

# ***The Greenhouse Effect:*** ***A Group Effort*** *by Joan Sousley*

Every corner of the greenhouse(s) is humming with activity as Master Gardeners gather in our various committees and get really busy putting together the pieces of our 2021 Plant Sale.

The Art Committee has a record (I'm sure) 300-plus items for the sale and are rushing to the finish line. Jenny M and her team want to thank all MG members who contributed items to their "want list." Jenny also wanted members to know that the family of our late member Marilyn Marsh donated many garden-related items to the committee, some of which Marilyn had made.

Diana Pieti reports that the Herb Committee is growing a good variety of culinary herbs, including basil and thyme, so members can make their own delicious spaghetti sauce!

The Annuals Team had such an adventure getting plant shipments in the door, after some orders were lost due to weather chaos enroute, or arrived frozen. Some orders arrived safely, and lost plants were replaced, but not necessarily with plants originally ordered. The upside to the experience is that we received some great new varieties we would not have tried. Disaster averted! There are several trays of plugs to plant into pots Tuesday, as well as seeds, and much grooming needs to be done. Join us, we work 8-11.

The Basket Committee anxiously waited for baskets, repeatedly delayed in shipping by the pandemic. They did finally arrive, and Patty Ferguson and crew are elbow deep in soil and plants, putting together

beautiful combinations for your patio or deck.

The hard working Vegie Team has finished planting the peppers, tomatillos, and ground cherries. Tomato varieties are seeded and will be put into pots. April 9th will be a big day, when the team will seed into pots the squash, melons, cucumbers and pumpkins. The Perennials Team is finished planting all their seedlings and divisions, and what's left is labeling, grooming, and "a bazillion other details that are bound to arise before we cross the finish line". The Team is proud of their plants, especially 2,300 tender succulents the team propagated and grew into gorgeous plants. Carol says "Bet you can't buy just one!" This is the first year in a very long time that we raised all our own plant material, not a single nursery plug in 2021. Each of us is happy to be part of such an extraordinary group effort. Come see for yourself on Monday mornings from 8-11.



*Photos courtesy of John Strong*





# Program Coordinator's

## Corner

### We're Coming Baaaacccckkkkkkk!

Now that we are in Phase 3, more options for Master Gardener events are opening up. We will however, continue to do all events following all safety precautions.

Last year all Demonstration Garden & Heirloom Garden classes, as well as 2 Spring Symposium classes, for the public had to be cancelled - which left a big gap in our CE options. Currently we are offering Demonstration Garden classes to MG's only. We kicked it off with a "How to Prune Grapes" mini-talk & handout by Claudia and a demonstration by her hubby Chuck Fiola (Vigneron) on how to prune the table grapes that are in the garden. Currently WSU allows 15 participants to gather and we had a total of 12 MGs who braved the chilly winds on Saturday March 20th at 10 am. It was quite the tangled mess, but by the time all of us finished it looked great. Thank you to all who helped. After finishing, Claudia & Chuck shared their Monukka table grape cuttings and Claudia sent her full power point (in pdf) on Growing Table Grapes to all participants.

More details will be coming by email on future classes: Diana is working on one on rose pruning and care of garden tools. And Angela is contacting

people who were cancelled last year and asking them if they would give their presentations this year.

The difference with these classes is that MGs will need to contact Diana and then Angela to confirm their spot in the class as we are giving priority to individuals who have not taken advantage of the many CE offerings through Zoom links and the Interns who need to complete their second year requirements. WSU is clear there will be no amnesty for the 10 minimum CE hours. So, watch for emails with more details to come.



*Hands-on learning with the Demonstration Garden grapes. Photos courtesy of Claudia Steen.*





# ***Demonstration Garden***

Photos from our demonstration garden that is waking up, but with a good covering of leaves which we are slowly removing...love the combination of conifers for their colors and shapes, the sweet little crocus that look like orchids, winter daphne in its glory, and, of course, our tiny blue/purple Iris Reticulata. Come see these for yourself every Wednesday morning starting at eight.

*~Diana Pieti*



*Demonstration Garden photos courtesy of Diana Pieti.*

***“In the spring, at the end of the day, you should smell like dirt.” ~Margaret Atwood***





*Spring Snowflake/Leucojum Bernom*



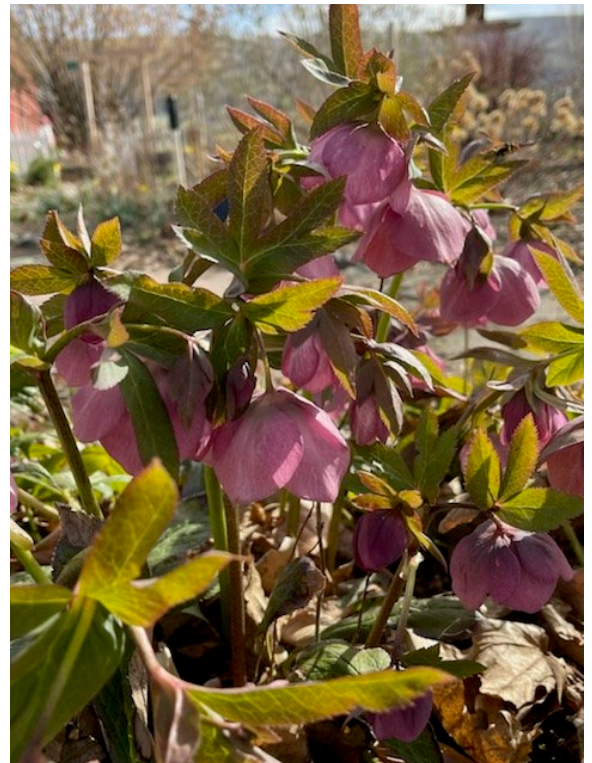
*"Pink Dawn" Viburnum*

# ***A Few Weeks Later...in the Demonstration Garden***



*Daffodils!*

*Photos submitted by  
Angela Galbreath*



*Hellebore/Lenten Rose*

# The Right to Garden...Who Says?

By Phyllis Pugnetti

The *Right to Garden Act* in Illinois recently passed the house and is currently waiting for a senate vote. At first glance, the right to garden seems like a good thing, but a review of the details may lead to a different opinion. The first part of the bill says that state and local government may not infringe upon the right of a residential property owner to maintain a garden for one's own consumption. The intention may have been to limit using residential land for commercial agriculture. However, the bill makes it illegal to share, give, or donate anything from a home garden (including food, seeds, flowers, ornamentals, herbs, bulbs, cuttings, root divisions plants, etc). Buried deeper into the bill, it goes on to say that state and local government may limit through statute, regulation, or other restrictions—water use; property set-backs; maximum lot coverage; utility safety; control of invasive species; the use of fertilizer, herbicide, and pesticide, etc., which contradicts the part about government not infringing upon the right to garden.



So it seems that the *Right to Garden Act* would actually empower state and local government to make the final decision about all things growing on residential property in Illinois. This seems a little like Venezuela where produce from home gardens is confiscated and the gardens are destroyed. And we don't even need to look that far from home. It calls to mind the Pennsylvania anti bio-terrorism law of 2010, that resulted in SWAT teams confiscating and destroying seeds from seed libraries across their state. The law was later changed, but the damage was already done. When it comes to the law and politics, the devil really is in the details. This appears to be a bill worth watching.

---

## ***Help Wanted...in the Greenhouse!***

Please join the Annuals team Tuesday morning, 8-11, come when you can, stay as long as you are able. There are the last of the plugs to transplant, and as always grooming to do.

The plants are flourishing! Thanks to all who have helped, from filling pots to putting plants in pots. You are appreciated.

All hands on deck! One month to go before the plant sale, and your help is needed Monday 4/5 between 8-11. The perennial team has everything planted, but our babies need labels and help with hair and makeup. Bring your own sharp snips and give some perennials some last minute grooming. You'll have plenty of ventilated space, and there are tables outside to work on, if you prefer. Hoping to see you then!

### **Master Gardening Mission Statement:**

*"Engaging university-trained volunteers to empower and sustain communities with relevant, unbiased, researched-based horticulture and environmental stewardship education."*

*WSU Extension programs and employment are available to all without discrimination. Evidence of non-compliance may be reported through your local WSU Extension Office.*



# ***Mason Bee Delight***

*By Deb Mathieu*

Several years ago I purchased a Mason Bee house and some full tubes of cocoons to put in my garden. Facing the east on a fence I rarely see, I didn't think much more about it until I took the recent online WSU-EDU class on Mason Bee harvesting.

In order to avoid parasitic damage to Mason Bees, you can harvest cocoons in the fall and hold them until shortly before budding in the spring. Since I had never done this, but wondered what was in my neglected Mason Bee house, I decided to investigate. What could it hurt?

I was in for a delightful surprise. My Mason Bee house is a synthetic pressed tray which easily opened onto my awaiting newspaper under a lighted magnifier. (Though I had added some paper tubes, they had not been used). It seemed I had some of everything the presenter had talked about: leaf cutter tubes, larvae of who knows what, pollen pockets that had been invaded by mites, and poop-covered cocoons of the coveted Mason Bees, neatly divided by mud walls. So I carefully picked up the cocoons and cleaned off all the little black specks of poop, as she had instructed, and inspected them under the magnifying glass. There were a few cocoons that had holes in them with the parasitic result of no viable Mason Bee. But quite a few looked "good" to my uneducated eye, so I set

them aside. As I worked, I noticed some movement



on the tray. Black something emerging. As I watched, a Mason Bee pushed its way out. I covered it with a little plastic cup, onto which it crawled, and took it outside. When I got back and sat down, resuming cleaning, I heard some little scratching sounds coming from the area where I had set aside cocoons. Yep, they were moving, and sure enough, another Mason Bee emerged. Wow!

Mason Bees will emerge when days are consistently above 55 degrees. Apparently, bringing them in under the light had stimulated them to emerge right before my eyes. But since I didn't want Mason Bees in my house, nor were my garden plants budding enough, I quickly paper bagged the remaining cocoons and put them in my fridge. Coincidentally, I had ordered some Mason Bee cocoons that were in a small box in my refrigerator (instructions are to put the box into the fridge before opening, to make them dormant, until you want to put them outside). So I compared cocoons. My harvested cocoons look exactly like the cocoons I had purchased. Yea!

So I am cleaning my trays with bleach water to put back out for new Mason Bee housing. And soon I will put my cocoons out, protected from my husband's bird feeders, so my emerging buds will have lots of pollination. With a new appreciation of Mason Bee care, I look forward to harvesting cocoons this fall.



**3rd Column: Leaf cutter tube**

**4th Column: Pollen, I assume parasitized, on end and 4 viable Mason Bee cocoons, covered in poop, separated by mud walls.**

## What's Wrong With My Cucumbers?

By Phyllis Pugnetti

Do you wonder why some years your cucumbers have low yields but you're not quite sure what you did wrong? It might not be you. It could be the 'dating and mating habits' of cucumbers that are causing the problem. The most common type of cucumbers are **monoecious** and are mostly very old varieties that have been around for a very long time. Like most cucurbits, monoecious cucumbers have both male and female blossoms on the same plant. The first blossoms in the spring are mostly male, but given a couple of weeks the ratio of male to female blossoms will be almost equal. For good fruit production, male and female blossoms must be open and ready for pollination at the same time. The blooms open in the morning just as pollinators are arriving in the garden. There is only a 12 hour window of time until the pollen is no longer viable. Think of it this way... a typical 'date' for a cucumber is getting together in the morning for coffee, NOT dinner and a movie in the evening. Pollinator visits are imperative because cucumber pollen is so sticky that it doesn't blow around on the wind. You can encourage more pollinator visits (and higher yields) by planting blooming flowers among your cucumbers. Cucumber blossoms are also sensitive to environmental factors which may reduce fruit set. Insect damage, low light, and overcrowding causes stress that results in fewer female blossoms. Temperatures above 86° results in more male blossoms, but below 60° results in more female blooms. Like many heat loving crops, cucumbers want ideal conditions. When conditions are less than perfect, they'll survive but will also let you know just how miserable they are.

All cucumbers (*Cucumis sativus*) grow best and achieve the highest yields when they are grown in loose fertile soil, with consistently even moisture.



Male blossoms attach to the stem. Female blossoms have an ovary between the blossom and stem.

*They don't like their roots to sit in puddles. They don't like to be crowded, or to compete with weeds. Cucumbers benefit from mulch to retain moisture and moderate soil temperatures. The best fruit set and highest yields happen when the soil and air temperatures are between 60° and 85°. Cucumbers want everything to be ideal—anything less and show you just how miserable they are with lower yields.*

Besides the common **monoecious** type cucumbers, there are two fairly new types that were originally bred for commercial uses but are beginning to make their way into home gardens. **Gynoecious** varieties produce blossoms that are 90% female. They need a few monoecious plants growing nearby to provide male blossoms for pollen. The high number of female blossoms result in excellent yields. **Parthenocarpic** cucumbers do not need any male pollen to set fruit. They produce high yields of seedless (or nearly seedless) fruits. Seeds for parthenocarpic cucumbers are the result of multiple hybrid crosses to get seeds that will produce seedless fruits. Parthenocarpic varieties cannot be grown near monoecious varieties as cross pollination will occur resulting in seeded fruits. You cannot save seeds from either gynoecious or parthenocarpic varieties as the seeds will be hybrid and are usually sterile.

*Source: Seminis Agronomic Spotlight*

## Summer Garden Classes

**May 8: Planting Containers/Diana Pieti and Angela Galbreath**

**May 22: ???**

**June 12: Raised Bed Gardening/Claudia Steen**

**June 26: Worm Composting/Beatrice Reiss**

**July 10: ???**

**July 24: Deadheading Flowers/Angela Galbreath**

**August 14: ???**

**August 28: ???**

**Sept 11: Planning Now for Seed Starting/Sarah Judd**

**Sept 25: Shrubs and Trees for Screening/Ken Tolonen**

**\*\*Have an idea for a class?? Willing to teach a class?? Contact Angela (509)930-7798**



# ***Gardeners At Home***



*Dee Adams shares photos of winter jasmine and pussy willow from her garden. Early signs of spring!*



***Reminder! Foundation Meeting via Zoom  
Wednesday, April 7th @ 10:30 am.***



# ***Floribunda: Annual Vines***

*by Carol Barany*

Few other plants add more romance and lushness to a garden as quickly as annual flowering vines. If you have a new landscape without mature trees, it won't take long for vines to cascade over an arbor or trellis, giving the impression that your garden has been there forever. You can use trellised vines to provide a green screen, creating an oasis of privacy. Do you have a view you don't like, such as your neighbor's garage, or even your compost pile? Chances are you can cover it up with a few fast-growing vines. And if you find yourself running out of horizontal space, "just grow up". There's usually room to shoe-horn in a vertical vine.

Since it's hard for growers to keep rapidly growing vines from getting tangled with other plants, you're not likely to find them at nurseries. My friend Nancy has a way with seeds, and each spring, she grows more vines than she needs herself, and shares the rest. The ones we love the most seem to be the heirloom varieties that have embellished gardens for generations. They require no policing, like overly rambunctious wisterias and trumpet vines. Like all annuals, they'll require replanting each spring, so be sure to save some seeds.

Darwin observed that the stem tip of a twining vine actually moves in all directions, searching for a support to twist itself around (circumnatation), and that a particular species of vine will always twine in the same direction (usually clockwise), no matter where or how it's being grown. Though twiners will rest side shoots on nearby horizontal branches, their growth is skyward, requiring vertical support.

Other vines use tendrils, thin and flexible leafless stems that also reach around in the air until they come in to contact with something to grab. Contact with a stake or branch stimulates growth on the other side of the tendril, creating the familiar coil that allows the plant to pull itself onto the support.

Vines that attach by tendrils or by twining need something slender to cling to. If the support is too thick, the vine will simply attach to its own stems, growing into a tangled mess.

These vines are excellent choices for latticework supports such as chain-link fences and lath trellises:

Fragrant Moonflower Vine (*Ipomoea alba*) can grow 10-12 feet in a season. Unlike other morning glories, these huge white, fragrant flowers open only at night, drawing pollinator moths. Listed in catalogs since 1884, Moonflowers need full sun, and average well-drained soil.

Two red-flowered relatives, growing 10-20 feet in a season, are Cypress Vine (*Ipomoea quamoclit*) and

Cardinal Creeper (*Ipomoea multifida*). Besides blooms, both offer attractive ferny foliage. Introduced in 1806, both are well-loved by my garden club for their ability to attract hummingbirds.

The Spanish Flag (*Ipomoea lobata*), another member of the morning glory family, has arching sprays of tubular flowers that soften from crimson to butter-yellow. In moist, fertile soil, this 1841 introduction will grow as much as 20 feet in full sun to part shade.

A vine related to the nasturtium that can do with less sun is the Canary Vine (*Trapaeolum peregrinum*). It climbs on strings or fine trelliswork to a height of 8-12' and produces bright yellow, edible blooms. This plant has been cottage garden favorite in the United States as far back as the mid-19th century.

A single Purple Hyacinth Bean (*Dolichos lablab*) rambled 20' up the rope attached to the flagpole in my front yard. Along the way, sprays of amethyst and violet blossoms on long purple stems bloomed throughout the summer. When the flowers fade, one catalog describes the seed pods that form as "cut from shiny purple patent-leather". Plants were introduced from Egypt in 1818 and thrive in Yakima's heat.

Cup and Saucer Vine (*Cobaea scandens*), was introduced in 1792, but I didn't meet it until last summer, and I'm sorry it took so long. A single plant covered a wire arbor in my cutting garden in a just a few months. Flowers start out as vintage green, papery buds, and open to reveal green bell-shaped flowers. The color morphs again to deep purple. These flowers, as well as stems of violet foliage and tendrils, are amazing in bouquets. Blooming starts in late summer and continues until a hard freeze.

Nancy sows seeds indoors, on heat mats and under lights, 6-8 weeks before our last frost. However, all of these heirlooms can be directly sown in the garden. Wait until the soil is warm enough to plant tomatoes.

**Newsletter submissions are due on the 25th of each month. Please send them to Julie Hunziker at [jbhunziker@gmail.com](mailto:jbhunziker@gmail.com). Texting photos and brief descriptions is fine, as well. (530)209-4329**



# March Madness...Mastering the Gardener

By Mary Vaananen|March 27, 2021

Republished with permission from the author. Originally published at <https://gardenrant.com/>

It is the middle of March. I stand looking at the back garden, which turns 24 years old this August. The Hellebores are blooming up a storm of color. Fragrant Edgeworthia is wafting its sweet scent to call me into the garden. But I just stand and look. I don't move.

There is a time as spring approaches that I am filled with pit-of-the-stomach angst anticipating that I will not be able to take care of this garden. It is too much. Pollarding, cutting back, removing, digging, dividing, and hauling the "yard waste" to await pickup. So much needs to be done. I do not know where that energy is going to come from. Then the mind leaps to summer (piling on) when the biting insects reign and the growth feels at times overwhelming. What have I done?

Recently, I approached the garden several times this way only to stop and feel overwhelmed. I sat down on the back porch and just looked out at ALL OF IT. Fretting and pondering.

Wild nature does not NEED in the same way a deliberately planted garden does. We collect diverse plants and set them together in sometimes impossible settings. Our intent is to make a beautiful and unusual vignette for our pleasure. Sometimes we take our identity from the cleverness and ingenuity of what we have created. We are *MASTER GARDENERS*.

But honey, these intricate collections need tending because they ain't where their mama dropped them, and you're their mama now. You have made your bed. *Master this.*

We are expected to have some kind of mastery—at least over ourselves. Tell this to your aging body and mind. We have been set up to fail. Meanwhile, the work ethic we inherited hums in our synapses reminding us over and over that we need to be self-sufficient, that it shows our worth. Society values the competent. Survival of the fittest. Heaven forbid you falter or lose your way. Does the garden expect this of us too?

I shook my head at those aging friends who decided to downsize and simplify their gardens. At the time I couldn't fathom it. Fast forward to now and the thought of simplification seems reasonable and even smart, eliciting a big internal sigh of relief. Really? Is it time to throw in the gloves? Or better, how to gracefully and fearlessly embrace a new phase of gardening as I age? Internal sighs are to be heeded and *the gardening* can be of service.

I stepped back into the garden on a gray, overcast day.

Without noticing I bent over and began trimming old Epimedium leaves. Doo dee doo....dah dee dah. Then I had the strangest feeling that the garden was *gardening itself*. We were one *movement*. There was no boundary between me and the garden. As I cut back and tidied, Mary was gone yet *gardening* was happening. It was clear. But to who? *Madness?*

We all have gotten lost in *the gardening*. Call it being in the

zone if you like. We are out of our minds for a while.

In this zone, there were no fears of not being able to manage.... of where the energy was coming from. No worry that I would somehow fail in cultivating this beautiful little garden nook. Just gardening happening. The garden needed tending and so it was. The required *movement* happened.

What do I mean by "*the gardening*"? Well, you can't have one without the other....a garden with no gardener, a gardener with no garden. They come into being together. You can expand that out to soil, air, rain, insects, fungi. *The gardening* is a synergistic happening.

*The gardening* worked its magic. The time out-of-mind eased the March *Madness* and I can breathe again. All of the mind-play circling around the idea of myself as a *competent* gardener (one of the million stories I tell myself about myself) faded away. *Mind-play is our human lot.*

I have learned much about life from *the gardening*. Much like marriage, what starts in earnest enthusiasm goes through many stages, some more trying than others. It is a kind of *madness*—this LONGTERM commitment to something so uncontrollable, undertaken with little thought to the complexity of the situation. To the tough times of drought or flooding or myriad other major and minor tragedies. And to the aging gardener's abilities in the decades ahead—the spring-chicken sixties, skillful seventies, creative eighties, (and fingers crossed) the nimble-ish nineties. You probably won't survive.

In the blink of an eye, 24 years later, I stand at the edge of the back porch looking out at the beauty that lives within my reach. There are piles of trimmings everywhere. Just after a rain, the colors are rich and the air is sweet and earthy. My heart opens up and I can hardly believe that this grace is ME.... the ME that is inextricably part of *the movement*, part of *the gardening*. It doesn't get any better.

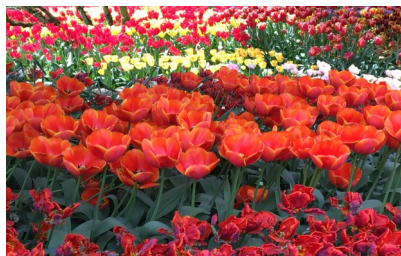
In retrospect, *the gardening* has shown me my humble place in the process. Every gardener should know that *the movement* is the true *MASTER*.

The garden awakens slowly, taking its cue from the invisible momentum. So does the gardener. It happens in its own time. It can only be this way.

Why was I worried?

*Mary Vaananen lives and gardens in Louisville, KY. She is the North American manager for Jelitto Perennial Seeds, headquartered in Germany.*





# April 2021

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1 <i>Hanging Basket Team 9-11</i> <i>Herbs Team 8-11</i>	2 <i>Veggie Team 9-11</i> <i>Art Team 9-11:30</i>	3
4	5 <i>Perennials Team 8-11</i>	6 <i>Annuals Team 8-11</i>	7 <i>Foundation Meeting via Zoom 10:30</i>	8 <i>Hanging Basket Team 9-11</i> <i>Herbs Team 8-11</i>	9 <i>Veggie Team 9-11</i> <i>Art Team 9-11:30</i>	10 <i>Rose Pruning Class@ Demo Garden 10 am</i>
11	12 <i>Perennials Team 8-11</i>	13 <i>Annuals Team 8-11</i>	14	15 <i>Hanging Basket Team 9-11</i> <i>Herbs Team 8-11</i>	16 <i>Veggie Team 9-11</i> <i>Art Team 9-11:30</i>	17
18	19 <i>Perennials Team 8-11</i>	20 <i>Annuals Team 8-11</i>	21	22 <i>Hanging Basket Team 9-11</i> <i>Herbs Team 8-11</i>	23 <i>Veggie Team 9-11</i> <i>Art Team 9-11:30</i>	24
25 <i>Newsletter Articles Due to Editor</i>	26 <i>Perennials Team 8-11</i>	27 <i>Annuals Team 8-11</i>	28	29 <i>Plant Sale!</i>	30 <i>Plant Sale!</i>	



Persons with disabilities who require alternative means for communication or program information or reasonable accommodation need to contact: WSU Extension/2403 South 18th Street/ Union Gap, WA 98903/509-574-1600

For accommodation please call at least two weeks prior to the event WSU Extension programs and employment are available to all without discrimination.