sun. Provide them with soils that are moist but well-drained and they will be happy. Once established, the plant is drought tolerant.

You can find plantings of crape myrtle in the beds and containers around the Secret Welcome and Education Center, the service road leading down from Miller Pavilion, and scattered throughout the





gardens. Some of the selections that have performed well at Secrest include, Lagerstroemia 'G2X133271' Infinitini® Magenta (**below left**), Lagerstroemia 'G2X13377' Infinitini® White, Lagerstroemia 'Chery Mocha', and Lagerstroemia 'SMNLIMG' Rikki Tikki™ Rouge (**below right**).

==Paul Snyder



**Pride and Joy:** Enjoy the beautiful variety of gardens from the personal spaces of our Master Gardener Volunteers.

### Dennis Mohn's **Pride and Joy**

The story of my yard is long and came about from many years of correcting drainage issues and establishing privacy screening and complicated by road work and my other projects.

**Photo 1** The east side of my driveway was all clay. I used foundation stone from an old garden to raise the elevation and backfilled with soil from regrading to improve storm drainage. Planted with mums, coneflowers, daylilies, roses, serviceberry, and other fillers, it is still a work in progress as it is only half completed.







**Photo 2** Street widening left only my homemade cupola, some Yucca, and two sickly scrub trees growing into the guide wires and covered with Virginia Creeper. I cut down the trees and double dug the frontage to remove the Yucca and Virginia Creeper. I built the mailbox stand from rough cedar, amended the soil with compost, and replanted with juniper, zinnia, lavender, coleus, and some Japanese iris.

**Photo 3** In an effort to save plants I did not get around to planting, and, to create a sitting area for my wife as well as to hide the ugliness of the work going on behind the plant screen, I tossed garden phlox, day lilies, Japanese iris, and hydrangea into pots and containers. The pine in the background has been in that pot about seven years. The containers allow me to move things around to work on the raised bed extension, create a seating area, and soften the view from the street.



## Sue Sivey's **Pride and Joy**

Sue reports great garden activity on her property. Many pollinators are visiting her perennial borders, her houseplants are spending time on her porch and putting on a show, and Sue is busy harvesting her vegetable gardens.

A small section of the perennial border has lots of pollinators visiting. From left: Yarrow, two types of Agastache, and then Butterfly Weed





My Night Blooming Cereus had 3 hand sized buds recently and there are 2 tiny buds forming now so I expect a second bloom. I've never had more than 2 flowers on it.



**(Right)** This is the first time my Orchid Cactus has bloomed. This flower was quite spectacular.

**(Below)** The first bed of potatoes picked and washed. Red, White, and Blue!

The garlic harvest is in and cleaned.





## Lori and Bob Everett's **Pride and Joy**

We moved to our new home in May 2021. We created 14 new gardens soon after we moved in with many transplants from our previous home. These pictures show several transitions of my favorite new garden. It is a large crescent shaped garden across from our kitchen sink window.

Note from Bob: And to be clear - all the credit for design, planting, and maintenance belongs to Lori!

**June 2021** – Getting Ready to plant. Plants sitting in their pots just after the rototill and compost/topsoil added...ready for planting. They then required constant watering through the summer to survive the hot summer transplant. (This picture is before we decided we needed a shed).



**April 2022** - Anticipation - front row is *Leucojum* about to bloom, (shed arrives!)  
Also...already I could see that I would want to move the *Leucojum* as soon as they finished their bloom.



**May 2022** - first significant blooms - purple lupine, pink sunset clematis, Siberian chilled wine iris, white delphiniums just ready to bloom



**June 2022** - second bloom cycle - sun drops, lavender betony, tall white fragrant valerian, pink coneflowers





**July and August** - Becky (tall!!) daisies, blue midwest hardy agapanthus lilies, zinnias, and morning glories (not blooming yet, both planted late May from seed)



There are 2 oak leaf hydrangeas, 2 tough stuff hydrangeas, 2 crab apples, 3 peonies, a red bud, and 2 clematis that were planted at the front, back and sides of the garden. Initially I thought I shouldn't start so many small trees and shrubs, but I could not bear to leave them behind as they were from several previous Secrest plant sales.

I split the 6 *Leucojum* clusters into 18 new clusters and planted them in another new garden that fronts the wooded back area of our lot. They would not have been an attractive focal point for several weeks of the summer to have remained across the front of the garden. As flowers completed their bloom cycle and even though several have pretty, dried brown flower head clusters, I decided to continually deadhead to keep the garden green and fresh through most of the summer.

I can see that I already need to scale back quantities and transplant other plants not even evident in the pictures:

Beautiful blooming Millennium allium are hiding behind tall Becky daisies.

There are already too many new iris, coneflower, and sun drops sprouting up.

The second bloom cycle of the white delphinium is totally lost next to the white Becky daisies.

The tough stuff hydrangeas are wasted as they can't compare to the flowers to be a focal point in this garden. They may work better in a garden that has more shrubs and ground cover.

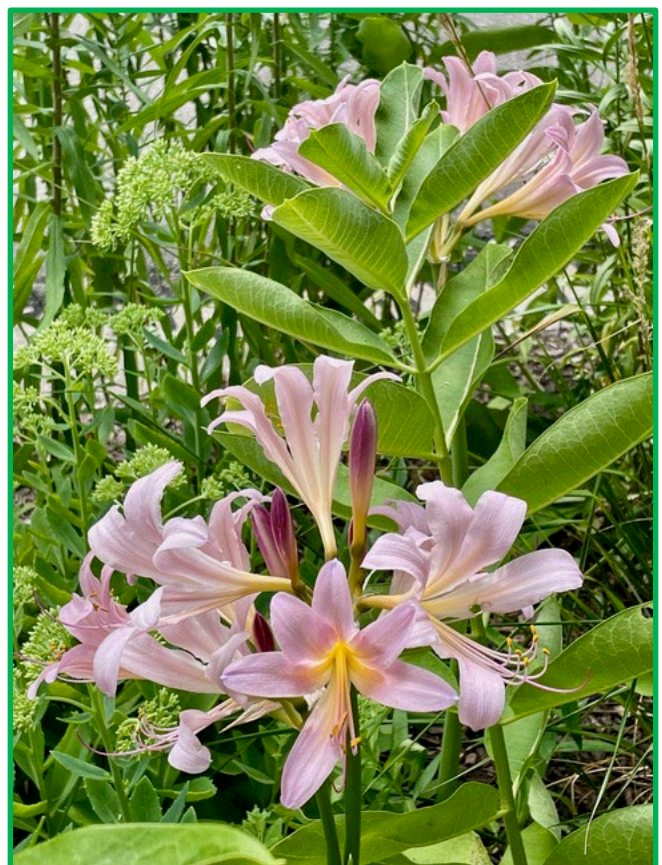
Overall, I was surprised at how quickly this garden became a garden.

The coneflowers bloom longest, but without zinnias, I do not have enough bloom to last into the later part of summer. As time goes on and the trees and shrubs grow larger, there will be less sun, and several of these perennials will not thrive, but when that happens, there will be less maintenance and I will be ready for that.

## Kim Tanner's **Pride and Joy**

My half acre city lot includes very little direct sunlight, so I converted our tree lawn into a perennial pollinator border. The remainder of my lot is heavily wooded and hosts my many native woodland perennials.

**(Left)** A friendly female American toad (*Anaxyrus americanus*) regularly soaks in my butterfly bath, reminding me of a plump lady enjoying her tub. Female toads are larger and plumper than their mates, with lighter throat pigment. She earns her tub time by eating mosquitos in my shade garden every evening. **(Right)** Resurrection lilies (*Lycoris squamigera*) - a plant in the amaryllis family. In the spring, long strap-like leaves emerge and then die back. Months later, these pink lilies bloom on bare stalks, adding needed color to the late summer garden.



**Next page:** **(Left)** Tiger lilies (*Lilium lancifolium*) offer a bright orange pop of color in my pollinator border. Tiny black beady seeds appear at the leaf junctions and will grow if planted. They can host the mosaic virus, which doesn't hurt them, but can hurt other lilies, so segregate them. **(Center)** Joe Pye weed (*Eupatorium purpureum*) - our native variety, is the tallest perennial in my border. In addition to many bees and butterflies, hummingbirds also love its pink fluffy blooms. **(Right)** Bears breech (*Acanthus mollis*) - the stunner of the garden, draws the most attention as people stroll past. Last summer one walker stopped to ask, "What is that fabulous flower"? They then requested a start!

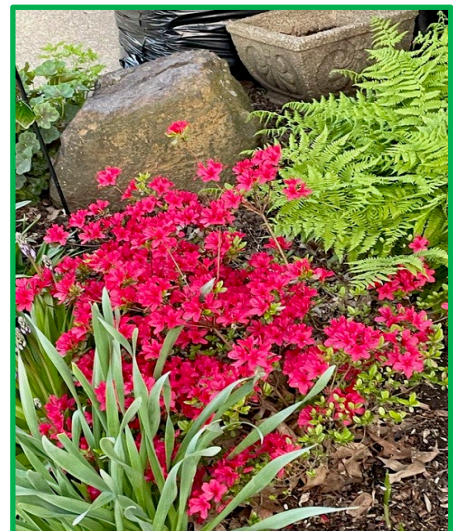
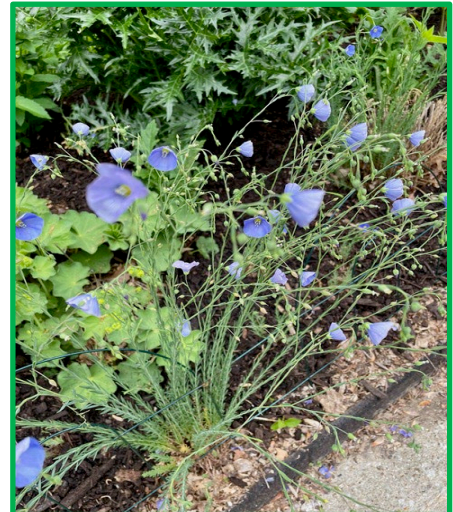




**(Below Left) Monarch caterpillar (*Danaus plexippus*)** - I have only counted 7 monarchs on my milkweeds this year, so I was thrilled to find 2 caterpillars in the past couple weeks. Crossing my fingers that they survive. I have only found 2 chrysalides in the past 2 years.

**(Center) Blue flax (*Linum lewisii*)** - a gorgeous color among the other bloomers. Sweet flowers open just after sunrise and close in the afternoon.

**Purple bearded iris (*Iris germanica*)** - given to me, so of unknown heritage, but isn't she a stunner!



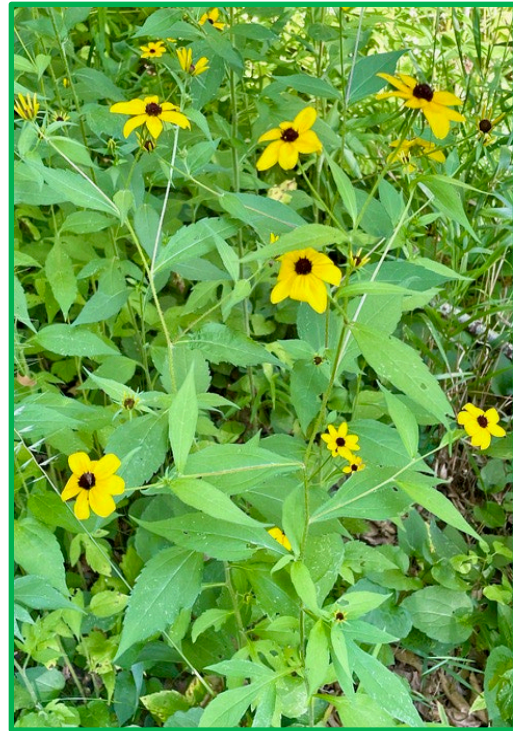
**(Left) Vintage rose (*Rosa alba*)** with great scent - I'm pretty sure it's 'Celeste'. A semi-double, she boasts golden stamens and grows happily in poor soil.

**(Right) Red azaleas (*Rhododendron* spp.)** - these were in the landscaping when we moved here 8 years ago. They do bloom best when I remember to apply fertilizer!



**(Below Left) Virginia bluebells (*Mertensia virginica*)** - a native ephemeral, one my favorites!

**(Right) Rudbeckia** - this long-lived perennial came in a packet of woodland edge seeds from Ohio Prairie Nursery. My first experience with Frost Seeding. Per their instructions, *"Requires exposed soil. As the soil freezes and thaws throughout the winter, the seed will stratify and get worked into the soil, thus completing the process."*



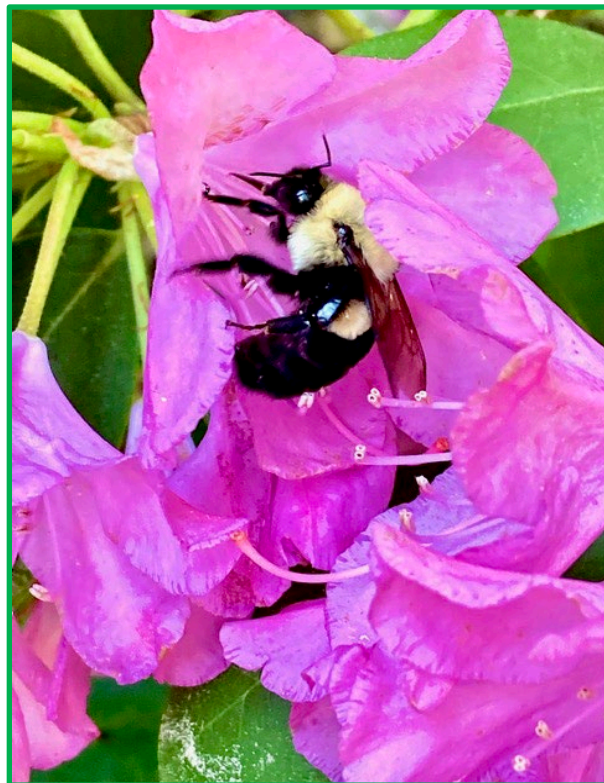
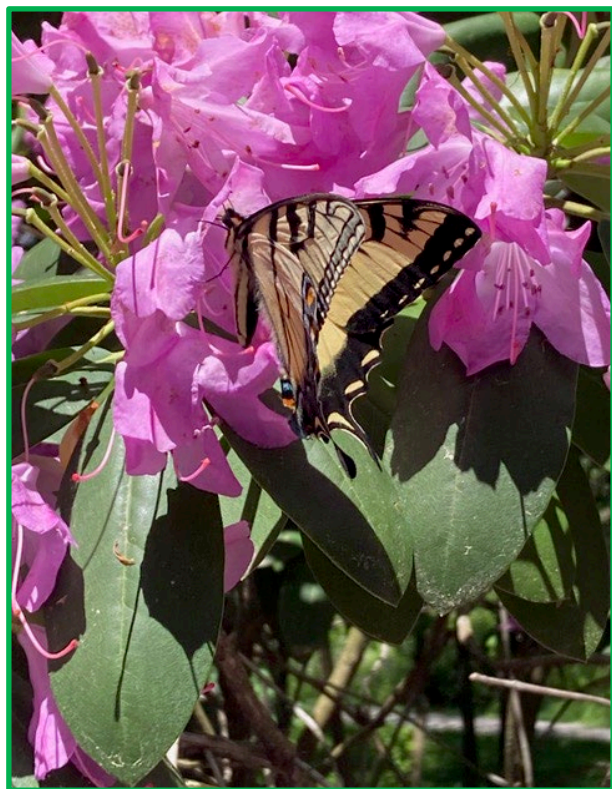
### Rachel Derr's **Pride and Joy**

I didn't plant much in my beds this Year . . . actually tore out some old shrubs and planted some small shrubs. We had to dig up old rhododendrons from our garden beds because of disease but grateful the ones in the woods flourished this spring!





I enjoyed taking close-up shots of the rhododendrons which were glorious this year . . . the bumble bees enjoyed them as well!



Because of teaching a watercolor class this summer at the Wayne Center for the Arts, I realized I enjoyed taking an abundance of photographs of close-up flowers and fruits in my yard for my students to paint. They proved to be inspiring!





Lea Ewing's **Pride and Joy**







## Upcoming Events

**August 19, 2022** – Music at the Arboretum.

**September 2, 2022** – Plant Diagnostic Clinic

**September 14, 2022** – Guided Tree Walk

**October 8, 2022** – Autumn Discovery Day Plant Sale

**October 12, 2022** – Guided Tree Walk

--Edited by Pat Warner