

March, 2022

Mulch & More Butler County Master Gardeners

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2022 MGV board:

President:

Paulette Walker

Vice-President:

Ginny Hertenstein

Treasurer:

Becky Hildebrandt

Secretary:

Jeanne Walther

Past President:

Lynn Glaser

Members at Large:

Margy Beckner,

Carol Kell,

Anne Rolfes,

Nancy Tereba

President's Notes

by Paulette Walker, President

Welcome to 2022, and a brand-new year of opportunities! I hope that this year allows us to resume even more of our normal activities. I know some members have felt disconnected from the Master Gardener group, and I want to encourage everyone to participate in activities as they are comfortable. We have a nice group of interns, as well as the two new members who managed to complete their hours during 2021, and I want all the new members to try out as many project sites

(Opportunities) as they can, so people can get to know one another, as well as renew relationships that have been put on hold due to COVID restrictions. This is also a good time for established members to reestablish the habit of lending a hand on workdays at several projects.

Our Plant Sale is a go this year, so please sign up for that. It will be interesting to see what kind of a crowd we can bring in, after a two-year hiatus.

The Fair Booth committee is gearing up for another great display at the Butler County Fair in July. The Butler County Farm Zone is looking at new ways to educate and entertain fair visitors, and the Master Gardener booth will be a big contributor to that. If you have an interest in helping with the planning, please contact Marilyn Bowling to be included in the efforts.

Our other projects/opportunities are gearing up for spring, as described below in the newsletter. We are lucky to have so many activities to choose from. This is because we have a large, loyal member base. I encourage members to contact me with ideas on how to improve our meetings, our projects, and other suggestions.

For those of you who do not know, anyone who is interested is welcome to attend the MG board meetings. They take place at the Extension Office, the first Wednesday of the months that the general meetings do not occur. For instance, the next board meeting will be at 10:00 am, Wednesday, April 6.

(Continued on page 2)



BCMG Projects:

Boys and Girls Club:

Lynn Glaser

BOE Planter Boxes:

Paulette Walker

Bull's Run:

Linda Mull

Butler County Care

Facility:

Carolyn Hoyt

Butler County Historical

Society Museum:

Karen Kessler

Chrisholm Farmstead:

Ginny Hertenstein

Judy Shillinglaw

Doty Homestead:

Gail Troy

Elisha Morgan Gardens:

Libby Head

Butler County Fair:

Marilyn Bowling

Governor Bebb Park:

Emily Eberwine

H.U.G.S.:

Michelle Merrett

Home Horticulture

Series:

J. T. Benitez

Keehner Park Pollinator

Habitat Garden:

Sandy Swiwert

Bonnie Bollie

Metroparks Office:

Carol Souder

President's Notes (continued)

You have heard me say this before, but please, if you have not become familiar with Hands On Connect, do so. If you are struggling with it, reach out to other members, or me, or JT. If I can learn to use it, anyone can!

Since we resumed in-person meetings, I have noticed that we don't have many people coming early to the general meetings, to help arrange tables and chairs. If you have time, please consider coming 15 minutes early and giving a hand. If you have questions about what this entails, please email me, or Frank Peters.

Vice President's Notes**by Ginny Hertenstein, Vice President**

I'm looking forward to serving on the Butler County Master Gardener Volunteer board! I'm glad to be able to give back to an organization I have been a part of for many years.

Our next meeting, on March 2nd, will feature our usual potluck lunch and new speakers Pete and Emalee Richman of the Rich Life Farm and Fungi. It should be an interesting talk.

This year marks the 25th anniversary of the BCMG's organization and we are looking into doing something special to celebrate this summer at our July meeting – details to follow.

Don't forget to order your seeds if you have not already done so. The catalogs run out quickly these days. Think Spring!

**Financial Summary and Annual Dues****by Becky Hildebrandt, Treasurer****March 2022 Financial Summary**

- The financial audit of 2020 and 2021 MG books was completed by Joe Morlino and Carol Sefton. All records were found to be in order.
- Checking Account Ending Balance = \$19,533.39
- 2022 Annual Income to Date = \$246.00
- 2022 Annual Expenditures to Date = \$392.12
- Members who paid 2022 dues = 86
- Members with unpaid 2022 dues = 17

To pay 2022 annual dues

- \$15 payable to BCMGV
- Send to PO Box 273, West Chester, OH 45071
- Or pay in person at the March general meeting



Projects (continued)

Miami U Conservatory:

Angela Lampe

Nancy Tereba

Plant Sale:

Robyn Glaser

Plant Science Skill-a-

Thon:

Margy Beckner

Pyramid Hill Sculpture

Park:

Cynthia Stever

Real Money, Real

World:

Frank Peters

Ross Village Roadside

Plantings:

Emily Eberwine

Speakers Bureau:

Lynn Glaser

St. Julie Church Garden:

Julee Uhrig

Newsletter Team:

Jim Lipnickey

Kathy Maurer

Judy Shllinglaw

Helen Smith

Richard Sunberg

Doug Troy

JT's Spot

**by J. T. Benitez, Extension Educator,
Agriculture & Natural Resources, OSU
Extension, Butler County**

On February 1st, 2022 (Groundhog Day) Punxsutawney Phil saw his shadow, which means 6 more weeks of winter. Let's hope Phil is wrong as I am ready for spring! During the warm spell of late December into early January, I saw plants starting to bud and Irises halfway out of the ground. Then the cold hit, and winter was finally here. Those plants did not do so well after that. January through February is the long wait after the holidays for warm temperatures and good weather to return! It feels like forever but once it is here, it is like a mad dash to the garden stores to get our supplies and to begin spring planting! I am ready for that! This is the first year back to some normalcy as the pandemic seems to be subsiding. Is normal returning and will we be the same after that? Time will tell.

So now is the time for that spring planning. I am sure many of you are getting those countless garden catalogs in the mail. I am on the regularly unsolicited mailing listed for many of them. Buy once, then 10 more catalog companies find you! Sometimes those new catalogs have even more cool items! Of course, I am thinking about all my vegetable and fruit plantings in the garden, a few more trees for our yard that we would like to plant, and I will probably be getting more ducks! It is a time to be excited as spring is for new beginnings. As you think about spring, maybe try a new plant or two, build a raised bed, grow a big vegetable garden, or make a backyard garden oasis. Use this time to come up with some fun creative garden ideas.

I wanted to remind everyone that if you need assistance with Hands on Connect Master Gardener Database System, let me know! I can assist you with recertification, entering hours, profile updating, or any other questions that you have. There are a few updates for the HOC that I will share at our March 2nd meeting. Thank you again for your commitment to the Butler County Master Gardener Program. Let's have a great start to spring!



Recertification Deadline: March 1

March 1, 2022 is the deadline for Master Gardeners to recertify in Hands On Connect, to remain active in 2022. March 1, 2022, is also the deadline for paying dues for 2022. If you need help with recertifying in Hands On Connect, please contact JT, Frank Peters, or Paulette Walker. If you still need to pay your dues, please mail \$15.00 to the Butler County Master Gardeners, PO Box 273, West Chester, OH 45071. We hope to have this completed before the deadline, and prior to the next meeting on Wednesday, March 2, 2022. Thank you.

Spotlight on MG volunteers

Editor's note: Members are encouraged to submit stories of interest for future newsletter issues.

Tree Seedlings in Pots by Richard Sunberg

Trees are one of our most prominent plants. To me a yard without trees is like a church without Jesus. Think about it, they provide, beauty, shade, and leaves to compost. You can tie a hammock to trees, lean up against them and sit under their shady branches. They provide fruit, nuts, seeds, syrup, firewood. fence posts, lumber, and habitat for birds to nest and for squirrels to perform their acrobatics.

They are also good landmarks...even today they serve as traffic markers in rural areas to give travel directions. I was once told to go about a mile past where the old oak used to be and turn left. So long after the old oak was gone locals still use it as a reference point.

I value trees so much that I propagate them to give to others including at the Master Gardener's seed exchange. When I was working, I dug up redbud and dogwood saplings each spring, and wrapped their roots in wet newspapers. I tied the wet papers in place, put the saplings into plastic bags and took them to work where I gave them to my co-workers.

Over the years I have been the conduit for 100s of trees that are now thriving in southwest Ohio and into Indiana.

I had an endless supply when I was living on my woodsy farm but even in town, I still have a good supply. Trees are constantly sprouting in my gardens and raised beds.

It is easy to use a trowel to scoop them up and transplant them into a gallon plastic pot. I let them grow in potting soil until I can give them away. I place the seedling pots in a cluster in my backyard and water them with a hose. They require little care.

This fall I ordered white pine and Norway spruce seeds to sprout under grow lights in my sun room. Anyone want some conifers?



2022 Project Plans and Needs

Elisha Morgan Heritage Gardens

by Carol Kell and Libby Head

Elisha Morgan Heritage Gardens is a collection of gardens on the grounds of the Elisha Morgan Mansion which is located in Gilbert Farms Park at 6181 Ross Road in Fairfield. (Location note: OH 4 Bypass, going south, becomes Ross Road as you cross Rt 4) This 30-acre park is part of the Fairfield City Park system, is within a residential area, and sees a lot of visitors for recreation, exercise and facility rental throughout the year, especially during spring, summer and fall.

This last spring and summer saw a rejuvenation of the gardens after the restrictions due to Covid-19.... positive feedback from the community was heard! The Cutting Garden was "reclaimed" and noted as a spot for photo ops, the Kitchen Garden provided vegetables for two food pantries as well as the local community who visited the park and shared in the harvest, and the Grape Arbor was repaired and replanted. The Rose Garden was planted with some new climbing roses and the Perennial Border and Herb Garden continued to flourish.

As you can imagine, these beds require a good bit of maintenance through the summer. We had a dedicated group from Four Seasons Garden Club with some additional help from Butler County Master Gardener Volunteers working throughout the summer. We are always in need of more help from BCMGV and we're hoping for some interest from the new interns as well as some veteran members who might want to check out the gardens and park.

On Monday mornings we will "Weed and Walk" at 8:30 am, beginning mid-April and continuing into the fall. This is an on-going work-day opportunity where we will meet to weed the beds, harvest vegetables as they come in, and finish up by walking the half-mile paved path around the park... as many laps as you like! We will also have additional workdays, TBD, to do "spring cleaning" of the beds, prepare and plant the Kitchen Garden, mulch the beds, and do other larger maintenance.

Make a plan to come and check out these gardens and discover a park that you may not have known existed. If you would like a personal introduction to the Elisha Morgan Heritage Gardens, feel free to contact Libby Head (513-863-2849) or Carol Kell (513-260-1277) and we will gladly meet you there. Carol lives four houses down from the park on Ross Road, so meeting you there wouldn't be at all inconvenient!

Plant Sale

by Robyn Glaser

2022 PLANT

Share the Date - May 7th, 2022 at 10:00

Actively Volunteer - Sign-up at the March Meeting or via the Sign-up Genius Link

Leave or Take Clean Pots - Extension Office in the MGV Cubicle (Pots Now Needed)

Everyone Participates - Donate 10+ Plants Plus Garden Décor/Tools & Bring in Boxes

2022 Project Plans and Needs (continued)

Plant Science and Lawn Care Skill-A-Thon Project by Margy Beckner

This is an unusual project that happens once a year. It is conducted 1 day of the week before the fair. All 4H and Junior Fair members may participate. Participants are divided into 2 age groups.

Kits with posters and cards with questions are furnished by our Extension Office. Volunteers ask the participants a series of 5 questions for each table. There are 5 different tables. A score is given at each table. The participants with the highest total score can win trophies or ribbons.

The project leader is responsible for deciding which posters, cards and questions will be used.

- 8 TO 10 VOLUNTEERS ARE NEEDED
- 5 VOLUNTEER HOURS ARE EARNED (4 WORKING + 1 FOR TRAVEL)

Please contact Margy for more information or to volunteer: mbeckner1@frontier.com

Pyramid Hill by Cynthia Stever

Pyramid Hill Master Gardeners introduced many new plantings in 2021 (Tuff-Stuff Hydrangea, Abelia grandiflora, and Spirea Double-Play) and relocated spring bulbs. We look forward to seeing how they weathered the winter.

This spring we will continue to cut back some overzealous spring plantings, especially sedge. Pyramid Hill has a new Executive Director. We look forward to continuing good relations with Pyramid Hill. If you would like to learn more about the Pyramid Hill project or to volunteer, please contact Cynthia at stevercj@fuse.net



2022 Project Plans and Needs (continued)

Board of Elections Planters by Paulette Walker

2022 marks the third calendar year that Master Gardeners have collaborated with the Butler County Board of Elections, to provide a beautiful entry into the Board of Elections offices. Lynn and Robyn Glaser organized the plantings for 2020 and left big shoes to fill! I took over the project in 2021.

Sonia Brule and I worked with Board of Elections staff to design and plant arrangements for spring, summer, fall, and winter. The winter arrangement is in the pots now. The Board of Elections staff even saves some plants from year to year for use in the pots. Several members have expressed interest in working with us in 2022, and it will be fun to see what new ideas we develop.

My main goals for 2022 are to continue with beautiful arrangements, do a better job of identifying the plants used, and to install a sign so people know that the Master Gardeners are responsible for the designs. Additional volunteers are needed for this project. Please contact Paulette for information or to volunteer paulettewg23@gmail.com



The four seasons are: flat pansies for spring, summer is the tropical theme, fall has grasses and blue and orange flowers, and the winter planter is self-explanatory.



2022 Project Plans and Needs (continued)

HUGS News 2021 – Hamilton Urban Gardens

by Michelle Merrett

In the past year, HUGS struggled like many other nonprofits to survive the negative impact of the coronavirus. In December of 2020 we signed an agreement with an urban farmer (Pippin's Produce) to share growing space at the garden. As part of our agreement to share space, HUGS received additional produce that was donated to residents and partners that feed the public. Through this effort HUGS was able to donate over 2500 lbs of food to area residents, the Community Meal Center, Open Door Food Pantry, and New Life Mission. We also continued to have our committed volunteers from the Church of Latter Day Saints to help with various projects in the garden. Over the 2021 growing season, approximately 8 elders volunteered, usually two each week, for 1.5 up to 2 hours.

Through partnerships formed with two nonprofits, LaSoupe and Miami Valley Meals, HUGS has been able to receive frozen soup and prepared meals for distribution. In 2021 HUGS continued to distribute frozen prepared meals and soup through these partnerships and distributed 1,340 prepared meals and 350 quarts of soup to residents and our community partners that feed the public. We also donated to Serve City.

In June we had a group from the Cincinnati Catholic Work Camp program that volunteered for one full week. The group came in from Wisconsin. HUGS was fortunate to have the volunteers that came, given the pandemic, and they were amazing.

During fall semester HUGS was assigned three Miami University students who were completing their student service-learning hours. They worked on numerous projects in the garden and were a tremendous help. We hope to have more students working with us during this next semester.

We were able to secure a small grant through 17 Strong in late summer 2021 that allowed us to paint our HUGS Logo on our storage container. We featured three local artists and showcased their talent. One painted the logo on our shipping container storage unit, one painted a mural on our shed, and another created a tree sculpture on the property. As part of the celebration, we had a successful open house in October which brought approximately 100 people into the garden to tour our space. Mayor Moeller and former City Council Member Kathy Klink were in attendance. The kids in attendance enjoyed the planned activities with face painting and games. Our community partner JEEFOODS also took part in this event.

In November 2021 HUGS received a Whole Kids Foundation and Lettuce Grow grant in the form of a hydroponic growing tower, which was given to our school partner, at Riverview elementary. The students have been very excited about experiencing, firsthand, the growth process of plants.

In December we were able to place a second tower at Riverview. Our goal is to place four units there over the next two years. It's important that children be introduced to practicing healthy eating habits and gardening techniques at an early age. Once schools are fully open (post pandemic) our goal is to incorporate gardening learning activities in the classroom.

As of January 2022, our urban farmer has taken advantage of an opportunity to farm at a larger space and oversee the whole produce production at Liberty farms. We will miss Pippin's Produce but wish him well with his exciting new opportunity. We may seek to bring in an additional urban farmer to continue sharing the space.

HUGS is now a part of the Cincinnati Civic Center Network of gardens. Beginning this upcoming garden season, we will be one of the HUB locations for learning activities in the garden, such as demonstration cooking sessions with a nutrition specialist. Additional plans are:

1. Reconstruct the fruit orchard
2. Plant additional raspberries/blackberries/strawberries in the garden
3. Finish rebuilding our compost bins
4. Secure funding for a pollinator garden
5. Recruit more volunteers
6. Continue to build on the kids garden area

(Continued on page 9)

2022 Project Plans and Needs (continued)

HUGS News 2021 (continued)

Needs for the garden:

1. We are always in need of volunteers
2. We could use funding to build vertical boxes in the kid's garden
3. We would like a large picnic table for the kid's area
4. We need new garden tools (shovels, rakes, hand tools)
5. We would like a generator for use when completing projects in the garden

We are looking forward to a great upcoming season! For more interest or to volunteer contact Michelle at michelle@hamiltonurbangardens.org.



2022 Project Plans and Needs (continued)

Miami University Formal Gardens

by Nancy Tereba

2019 was the first year that we made a complete circuit in maintaining the gardens since I have been involved! It was exciting since we had finally caught up and would be able to do some extra things in the area. Fast forward to 2020 and when Ohio State Master Gardeners were able to begin gardening again, Miami University had not opened up and we were unable to do anything for the entire year. Chelsea, the Interim Manager did her best to maintain the gardens but if you are aware of the size of the project you know that was just not possible. Last year we had a wonderful, devoted group that came out and once again were able to get the gardens caught up! Now in 2022 we hope to continue where we left off and maintain the area as well as add flowers to some of the empty spots. Chelsea is starting flowers that we will be able to add to the garden beds.

If you're looking for a challenging project where you can learn about the plants as you work, then this is a great project for you. Chelsea works alongside of us, and answers questions and gives us interesting tidbits of information on what we are doing!

Hope to see you the 2nd and 4th Mondays of the month beginning in April and ending in October. Questions? Email Nancy Tereba @ ntereba363@gmail.com

BCHS/Benninghofen Museum

by Karen Kessler

Welcome to the BCHS/Benninghofen Museum gardens! This has been an ongoing MGV project and partnership with the Butler County Historical Society since 2005. Our MGVs care for the Cutting and Herb gardens as well as the surrounding landscape garden areas. This spring we will be preparing to mulch all the gardens. It's a big job but the MGVs are up for the challenge! We welcome all volunteers and look forward to seeing many of you in the Benninghofen gardens this spring!

We meet on the third Wednesday of the month from March thru October. Bring your gardening tools and water. Any questions - contact Karen Kessler, kkessler2147@gmail.com

BCHS/Benninghofen Museum

327 N. Second Street, Hamilton, 45011

Parking on the street

Restroom facilities available



2022 Project Plans and Needs (continued)

Fair Booth Early Planning News

by J.T. Benitez and Frank Peters

This year for the Farm Zone we are planning to bring back a lot of the interactive parts of the Farm Zone with some new changes. We are still wanting to bring in a permanent display down the center but reduced to one row on maybe some classic tractors. The “I am a Farmer” exhibit with the sandboxes and milking cow will be back, the Master Gardeners Booth will return to full size, OSU, SWCD will also be back to similar form (not sure on the soil trailer, will that spot be available outside for them again?) and other items. We are thinking about having interactive corners and sections instead of the whole center. When the interactive activities are completed, the center could be empty for parts of the day as it usually was from 1:30 to 4:30. The whole building is open from 11 AM to 7 PM. Having interactive tables to the side will not create an empty space when they are done for the day. My thoughts are to have interactive activities at these tables in two shifts or all day. For times that I cannot fill, I will have some filler displays for the space so there is never an empty spot.

Marilyn will get the Fair Committee together in March to select a theme and start the committee’s reorganization. She hopes to have all the existing members present for this meeting and is targeting the new MG class for participation.

The Master Gardeners will still be responsible for the landscaping at the front entrance of the Farm Zone building. Everyone at the meeting today agreed that tattooing was not a very good activity to continue. If decided, tattoos could be handed out to take home.

Doty Farmstead Needs and Plans

by Gail Troy

This year will be the second summer that MGV’s have gardened at the Doty Farmstead at the Pioneer Farm Museum at Hueston Woods. We had a very successful first year with an enthusiastic group of volunteers, produce to share with a local food pantry, visitors and interns for weekend programs, and positive comments from visitors and Oxford Museum Association (OMA) members. In fact, because of our success we decided to nearly double the size of our garden.

This summer we plan to enlarge our herb bed and double the garden space for vegetables. Because we are attempting to display a mid-1850’s garden, we planted corn, beans, and squash in a 3 Sisters style last summer and will now have more space to do that as well. OMA has also asked us to help plant some other items that will be used by their interns for educational programs. Lastly, our garden has walkways through it which meet in the center. Our vision is to have a bench there – either donated or constructed by volunteers – with several pots of flowers around it.

We have an awesome group of volunteers but with more garden, more volunteers will be welcomed. We will begin working in April with cleanup of existing garden space and construction of new spaces. We will meet on alternating Fridays and Saturdays so that those that work during the week will be able to volunteer. Last summer we met every week to keep the gardens in tip-top shape for weekend visitors. We also had “Watering Wizards” that watered the garden during the week. Volunteers will be welcomed with any of these tasks, as well as some with carpentry skills. We are also in need of some herbs – dill and mint (which will be planted in pots), rhubarb and asparagus. Please contact Gail at gailmtroy@gmail.com for more information or to join our team.

2022 Project Plans and Needs (continued)

Bull's Run

by Linda Mull

We up here in the northeast corner of Butler County at Bull's Run are eagerly awaiting our first workday of the spring season on March 19. We have several plans for this year, all dependent on funding and volunteers, particularly Master Gardeners. We're applying for a small grant to put in a monarch milkweed waystation along our access road at the front of the arboretum. We plan to continue removing as much of the Amur honeysuckle and wintercreeper euonymus as possible, continuing our efforts to eliminate invasives in the arboretum. We will be planting several more trees and shrubs in April in honor of Earth Day and extending our efforts to revitalize the woods. We lost over 200 ash trees to EAB and are gradually diversifying our trees and shrubs with more native plants to Ohio.

Although we are designated as a city park, any work done inside the fence line by the City of Middletown is limited to removal of hazardous trees. Our needs are many, and they are dependent on volunteers like you. We need people with carpentry skills to repair and maintain our bird feeders. We have a dedicated group of volunteers who refill the feeding stations throughout the winter. Vandals damaged capstones on our newest bridges. We need to repair this to maintain the integrity of those bridges. There are also a few other bridges that need replacement when funds and workers become available. We always need mulch for the trails and volunteers to spread it. And of course, we need YOU to help us each workday as we make progress on our plans. For more information or to volunteer at Bull's Run contact Linda Mull at rltm@cinci.rr.com.

We are approaching one of my personal favorite times of the year in the arboretum. The ephemeral wildflowers, which are abundant in Bull's Run, will begin their annual spring show soon. Something will be in flower from early March through May. We plan several wildflower walks during the spring so people can see and learn about our ephemerals throughout their season of beauty. I hope you can take some time to come join us, visit, walk the trails, and experience how volunteering in an eleven-acre arboretum is so unique.

Mulch & More is the newsletter of the Butler County, Ohio, Master Gardeners. © 2021 Butler County Master Gardeners. Submission of articles and member news is encouraged. Send to douglastroy@gmail.com.