



# Dutchess Dirt

A gardening newsletter from  
**Cornell Cooperative Extension**  
**Dutchess County**

Issue #190, April 2023

## TREES AND THEIR LEAVES IN APRIL

By Joyce Tomaselli, CCEDC Community Horticulture Resource Educator

Spring is springing! Peepers are peeping. Songbirds are singing. Blubs are blooming. And some trees still have their leaves from last fall. Wait a minute. Why?

Most trees in autumn shed their leaves through two processes. First is [senescence](#) - an ordered series of events which allow trees to conserve resources, prepare for a dormant period, and shed inefficient tissues. Shorter days and cooler temperatures cause leaves to stop their food making process. Nutrients such as phosphorus and nitrogen are withdrawn from the leaves and stored in the tree's wood. Less sun results in less chlorophyll production. As the green fades other colors dominate and we enjoy a few weeks of blazing beauty. Then [abscission](#) occurs – the process by which a plant drops one or more of its parts. The place where a leaf's petiole is connected to the tree is called the abscission zone. It is a built-in weak point which allows the leaves to safely fall off. The reduced chlorophyll production causes the abscission zone layer to harden. The leaf falls off and that protective layer seals the wound, preventing water from evaporating and pests or diseases from getting in.

A few trees don't shed their leaves in autumn. There is a process called [marcescence](#) - the withering and persistence of plant organs that normally are shed. Oak and beech trees, especially younger ones, often retain their leaves until spring. Specifically, the abscission zone is not activated in autumn. It's not clear why. The most common hypothesis is that the dead leaves provide protection to the buds from deer browsing in the winter. When the buds grow in spring the leaves are pushed off.

But what about the other patches of trees that still have their leaves now? These trees are often young and growing on slopes



or rocky areas. Many are maples, or a mix of genera. The leaves of those trees likely were killed by drought and heat.

Most deciduous trees will drop leaves when they undergo drought stress in summer. They adapt by shedding the part that loses water. They pull back the nutrients they can into their trunks/stems and roots. We see the leaves turn yellow then fall. The buds for next year have already been created. It weakens the plant but usually does not kill it.

But sometimes more damage occurs. There is a condition called **cavitation** which occurs when air bubbles form in the xylem (the tubes that transport water from the roots to the crown). The bubbles prevent the water from being moved upward, which can cause the tree (or parts of it) to die. The patches of trees still have their leaves because the branches died mid-summer.

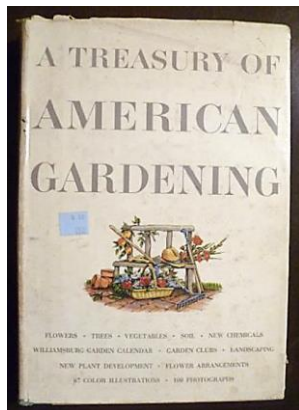
The best thing to do with trees that still have their leaves now is to wait and watch for the buds to grow new leaves. Dead branches or trees will become (sadly) obvious.



### **THE MASTER GARDENER BOOKSHELF**

## **A TREASURY OF AMERICAN GARDENING SEEDS OF PEACE**

**A Review by Nancy Swanson, Master Gardener Volunteer**



Not so suddenly it's now April. Our time for indoor work is waning, One of my indoor projects is sorting through books to decide which ones should go to the library's book sale. Where I got this particular book I have no idea. It was almost too boring looking to even peek into its 272 pages—*A Treasury of America Gardening* edited by John R. Whiting, copyright 1947, 1954, 1955. 68 years ago. Anything of interest? I'll take a quick look before putting it in the donation box. The last chapter, entitled "The Garden Club Story" by Helen S. Hall is not promising. However, the last two pages are headed "Seeds of Peace." What's that all about? It is only one and a half pages. I'll take a look.

"In the spring of 1948 when seeds were selling in Europe "by the seed," through contributions amounting to \$45,000 from garden club members, 17 ½ tons of vegetable seeds were sent to the needy people of those countries our government was offering to aid by the Marshall Plan....The Burpee Seed Company supplied the seeds at quantity prices and co-operated in packaging them in garden units of thirteen packages each, enough to supply food for a family of five. Messages on the envelopes containing the garden units carried greetings from the gardeners of America in the language of the country to which the seeds were sent. This was the message:

'The people of the United States have great concern for you, and our hearts and minds are seeking ways to help. We are growing food in our own gardens, and we are sending these seeds that you may have fresh vegetables. The names enclosed are those who have given

these garden units and they would like to hear from you. They would like to know who you are and how your garden grew. Do not bother to write in English, if you cannot readily do so, for we will gladly have your letter translated here, and we will treasure it as from a friend. May Peace grow with these seeds and bring us all food and friendship.'

More than 3000 letters received from grateful families in Belgium, Holland, Luxembourg, France, Austria, Greece, and the American Zone in Germany remain as documentary evidence that 'Seeds of Peace' accomplished the intended mission. They supplied needed food and were accepted in the spirit in which they were given."

How warm and wonderfully personal were the envelope messages. Could we do the same thing again? The world is in a situation that could require such generosity. And hopefully soon. The chapter and book ends with an 'Old Spanish Proverb.' 'More grows in the garden than the gardener sows.'

## ANNUAL FLOWER VINES FOR YOUR GARDEN

By Linda DiGasper, Master Gardener Volunteer

Annual vines can be a great addition to any garden, as they can provide height to an otherwise flat landscape. All they need is a support to grow properly, and there are several different types of supports that can be used. Some popular options include trellises, arbors, fences, and arches.

My interest in annual flower vines started with a six-foot trellis placed near the front door of my home. Wanting the lovely smell of sweet peas, *Lathyrus odoratus*, I directly sowed seeds at the base of the trellis and waited patiently. With no sign of germination, I planted again and then again that season to no avail. By mid-June, I sought to purchase an annual vine and found slim pickings in large and small garden centers locally. I wasn't ready to commit to a perennial vine like many clematis that are ubiquitously sold.



*Lathyrus latifolius* perennial sweet pea

The next spring, I successfully grew sweet peas with some modest flowering, but they had no scent, and they didn't self-climb. What a disappointment! Much to my surprise, the sweet peas grew back the following year. That is when I learned there is a perennial sweet pea, *Lathyrus latifolius*, but it has no scent. The seed packet "conveniently" didn't include this little detail. This is when I delved into researching and trying out many types of annual vines.

### *Ipomea*

This is a very large genus that contains such varying types, some of which are very well known and some that may surprise you. Many are familiar with ornamental sweet potato vine, used as a lovely trailing foliage accent in flower containers. These are *Ipomea batatas*, which comes in chartreuse, near black, and tri color varieties. All three types will be sold at the Dutchess County Master Gardener Spring Plant Sale on May 19-20, 2023 (<https://ccedutchess.org/gardening/spring-plant-sale>)





*Ipomoea batatas* 'Tricolor'  
(Ornamental Sweet Potato Vine)



*Ipomoea batatas* 'FloraMia  
Limon Wedge' (Ornamental  
Sweet Potato Vine)



*Ipomoea batatas* Sweet  
Georgia® Black Maple  
(Ornamental Sweet Potato  
Vine)



*Ipomoea purpurea* is the more common morning glory whose named varieties come in splendid colors and patterns and can vary in height from 6-10 feet. Seeds should be scarified and soaked overnight to aid in germination due to the very hard seed coat. They prefer poor soil as too much fertilizer will result in less flowers and more foliage. A common reputation is that they can self-sow extensively, providing numerous "volunteer" plants the following year. Deadheading during the growing season can help avoid this and unwanted seedlings can be readily pulled out. But some gardeners may deem it as too aggressive to lend their time on. For me, I mulch and densely plant my garden beds and have found self-sowing is curbed significantly.

*Ipomoea purpurea* 'Heavenly Blue' morning glory

*Ipomoea quamoclit*, cypress vine, has fine feathery foliage and trumpet-shaped flowers in shades of red, pink, and white on 10-20 foot vines. It is also a favorite of hummingbirds and butterflies, making it a great addition to a pollinator garden. Looking very similar is cardinal climber, *Ipomoea x multifida*. They have the same growth habit with cardinal flower having slightly rounded flower edges and broader fern like foliage. I grew both and they vigorously wrapped themselves around my white arbor and attracted lots of hummingbirds!



*Ipomoea quamoclit* 'Funny Valentine Blend'  
cypress vine and *Ipomoea x multifida* cardinal  
climber



*Ipomoea alba*, moonflower

Last of the *Ipomoea* that I grew was *Ipomoea alba*, which is also known as moonflower. On 10-20 foot vines, it produced 5-6 inch, fragrant, white satiny flowers that opened at night. This vine supports night pollinators like fireflies and moths and is a must have in a moon garden.



*Thunbergia alata* 'African Sunset',  
black eyed susan vine

A shorter vine than the others at only 3-6 feet, I grew *Thunbergia alata*, which is black-eyed susan vine. This variety had peach and salmon and other varieties have yellow, orange, or white flowers. As pictured, MG volunteer Victoria Rolfe utilizes a clever way to make any object able to support a vine by adding netting. This is the only vine in this list that can perform well with part shade (2-6 hours sun).

I grew scarlet runner beans, *Phaseolus coccineus*, that had red-orange flowers in the summer into fall. I grew it for ornamental purposes, but it can be grown as food with edible pods. This 8-12 foot vine can also come in white and coral colors. Another edible that I grew as an ornamental was *Lablab purpureus*, purple hyacinth bean. This 10-15 foot vine produces purple flowers and striking glossy purple bean pods. (Note: The mature pods and dried seeds are toxic to eat.)

Last year, I grew *Cobaea scandens*, which is called cup and saucer vine. It has large, bell-shaped flowers in shades of purple, pink, and white on 10-20 foot vines. In my garden, blooms came late and only numbered three on one plant. In researching, cup and saucer vine will react to excessive fertilizer by growing more foliage and less flowers. Another case of relevant information missing on the seed packet!



*Cobaea scandens*, cup  
and saucer vine

Here are a few general considerations that I would like to share about annual vines. For the best success, seek information beyond the seed packet or label to really understand it's growth habits and requirements. Plan on giving them lots of sunshine, as most annual vines bloom best in full sun (6 or more hours). For those wanting to stick with native vines, all the vines mentioned here are not native to our region. There is little information on annual native vines suitable for the home gardening.

In conclusion, I hope that I inspired some to grow an annual flower vine. My experimenting continues this year and I am excited to give these a whirl!

- Canary climber, *Tropaeolum peregrinum*, 8 feet, feathery yellow flowers on lobed green leaves
- Snail vine, *Cochiliasanthus caracalla*, 10 feet, twisted, spiral-shaped flowers in shades of purple, white, and yellow
- Morning glory, *Ipomoea purpurea*, 'Blue Picotee', 5-6 feet, deep violet blue trimmed in white flowers



Photos courtesy of the author.



## LEARN IT, GROW IT, EAT IT! CCEDC MG VEGETABLE GARDENING CLASSES FOR BEGINNERS

Want to grow fresh, organic veggies right outside your kitchen door?  
Sign up for a series of three classes taught by Dutchess County Master Gardeners!

**Wednesdays, April 5, 12 & 19, 6-8 pm, Stanford Free Library, 6035 NY-82, Stanfordville, NY 12581.** Call (845) 868-1341 or email [stanfordlibrary@optonline.net](mailto:stanfordlibrary@optonline.net) to register

- Class 1      Getting started: Choosing locations...Preparing soil...Critter protection... Selecting and growing seeds and plants... Mulching, fertilizing, watering
- Class 2      First planting, cool season veggies: Peas, lettuces, spinach, carrots, radishes, onions, beets, chard, broccoli, kale
- Class 3      Veggies that need the heat: Tomatoes, peppers, beans, squash, cukes  
Garden Design: Set up for success!

You will receive seeds and plants at each class.

***Harvest your first salad in June,  
and still be eating fresh veggies  
from your garden in September!***



## DUTCHESS COUNTY EARTH DAY EVENT

April 29, 2023, 10:00 am - 2:00 pm  
Dutchess County Farm and Home Center, 2715 US-44, Millbrook, NY 12545

Join the Division of Solid Waste Management for this fun family event and learn about environmentally sustainable actions happening across Dutchess County and what you can do at home. See our [event program](#) for all participating organizations.

## Beatrix Farrand's Wild Garden Realization

The Beatrix Farrand Garden Association (BFGA) is excited to announce a new major project: Beatrix Farrand's Wild Garden Realization at Bellefield. Based on Farrand's designs of the original site, the BFGA and National Park Service are installing a "wild garden" featuring native plants which will connect the walled garden to the greater Hyde Park trails and FDR Historic Site property. Volunteers are needed for this effort! Please email [hort@bfgahydepark.org](mailto:hort@bfgahydepark.org) for more info.

## CCEDC 2023 Spring Plant Sale May 19 & 20

Save the date! The perennials are potted and growing beautifully. Herbs are started from seed. The annuals arrived this week and are all potted too. Vegetable seeds are started and will be potted as they get big enough. The greenhouse is filling up quickly. You can see the plants and a summary of their characteristics at our [Spring Plant Sale Preview](#). Lists of plants are also on our website at [CCEDutchess.org/gardening/spring-plant-sale](https://CCEDutchess.org/gardening/spring-plant-sale). You can use either or both to make a shopping list ahead of time or just shop when you arrive.

Our plant sale features a wonderful selection of healthy annuals both flowering and foliage, perennials, vegetables and herbs. The plants are grown by our Master Gardener volunteers. We offer personal service! Volunteers will be available during the plant sale to answer gardening questions, to help make plant selections and to help bring plants to cars if needed.

We depend on the continued success of the plant sale to continue our educational programming. Your support is needed and greatly appreciated!

### The Hoop House is full of perennials!



### The Greenhouse is filling up too!



## UPCOMING EVENTS

**Monday, April 3, 6:30 pm, Pleasant Valley Library**, 1584 Main St, Pleasant Valley, NY 12569. **“Basic Garden Design”** by CCEDC Master Gardener Philomena Kiernan. For more information go to [PleasantValleyLibrary.org](http://PleasantValleyLibrary.org).

**Saturday, April 8, 10 am Millbrook Library**, **“Let’s Go Native! An Introduction for Home Gardeners”** by CCEDC Master Gardener Volunteer Michelle Keeley. For more information and to register visit [MillbrookLibrary.org](http://MillbrookLibrary.org)

**Saturday, April 15, 11 am, LaGrange Library**, 1110 State Rte 55, Lagrangeville, NY 12540 **“What’s the Buzz. Creating Pollinator-Friendly Communities”** by CCEDC Community Horticulture Resource Educator Joyce Tomaselli. For more information and to register visit [LagLib.org](http://LagLib.org)

**Thursday, April 20, 6pm, Beekman Library**, 11 Town Center Blvd, Hopewell Junction, NY 12533, **“Contain Your Enthusiasm”** by CCEDC Master Gardener Volunteer Denise Grogan. For more information and to register, go to [BeekmanLibrary.org](http://BeekmanLibrary.org)

**Wednesday, April 26, 10 am, Rhinebeck Garden Club Monthly Meeting**, Starr Library, 68 West Market Street. **“What’s the Buzz. Creating Pollinator-Friendly Communities”** by CCEDC Community Horticulture Resource Educator Joyce Tomaselli. Refreshments Served. Visitors welcomed. Every year, the Rhinebeck Garden club puts together a series of meetings, field trips and events which are mostly open to the public. For further information, call 914-263-5298, or 845-309-3181. Or [Log into Facebook](#)

**Tuesday, May 2, 6:30 pm, Pleasant Valley Library**, 1584 Main St, Pleasant Valley, NY 12569. **“Home Composting and its Benefits”** by CCEDC Community Horticulture Resource Educator Joyce Tomaselli. For more information go to [PleasantValleyLibrary.org](http://PleasantValleyLibrary.org).

## SUBMIT UPCOMING EVENTS

Would you like information on an upcoming gardening event to be shared in this newsletter? Send an email to Francheska Kuilan at [fk232@cornell.edu](mailto:fk232@cornell.edu) or Joyce Tomaselli [jdt225@cornell.edu](mailto:jdt225@cornell.edu) by the 25<sup>th</sup> of each month to be included in the next month’s newsletter. Please include the date, time, location, a short description, cost and contact information for more details.

## MASTER GARDENERS SPEAKERS BUREAU

Master Gardener Volunteers offer lectures on a wide array of subjects for gardeners. Favorite topics include: Vegetable Gardening; Pollinator Gardens; Home **Composting**; Sustainable Gardening Best Practices; Gardening in Small Spaces; Deer Defense; Bulbs for All Seasons; Spotted Lanternfly; Jumping Worms, **Putting the Garden to Bed in Fall; and Nature in Winter**. Additional topics can be prepared to meet a particular group’s needs or interests. Most of these topics are available to be delivered in person or online.

The talks are 45 minutes in duration, followed by 10-15 minutes for questions from the group. A fee of \$75 per lecture (or 3 for \$200) helps support our numerous community projects. To arrange for a speaker, and details of offerings, contact Joyce Tomaselli at [jdt225@cornell.edu](mailto:jdt225@cornell.edu).



## MONTHLY ID QUIZ



Why does this Sugar Maple tree have dead leaves still on it in February? Drought in September killed the limbs and their leaves before they could naturally fall in Fall.



The parking lot at our office is covered with light fluffy material. Do you know what it is?

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

Our office is now open to the public, but staff are working from home some days. Please make pre-arrangements before bringing soil or diagnostic samples to the office. Please email Francheska Kuilan at [fk232@cornell.edu](mailto:fk232@cornell.edu) for forms and instructions.

### *Need Soil pH Testing? Need Lawn or Plant Diagnosis? Have any gardening questions?*

The **Horticulture Hotline**, (845) 677-5067 is open Wednesdays from 9 to noon from April to October. Diagnostics questions can be left for Joyce Tomaselli at 845-677-8223 ext. 134 or emailed to [jdt225@cornell.edu](mailto:jdt225@cornell.edu). Written questions can be submitted to our website at [www.CCEDutchess.org/gardening](http://www.CCEDutchess.org/gardening). Click on Contact Us and select the topic of Gardening. If a photograph is included, please ensure it is focused and as close up as possible.



Websites mentioned in Dutchess Dirt are provided as a courtesy to our readers. Mention of these websites does not imply endorsement by Cornell University, Cornell Cooperative Extension or by the author.

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