

# 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 I write this we are all trying our best to comply with the governor's guidelines to mitigate the spread of the corona virus. We have had to essentially compress our lives: Limiting our movement in the community, and our interactions with people. As of yet we don't know when we can return to normal, although the new normal may not be the same as the normal before the virus.

We don't know as yet whether we will be able to hold our May membership or board meetings. As you know we have had to cancel our Spring Plant Sale. We are still hoping to hold our Plant Auction/Pot Luck Dinner in June, but it is too early to know whether that will be possible.

Gardeners have a special ability to cope with our altered life styles this spring. We can focus our attention on cultivating the growth and renewal of all types of plant life.

The sugar snap peas I planted outside on March 17<sup>th</sup> are already beginning their climb up seven foot netting. Note: Do not underestimate their need for vertical support. You may be planting cold weather crops like lettuce, cabbage and spinach. You may be starting some of your other plants indoors.

I want to recommend an excellent source, Lee Valley, for both gardening and woodworking tools. I have subscribed to their newsletter and this month there is an excellent article entitled *Gardening Off-Bootcamp for Seedlings*. Go to the website, leevalley.com, to subscribe or get a catalog.

Probably the most important gardening tasks to get started on is cleaning our last year's detritus of leaves, dead annuals and the remains of perennials. I have several large willows in my back yard and must attend to the annual ritual of having to pick up the many branches that have fallen over winter. I am considering hiring a teenage neighbor for this task.

I want to remind you all that although we cannot get together for meetings, we can still be a resource to each other in other ways. Through email, snail mail, testing and phone calls, we can still stay connected. Ask for advice. Offer support. Check up on each other.

Until we meet again,  
*Tom Atrens*

*Those who have long enjoyed such privileges as we forget that men have died to win them.* Franklin D. Roosevelt

*The patriot's blood is the seed of freedom's tree.* Thomas Campbell

*Home of the free because of the brave.*

Unknown

*Who kept the faith and fought the fight; the glory theirs, the duty ours.* Wallace Bruce.



**Judge Joseph Donofrio**

1926-2020

*Rest In Peace, Dear Brother*

### May Membership Meeting

*Cancelled unless otherwise posted on MGCY.org*

### May Board Meeting

*Cancelled unless otherwise posted on MGCY.org*

### Mill Creek MetroParks

#### May Events

*Cancelled unless otherwise posted on millcreekmetroparks.org*

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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.



We believe it was the right thing to do given the circumstances. A significant amount of planning and expenditure goes into putting on such an important event, not the least of which is scheduling speakers. A much more limited event may be held in the fall, an announcement of which will be made when information is available.

The sad reality is this event could have been well attended due to guests being able to stay in Ohio State University Agriculture Technical Institute's college dormitories free of charge making attendance much less expensive. This and the fact that the venue would have been within driving distance of the Cleveland, Youngstown and Akron clubs could have significantly increased attendance.

### Added Attractions at Winter Seminar

The timing of our annual Winter Seminar could not have been better. In addition to a perfectly planned and executed event, guests enjoyed some added attractions at Mill Creek MetroParks' D.D. Davis Center at Fellows Riverside Gardens. Upon entering the venue, guests were treated to Fellows' *Jewels of Winter* annual display of a wide variety of orchids. While he was photo documenting the seminar, MGCY Photographer Paul

I den took time to add pics of these beautiful and unusual plants. Here are a few examples.



Also on display were Fellows' annual Nature Photo Contest entries. There was a wide variety of subject matter that included wild and domestic animals, plants and landscapes. The Best of Show winner was Mike Barney's shot of a hummingbird 'Sipping Nectar'.



### Sanitizing Recent Purchases

We recently received a video by email on the precautions we should take when bringing home food and other purchases. The Corona Virus will remain viable in the air for 3 hrs., on paper and cardboard for 1 hr., and up to 3 days on plastics and metals. Items placed in the freezer may remain contaminated for up to 2 years. Takeout foods, but not the wrappers, should be considered safe. Heat and reheating helps kill the virus.

Wash fruit as you would your hands. Dump food on plates or in a bowl, discard the wrapping and store in freezer bags. Household sanitizing products should be used regularly on any surface touched by purchases.

## The Secret Life of Trees

Mill Creek MetroParks had a presentation scheduled in late March regarding tree communication but it was cancelled due to the ongoing virus crisis. There has been a great deal of scientific interest of late on the subject, and an article in *Smithsonian Magazine* discussed research by German forester Peter Wohlleben, author of best selling *Trees: What They Feel, How They Communicate*.

It turns out that trees are far more alert, social, sophisticated and intelligent than we ever dreamed. It was previously thought that these giant plants were loners competing for water, nutrients and sunlight with winners shading out losers and sucking them dry. Scientific research, however, has found that trees of the same species are communal, and will often form alliances with those of other species.

What some call the 'wood-wide web', all healthy trees in every forest are connected to each other through underground mycorrhizal fungal networks. These fine, hair-like root tipped fungi consume 30% of the sugars trees photosynthesize. These fungi then scavenge the soil for nutrients that are absorbed by the trees. This mutually beneficial relationship also provides a communication system whereby when an individual tree suffers from drought, disease or insect attack, other trees will know and alter their behavior.

Saplings growing in deeply shaded forests often lack the ability to photosynthesize to survive. But, like a baby suckling its mother, they receive sugars from large trees through this network. The stump of a huge beech felled centuries ago was found to be still green with chlorophyll. It was kept alive by other beeches passing on sugars through the fungal/root system.

The network also facilitates communication by sending chemical, hormonal and slow-pulsing electrical signals that scientists are just now beginning to decipher. These impulses are strikingly similar to those in animal

nervous systems. Thus far alarm and distress seem to be the main topics of conversation, but who knows what science will learn in the future?



They also communicate through the air using pheromones and other scent signals. In sub-Saharan Africa, an acacia tree having its leaves nibbled on by giraffes emits a distress signal in the form of ethylene gas. Neighboring acacias will begin pumping tannins into their leaves. In large enough quantities, these compounds can sicken or even kill large herbivores.

## Plants Provide A Timely Alternative

As we write this, locating toilet paper has become problematic. If shopping for it lately, you've probably encounter empty shelves. In the midst of the Corona virus scare, many people are hoarding common hygiene essentials and finding a single roll is nearly impossible. Our industrialized, consumer driven society can take lessons from aboriginal peoples and our ancestors on how to cope when shortages stress modern society.

Now an article from *Gardening Know How* offers information on plant-based sources that are more soothing, softer and compostable. The use of toilet paper goes back only about a century. Before then, the wealthy used fabric while everyone else used what was at hand including plants which can enhance landscapes.



Those with fuzzy-textured leaves are particularly useful. The towering mullein plant (*Verbascum thapsis*) is a biennial that produces pretty yellow flowers in its second year and furry leaves spring through fall. Lambs Ear (*Stachys byzantine*) is a perennial with large, soft leaves. Thimbleberry leaves are not as fuzzy but are soft and as large as an adult's hand.



Common Mallow (*Malva neglecta*) is related to hollyhock and hibiscus, and flowers in early spring and mid-fall. It was highly valued for its medicinal properties by Native Americans. Other options include Indian Coleus, Pink Wild Pear (tropical hydrangea), Large Leaf Aster and Blue Spur Flower (highly invasive).

These plants are generally non-toxic but should be tested by swiping a leaf under the wrist and waiting 24 hours for a reaction. Before the plant goes dormant the leaves can be dried flat and stored. They may lose their soft texture but will soften from bodily moisture when put to use.

## Conserving Toilet Paper

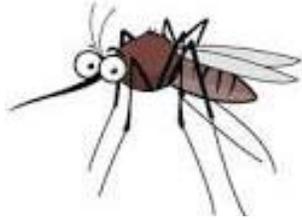
Take a single sheet and tear out a one inch hole in the center. Put your finger through the hole and stick it where the sun don't shine. After a couple good swirls, remove your finger and wipe it clean by pulling the sheet up and over. Use the tornout part to clean under your finger nail.



## Do Mosquito Repelling Devices Work?

From *Garden Myths* posted by Robert Pavlis

**Electronic Repellers** produce high-frequency sound that supposedly mimics that of bats or dragonflies. The problem is that these pests are not normally on bats' menu so why should they have evolved to fear these sounds. The American Mosquito Control Assn. states, "...studies over the past 15 years have unanimously denounced ultrasonic devices as having no repellency value whatsoever".



**Smart Phone Repeller Apps**, another high frequency sound device that doesn't work.

**Bug Zappers** use ultraviolet light to attract insects then kills them with an electrical charge. The problem is that the vast majority of victims are not pests but night flying beetles and moths some of whom are beneficial, depriving birds and bats important food sources.

**Handheld Zappers**, some resembling tennis rackets, produce a lethal, battery-powered shock when a bug comes in contact with the strings. They are fun and provide some exercise, but chasing bugs causes you to emit more CO2 drawing more mosquitoes to you.

**CO2 Traps**, some producing the mosquito-luring gas by burning propane, have been proven to have little effect in limiting the number of the pests in a given area.

**Clip-on Fans** are small devices that contain some insecticide. Under the best of circumstances - little wind and the wearer staying in one place - they are still much less effective and more expensive than Deet.

**Wristbands & Patches** contain repellants that cover a limited body area. While they offer some protection from mosquitoes landing and aren't sticky liquids, the success rate is 7% compared to Deet's 100%.

**Citronella Plant (a fraudulent identification) & Candles** don't work. Smoke does offer some repellence.

**Bat Houses** that are often properly made and placed are great for helping these valuable pest eaters and pollinators but, again, bats eat very few mosquitoes.

**Purple Martin Houses** attract a bird that eats a significant number of mosquitoes but plays a limited role in controlling mosquito populations.

Long story short, **Deet** and **Picaridin** are the best choice offering both safety and efficacy.

## For Mom On Her Special Day

*Youth fades; love droops; the leaves of friendship fall; A mother's hope outlives them all.* Oliver Wendell Holmes  
*Life began with waking up and loving my mother's face.*

George Elliot

*There is nothing as sincere as a mother's kiss.*

Saleem Sharma

*A mother's happiness is like a beacon, lighting up the future but reflected also on the past in the guise of fond memories.*

Honore de Balzac

*The art of mothering is to teach the art of living to children.*

Elaine Heffner

*A mother is a person who, seeing there are 4 pieces of pie for 5 people, promptly announces she never did care for pie.*

Tenneva Jordon

*An ounce of mother is worth a ton of priest.*

Spanish Proverb

*Life doesn't come with a manual, it comes with a mother.*

IAuthor Unknown



## Spring and has Sprung

*The Corona virus beauty parlors, nail salons, barber shops and gyms.. It's going to get ugly out there.*

*If I get quarantined a whole month with my wife and die, be assured it wasn't the virus that killed me.*

*Definition of Irony: When the Year of the Rat begins with a plague.*

*Before the Corona virus I used to cover a fart with a cough. Now I cover a cough with a fart.*

*To the people who bought 20 bottles of hand sanitizer: You do realize that to stop getting the virus, you need other people washing their hands too.*

*Don't worry, the Corona virus won't last long. It was made in China.*

*During self isolation, dogs think: Oh my God, you're here all day and I can love you, be with you and follow you all day. Cats think: What the heck are you still doing here?*

*To those complaining about quarantines: Just remember that your parents and grandparents were called to war and suffered through the Great Depression while you are being called on to sit and watch Netflix. You can do this.*

# The Germinator

May 2020

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

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## RICHARD STATES

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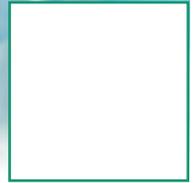
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# The Germinator

May 2020



Men's Garden Club of Youngstown Ohio  
c/o Newsletter Editor  
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[www.mgcy.org](http://www.mgcy.org)



## calendar of events



May 6th.....	General Meeting.....	Cancelled .....	Fellows Riverside Gardens
May 13th.....	Board Meeting.....	Cancelled .....	Austintown Public Library
May 6, 7, 8, 11, 12....	Spring Plant Sale .....	Cancelled .....	MCJVS
June 3rd .....	Plant Auction.....	TBA .....	Boardman Park
June 10th.....	Board Meeting.....	6:60 PM.....	Austintown Library
July 1st.....	General Meeting.....	7:00 PM.....	Fellows Riverside Gardens
July 8th.....	Board Meeting.....	6:30 PM.....	Austintown Public Library
August 5th .....	Steak Fry - Gen. Mtg.....	6-7 PM .....	At the home of Larry Duck
August 6th or 13th ..	Scrappers Ball Game.....	5:30 PM.....	Eastwood Field, Niles, OH
August 12th.....	Board Meeting.....	6:30 PM.....	Austintown Public Library
August 21st.....	Setup Horticulture Show....	12:00 Noon ...	Fellows Riverside Gardens

## 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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