

OSU Extension - Auglaize County Weekly Horticulture Newsletter – 4-24-20

How to Establish a Victory Garden



Village Green Floral and Garden Center is pairing up with the Auglaize County Historical Society, the Wapakoneta Chamber of Commerce and J. Marie's Restaurant to promote growing your own Victory Garden. There is even a prize package involved with this effort. Therefore I thought I would create a series of columns to offer guidance in creating a beautiful and bountiful Victory Garden.

What is a "victory garden"? The roots of a "victory garden" go back to World War I. To supplement the food supply for the country people were asked to plant gardens. This allowed people to have more food to eat because food was being rationed at this time. During this time period the gardens were called "war gardens". At the end of the war they were called "victory gardens" to celebrate the end of the war. The Victory Garden program was promoted once again during World War II by the government and the industry.

During this COVID-19 crisis some people are suggesting we go back to planting gardens to smooth out the food supply chain.

How do I start a garden? Lot's of planning and preparation. First you must choose a suitable site. Choose an area that has as much full sunshine as possible. Keep it away from trees that will shade the garden and compete against the crops grown in the garden and from buildings that shade the garden from sunshine and rainfall. Tree roots can go out about as far as the tree is tall. The closer the garden is placed to trees the more nutrients and water will need to be supplemented to have a highly productive garden. Do not place the garden on top of a leach field so that the roots do not plug the tiles and the roots do not pick up harmful chemicals that may have been put down the drain and subsequently ended up in the leach field. Be sure that you have as much topsoil as possible where you are placing the garden. If you have lots of subsoil, you will need to amend the soil. The best thing to put in the soil to improve it is compost. Adding compost will help to aerate the soil and provide nutrients to plants. Sand will only improve drainage, NOT soil nutrients. Add as much compost as you can find. Be sure the compost is free of herbicide residues.

What do I do with my lawn to start a garden? That depends upon what type of garden you want. Do you want a deep raised bed, a shallow raised bed or no raised bed? If you will build a frame for a deep or elevated raised bed then you only need to put some newspaper down over the grass before you put your "soil" mixture into the raised bed. The newspaper will smother the grass in the short term and decay over time. Place four sheets of newspaper on the grass, then water the paper to make it damp then put the "soil" mixture on top. There are many types of "soil" you may put into the raised bed, but rely heavily on compost free of herbicides and weed seeds. When selecting raised bed materials do not use any wood or other materials that is treated with chemicals or in which a chemical may leach out of the product later. Use a material that is sturdy and will withstand the wet conditions of having it next to soil.

Another option is to start a shallow raised bed where you lay down the newspaper described above and just put straight compost directly on it. This is the fastest way to start a garden as only newspaper and herbicide-free compost are needed. Place at least four inches of compost on the newspaper.

Another method which requires lots of time is to dig out a chunk of soil 8" deep and turn it exactly upside down placing it back in the hole where it came from. This is a really good method like the newspaper method to not have to deal with the weed seeds that are mostly in the upper 4 inches of the soil. This method also allows you to make a nice seedbed without dealing with the sod.

Another method to get rid of the sod is to spray the area with a high rate of glyphosate to kill all vegetation that is present. Apply a three to four percent solution of glyphosate. The reason for doing this is to make sure most of the existing vegetation is killed and to make sure the soil tills a "little" easier than dealing with the living sod. The draw back to this method is that you will leave the weed seeds at the surface to re-infest the new garden and need to wait until the sod dies.

The last method is to just use a large tiller to kill the sod and to prepare a seed bed. This can be difficult and there may be rhizomes and other structures left for perennial weeds to reemerge. Another issue is that there may be too much grass residue if not tilling deep enough to get a good seed bed. A good seed bed is important to establishing plants from seed.

The last thing to remember is to be PATIENT. DO NOT work the soil when it is wet! To know when the soil is ready, dig down 6 inches and grab a handful of soil. Squeeze the soil. If it crumbles when you open your hand the soil is ready, if it stay in a ball, then it is too wet.

Local Observations



Trench for may new asparagus bed



Tulips in flower



A tulip mixed with a peony



Creeping phlox



A red bud budding!! (my favorite tree)



Apple tree about to flower

Good afternoon! I pray you are well.

We received rainfall 3 days this past week. Rainfall on Friday, April 17th ranged from a 0.16" near Wapak-Fisher and Townline-Lima roads to 0.4" near St. Rt. 197 and Mercer Line roads. Rainfall on Tuesday ranged from 0" near Minster-Ft. Recovery and Sommer roads to 0.11" near Lowes. Rainfall on Thursday ranged

from 0.15” at four locations on the western half of the county to 0.25” near County Road 66A and Dowty roads and Townline-Kossuth and Glynwood roads. Rainfall for the week ranged from 0.33” near Minster-Ft. Recovery and Sommer roads to 0.67” near St. Rt. 197 and Mercer Line roads. The average rainfall for the week was 0.48”, 0.17” more than last week. Looks like rain is forecasted for most days next week, but total volume will only be about 1 inch.

The average high temperature now is 64 degrees F, 3 degrees higher than last week. Temperatures were above normal for 0 day and below normal for 7 days this past week. Temperatures ranged from 44 degrees F to 60 degrees F. The average high temperature for the week was 55.0 degrees F which is 9 degrees F colder than the historical average high. Looks like it will be mostly below normal temperatures for next week.

Flowering continues for many species including weeds. The tulips have finally popped and the red buds are close to flowering. The garden was dry enough to plant again, but I did not because I was digging my trench for my asparagus plants that will be coming in early May.

Weekly Weed Photos



Clasp pennygrass (a new weed for me)



Cressleaf groundsel (poisonous)



Common wild blue violet (weed or not??)



Common chickweed

Special OSU Horticulture Meetings

During this period of COVID-19 OSU Extension is offering a Horticulture Lunch and Learn Program and a Horticulture Happy Hour Program. If you are interested, visit the following web address: <http://go.osu.edu/MGVlearn> The Lunch and Learn occurs every Tuesday and Thursday from noon to 1:00 PM and the Happy Hour is Wednesdays from 4:00 to 5:00 PM.

VegNet

Upcoming Session to Focus on Long-term Success in High Tunnel Production

April 20₂₀₂₀

Share

Investments in high tunnels and high tunnel production are among the most significant growers can make, especially if the tunnels are stationary (not designed to move) and income from the tunnels is critical to the farm. Getting the most from tunnels from the start and over the long run is important. A session summarizing steps toward that goal will be held on Thursday April 23, beginning at 12 PM ET. The session is part of the OSUE Ag Madness series (<https://go.osu.edu/agmadness>) and will focus on major challenges and emerging opportunities in high tunnel production. Specific topics will include soil health, and new crops and high tunnel technologies — information for all high tunnel users, regardless of experience. Please see <https://agmr.osu.edu/events/agriculture-and-natural-resources-madness> to connect and contact Matt Kleinhenz (kleinhenz.1@osu.edu; 330.263.3810) for information. We look forward to seeing you there!

BYGL

I did not include all of this week's articles in this newsletter. To see them go here:
<https://bygl.osu.edu/>

Shrub of the Week: Yellowroot

Authors

[Paul Snyder](#)

Published on

April 24, 2020



Yellowroot, *Xanthorrhiza simplicissima*, is a member of the Ranunculaceae that few people in Ohio are familiar with. When I began working at Secret Arboretum in 2010 I learned *Xanthorrhiza* from Ken Cochran as a plant that could be grown in dry shade beneath white pines. After the 2010 tornado we moved clumps of the plant to new areas to help cover open areas. At the time I wasn't impressed with it, except for the brilliant yellow roots (think yellow highlighter yellow). However, over the years *Xanthorrhiza simplicissima* has grown on me.

Native to portions of the eastern and southeastern United States (the USDA lists it as native to Ohio though no county data exists for it), Yellowroot is a colonizing shrub capable of filling a landscape bed. The best way to grow it is to plant it somewhere it can be contained either by a retaining wall or sidewalk. *Xanthorrhiza simplicissima* makes a good groundcover and has no known disease or insect problems.

The name Yellowroot, comes from the bright yellow color of the roots and stems (Xantho= yellow, rhiza=roots). It was used medicinally and as a dye by native Americans. The shrub reaches a mature height of 2-3' with an infinite spread. Interestingly, the stems do not branch like other woody plants which is what the specific epithet, *simplicissima*, refers to.



Bright yellow roots

Yellowroot can be grown in full sun though it does best in part shade. Like most plants native to the eastern US, it prefers soils that are slightly acidic and rich in organic matter. In the wild it can be found along stream banks.



Purple flowers of yellowroot

Purple panicles of flowers emerge in the spring before the foliage. While the flowers are not large and showy they do add a wispy cloud of purple to the area in which they are planted. The flowers are followed by small green follicles which are hidden beneath the foliage.



A brown-purple flowering form at Secret Arboretum

If you're looking for a native groundcover that is both beautiful and functional, consider planting Yellowroot.



Fall color

Further Reading:
Dirr, Michael. *The Manual of Woody Landscape Plants*
[North Carolina State University Extension](#)
[Missouri Botanical Garden](#)
[Flora of North America](#)

Virtual Program Reminder - April 21, 2020, 9 am, 12 pm and 3 pm

Authors

Amy Stone

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Just a quick reminder that it is horticulture day for bracket play with OSU Extension's Agriculture and Natural Resources virtual training. The sessions are FREE and open to all. Each session will be recorded and the link to the video will be made live after the session at:

<https://agnr.osu.edu/events/agriculture-and-natural-resources-madness/full-bracket>

Here is today's presentations. Don't miss out and tune using Zoom!

Awesome Annuals

9:00 a.m. tip-off *Pam Bennett, Horticulture Educator, OSU Extension Clark County*

Pesticide Safety

Noon tip-off *Mimi Rose, Pesticide Safety Education Program Director, OSU Extension*

BYGLive Ornamental Horticulture Updates

3:00 p.m. tip-off *Joe Boggs, Horticulture Educator, OSU Extension Hamilton County*
Jim Chatfield, Horticulture Specialist, OSU Extension

Stay safe and happy learning!

More Information

OSU Extension, AgNR Bracket of Education

<https://agnr.osu.edu/events/agriculture-and-natural-resources-madness>

Calico Scale Poo Showers Commence

Authors

Joe Boggs

Published on

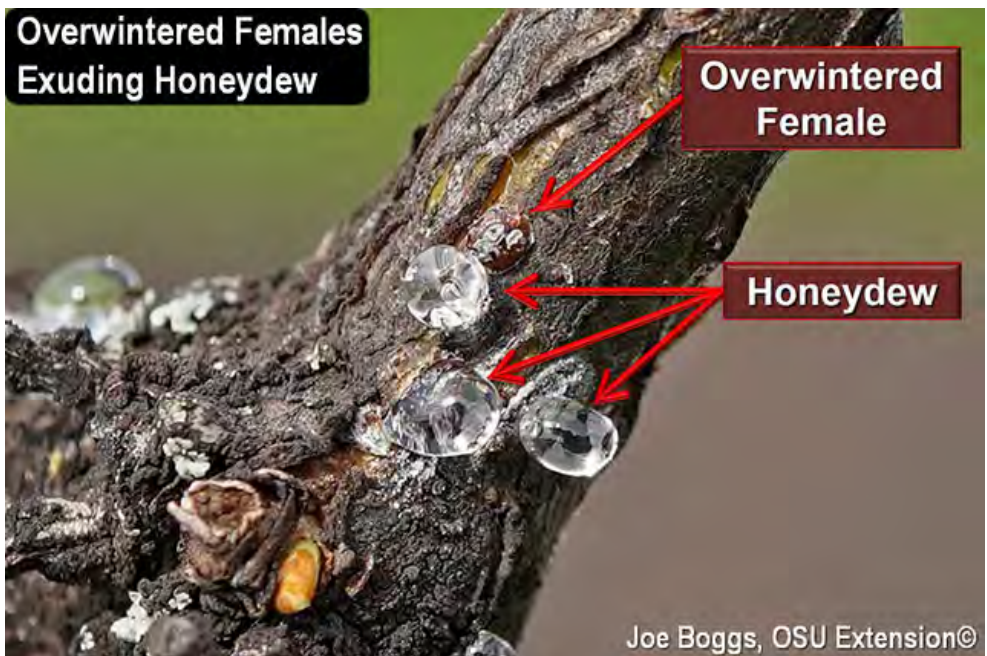
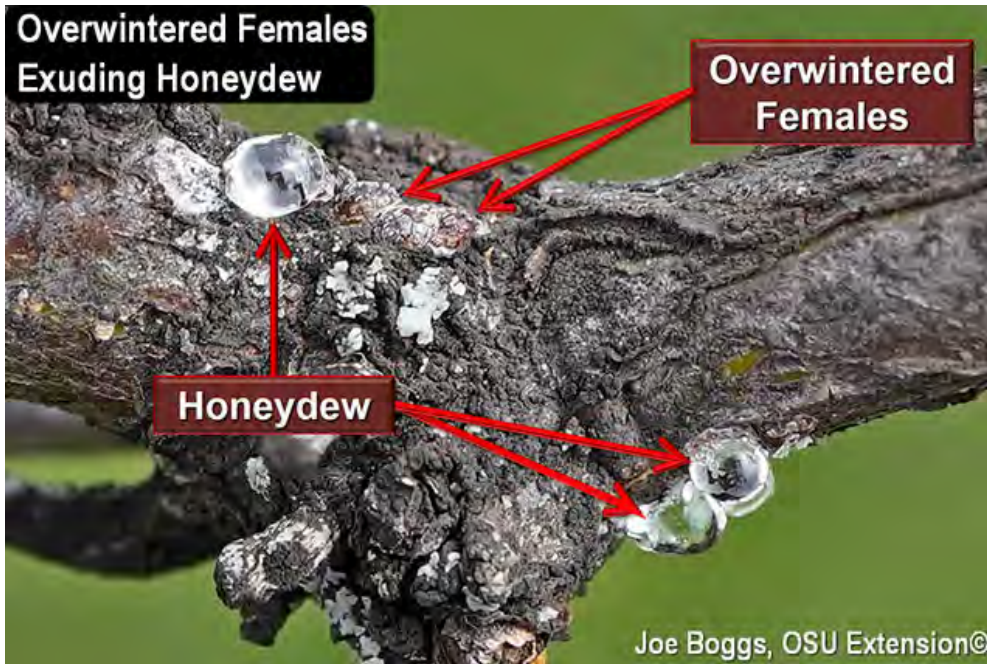
April 17, 2020



Calico scale (*Eulecanium cerasorum*) females spend the winter as small, crusty, flattened late instar nymphs (crawlers) stuck on plant stems. They don't look anything like their mature form and may be overlooked or misidentified.



They make their true identity known when they start pumping out impressive quantities of honeydew. The first image in this report, as well as the two images below, show something that I've never observed before. I took these pictures yesterday on honeylocusts (*Gleditsia triacanthos*) in southwest Ohio.



If you look closely, you'll see the shimmering droplets of honeydew are oozing from the females **before** they inflate like balloons as they mature. In fact, some of the droplets obscure the source making it look like the trees are leaking sap.

These flattened females will eventually "puff up" and their characteristic helmet-shaped shells will display the starkly contrasting calico pattern of black-and-white markings that gives this scale its common name. I've only ever observed heavy honeydew production during the puffing-up phase, not while the females remained flattened on the stems.





Calico scale is a type of "soft scale" meaning their shells can be easily crushed. In fact, this soft scale can be handily removed from tree stems using a scrubbing pad or scrub brush. It's an effective management method for small trees and preserves natural bio-allies such as lady beetles and other predators that target this sucking insect.



Origins of Scale Poo

As with all soft scales, calico scale adults and nymphs (crawlers) feed by inserting their piercing-sucking mouthparts into phloem vessels to withdraw sap. They extract both carbohydrates for energy and amino acids to build proteins. However, the sugary sap contains a much higher percentage of carbohydrates by volume compared to amino acids meaning the scale must remove a huge amount of sap to extract the quantity of amino acids required to meet their needs.

They discharge excess sap from their anus in the form of a sticky, sugary, clear liquid called "honeydew;" a polite name for the liquid scale poo. The honeydew drips onto the leaves and stems of infested trees as well as understory plants, sidewalks, lawn furniture, parked cars, stationary entomologists, etc. My hat, shirt, glasses, and camera have become speckled with sticky scale poo goo during past visits to heavily infested trees.



Black sooty molds quickly colonize the honeydew imparting a black veneer to stationary objects. Despite its unsightly appearance, the sooty molds cause no direct harm to plants other than possibly interfering with photosynthesis.



What's Up Next?

The females will continue to spew honeydew as they mature towards egg production. Each female can produce more than 1,000 eggs, so populations can build rapidly.

Calico scale females die after producing their eggs and quickly turn reddish-brown and appear deflated. The 1st instar crawlers that hatch from the eggs migrate to the underside of leaves where they attach themselves to veins. They suck fluid from phloem vesicles and drip honeydew; it's a family business.



A Host of Calico Problems

Calico scale has a wide host range. In fact, few landscape trees in Ohio other than conifers are beyond the reach of this Asian native. Here is a partial A-to-Z list of possible hosts: buckeye, crabapple, dogwood, elm, hackberry, hawthorn, honeylocust, magnolia, maple, oak, pear, redbud, serviceberry, sweetgum, tuliptree, poplar, witchhazel, yellowwood, and Zelkova.

Fortunately, as with most soft scales, calico scale is seldom a direct killer of established landscape trees. But heavily infested trees may suffer branch dieback and the accumulated stress caused by substantial sap loss coupled with other stress-inducing conditions may kill trees. So, the best first step in scale management is to resolve other issues that may affect overall tree health. I've frequently observed large, heavily infested honeylocusts that are planted in good sites showing no obvious symptoms. Just don't park your car beneath them.

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Green "Ramping Up" All Over NE Ohio Forests

Authors

Erik Draper

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As I was out walking and checking our phenology sequence here in Northeast Ohio, I couldn't avoid noting massive patches of green scattered across the forest floor. The more closely I looked, the more I noticed it was EVERYWHERE in the woods. Well, I couldn't let an opportunity for some plant investigation go untouched, so I tramped off the beaten path... proclaiming social distancing rights! I was astounded to discover that as far as the eye could see, it was *Allium tricoccum* (AT) or more commonly called "ramps" by foraging aficionados.



Ramps are greening up



Ramps as far as the eye can see... they're EVERYWHERE!

AT is a bulb-forming perennial, which can be easily identified by the two broad, flat leaves being produced from each bulb. These two elongate, oval leaves are a lighter mossy-green and 1-2.5 inches wide and 5-10 inches long and often have a deep purple or burgundy tints on the lower stems arising out of the soil. Both the white lower leaf stalks and bulb and the broad green leaves are edible much like a scallion or green onion.



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Close up of ramps burgundy tints on stem



Appearance of the entire ramp plant

Ramps, also known as spring onion, ramson, wild leek, wood leek, and wild garlic, are closely related to onion, garlic, shallot, scallion, chive and Chinese onion! All of the aforementioned monocots belong in the Amaryllidaceae family and all belong to the genus *Allium*. Ramps are native to North America and most commonly are found in clusters growing in moist deciduous forests. They are one of the earliest plants to emerge and show green in Spring. Ramps can be found scattered from the Appalachian Mountains, north into Canada, as far west as into Missouri and then north into Minnesota and finally, as far south as Tennessee and North Carolina.



Cluster of ramps in the woods

If you dig one up, you'll get a whiff of both onion and garlic; ironically, the flavor of ramps is described as a combination of onion and garlic, with the garlic flavor being particularly conspicuous. Evidently, the flavor and smell are pungent enough that even die-hard ramp lovers will advise caution when using them in food preparation—so that they don't overwhelm all other flavors. The green tops of ramps are described as being milder in flavor and are often used along with a portion of the stronger-tasting bulbs in an attempt to reduce the flavor intensity. It's that same pungent smell and flavor that has earned them the nickname of "little stinkers." Boy, that's something ponder over next time you want to try a bowl of the Potato and little stinkers soup!



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Cluster of ramps in the woods

Other Articles

The Sassafras Tree Is an Interesting Native Species

MEGHAN SHINN

APR 21, 2020

- Source: <https://www.hortmag.com/plants/sassafras-tree>

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Sassafras leaves can be three lobed, oval or shaped like a mitten.

Virtues: Sassafras is an easy-going North American tree with pretty spring flowers and large, interesting leaves that turn beautiful colors in the fall. It can be kept as a single small- to medium-size tree or allowed to spread (by suckers) and mature into a shrubby colony. Controlling its spread is easy, however. Sassafras is a larval host for several swallowtail butterfly species and the female tree can produce berries that feed birds.

Common name: Sassafras

Botanical name: *Sassafras albidum*

Exposure: Full sun to part shade

Flowers: Male and female flowers occur on separate trees. Rounded clusters of small, greenish-white flowers occur at the tips of the branches in mid-spring, before the tree has leafed out.



Flowers occur in mid-spring.

Foliage: The deciduous leaves can appear in three shapes, sometimes all on the same tree. They may be ovate; shaped like a mitten; or cut into three wide lobes. The summer color is medium green, and in fall the leaves take on beautiful shades of red, orange and purple.

Habit: Sassafras can grow 30 to 60 feet tall, with a canopy 25 to 40 feet wide. It can be a single-trunked specimen tree with a little maintenance, or it can become a

multistemmed tree or colony of shrubby individuals (all connected to the same roots) if allowed to sucker.

Origin: *Sassafras albidum* grows in open woods and along roadsides from New England west to the Great Lakes and south to Florida and eastern Texas.



Sassafras is a small to medium tree with brilliant fall foliage.

How to grow it: Sassafras develops a large taproot that resents disturbance, so choose its position carefully and avoid attempting to transplant it in future seasons. Site sassafras in full sun to part shade and well-drained soil. Although it prefers an acidic loam with consistent moisture, it will adapt to drier conditions and sandy soil. If you wish to keep sassafras as a single specimen tree, remove any root suckers as they pop up. Alternatively, plant your sassafras where it can spread and it will create a shrubby thicket. This tendency to sucker makes it a good candidate for a screen or casual hedge in a large space, or a transitional plant between the garden and a natural area. USDA Zones 4–9.

As a native plant that feeds butterfly larvae, sassafras makes a good addition the wildlife-friendly garden in certain areas of the country. For more help in designing a wildlife garden wherever you grow, I recommend [*Attracting Birds, Butterflies and Other Backyard Wildlife*](#) by David Mizejewski of the National Wildlife Federation.

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