

The Germinator



PUBLISHED BY THE MEN'S GARDEN CLUB OF YOUNGSTOWN, OHIO
86 YEARS OF SERVICE TO THE MAHONING VALLEY AND SURROUNDING COMMUNITIES

President's Message - August

Where has the time gone? Summer is slipping away. It seems like we were just talking about getting ready to plant and, all of a sudden, it's harvest time and we are getting ready for the Horticulture Show and the Canfield Fair.

The show is on Aug. 26 & 27 with setup on the 25th at noon. We would like anyone who can make it to help out. For those who have never attended, it at the Davis Center, Fellows Riverside Gardens. You'll see a lot of interesting plants and get tips on growing and showing them. I hope that someone can beat Don Brown in the Larry Whetson Memorial Heaviest Tomato Contest. The winner gets a \$25 prize and there is also a similar award for the best zinnia.

The Mahoning Valley Scrappers outing at Eastwood Field in Niles is on Aug. 24. The picnic lunch begins at 5:30p and the game starts at 7:00p. For \$14 you'll enjoy an evening of baseball with family and friends. Contact Rodney Toth, 330-759-1993, rkdahalias@aol.com, for info. Guests Welcome.

The Canfield Fair, Aug. 30 thru Sept. 4, is right around the corner and our club will have an information booth where we will give gardening tips to visitors, tell them about our organization and try to sign up new members. It is a good way for new members to get to know those of us who have been around awhile. The club plays for your admission. Contact Bruce Brungard - 330-793-1307, bgbbhi@live.com - to participate.

Thanks,
Dennis

Board Meeting
6:30pm, Wednesday, Aug. 9
Austintown Public Library
South Raccoon Rd.
- All Members Welcome -

MetroParks Events

Family Tour Thursdays.....	3,10,17
Cohasset Express Nostalgia.....	3,8,13,27
Yellow Creek Concerts.....	3,10
Family Fun Fridays.....	4,11,18,25
Backyard Bees Workshop.....	5
Morning Relax, Restore.....	5,12,19,26
Wildlife Paddle.....	5
Reptile & Amphibian Show.....	6
Sunset Full Moon Hike.....	7
MetroMutts.....	8,19,23
Live at Morley Concert.....	9
Children's Hour - Box Turtles.....	10
Mill Creek Meandering.....	12
Tractor-Wagon Rides.....	13,20
Traveling Naturalist.....	13
Birding the Sanctuary.....	19
Book Discussion: Future of Nature.....	19
Summer Trolley Ride.....	19,22
Hike with a Naturalist.....	20
Partial Solar Eclipse Viewing.....	21
Botanical Mornings.....	25
Glacier Outing.....	26
Shakespeare in Park-Romeo & Juliet.....	26
MetroParks Farm/Canfield Fair.....	27-31
Golf Shop Sale.....	Aug. 31- Sept. 4

www.millcreekmetroparks.org

Mens Garden Club Horticulture Show
Fellows Riverside Gardens Davis Center
Show: Saturday, Aug. 26 Awards: Sunday, Aug. 27
Registration & Setup - 7:30a-10:30a Judging at 11:00a
Bring your best specimens and join the fun. \$25 heaviest tomato & best zinnia. Schedules available at Steak Fry & Aug. Board Meeting.

Steak Fry & Membership Meeting
Wednesday, Aug. 2 • Setup: 5 pm • Dinner at 5:30 pm,
Larry Duck's Home, 5471 Clingan Rd., Struthers
Steak (\$12), Salmon (\$10), Chicken (\$8) & Lots of Sides
Contact Bob McGowan - 330-518-6397 or rjfmcgowan@aol.com to reserve your spot. Deadline is July 25th.

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Club News

WWW.MGCY.ORG

82 Members • 2 Associates

For The Birds

Most members had never met Dennis Toth, Rodney's brother, before our July membership meeting, but we soon discovered a resemblance in both appearance and an affinity for the natural world. Dennis expresses his love of God's creations by combining wood working skill with watching avian behavior. The result is some very innovative and functional birdhouses made from scraps of a variety of woods including dead elm and ash.

This bluebird house has an ash face complete with emerald ash borer larva scars, sides made from alternating strips of light and dark walnut, a black locust roof and a sassafras perch. Dennis will be entering it in the TGCA/MGCA National Conference Bird House Competition. The others pictured below will be convention door prizes.



There are several important points to consider when making a birdhouse. They are:

1. The nesting cavity and entry hole should be species specific. For bluebirds, the interior should be 5"x5"x5" below the 1 1/8 to 1 1/2 inch entry hole.
2. Spaces between the roof and sides, or drilled holes in the rear and bottom to allow for ventilation.
3. The bottom should be hinged to clean out old nest debris. Dennis cleans his houses in March and October, or before and after nesting.

Bluebird houses should be placed in open areas while other species may prefer more secluded locations. Dimensions and mounting locations for specific bird species can be found on line.

Helping our Valley to Grow Since 1930

MGCY Annual Horticulture Show

In addition to the Larry Whetson Memorial Heaviest Tomato contest, this year's show will premier the Boe Korody Memorial Best Zinnia Award, each with a \$25 prize going to the winner. Boe passed away two years ago and was always reluctant to exhibit his 'State Fair' zinnias in competitions. He just took joy in people seeing them at the Knoll Run Golf Course.



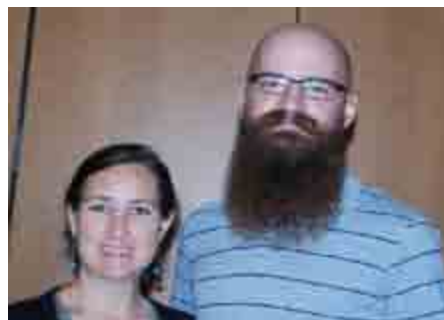
Before he died, his friend Yvonne Ford persuaded him to allow her to enter one of his zinnia specimens in the Canfield Fair, and he was delighted when it won Best In Show. At his funeral, his wife passed out 'State Fair' zinnia seeds to those in attendance. Yvonne is sponsoring the Best Zinnia Award in Boe's memory.

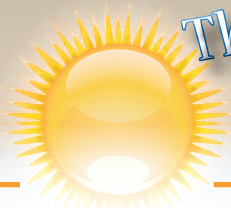
This is just another example of the esteem gardeners hold for our horticulture show, known as the best over a very wide area. It is the duty of every MGCY member to maintain this tradition of excellence by participating in any way they can, whether its bringing as many entries as possible, helping with setup, working the show or helping with cleanup. An exhibiting tutorial where show schedules will be available will take place at our Steak Fry on Aug. 2

Non-Traditional Scholarship Winner

It is an often overlooked fact of American life that the chances of getting a college education diminishes as time passes after graduating high school, especially if one has a family to support. Given these obstacles he had to overcome, we were happy to meet Eric Tanner who was awarded one of our 2017 Scholarships along with Joe Fagnano and Christopher Moore.

Eric will graduate from Ohio State University's Agriculture Technical Institute in December. His major is Greenhouse Management. He worked for Grainger Industrial Supply for eleven years. He is married to Ashley and they have a son, Kamden, eleven years old. We are proud of having made this small contribution to the Tanners' future.





Million Pollinator Garden Challenge (MPGC)

In 2015, the National Gardening Assn. and 8 other organizations created the National Pollinator Garden Network (NPGN) to ask gardeners to help restore pollinator populations by planting attracting vegetation and providing suitable habitat. The MPGC is a nationwide effort of preserve and create gardens and landscapes that help revive the health of bees, butterflies, birds, bats and other pollinators across America.



While the 2017 challenge was held the week of June 19-25, now is the time to begin planning for next year's event. You can begin with a wish list to plant next spring. They include Garden Phlox, Coneflower, Strawflower, Lily, Wild Arugula, Cosmos, Lily, Black Eyed Susan, Cleome, Heliotrope, Nasturtium, Nicotiana, Pentas, Salvia, Scabiosa and Zinnia.



One of the best known plants for attracting pollinators, especially Monarch butterflies, is milkweed. A new variety, (*Asclepias curassavica* 'Red Butterfly'), features red and yellow, flattened flower clusters in summer, and is an attractive evergreen that also attracts hummingbirds and bees. It is a vigorous grower that prefers well-drained soil and full sun. It self-sows spreading quickly so removing the seedpods before they can open will limit too many extra plants the following spring.



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Summer Container Watering Tips

Summer often means periods of draught, high temps and harsh winds that can wipe out your beautiful potted and hanging arrangements in a couple of days. A bottom layer of gravel has long been a favored technique but it can cause water to pool leading to constantly wet roots and root rot. Gravel also takes up space otherwise occupied by soil. Here are a few suggestions from the National Gardening Association:

1. Save your old dishwashing sponges, cut them up and layer on the bottom of the container before filling it with soil. They will hold water for thirsty roots and prevent it from flushing out the bottom.

2. Dunking the container in a sink filled with water for several hours if the plant shows signs of major wilting and/or if soil has shrunk away from the sides of the pot.

3. Slice oven a clean, unused baby diaper and mix the absorbant contents with the soil. The fibers that keep a baby's bottom dry will help maintain plant hydration.

4. Mulching will help prevent excessive evaporation.

5. Keep a pencil nearby and periodically insert it one inch into the soil. If soil particles stick to it the container contains sufficient water.

6. Potted plants exposed to full or partial summer sun benefit from a layer of ice cubes. The ice slowly melts and doesn't spill over the side taking soil with it.

7. 16-32 oz. plastic bottles with the bottoms cut out and a couple holes punched in the caps can be inserted upside down in the soil and filled with water when needed. Some gardeners prefer to use coffee cans rigged in a similar way. These methods allow plants to get a slow, steady watering.



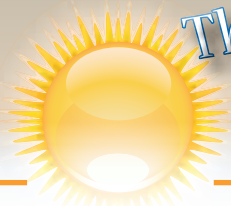
Remember that potting mix often contains large portions of peat moss. Once dry, it seems unwilling to absorb water. Adding a drop or two of dishwashing liquid will break the surface tension of the water allowing it to soak the dry moss.

Sign up for the weekly National Gardening Assn. newsletter at Garden.org.

Maintaining Bird Baths With Vinegar

We have heard that pet parrots can be potty trained, but wild birds are of a different feather. A dip in nice, clean water seems to relax their sphincters and the water is soon 'fowled' resulting in the need for a daily change. Now comes word that adding a few ounces of white distilled vinegar per gallon of bath water will keep the water clear for up to 3 hot summer days.

The vinegar breaks down the bird droppings and the solution keeps the water surprisingly clear and odor free. Changing the water only involves dumping the old, hosing the bowl down with a hose and adding fresh water. Going beyond 3 days will often result in a water ring and several spots of dried nasties on the bowl edge due to evaporation. Not to worry. Full strength and a stiff brush will take care of that. Clean the bowl once a month with full strength vinegar and a stiff brush.



The Joke's On Us But God Isn't Laughing

God to St. Francis: Frank, you know about gardens and nature. What is going on down there on Earth? What happened to the violets, dandelions, milkweed and stuff I started eons ago? I had a perfect no-maintenance garden plan. Those plants grow in any type of soil, withstand drought and multiply with abandon. The nectar from the long-lasting blossoms attracts butterflies, bees and flocks of song birds. I expected to see a vast garden by now. But all I see are these green



rectangles.

St. Francis: It's that tribe, the Suburbanites, that settled there. They started calling your flowers "weeds" and went to great lengths to kill them and replace them with grass.

God: Grass? But it's so boring. It's not colorful. It doesn't attract butterflies, birds and bees - only grubs and worms - and it's sensitive to temperatures. Do these Suburbanites really want all that grass growing there?

St. Francis: Apparently so, Lord. They go to great pains to grow it and keep it green. They begin each spring by feeding their lawns with fertilizer and poison any other plant that crops up there.

God: The spring rains and warm weather probably make grass grow really fast. That must make the Suburbanites happy.

St. Francis: Apparently not. As soon as it grows a little, they cut it - sometimes twice a week.

God: Cut it? Do they then bale it like hay?

St. Francis: Not exactly, Lord. They rake it up, put it in bags, and then pay to have someone haul it away.

God: These Suburbanites must be relieved in the summer when I cut back on the rain and turn up the heat. That surely slows the grass' growth and saves them a lot of work.

St. Francis: You're not going to believe this, Sir. When the grass begins to grow more slowly, they drag out hoses and pay to water it so it will grow fast again. Then they can continue to mow and pay to get rid of it.

God: What nonsense. At least they kept some of the trees. That was a sheer stroke of genius if I say so Myself. The leaves grow in the spring and provide beauty and shade in the summer. In the autumn they fall to the ground forming a blanket to keep the soil moist and protect plant roots and seeds. Then they decay and return nutrients to the soil. It's the natural cycle of life.

St. Francis: Actually, Lord, in autumn the Suburbanites pay to have the leaves hauled away too.

God: No! What do they do to protect tree and shrub roots in winter, and keep the soil loose and moist?

St. Francis: After throwing away the leaves, they go out and buy something they call mulch. They haul it home and spread it around the trees and shrubs.

God: And where do they get this mulch?

St. Francis: They cut down trees and grind them up.

God: Enough! I don't want to think about this anymore. St. Catherine, you're in charge of the arts. What movie have you scheduled for us tonight?

St. Catherine: 'Dumb and Dumber', Lord. It's a story about...

God: Never mind, I think I just heard the whole story from St. Francis.

Korean Maple Tree

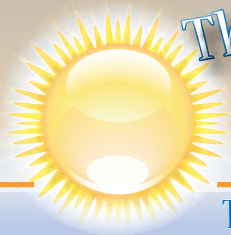
This maple (*Acer pseudosieboldianum*), like its Japanese cousin, is relatively small - 25ft x 25ft fully mature - and has some exceptional features. In the spring, new hand-sized leaves are soft and downy with each having 10 lobes. The blossoms are in purple clusters developing into winged samaras in summer.

The big attraction of this tree is its spectacular fall color. The dark green leaves flame into shades of orange, purple, yellow, red and crimson as the weather gets cooler.



Hardy to Zone 4, the tree prefers moist, organically rich soil with excellent drainage, and is relatively immune to insects and disease.

Source: gardeningknowhow.com.



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Thank you to the MGCY Friends for their Civic Fund donations.

Members are urged to give them a visit.

DICK ADGATE FLORIST

4257 Market St
Youngstown, Oh 44512
330-788-5054

JOE ALESSI

MGCY Member

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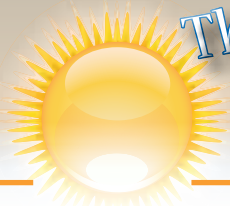
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Youngstown, OH 44511-1108
(330)-788-8739
www.theyoungstownplayhouse.com



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Men's Garden Club of Youngstown Ohio
c/o Newsletter Editor
123 McKinley Ave. • Youngstown, OH 44509

www.mgcy.org



See you at the Canfield Fair!
Wed., Aug. 30 - Mon., Sept. 4

calendar of events



Aug 2	Steak Fry/General Meeting ... Larry Duck's.....	5:30/7:00 pm
Aug 9	Board Meeting..... Austintown Public Library	6:30 pm
Aug 24.....	Scrappers Outing..... Eastwood Field.....	TBA
Aug. 26-27	MGCY Horticulture Show FRG.....	TBA
Aug. 30-Sept. 4.....	Canfield Fair..... Canfield Fairgrounds	9:00 am - 9:00 pm
Sept 6.....	General Meeting	FRG.....7:00 pm
Sept 13.....	Board Meeting..... Austintown Public Library	6:30 pm
Oct 4.....	General Meeting	FRG.....7:00 pm
Oct 11.....	Board Meeting..... Austintown Public Library	6:30 pm
TBA	Fall Breakfast..... FRG.....	9:00 am
TBA	CGLG Meeting..... Kingwood Gardens, Mansfield, OH.....	10:00 am
Nov 1	General Meeting	FRG.....7:00 pm
Nov 8	Board Meeting..... Austintown Public Library	6:30 pm
Dec 6	Board Meeting..... Austintown Public Library	6:30 pm
Dec 13	Christmas Dinner..... A La Cart in Canfield, Ohio	6:00 pm

THE MGCY 2017 OFFICERS

PRESIDENT

Dennis Zap
zappy4@aol.com

1ST VICE PRESIDENT

Paul Shanabarger
pdsanab@aol.com

2ND VICE PRESIDENT

Bruce Brungard
330-793-1307 • bgbhhi@live.com

TREASURER

Robert J. McGowan
P.O. Box 724 • Canfield, OH 44406
330-518-6397 • rjfmcgowan@aol.com

RECORDING SECRETARY

Joe Fagnano
330-533-2475 (H) • 330-559-5295 (C)
jlfagnano@hotmail.com

CORRESPONDING SECRETARY

Michael Banks
330-707-9089 (H) • 330-565-0592 (C)
mcbankspaint@yahoo.com

GERMINATOR STAFF

David Campana, Editor
Paul Shanabarger • Dan Miller
Joseph Alessi, Jr., Editor Emeritus
mgcygerminator@gmail.com