

# 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 - December

Greetings all,

This is the last President's Message from me. The last two years have gone by in a flash. I've gotten to know a lot of the members and it has been my pleasure to do so.

As we start into the holiday season, let us all be sure to be thankful for all that we have. We still live in the greatest country in the world.

Happy Holidays to you and your family, and all the best for the new year.

Dave



*Annual Christmas Dinner*  
*Wednesday, December 14th*  
*6 PM Social Hour*  
*6:30 Dinner*

*Meal Choice of:*  
*Chicken Cordon Bleu or*  
*Stuffed Pork Chop*  
*Cost \$ 20.00 per person*  
*(tip included)*

*Entertainment provided by:*  
*Robin Roseberry (vocalist)*

*Reservations (along with check)*  
*and meal choice to*  
*Bob McGowan by December 7th.*

## Mill Creek MetroParks

### November EVENTS

*Health & wellness, golf, children's & family activities, nature hikes, horticulture shows & seminars, workshops, crafts & more:*

- 3.....December 3 @ 10:00 am - 11:30 am  
Botanical Ceramic Art Workshop  
In this two part series, you will use inspiration from botanical designs and ceramic artists with Dan Dinsio. The finished piece will be four 4"x 5" ceramic tiles hung together to create an amazing work of art. The first session will focus on designing and sculpting the clay.
- 4.....December 4 @ 10:00 am - 5:00 pm  
Take a trip back through the last century and a quarter as you rediscover r Mill Creek Park. Stroll along inside the Davis Center to see your favorite iconic park structures, the annual holiday tree walk, a student-led Chihuly inspired display, and seasonal blooms. During the first three weekends (Saturday and Sunday), we are open late.
- 6.....December 6 @ 6:30 pm - 8:30 pm  
Design a fresh boxwood tree for your holiday celebration table with Marie Borocz. You will use mini red carnations, white mums, white limonium and seasonal decorations. Register/pay by 12/4. \$34; FFRG \$28
- 15.....December 15 @ 1:00 pm - 2:00 pm  
12/15, 1/19 & 2/16 | 1 - 2 pm Ages 3-5, plus adult. Join the Sprout Club this winter to learn about the amazing world of plants with topics that include: sunlight, mad science, and air plants! Each class will include an activity and snack. Attend all three classes and receive a plant-related prize.
- 20.....December 20 @ 6:30 pm - 8:30 pm  
Your holiday table will sparkle and glisten with this long and low centerpiece. Marie Borocz will guide you in using fresh mixed holiday greens, red carnations, white mums, and some holiday glitz and glitter. Register/pay by 12/18. \$40; FFRG \$34
- 31..... December 31 @ 10:00 am - 12:00 pm  
Share the joy of the season by lending a hand to our over-wintering feathered friends. We'll create edible bird ornaments using pinecones and other natural materials to decorate a pine tree outside the Ford Nature Center.

**Board Meeting**  
 December 7th  
 Austintown Library  
 6:30 pm  
*All members welcome*

**General Meeting**  
 December 14th  
 (Christmas Dinner)  
 A La Cart, Canfield, Ohio  
 6:00 pm



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*For a complete schedule and details:*  
[www.millcreekmetroparks.com](http://www.millcreekmetroparks.com)



## Club News

WWW.MGCY.ORG  
85 Members • 1 Associate

### **CGLR Fall Meeting**

*reported by Paul Shanabarger*

The Central Great Lakes Regional meeting was held October 22 at Kingwood Center in Mansfield with five MGCY members in attendance. Only the Cleveland club had more.



TGOA/MGCA President Billy Clark spoke about his gardening experiences in Texas. Billy then presented to John Schinker the National Presidency Pin for 2017. The 2017 CGLR officers were also installed.



After lunching at the Golden Corral, a presentation on tree disease and insect problems given by Ms. Deborah D. Miller MSC, Senior Plant Pathologist, Diagnostician and Researcher with the College of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources, University of Tennessee.

### **Fellows' Pumpkin Walk**

The weather was perfect for the 2016 Fellows Riverside Gardens' Annual Pumpkin Walk attended by an estimated 9,000 children of all ages. Activities



included a polka band, pumpkin carving demonstration, children's activities, and free apples and cider. Over 700 lighted jack-o-lanterns lined walkways and several host tables.

## *Helping our Valley to Grow Since 1930*

At the invitation of Lynn Zocolo, MGCY provided an information booth manned by members Dennis Zap and Rodney Toth. Each child received a packet containing 'Big Max' pumpkin seeds and 'Mammoth Gray Stripe' sunflower seeds courtesy of Dave Causer. In addition, each child's sweet tooth was stimulated with free candy.

Our table was graced with a beautiful sunflower tablecloth provided by Kay Toth and one of Rodney's Indonesian gourds, icebreakers that stimulated inquiry and conversation. It was a wonderful evening and, as Lynn put it, "It's a fun was thing to do something as a family, and it doesn't cost a dime".

### **MGCY Christmas Tree Decorating**

Hopefully our members received the email about decorating our Christmas tree at the Davis Center, Fellows Riverside gardens at 5pm, Tuesday, Nov. 29. If you haven't already given Joe Fagnano your dried garden and nature items, please bring them and join the fun.

### **Fall Breakfast**

Just a few pics of our members and guests enjoying



a sumptuous meal and guided tree identification tour of Fellows Riverside Gardens. We hope you'll be able to attend our Spring Breakfast. Tell your friends. It's a great time and open to the public.

### **Winter Seminar Lineup**

Our members will want to be on hand for our Annual Winter Seminar, Feb. 20, at Fellows Riverside Gardens. In addition to good food, a Chinese auction and other attractions, we have a great slate of speakers.

**Paul Zammit**, Director of Horticulture, Toronto Botanical Gardens - *Elements of Great Gardens* and *365 Days of Gardening*.

**Jerry Fritz** - Proprietor of Jerry Fritz Garden Design & operates Linden Hill Gardens - *Cutting Edge Plants for the Landscape*.

**Nancy Drobnick** - Owns and operates Miriams River House Designs in Chagrin Falls - *Dynamic Design Brings a Garden to Life*.

## Growing Milkweed

by Paul Shanabarger

When trying to lure butterflies, especially Monarchs, few plants can compete with milkweed. To add it to your beds, start seeds indoors 4-6 weeks prior to the last expected frost. Seed flats should be placed in a sunny location (south or east facing window) maintaining a near 75 degree temperature.



To acclimate seedlings for outdoors, trays should be placed outdoors for increasing amounts of time over the course of a week. Remember that plants need to be adapted to sunlight as well a temperature.

Transplant 6-24 inches apart. Spread mulch around seedling base and apply a water-soluble fertilizer 3-4 times throughout the growing season. Water until well established.

Seeds can also be sown directly in loose, well-drained soil after the last frost. If the seeds came in a company packet, refer to it for instructions specific to that species of milkweed. Thin the seeds several times through the growing season beginning 1-2 weeks after germination and harvest the seeds the following autumn.

*Paul passed out milkweed seeds at our November membership meeting. Bruce Brungard shared biennial butterfly weed seeds at our October board meeting and may still have some available.*

## Multiplying Favorite Plants By Cloning

Matt Occionero, a Gardeners of Greater Cleveland member, is a certified flower show judge who helped rate the entries at our 2016 Horticulture Show. He also won two Best-In-Section ribbons for his *Episcia 'butternut'* (left) in the Potted Plants section and his Succulent potted garden of *Gasteria*, *Euphorbia*, *Sedum margiancum*, *Echevaria*, *Crassula*, and *Cryptanthus*.



Be assured he did not judge his own entries.

His presentation at our November membership meeting focused on propagation, soil, nutrients and lighting for growing indoors including producing healthy cuttings. The basics for cloning are:

1. Keep all equipment sanitized.
2. A razor or sharp shears limits plant stress.
3. Ensure good airflow. This deters mold growth and keeps the soil damp but not soaked.
4. Too much water will alter the pH, ideally 5.8-6.5, not allowing the plant of absorb nutrients and cause 'damp off'.
5. Start with a vigorous growing region, crown or leaf, ideally below an internode. Cut at a 45 degree angle.
6. Apply a rooting hormone such as a gel to seal air from going up the stem.
7. A temp of 78 degrees is optimal. Cooler temps will retard growth, while those over 80 degrees encourages mold and damp off.
8. Distilled water prevents contamination and chlorine from affecting cuttings. Matt uses a bicycle water bottle to keep water off the leaves and prevents over-watering.
9. The soil should contain microbes (bacteria, mycorrhizae & microbes), ensuring the natural development of the plant. His favorite fertilizer is earth worm castings.
10. There are some excellent T5 fluorescent growing lights available that give plants a full light spectrum. A common mistake is having the lights too close to the plants. The ideal distance is 2-3 feet above depending upon the light intensity.

Matt represents Top Garden Products, 8600 East Ave., Suite C, Mentor, OH, 44060, 440-290-8773, at TopGardenProducts.com. They have a wide variety of products to meet you indoor and outdoor growing needs.

Matt will give a demonstration at the TGCA/MGCA National Conference this summer.



## Protecting Tender Plants Over Winter

Whether it's a large tree in a container, a house plant or some perennials that won't hold up when the snow flies, there are a few things to do before bringing them inside.

Begin by doing a pest inspection. Check the foliage, stems, recesses and the undersides of leaves using a flashlight and magnifying glass. This is especially necessary when searching for tiny pests like spider mites. Remove the top inch or two of potting soil for shy varmints. If bringing in a bedded plant, remove as much soil as possible and look for pests. Next, spray the plant with several drops of a mild dish detergent solution in a quart spray bottle, then rinse with warm water. Once confident that pests and their future progeny have been removed, clean the container and then sanitize it with a 10% bleach solution. Add fresh potting soil and bring it inside being sure to keep it away from the other house plants for a few weeks in case you missed some pests.

Heavily infested plants should probably be trashed but if you can't live without it, maintain the quarantine and apply the weakest insecticide first - insecticidal soap which suffocates insects. Once inside, only water them when the top two inches of soil are dry. They'll also need a onetime fertilizer boost to overcome the shock of your meddling and their new home.

## Maximilian Sunflower

by Paul Shanabarger

Looking for an autumn ornamental that attracts bees, butterflies and, later, finches who love the seeds? The Maximilian sunflower is a Prairie wildflower that grows to 8 ft with a multitude 3 inch flowers blooming from the first week of September through mid-October. This



tall plant needs to be staked or trellised as it will tip over in strong winds. This same trait, however, discourages squirrels.

Although a perennial, it is first year plants that are most attractive producing more flowers top to bottom. Sowing should be started indoors in early March with multiple seeds per flat pod due to a low germination rate. If started later, the plants will be smaller but will still produce flowers. Transplant when frost is no longer expected. This sunflower prefers dry soil with little need for watering. I've been told that pinching off the growing tips when the plants are 3-4 ft tall will produce shorter plants with more flowers.

## How About Some Holiday Humor

### From the Readers Digest archives:

*Christmas is a baby shower that got totally out of hand.*

Andy Borowitz

*The holiday season is a deeply religious time that each of us observes, in his own way, by going to the mall of his choice.*

Dave Barry

*I once bought my kid a set of batteries for Christmas with a note saying, 'Toys not included'.*

Bernard Manning

*When I was a kid, I insulted a mall Santa by putting down protective paper before sitting on his lap.*

Conan O'Brien

*Did you hear that Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer never went to school? It turns out he was elf taught.*

Anonymous

*Last Christmas, I told my girlfriend that all I wanted was an Xbox. That's it, end of list: XBox. Know what she got me? A homemade frame with a picture of us from our first date together. Which was fine because I got her an Xbox.*

Anthony Jeseinik

*When they were small, I told my kids that Santa is fat because he eats the children who get up early on Christmas morning. That way, I get to sleep in.*

James Knowles

*Three men die on Christmas Eve and meet St. Peter at the Pearly Gates. 'In order to get in', he tells them, 'You must each produce something representative of the holidays'. The first man digs into his pockets and pulls out a match then lights it. 'This represents a candle of hope,' he says. St. Peter lets him in. The second man pulls out a ring of keys and shakes them. 'These are holiday bells.' He too is allowed in. 'So,' St. Pete asks the third man. "What do you have?" The man shows him a pair of red panties. 'What do these have to do with Christmas?', asks Peter. The man smiles proudly and says, 'They're Carol's'.*

Anonymous

*Three buildings in town were overrun by squirrels - the town hall, the hardware store and the church. The town hall brought in some cats but, after they tore up all the files, the mayor got rid of the felines. Soon afterward, the squirrels were back. The hardware store humanely trapped the squirrels and set them free outside of town. But three days later, the squirrels climbed back into the store. Only the church came up with an effective solution. The priest baptized the squirrels and made them members of the church. Now, they're only seen on Christmas and Easter.*

Anonymous



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December 2016

Thank you to the MGCY Friends for their Civic Fund donations.  
Members are urged to give them a visit.

#### ANYHONY BILLET

188 Palestine Avenue  
Youngstown, OH 44512  
330-758-8225

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www.BrentandBeckysBulbs.com

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#### EARTHBOX

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800-821-8838  
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#### ELLIOT'S GARDEN CENTER

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Warren, OH 44484  
330-856-5291

#### LOU'S BEER & WINE CELLAR

2975 Canfield-Niles Road  
Youngstown, OH 44515  
330-799-2059

#### MEN'S GARDEN CLUB OF YOUNGSTOWN

123 McKinley Avenue  
Youngstown, OH 44509  
www.MGCY.org

#### PARKS GARDEN CENTER

9010 Youngstown-Salem Road  
Canfield, OH 44406  
330-533-7278

#### PAW PAW EVERLAST LABEL COMPANY

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www.TheYoungstownPlayhouse.com

#### JOE ALESSI

#### KESTER'S KRISAS

#### RICHARD STATES

# The Germinator

December 2016

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

[www.mgcy.org](http://www.mgcy.org)



Wednesday, December 7th, 2016



## calendar of events



Poinsettia Day - Always on December 12 th

These beautiful flowers are a well-recognized symbol of Christmas. Poinsettia Day was officially declared by an Act of Congress. It is in honor of Joel Roberts Poinsett, who died on December 12, 1851. Poinsett was the first Ambassador to Mexico. Poinsett brought this colorful plant back to his plantation in the U.S. He grew the plants in his Greenville, S.C plantation and gave them out as gifts to friends.

According to Mexican folklore, there is a story of a little poor girl who had nothing to bring to church for Christmas. On her way to church, she picked some plants by the side of the road. As she entered the church, the leaves at the tips of the branches turned into bright, brilliant red flowers. You guessed it... Poinsettias.

December 7 .....	Board Meeting .....	Austintown Library .....	6:30 pm
December 14 .....	Christmas Dinner .....	A La Cart, Canfield, OH .....	6:00 pm
January 4 .....	General Meeting .....	FRG .....	7:00 pm
January 11 .....	Board Meeting .....	Austintown Library .....	6:30 pm
TBA .....	National Newsletter Competition		
February 1 .....	General Meeting .....	FRG .....	7:00 pm
February 8 .....	Board Meeting .....	Austintown Library .....	6:30 pm
February 18 .....	Winter Seminar .....	FRG .....	9:00 am
TBA .....	Streetscape Fund raiser		
TBA .....	MGCY Scholarship Applications Due		
March 1 .....	General Meeting .....	FRG .....	7:00 pm
TBA .....	Floriculture .....		
March 8 .....	Board Meeting .....	Austintown Public Library .....	6:30 pm
March 18 .....	Spring Breakfast .....	FRG .....	9:00 am
TBA .....	National Photography entries due.		

## THE MGCY 2016 OFFICERS

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