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GARDENING

in Orange County

WITH THE MASTER GARDENER VOLUNTEERS

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July 2017

July Celebrations

By Joe Gregoire - Warwick Master Gardener

July is a month ripe for celebrations big and small, starting with the unofficial kick-off of the summer vacation season that the long 4th of July weekend brings. We celebrate our Nation's independence while we celebrate our own independence from work and enjoy time with our family and friends outside, far from the cold and discomfort of winter. We celebrate long days that give us the time to complete the outdoor projects we only dreamt about earlier in the year. With the added time the extra daylight brings, the rush to get done before dark is replaced by a more leisurely pace, as endurance, not speed, takes priority. Hot days come, but are replaced by cool days with brilliant blue skies, as the real heat of summer is still a month away. We celebrate that first ripe tomato fresh from the garden and are faced with the hard decision to deliver it to the kitchen to share or enjoy instant gratification and pop it into our mouth right there in the garden, sweet and warm from the summer sun. Finding ways to fill our days, keep the kids occupied, and entertain visiting house guests replaces the routines of the indoor months. We turn off the TV, put away the square screens, or force this by driving out into the wilderness for some camping outside of cell service range.

This issue of Gardening in Orange County is full of articles to help you fill your July with good things. We have ideas on spending time out and about in the area viewing beautiful gardens or visiting a little known museum on a sunny day.

Grilling from the Garden

By Mary Strong - New Windsor Master Gardener

Grilling a vegetable? Natural sugars caramelize, essential oils in herbs become more aromatic and colors become more vivid. Grilling vegetables is both flavorful and healthy.

Tomatoes should be firm. Under 6" is good for squash and zucchini. Asparagus, mushrooms, potatoes, peppers, eggplant, onion, green beans, corn and, even lettuces and cabbage can be grilled. Steam denser vegetables until barely tender before grilling. Grilling baskets help by not allowing vegetables to fall through the grates. Cut lettuces and cabbage into quarters, leaving the core.

Vinaigrettes, marinades and flavored butters add more flavor to your vegetables. Prep ahead of time to allow the flavors to

Ideas on beautiful plants to add to your garden and tips on keeping a common pest under control without pesticides. A great summer reading opportunity to enjoy while lazing away a day in a shady hammock and sipping a cool drink. Recipes for turning an easy growing perennial into that cool drink and ways to turn the bounty from your garden into a healthy meal while enjoying the outdoors. And while July is really about spending time outside, this issue can help you connect with nature and appreciate the hidden beauty and relentless power of the natural world.

July has been a special month for the civilized world since there was a civilized world. The fact that July gets its name from none other than Julius Caesar must mean the ancient Romans thought this time of year to be pretty special too. So, whether your plans for this July include travel to a vacation spot far away, a long weekend in the woods sleeping under the stars, or just a 31 day stretch of long afternoons in your own back yard, make sure you get outside and enjoy it. August is right around the corner and bound to be hot, so get acclimated to the heat on those occasional hot July days, knowing that there are cool days to enjoy in July as well. None of which you'll experience from inside your climate controlled house. Get outside...a celebration of nature awaits!



develop. No time? Purchase store bought marinades and salad dressings. Use them to marinate or baste the vegetables while grilling.

Make sure your charcoal or gas grill is clean and in good working order. Use hardwood charcoal. It is natural and does not contain petroleum (briquettes do). Heat your grill to moderately hot, allowing the grates to heat up.

Whatever vegetable, marinade, butter, oil or grill you use, the results will be both flavorful and nutritious. Enjoy!

Continued on page 6

Uses for Mint around the House

By Madelene Knaggs - New Windsor Master Gardener

We all have it, copious amounts of mint growing in our gardens, taking over entire beds. However, this easy-to-grow herb is very useful as an addition to meals and teas. In addition, it has soothing and anesthetic properties that make it great for homemade body-care products.

Mint can actually be too easy to grow, so give this attractive ground cover plenty of room to spread, or plant it in a container. Growing mint will keep your yard and garden buzzing with beneficial insects. Mint is rich in nectar and pollen, and its small flower clusters keep these sweet treats easily accessible for honeybees. While it attracts "good bugs," mint also deters "bad bugs." Some say you can repel ants and flies by growing pennyroyal mint right outside your door, or spray diluted peppermint essential oil (10 parts water to one part oil) around doorways and windows. Mint can be used as a room refresher: make your home smell fresh by adding a few drops of mint essential oil to your favorite homemade or unscented store-bought cleaner. Use mint as a scented sachet. Tie a few branches of strongly scented mint (peppermint, sage, lavender, rosemary or bee-balm) together. Suspend by a string inside a garment bag, tuck into bags of stored woolen clothing, or just

place in your drawers to let your clothes soak up the scent. Refresh periodically to keep the scent fresh.

Mint lends a refreshing quality to beverages and foods. Add sprigs of fresh mint to a pitcher of water or plain iced tea and serve it over ice for an invigorating drink. If you enjoy cocktails, mix fresh mint into homemade juleps or mojitos. Enjoy an interesting twist on a vegetable medley by adding fresh or dried chopped mint to peas, green beans, carrots or cauliflower during their last two minutes of cooking.

Mint contains aromatic oils that will enhance homemade personal care products. For a hair rinse, add one part strong mint (especially rosemary) tea to one part cider vinegar for a conditioning rinse you can either leave in or rinse out. The vinegary smell dissipates after drying. To make a facial astringent, add a few finely minced leaves of fresh peppermint or other mint to a cup of witch hazel. Store in a glass jar for a week or more, shaking occasionally. Strain the herbs from the mixture after a week. Mint, and other herbs from the lamiaceae family, makes a cleansing mouthwash by chopping a quarter cup of fresh mint, bee-balm, lemon balm, basil, thyme, or oregano leaves and infuse in a quart of boiling water. When cool, strain the herbs and store in the refrigerator. For a simple, all natural breath freshener just chew on a few mint leaves.

How To: Harvesting, Drying, and Storing Mint for Tea

All varieties of mint (*menthe*) can be steeped into a lovely tasty tea.

Once the plant is at least 6 inches tall, you can cut the top third to half of the stalk. Mint should be cut for tea before it flowers. Herbalists suggest harvesting on a sunny day after the dew has evaporated off the plants, but before the full heat of the day has filled the garden. Just before noon the volatile oils have had a chance to reach the leaves, but have not yet been drawn off by the day's heat.

If the plant is clean, you can forgo washing and go right to drying. If you must clean the leaves, do so gently by just dipping and swishing the stalks in a bowl or pot of water, not by heavy spraying which removes some of the oils. Place the stalks on a towel to dry before continuing the full drying process.

There are a number of ways to dry mint. The slowest, most natural, least expensive method is to air dry the stalks. Bundle them loosely and hang them top down in a shady well-ventilated place. When the leaves are crumbly, usually after a



few weeks, the mint is ready. Hold each stalk over a bowl, and run a clean hand along the stalk to drop the leaves into the bowl.

You can also dry mint in a dehydrator, an oven, or even a microwave. For each of these methods, using a scissors, remove the leaves from the stalk and lay them in a single layer.

For a dehydrator, use the lowest setting and timing. For an oven, pre-heat to 140 degrees, hold that temperature for 5 minutes, then shut the oven off. Place the non-metal tray or parchment lined metal tray with the mint leaves into the warm oven. Check after 15 minutes. If drying in a microwave, lay the mint leaves on a double layer of paper towel. Start slowly, 30 seconds at full power, then 10 to 20 second bursts as needed.

When dry, the mint leaves will curl, but should remain green. If they crumble, they're done; if they are pliant, they're not. Store dried leaves in an airtight jar in a dark place. Mark the date and variety. Do not crumble until ready to use.

Gardening in Orange County is a community service effort of the Master Gardener Volunteers of Orange County to provide practical and up-to-date, unbiased information for gardeners. Ten issues per year are published for an annual fee of \$20.00. Call 845-344-1234 for more info.

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A Hopyard Grows in Westtown

By Joe Gregoire - Warwick Master Gardener

In June 2015, my wife and I purchased some farmland in Westtown with the intent of slowly developing the land into a viable farm enterprise. Now, as I'm not a farmer, did not grow up around farms, and have a full-time career not at all related to farming, you might say the learning curve would be very steep. And you'd be right. We essentially had a piece of land and not much else, aside from a passion for growing and a love for craft beer. But our focus on hops was clear from the start. Fast forward 2-years and our dream is slowly coming true, with a lot of valuable learning gained along the way. Here are some of the valuable lessons we've learned that I'd like to share with you.

1. **Learn from others.** YouTube and Google are great resources for information. But personal interaction with those in the business is the key to quickest learning. The Northeast Hop Alliance (NEHA) is an organization founded through a joint partnership of Cornell University and the University of Vermont dedicated toward supporting the return of the hop growing industry in the North East. As New York was once the largest hop producing state in the nation in the late 1800's, there's a long history of hop growing in the region. But the combination of pest pressures and prohibition in the early 20th century ended that tradition in New York. Following prohibition, the hop industry regained strength, but in the drier growing conditions that the Pacific Northwest offers. Founded in the year 2000, NEHA has shepherded a small resurgence of hop growing in New York State and the surrounding Northeast, with nearly 1000 acres now in hop production, from a base of zero less than 15 years ago. This organization provides an annual conference every December, bringing growers and brewers together for a day of learning and networking. Through this network, we've gained much needed support and guidance that has shaped our practices and focused our efforts.

2. **Good neighbors are priceless!** On countless occasions I've been blessed with the kindness of my neighbors, who've undoubtedly been watching and wondering what we're building in the middle of a 4 acre pasture. A hopyard is like a 20 foot tall vineyard. Our hopyard covers just over an acre and a half and resembles a field of 80 telephone poles sprouting from a patch of weeds. We have no infrastructure on the farm beyond the trellis and own very little equipment. Rentals are how we get by and, from time to time, we face the difficulties of weather with which all farmers contend. Having kind neighbors to help pull your rental equipment out of the mud so you can return it on time or jumpstarting your stalled pickup that's blocking the road are just a few of the occasions I've come to be very thankful for my neighbors, and I hope I can return the favor to them in the future.

3. **Nature is a powerful force.** I'm not talking about the tornados and hurricanes power of nature, I'm referring to



the smallest, invisible power that happens all around. We're all familiar with weeding. This is a great example. Creating a perfect weed free area for your cherished plants to grow takes effort, but bare soil is not natural and nature will automatically fill the void. At a microscopic level, the soil is teeming with life, completely invisible to us but essential to the health of our plants. These microbes, bacteria and fungi all depend on the exudates, or extra sugars, secreted from growing plant roots for sustenance. Bare soil reduces this food source and exposes the soil to erosion and loss of organic matter which is home for these microbes. So keeping the soil covered at a

minimum helps to protect the soil, just as the forest floor is covered by autumn leaves. Bare soil should therefore not be an option in the garden or on a farm, but on a farm scale, mulching can be impractical. Working with nature is therefore easier than working against and cover crops have become a tool I continue to experiment with and learn about. While they may look like weeds, these selected plants grow at the base of the hop plants and compliment rather than compete. Nitrogen fixing clover is low growing and dense, so bare soil is covered and more competitive weed seeds are suppressed. Daikon radish are fast growing and their tap root penetrates deep into the subsoil, breaking up hardpan, improving drainage and aeration, and pulling up nutrients from



deep underground. I think of them as nutrient storage tanks as they swell on the soil surface, are frost killed and decompose over the winter, releasing their stored nutrient back into the root zone of the hop plants. With little more than scattering seed in the spring, these cover crops perform their natural abilities with little need of me and the result is healthier soil and healthier plants. In the 2 years we've been working this soil, a noticeable transformation has occurred. From tough clay soil that is slippery mud until June and hard as pottery until November, to loose, friable, loamy black soil that continues to improve each year. Helping nature do what nature does best has proven to be the most valuable learning.

Mites and Mice

By Riki Lent - New Windsor Master Gardener

With July's arrival, I am hoping for some sunny skies, enjoying a cup of tea in the garden and lots of flowing honey at the beehives sitting down the hill behind the raspberry bushes. As a second year beekeeper, I learn so many exciting things each time I enter a hive or just sit and observe the behavior of the honeybee.

On these hot and humid summer evenings, you will see large clusters of bees on the outside of the hives. Many believe this is an indication of a hive getting ready to swarm; however, what it really tells us is that the bees are bearding. It is very common and bearding is the bee's way of hanging out on the front porch with their buddies on a hot summer night. It is also an indicator that you may need to provide some more ventilation in the hive so make sure there is good airflow through the bottom screened board or prop the cover up with a small piece of wood to provide additional ventilation.



There is nothing better than a jar of local honey sitting in the cupboard to use in almost every dish or beverage that is made. The health benefits are many. I feel a great privilege to be learning the ins and outs of beekeeping, with the ability to bring this all natural product to my family and friends' tables. It is a true blessing.

Now that we are in the honey flow period and are getting ready to harvest honey, we grow concerned with the Varroa mite counts as they cannot be treated while the honey supers are on the hives. Varroa mites (*Varroa destructor*) are the biggest threat to honeybee colonies worldwide; they are small, reddish-brown tick like pests which feed on the blood of the honey bees. They will create cuts on the bees that can become infected as well as transmit viruses. Varroa mites are currently the greatest threat to beekeepers and their colonies. An infested colony will perish if action is not taken to control mite levels. This presents a significant threat to a beekeeper's income as well as the satisfaction levels of the backyard beekeeper such as myself.

The mites can harm the bees indirectly as well. In addition to the effects a mite has that feed on growing adult bees, the mites can also carry several viruses that will inevitably kill bees. These infections happen when the mites compromise the bees' immune systems and cause a condition known as Parasitic Mite Syndrome (PMS) which can kill colonies within months of an infestation.



Many colonies that will die from a Varroa infestation will do so in the late summer or fall, that's why it is really important to measure the mite levels in the hives so we know how and when to treat them.

Below are some detection methods that are commonly used and each beekeeper has their own preference on which method works best for them:

Sugar Shake Method - This method estimates the percentage of adult bees with mites.

1. Use a clear 1-pint jar or other container with a lid made from 1/8-inch hardware cloth or similar mesh material. If you can't find a jar with a mesh lid, make a mesh lid for your container.
2. Brush or shake approximately 200 adult bees from a frame with emerging brood into the jar.
3. Close the mesh lid on the jar and add 2 to 3 tablespoons of 6x powdered sugar through the lid.
4. Set the jar aside for several minutes to allow the bees (and mites) to be covered in sugar.
5. Shake the sugar out of the jar onto clean, flat surface (preferably white). The bees, although covered in sugar, are not killed and can be returned to the hive. If 10 or more mites are found per 200 bees, then appropriate measures should be taken to control the mite population. A magnifying glass may be necessary to see the mites.



Sticky Board Method - This method estimates the total number of mites in the hive.

1. Purchase a commercial sticky board from a beekeeping supply company, which has a pre-applied adhesive and sampling grid drawn on the surface. Alternatively, you can construct your own sticky board by using a corrugated white sheet of paper or plastic.
2. Spray the upper surface of the paper or plastic with an aerosol cooking spray, or apply a thin layer of petroleum jelly to the upper surface to create a homemade sticky board.
3. Place the board or paper between two 8-mesh wire covers so that the bees do not adhere to the sticky surface.
4. Place the sticky board on the bottom floor of the hive. A portion of the mites will fall off the bees, fall through the mesh screen and stick to the white board.
5. Remove the board 24 hours later and count the total number of mites on it. If the number of mites is between 60 and 190, then appropriate control measures should be taken.



Drone Brood Inspection - Because of the variation in sampling, this method is not always a reliable indicator of mite levels in a hive. However, it can be used to verify the degree of an infestation.

1. Find any capped drone brood within the hive, which is typically located on the periphery of the brood nest.
2. Uncap the cells and gently remove the pupae.
3. Closely inspect the drone pupae for adult Varroa mites. If 10 percent or more of the drones are infested, then you should take appropriate measures to reduce the mite population.



The number of mites counted that would be considered a concern per the number of bees that you are monitoring will be different among beekeepers, we all have our own opinions, and however, the numbers above are more of a guideline to get you through the process.

I generally use the sticky board method as it is the least invasive and quickest way for me to monitor for the Varroa mite. If I detect a large number of mites, I will treat the hive after the honey flow and the supers are removed. Usual treatment times are in the fall and early spring.

In addition to the mite problems, I also have to watch out for mice. I have found mice in the hives as early as late July

preparing for a long winter and making themselves at home in a comfy environment where they can eat for free. This may or may not work to their advantage and in most cases a mouse can co-exist with the bees for a long period of time.

The mouse can and will eat all the winter stores that the bees depend on to keep them alive through most of the winter. The colony can starve to death and die if the mouse is not found and removed. It is not always an ideal situation to remove a mouse during the cold and the risk of hurting the bees is always of concern. Many beekeepers, including myself will feed the bees until it is safe to take the hive apart and remove the pest and others would remove it straight away. We all do things a little differently.

The mouse may also succumb to the bees stinging it to death. If the bees are inclined to defend the hive in such a manner they will and then they will sort of cocoon or encapsulate the mouse in propolis (bee glue) to keep it separated from the hive. Either way, a beehive is not a place where a mouse is welcomed to take up residency.

The easiest way to deter the mice is to staple 1/2-inch hardware cloth across the entrance to the hive so the bees can easily enter and exit but the mice cannot. The mice will get in if they really want to by chewing holes through the wood. I have seen hives that are wrapped in chicken wire or hardware cloth but I have not had to take these actions yet.

So while we are moving through the dog days of summer, a beekeeper is watching and working the hives vigilantly for disease, those who wish to rob the stores and that ever sweet honey flow that is being harvested and brought to tables around the world.



A Hidden Treasure in Orange County

By Riki Lent - New Windsor Master Gardener

It all started with a big dream, one barn, a small workshop, a small visitor center and a chicken coop. The Orange County Farmers Museum now boasts a memorial barn, working blacksmith shop, enlarged workshop, working sawmill, a run in shed, barnyard, an education center with heated restroom facilities and an improved concession stand to accommodate visitors to events and weekend workshops.

The Farmers Museum is a non-profit organization that relies solely on volunteer labor, member donations, special events and educational programs that are held on both its grounds and around communities in Orange County and beyond. The museum operates in the public trust as a museum of service and interpretation. It connects objects and ideas relevant to the farming history of Orange County and its members believe that the collection of farming implements, tools, household items and literature housed on site has the power to educate, inspire and transform individuals of all ages and the local community that it serves.

Orange County Gardens to Visit

By Lily Norton - Newburgh Master Gardener

SUNY Orange, 115 South Street, Middletown

Park in the lot directly across the street from Morrison Hall. There are 4 interesting educational gardens on the campus: Xeriscape Garden, Native Garden, Wetland Garden and Rain Garden. The main emphasis on all these gardens is Sustainability. At each garden, there is an information board with detailed descriptions of the garden, including the benefits of that particular garden as well as information on some of the plants included in the garden. Plants are well marked and each garden is well maintained and beautiful. Don't worry about trying to locate the gardens. Enjoy a stroll around the campus and you will find these four delightful treasures.

Grilling from the Garden

(Continued from page 1)

Whatever vegetable, marinade, butter, oil or grill you use, the results will be both flavorful and nutritious. Enjoy!

Grilled Vegetable Gazpacho

4 large garlic cloves, unpeeled
2 large red peppers, whole
2 large yellow peppers, whole
2 medium zucchini, halved lengthwise
1 large white onion, peeled, cut thick
2 ears corn, husked
2 tbsp. vegetable oil

Salt and pepper
1½ tsp. ground cumin
½ tsp. crushed red pepper
2 cups tomato juice
½ cup orange juice
3 tbsp. lemon juice
2 tbsp. red wine vinegar
¼ cup chopped cilantro
1 English cucumber, chopped

Skewer garlic. Brush garlic and vegetables with the vegetable oil and season with salt and pepper. Grill over



moderately high heat, turning frequently until lightly charred and crisp tender. Transfer the peppers to a bowl and cover with plastic wrap. Steam for 10 minutes. Remove garlic from skewers, peel, transfer to a large bowl. Cut kernels from corn and add to bowl. Peel the peppers, remove seeds and stem. Add to bowl along with everything else except cilantro and cucumber. Process small batches to puree. Season with salt and pepper. Cover, refrigerate 2 hours. Add cilantro, garnish with cucumber before serving.

The museum is located within the Brick House Museum Park at 850 State Route 17K in Montgomery and is open every weekend between May 15th – October 1st from 10am thru 4pm. Most events and programs are free to the public, however kind donations are always appreciated. You can find a list of events and programs as well as learn more about the museum and their volunteer opportunities by visiting their website at ocfarmersmuseum.org or just stopping by and saying hello.



Orange County Arboretum, 211 State Route 416, Montgomery

The gate is motion activated so drive up slowly and it will open. This 35-acre facility is a natural site for the organized display of trees, shrubs and plants. Also, there are magnificent raised gardens and cascading water features. Pathways connect the gardens and numerous benches make it an ideal spot to take a walk or just sit and enjoy the beauty and tranquility of the setting. There is also the Remembrance Walkway and Garden honoring the victims of the September 11th attack on America. A large stunning, rotating granite sculpture of the earth surrounded by bronze plaques with the names of the 44 Orange County residents who perished that day is the focal point of the Remembrance Garden. The Arboretum also hosts a wonderful holiday light display in December.

Community Gardens, various locations in the county

Community gardening is a wonderful experience. A visit might entice you! Rent a bed and grow your own vegetables, free of pesticides. You'll be eating healthier because you know how you grew it. It will be fresh from the garden. Save money. Get more exercise. Meet new people. For a community garden near you, contact Cornell Cooperative Extension, (845)343-0664, M-W-F, 9:30 am-12:30 pm.

Remember that whatever and wherever you visit public gardens, they are very different at various times. Go often and enjoy!



LAB GIRL: BY HOPE JAHREN

Reviewed by Brooke Moore - New Windsor Master Gardener

As a child, I spent countless hours wandering in the forest behind our house, exploring the trees, the small woodland plants, the moss, the detritus that built up on the forest floor and mostly imagining that the trees could talk to each other. Towering over me they seemed like mythic creatures, powerful but vulnerable.

Now through the incredible book, *Lab Girl* by Hope Jahren, I know that indeed trees can communicate with each other and so many other plants. Jahren, brings us inside the mind and life of an academic plant scientist. She explains in clear language and examples how the world of a plant biologist works.



APHIDS

Bruce S. Rennie - Fort Montgomery Master Gardener

Aphids are a common problem to many gardeners. They are a small insect, less than 1/8th of an inch, but they can do a lot of damage that can result in the eventual death of a plant. Aphids suck the sap and chlorophyll from a plant's stem or leaves. The plant can become wilted, yellowish or the leaves can curl with an infestation of aphids. Aphids excrete a substance referred to as "honeydew." This substance can promote the growth of an unwanted black mildew. More importantly, ants eat this honeydew and actually help increase the aphid population by "farming" the aphids.

When you are casually walking around your garden and notice aphids, the first maneuver is to crush them by hand. This may release a chemical, a pheromone, that will deter more aphids from landing on the plant. Some aphids have wings some do not.



HARDY HIBISCUS

By Jim Scharfenberger - Warwick Master Gardener

With dinner-plate size blooms of darkest red, pink swirl, and glowing white with ruby red eyes, hardy hibiscus, *Hibiscus moscheutos*, will appeal to the not so shy gardener who wants to make a bold statement in the border or in large containers on the patio. Not to be confused with the exquisite but frost sensitive tropical hibiscus (*H. rosa-sinensis*), hardy hibiscus are reliably hardy into zone 5. The enormous flowers attract butterflies and hummingbirds and (yes) the plants are deer resistant. Hybrids like 'Disco Belle' and 'Luna' offer all of this midsummer to fall excitement on attractive medium green heart shaped foliage in a compact 2-3' package.

Hardy hibiscus are easy care sun loving perennials with few special requirements beyond sufficient water and a well-drained



Her writing is lyrical, compelling and totally understandable. You need not know one scientific term going in but coming out you will have a wealth of knowledge about plants, how they live, how they die, how they thrive and prosper and how much we still need to know. You will also experience the challenges of a life devoted to plant science.

It is a rare book that brings alive the interior workings of characters but Jahren in her part memoir, part ode to plants does so brilliantly. This is a perfect summer book to read out in the garden surrounded by plants. You will have a newfound respect for the natural world and how it works.

The next step is to use the hose. If you catch the problem early, use enough power in the spray to knock off the aphids but not damage the plants.

A hand held spray bottle is the next weapon in your arsenal. A little dish soap, a teaspoon or two or insecticidal soap can be put in a sprayer to coat the aphids. Dormant oil and can be sprayed in the fall to prevent overwintering eggs. If you want to use something stronger buy a bottle of pyrethrins, a chemical made from chrysanthemums and spray.

Long term solutions include buying ladybugs (which eat aphids), and releasing them, or planning for next year by planting fennel, coriander, dill, nasturtiums and chives. All of which seem to repel and help control those nasty aphids.

soil rich in organic matter. Once danger of frost has passed, prepare a hole at least double the size of the pot and plant with the crown at or just above the soil line. Full sun and a phosphorous-rich spring feed assure strong growth and abundant blossoms.

Few pests bother hardy hibiscus. Keep an eye out for hibiscus sawfly (*Atomacera decepta*) whose dark-headed yellowish-green larvae congregate on the leaf underside and will skeletonize the foliage if given the chance.

Venture outside your gardening comfort zone. Try hardy hibiscus.

Gardeners on the Web

By Riki Lent - New Windsor Master Gardener



Among the most important pollinators in both natural and managed systems are the 5000+ species of bees in the family *Apidae*. This is a group that includes honey bees and bumble bees. Concern about pollinator declines has increased over the years and we are aware that we need to provide more pollinator friendly landscapes. I have found some great info on pollinator gardens in an unlikely place, The Hartford Insurance Company's Extra Mile website.

The link below will bring you to a bee friendly garden how to article with links as well as access to other gardening posts:

<https://extramile.thehartford.com/home/bee-friendly-garden>

GARDENER'S CHECKLIST

Gardener's Checklist

- Relax, you only get one summer in 2017.
- If you don't get it done this year, there is always next year.
- Go to a farmers market and buy fresh food to make your favorite summer meal.
- Go to your own vegetable garden, if you have one, see what you have and find a new recipe for the things you have grown.
- Turn your compost.
- Keep your hummingbird feeders clean. Fill them weekly and keep them in the shade. This will make your hummingbirds happy.
- Keep an eye on the rainfall, last year was very dry. Water in the morning and try to maintain at least an inch a week of water in your gardens.

- Check house plants, flowers, shrubs, trees and vegetables for health and disease.
- Deadhead any old flowers past their prime.
- Cut back chrysanthemums once before the fall.
- Relax one night, turn on outdoor lights or floods and watch all the cool flying insects that are attracted to the light. You might even see a bat.
- Protect bats.

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WHAT'S HAPPENING

Thurs., July 6

Composting • 6:30 – 7:30 PM at Moffat Library. Call 845-496-5483.

Tues., July 11

Homemade Fruit Shrubs • 6:00 – 9:00 PM at Cornell Cooperative Extension, Middletown, NY.
Cost is \$15 per person. Call 845-344-1234 or email jd863@cornell.edu to register.

Thurs., July 13

Pruning • 6:30 – 7:30 PM at Moffat Library. Call 845-496-5483.

Thurs., July 13

Essential Oils • 6:30 – 7:30 PM at Josephine-Louise Library, Walden. Call 845-778-7621.

Thurs., July 20

Attracting Birds to the Garden • 6:30 – 7:30 PM at Moffat Library. Call 845-496-5483.

Thurs., July 20

Ground Covers • 6:30 – 7:30 PM at Goshen Library. Call 845-294-6606.

Thurs., Aug. 17

Plant Propagation • 6:30 – 7:30 PM at Goshen Library. Call 845-294-6606.

Fri. Aug. 18

Growing Garlic • 2:00 – 3:00 PM at Pine Bush Library. Call 845-744-3375.

Sat., Aug. 19

Making Peach Bellini Freezer Jam • 9:00 AM – 1:00 PM at Cornell Cooperative Extension, Middletown, N.Y.
Cost is \$27 per person. Call 845-344-1234 or email jd863@cornell.edu to register.

GARDEN HELPLINE

CALL OR EMAIL US WITH YOUR GARDENING QUESTIONS

E-mail: mghelpline@cornell.edu Phone: 845-343-0664

April – November: Mon., Wed., Fri., 9:30 AM - 12:30 PM. All other times, please leave a message.