

June 2020

# The Germinator



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

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Greetings Everyone,

As we head into warmer weather and the growing season, as are eagerly anticipating or appreciating the emergence of all manner of flora: Trees, bulbs, tubers, shrubs, flowers, vegetables, etc. Gardeners have much to do this time of year. Our tasks are guided by the science of botany. We can predict with a fair degree of certainty that if we follow the science we will reap a positive outcome.

What is not as predictable is whether or how we can come together as a club. The Davis Center will be closed through the end of August. We will have no place to hold our monthly meetings or even our precious Horticulture Show. The June Plant Auction also has been cancelled. There is even some uncertainty about next year's Winter Seminar.

The challenge before us is that, in the face of limitations, can we adapt? Can we carry on as a club albeit with some modifications of our long-standing traditions and initiatives? The Men's Garden Club of Youngstown Board of Gardeners met on May 13<sup>th</sup> at Austintown Park to discuss these issues.

However the uncertainty facing our organization pales in comparison to what millions of our fellow citizens are facing. Let us remember and empathize with those who must adapt in far more dramatic ways, and let us do what we can to help those who are less fortunate.

Past President Dave Causer suffered an unfortunate accident and, at this writing, is in the Akron Burn Center. He would probably like some communication from members and friends. If anyone knows of other members sick or in distress, please email [mgygerminator@gmail.com](mailto:mgygerminator@gmail.com).

Until we meet again,

*Tom Atkins*

## June Membership Meeting

*Cancelled unless otherwise posted on MGCY.org*

## June Board Meeting

*We may meet again at Austintown Park or another location. All members are welcome and your input is valued. If held, it will be posted on MGCY.org*

## Mill Creek MetroParks

### June Events

*While all indoor venues are closed at least until Sept. 1<sup>st</sup>, most outdoor activities are open. Go to [millcreekmetroparks.org](http://millcreekmetroparks.org) for more information.*

## Not Enough Covid News?

*A Scandinavian country just closed its borders. That means no one will cross the Finish line.*

*I ran out of toilet paper and had to start using old newspapers. Times are rough.*

*What's the difference between Covid-19 and Romeo and Juliet? One's the corona virus and the other is a Verona crisis.*



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57 Members

### ***New Members***

**John D. Dotson**, P.O. Box 42, Canfield, OH, 44406, 740-202-3461, [johnny.dotson@aol.com](mailto:johnny.dotson@aol.com). John is a case worker and the Garden Director at FlyingHigh, Inc., 6 Federal Plaza Central, Youngstown, OH, 44503. He is married (Debra), an O.S.U. Extension Master Gardener, a 32 degree Mason and a gardening generalist.

**Tom McGiffin**, 855 N. Ward Ave., Girard, OH, 330-501-9786, [tsmcgiffin@gmail.com](mailto:tsmcgiffin@gmail.com). Tom is former member who decided life is better when you're with MGCY.

### **Welcome Aboard, Gentlemen**

### ***TGCA/MGCA Convention Cancelled***

The Gardeners of America/Men's Garden Clubs of America's National Conference, titled '2020 Vision', scheduled for July has been cancelled due to the Corona Virus pandemic. Hopefully, the problem will be under control by then but the national's officers decided to take a cautious approach. A much more limited event may be held in the fall, an announcement of which will be made when information is available.



### ***May Board of Gardeners Meeting***

The May meeting had a quorum that discussed a number of issues. While it was proposed that a monetary donation be made to a food bank, a majority decided it not only didn't fit within our constitution and bylaws, but the public would be better served by assisting local neighborhood garden associations.

Also discussed was whether we should hold our annual Horticulture Show now that Fellows Riverside Gardens is unavailable. Chairman Rodney Toth would welcome any input from members. This will be discussed if we hold another board meeting in June.

### ***His Honor, Our Loss***

Local history teaches us that members of 'The Greatest Generation' and those involved in 'public service' haven't always lived up to the status nostalgia and society have bestowed upon them. One man, however, epitomized the absolute best of both.

Joseph Donofrio's family immigrated to the United States when he was four and the country was just beginning to endure the Great Depression. The hard

times were made worse when his father passed away when he was fourteen. Joe had to work during off school hours to help the family make ends meet. During his senior year, he began working on the Erie Railroad until graduating for East High School in 1944. He then entered the Army Air Corps serving on the blood-soaked islands of Saipan and Tinian.

Under the G.I. Bill, Joe earned business and law degrees at Youngstown College while still employed by the railroad, continuing to work there while a fledgling attorney. In 1960, he was appointed Youngstown Assistant Prosecutor where he helped process people arrested for public drunkenness the night before. Witnessing the terrible mental and physical condition of these people, some of whom died in jail suffering from DTs and other conditions, left a lasting impression.

After several years as a prosecutor, he was elected to the Youngstown Municipal Court where he founded a rehabilitation program for indigent alcoholic offenders and coordinated the court's DWI Counterattack Program which established the Donofrio Home, the city's first alcoholic halfway house. Meridian Services, Inc. took over the groups vital services in 2007. He was appointed to the 7<sup>th</sup> District Court of Appeals in 1972, and was subsequently reelected three times. Son Gene was elected as his replacement in 1992.

Joe gathered no moss upon retiring. He was always been happiest when gardening from starting plants in his basement, transferring them to a heated greenhouse then out into an expansive garden that included fruit trees. The *Germinator* published a tribute to Joe in 2007 when fellow MGCY member and friend, Joe Alessi, was editor.



The Donofrio's kitchen could service a small restaurant. In addition to a six-burner stove, it includes a built-in grill and a brick oven where Joe baked bread and pizza. His property's centerpiece was a large pavilion that includes two gazebos, a built-in roasting spit and a brick oven that can bake up to seven pizzas. He was a skilled oil painter, woodworker and a proud student of Italian history and culture. He was also on the board or a member of many charitable organizations.

Still looking forward to planting his garden this year, Joe sadly passed away in April from complications of the Covid-19 virus at age 94. He is survived by Angela, his wife of 79 years, sons Judges Gene and Anthony; daughters Dr. Joanne Franks and Judy Ricciardi; 10 grandchildren and 6 great grandchildren.

***Rest In Peace, Dear Brother***

## Changing Up Your Garlic Game

Now is a good time to prepare the soil for a great garlic harvest next summer. Dig in 2-3 inches of compost or seasoned manure into well-drained soil and plant the fattest cloves, points up, 1-2 inches deep. Cover with 3-4 inches of mulch (straw is a good choice) after the ground freezes. Remove mulch when the weather warms. Maintain an inch of water per week during spring. Stop watering when bulbs begin to form, usually mid-June.

Fertilize in early spring and then a month later. Remove nutrient and moisture robbing weeds. Hardneck varieties should be harvested when the lower leaves turn brown. Softnecks are dug up when the leaves lay down.

Many gardeners are in a garlic rut, growing the same varieties year after year, and now is the time to consider trying something new. Here are a few suggestions from [gardeningknowhow.com](http://gardeningknowhow.com).

**Porcelain garlic** is an attractive hardneck variety with heads containing 4-7 plump cloves that are easy to peel, delicious to eat and store longer than most types of garlic. Except for extremely warm climates, it can be grown almost everywhere.



Porcelain varieties include: *German Extra Hardy* – disease resistant with a robust, hot flavor; *Polish Jenn* – tall plant with a rich, deep, mellow flavor; *Majestic* – large bulbs with strong, delicious flavor; *Dan's Russian* – moderately hot; *Music* – colorful with rich, strong flavor not overly hot, sweeter when baked; *Zemo* – strong, pleasant taste.

**Purple Stripe** varieties are a hardnecked have vivid purple stripes or blotches on their wrappers and skins, the color intensity dependent upon weather temperature. Cloves numbering 8-12 can be expected. They will withstand the coldest of winters but struggle in hot, humid climates.

Purple Strive varieties include: *Persian Star* – full, mellow, mildly spicy flavor; *Siberian* – rich, mild flavor; *Russian Giant Marble* – large cloves with mild flavor; *Metechi* – very hot, heirloom that matures later and stores well; *Bogatyr* – huge, very hot bulbs with long storage live; *Chesnok Red* - maintains full flavor when cooked.

## Composting & Suckering Myths Exposed

[Gardenmyths.com](http://Gardenmyths.com) again sails against the winds of conventional gardening wisdom regarding composting and removing suckers from tomato plants. We'll just give the basics and, if you're curious, go to the web site.

**Composting** is not complicated. You don't need to employ bins, dice up and regularly turn the ingredients, add nitrogen, sweat the green/brown mixture or do it in hot, sunny weather. You will still get 'black gold' but it will just take a little longer.

Myths: Compost will affect soil pH; compost stinks (only if you add meat or too much high nitrogen material); composting attracts flies and rodents; don't compost cooked food, cheese, fat, meat, starchy foods, onions, citrus peels, weeds, poop, pine needles, grass clippings and diseased plant materials.

What you don't need or shouldn't use: Tumblers that claim to produce compost in 2 weeks (composting takes time); starters or accelerators; egg shells; cardboard or paper; tea bags; Coca-cola and molasses; or mythical "compostable plastic". Except when employing "vermicomposting", don't add earthworms. Compost exposed to direct sunlight in hot weather will dry out the pile.

The author prefers either piling plant debris and let it compost naturally, or letting cut plant debris compost where it falls.

## Suckering Tomatoes

Suckering is the removal of growth sprouting between a tomato's main stem and branches. Many gardeners believe these "suckers" don't produce fruit or drain plant energy away from fruit production. Some go as far as to remove most foliage once the fruit reaches a certain point. An article from [Laid Back Gardener.com](http://Laid Back Gardener.com) gives reasons why these are bad ideas.

First of all, suckers will produce fruit albeit somewhat smaller but there will be a net gain in fruit production by weight. More foliage means more photosynthesis occurs allowing the plant to grow more vigorously and produce more fruit. Farmers started suckering tomatoes because the extra foliage makes it hard to support the plant with one stake. A better idea is to use two stakes per plant or use a large cage.

When too much foliage is removed, the fruit may suffer sun damage. Unsuckered plants may suffer more diseases because of less air circulation, therefore plant distancing should be increased.

## **Pandemic Gardening Surge**

The Covid19 outbreak has resulted in shortages of everything from toilet paper to baker's yeast, and empty meat displays may be coming to a supermarket near you.

With being stuck at home and more time on their hands, either due to mandated lockdowns or unemployment, more people are taking up home improvement projects including gardening.



We're sure many MGCY members have experienced long waits for seed order delivery or seed varieties being unavailable. Burpee and Johnny's are two seed companies we know of who have stopped taking new orders for a period of time in order to catch up with demand. This demand increase has established gardeners competing with newbies for garden supplies, especially for seeds sown in early spring or started indoors.

An executive with the Seed Savers Exchange, a non-profit devoted to heirloom seeds, attributes increased demand to food insecurity. Many people in the mid-west have experienced long waits getting some groceries, a disruption they've never experienced before. Others with less income simply can't afford to shop for food as they did only months ago.

Feeding America, the nation's largest network of food banks, reported double normal demand. And the need may be most critical in rural communities where pantries are closing because food is scarce and there are fewer volunteers due to concerns for their own health.

The good news is that there is no seed shortage. Seeds must be weighed, packaged and sent to stores, and seed companies didn't have enough pre-packaged packets to meet the influx of customer orders. Many companies have increased staff to meet the increased demand. The bottom line is that there is no reason to panic. While time is running out for some cool weather crops like lettuce, peas, etc., to be planted early, we have until June 1<sup>st</sup> to plant them. The seed companies assure us that they will be caught well before that.

*Hopefully this gardening interest surge will mean more people will want to join garden clubs.*

## **The Myth of Compostable Plastic**

The ever-growing problem of plastics in landfills has gotten the public's attention, and smart marketing gurus have taken notice. Eco-aware consumers now have to decipher and choose between "biodegradable, degradable, compostable, starch-based or plant-based" plastic products. Robert Pavlis of [gardenmyths.com](http://gardenmyths.com) researched the subject and came to a less than startling revelation.



Long story short, from home gardening to almost all commercial composting methods, there's no such thing as compostable plastic. Even the most biodegradable packaging product must be exposed to 140 degrees Fahrenheit for at least 90 days. Home compost bins rarely attain that temperature for even a short time, while commercial facilities usually work on a 30 day cycle resulting in packaging ending up in a landfill.

As demand for fossil fuels declines due to the public's awareness of its contribution to climate change and sustainable energy sources become more economical, the petroleum industry has become more dependant on plastic products. Hopefully their scientists will find a way to produce products that don't trash the planet.



## **Father's Day Thoughts**

*Dad: A son's first hero, a daughter's first love.*

Unknown

*A father carries pictures where his money used to be.*

Steve Martin

*I cannot think of any need in childhood as strong as the need for a father's protection.*

Sigmund Freud

*It doesn't matter who my father was; it matters who I remember he was.*

Anne Sexton

*A good father is one whose only reason for putting down a laughing baby is to pick up a crying one.*

Linda Poindexter

*You can tell what was the best year of your father's life because they seem to freeze that clothing style and ride it out.*

Jerry Seinfeld

*A father is a banker provided by nature. A father is a man who expects his son to be as good a man as meant to be.*

French Proverb  
Frank A. Clark

*By the time a man realizes that maybe his father was right, he usually has a son who thinks he's wrong.*

Charles Wadsworth

*When you teach your son, you teach your son's son.*

The Talmuss

# The Germinator June 2020

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

**Ace Hardware Canfield**

413 E. Main St.  
Canfield, Ohio 44406  
330-533-7464

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Boardman, Ohio 44512  
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MGCY Member

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Youngstown, Ohio 44515  
330-799-5569

**Colonial Gardens**

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330-539-5500  
www.colonialgardensohio.com

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www.truevaluetrains.com

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www.gardenclogs.com

**DJ's Greenhouse**

1004 East Lake Rd.  
Transfer, Pennsylvania 16154  
724-962-1230  
www.djsgreenhouse.com

**Elliot's Garden Center**

1283 W. Western Reserve Rd.  
Youngstown, Ohio 44514  
330-758-8889

**Garden Artisans**

451 Defense Highway, Ste. A  
Annapolis, Md. 21401  
www.gardenartisans.com

**Greenstar Cooperative**

12093 Lisbon Rd.  
Greenford, Ohio 44422  
800-423-3609

**Green Team**

345 Oakhill Ave.  
Youngstown, Ohio 44502  
330-740-2060

**Gardening-Indoor**

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**Heritage Country Store**

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Boardman, Ohio 44512

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7001 Southern Blvd.  
Boardman, Ohio 44512  
330-965-4790

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Greenville, Pennsylvania 16125  
800-627-6840  
sales@hotpepperwax.com

**Jack's Custom Landscape**

Boardman, Ohio 44512  
330-953-7737

**Jimmy's Italian Specialties**

3230 Belmont Ave.  
Youngstown, Ohio 44505  
www.jimmysitalianspecialties.com

**Kravitz Delicatessen**

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www.kravitzdeli.com

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**Lou's Beer & Wine Cellar**

2975 Canfield-Niles Rd.  
Youngstown, Ohio 44515  
330-799-2059

**Men's Garden Club of Youngstown**

123 McKinley Ave.  
Youngstown, Ohio 44509  
www.mgcy.org

**Nick's Wine Cellar**

105 S. Meridian Rd.  
Youngstown, Ohio 44509

**Outdoor Recreation Equipment, 5316**

Market St.  
Boardman, Ohio  
330-782-2004

**Parks Garden Center**

9010 Youngstown-Salem Rd.  
Canfield, Ohio 44406  
330-533-7278  
parksgardencenter@aol.com

**Paw Paw Everlast Label Co.**

P.O. Box 93-C  
Paw Paw, Michigan 49079  
www.everlastlabel.com

**Petitti Garden Center**

5509 South Ave.  
Boardman, Ohio 44512  
330-788-0733  
www.petittigardencenter.com

**Robert McGowan, LPL Financial**

MGCY Member  
3736 Boardman-Canfield Rd.  
Canfield, Ohio 44406  
330-533-2320

**Stone Fruit Coffee Co.**

8414 Market St.  
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hello@wallygro.com

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330-629-2473  
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**Youngstown Cityscape**

15 Central Square, 2nd Floor  
Youngstown, Ohio 44503  
330-742-4040

# The Germinator

June 2020



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

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



## calendar of events



June 3rd .....	Gen. Mtg./Plant Auction .....	CANCELLED	
June 10th.....	Board Meeting .....	CANCELLED	
June 10, 11, 12.....	National Convention .....	CANCELLED	
July 1st.....	General Meeting.....7:00 PM.....	Fellows Riverside Gardens	
July 8th.....	Board Meeting.....6:30 PM.....	Austintown Public Library	
Aug. 5th .....	Steak Fry - General Mtg.....6 PM - 7 PM .....	At the home of Larry Duck	
Aug. 6th or 13th.....	Scrappers Ball Game.....5:30 PM.....	Eastwood Field, Niles, OH	
Aug. 12th .....	Board Meeting.....6:30 PM.....	Austintown Public Library	
Aug. 21st.....	Setup Horticulture Show .....	12:00 Noon .....	Fellows Riverside Gardens
Aug. 22nd-23rd .....	Horticulture Show .....	7:00 AM .....	Fellows Riverside Gardens
Sept. 2nd-7th.....	Canfield Fair .....	9 AM - 9 PM.....	Canfield Fairgrounds
Sept 2nd.....	General Meeting.....7:00 PM.....	Fellows Riverside Gardens	
Sept 9th .....	Board Meeting.....6:30 PM.....	Austintown Public Library	

## Please Join Us!

The purpose of The Men's Garden Club of Youngstown is to create a better understanding of gardening and to encourage and promote the beautification of our community. In order to meet this endeavor, several civic projects are completed each year.

Meetings are held the first Wednesday of each month at 7:00 p.m. in the D. D. Davis Center at Fellows Riverside Garden. Members receive a monthly newsletter, "The Germinator," which has timely gardening hints, club news and other local and regional horticultural events. Members also become members of The National Men's Garden Club of America.

Membership is open to residents of the Mahoning Valley and surrounding communities with an interest in gardening.

To join, contact us at: **Men's Garden Club of Youngstown Ohio**



% Membership Committee  
123 McKinley Way  
Youngstown, OH 44509



or on our website at [www.mgcy.org](http://www.mgcy.org)

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Vacant

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