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Jennifer Schutter
University of Missouri Extension
Horticulture Specialist
660-665-9866
schutterjl@missouri.edu

If you need this newsletter in alternative format, please contact Jennifer Schutter at the Adair County Extension Center.

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WHAT’S ALL THE BUZZ ABOUT?

With the decline in the honeybee population, more and more people have taken an interest in beekeeping and restoring the populations. If you are interested in becoming a beekeeper and need to learn more, you can attend one of our workshops held throughout Missouri this winter. Check with your county extension center to see where the one nearest you is being held. In the Northeast Region, workshops will be held in Macon on February 7 and Kirksville on February 21. See the back page for details.

Did you know.......

- A honeybee has to travel over 55,000 miles and visits approx. 2 million flowers to make 1 pound of honey.
- A honeybee can fly approximately 15 miles per hour.
- Honeybees are the only insect that produce food for humans.
- Honey is the ONLY food that includes all the substances necessary to sustain life, including water.
- A typical beehive makes more than 400 pounds of honey per year.
- Approximately 7-8 pounds of honey are consumed by bees to produce 1 pound of beeswax.
- Honeybees are a great scientific mystery because they have remained unchanged for 20 million years even though the world has changed around them.
- Honeybees will usually travel approximately 3 miles from their hive.
- A single honeybee will only produce approximately 1/12 teaspoon of honey in her lifetime.
- A honeybee will flap its wings about 11,400 times per minute creating the "buzz" that you hear.
- Honeybees are the only bees that die after they sting.
- Honeybees are entirely herbivorous when they forage for nectar and pollen, but can cannibalize their own brood when stressed.
- Honey speeds the healing process and combats infections.
- Honey never spoils.
- It would take about 1 ounce of honey to fuel a honeybee's flight around the world.
- Honeybee colonies have unique odors that members flash like ID cards at the hive's front door, so the guard bees can recognize the entering bees.
- Honeybees are responsible for approximately 80% of all fruit, vegetable and seed crops in the U.S.

Source: Betterbee...Beekeepers Serving Beekeepers, http://www.betterbee.com/Fun-Facts
OVERWINTERING HOUSEPLANTS

By now over-wintering plants may not look so good. Your hibiscus may have dropped every leaf it has and may now be all stems. I over-winter a beautiful tropical hibiscus each year. Its blooms are gorgeous during the summer months, but during the winter it looks like it’s dying... but it’s not. Going from outside all season into a house is a big shock. The temperature and low humidity inside a house are not the ideal conditions for this type of plant. Remember, tropical hibiscus are just that... “tropical” in nature and it’s hard to duplicate those conditions inside your home. Typically in November the leaves get dark spots, turn yellow and drop off. By the end of January, there’s usually not a leaf left on it. If it’s your first year over-wintering a plant like this, do not be alarmed. I know my first year with my hibiscus I thought it was dying. I’ve realized by losing its leaves, it can have a rest period and build up energy for next season’s blooms. During this time, I do not fertilize it and only water it about once every 7-10 days. By the end of March or early April, leaf buds start forming on the stems. When the weather warms up and temperatures return to 75 degrees, I put my hibiscus back outside where it thrives all season.

Be sure to monitor all of your houseplants for insects. Wipe off insects with a cotton ball soaked in rubbing alcohol, then wipe clean with water. Remove dead leaves, and repot any plants too big for the pot they are in. For more information on caring for houseplants see MU guide 6510 “Caring For Houseplants”.

IN MEMORY OF ALIX CARPENTER

The Salt River Master Gardeners recently lost Alix Carpenter to cancer. She was our instructor, leader, mentor, and friend. In her memory, the members as well as her co-workers chipped in more than enough money to purchase a Memorial Tree through the Palmyra Parks and Recreation Department. In addition, there was enough money to pay for a butterfly house with her name on it in a special garden, and whatever is left will be used for special plantings. There is a leaf plaque which will be on display in the Sesquicentennial Building at the Marion County fairgrounds with special engravings. We wanted Alix to be visibly remembered by everyone for her hard work and true friendship. The group also started a special trust fund for her two sons. Alix will not be forgotten.

Written by: Randy DeGarmo, Salt River Master Gardener

More about Alix: Alix was an agronomy specialist for about 15 years at the Marion County Extension Center. Alix helped producers with production issues, conducted pesticide applicator training, helped homeowners with horticulture questions, and served as coordinator for the Salt River Master Gardeners, among many other things during her career. Alix was my friend and co-worker. We were all saddened to learn of Alix’s cancer and death shortly after her diagnosis. She was 44 years old and has two young sons.

2014 MASTER GARDENER VOLUNTEER HOUR SUMMARY

I want to thank all of the Master Gardeners who turned in volunteer hours for 2014. The northeast region contains 20 counties: Adair, Audrain, Boone, Chariton, Clark, Howard, Knox, Lewis, Linn, Macon, Marion, Monroe, Pike, Putnam, Ralls, Randolph, Schuyler, Scotland, Shelby and Sullivan. In our region, 1,456 contacts were made by Master Gardeners in 6,617.5 hours. Of that 1,516.25 were continuing and advanced education hours. Volunteer service hours for the northeast region was 5,101.25 hours valued at $115,033.18, using the figure of $22.55 per volunteer hour according to the Independent Sector.

Master Gardener public value statement: When you support MU Extension’s Master Gardener program public awareness of unbiased, research based gardening information is promoted and increased. Master Gardeners assist in their communities through beautification projects, by helping to disseminate research based information through workshops, programs and consultations, and by assisting with various other horticulture projects.
FOOD GARDENING IN THE U.S. AT THE HIGHEST LEVELS IN MORE THAN A DECADE ACCORDING TO NEW REPORT BY THE NATIONAL GARDENING ASSOCIATION

By: A. Cort Sinnes

- 35% of all households in America, or 42 million households, are growing food at home or in a community garden, up 17% in five years.
- Largest increases in participation seen among younger households - up 63% to 13 million since 2008.
- 2 million more households community gardening -- up 200% since 2008.

During the past five years there's been a significant shift toward more Americans growing their own food in home and community gardens, increasing from 36 million households in 2008 to 42 million in 2013. That's a 17% increase and represents the highest level of food gardening in more than a decade, according to a special National Gardening Association report, Garden to Table: A 5-Year Look at Food Gardening in America. The report shows that more young people, particularly millennials (ages 18-34), are the fastest growing population segment of food gardeners. In 2008 there were 8 million millennial food gardeners. That figure rose to 13 million in 2013, an increase of 63%. Millennials also nearly doubled their spending on food gardening, from $632 million in 2008 to $1.2 billion in 2013. The report found that more households with children participated in food gardening, increasing participation during the same time period by 25%, from 12 million to 15 million. Additionally, there was a 29% increase in food gardening by people living in urban areas, up from 7 million in 2008 to 9 million in 2013. Two million more households also reported participating in community gardening in 2013 than 2008, a 200% increase in five years. “This report clearly shows that there truly is a food revolution taking place in America,” said Mike Metallo, president and CEO of the National Gardening Association. “We are seeing more people, particularly young people, actively engaged in growing their own food. “The growth in just five years is pretty spectacular.” As the nation’s leading nonprofit in gardening education, the National Gardening Association has published annual statistics on food gardening in America since 1978. This special report examines data collected from 2008 - 2013, providing an in-depth look at trends, statistics and analytical data about food gardening during that period. The data collected shows nearly all categories of food gardening with major increases during the past five years.

Additional highlights from the 5-year report include:

- 1 in 3 households are now growing food - the highest overall participation and spending levels seen in a decade.
- Americans spent $3.5 billion on food gardening in 2013 - up from $2.5 billion in 2008 - a 40% increase in five years.
- 76% of all households with a food garden grew vegetables, a 19% increase since 2008.
- From 2008 to 2013 the number of home gardens increased by 4 million to 37 million households, while community gardens tripled from 1 million to 3 million, a 200% increase.
- Households with incomes under $35,000 participating in food gardening grew to 11 million - up 38% from 2008.

The National Gardening Association associates the rise in food gardening to several reasons: An improving economy; strong national leadership, including the launch of the “Let's Move” initiative and White House Kitchen Garden by First Lady Michelle Obama during the time period; action by federal agencies such as the U.S. Department of Agriculture and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services to increase awareness and educational efforts toward food gardening; and more engagement and public-private partnerships through organizations like the National Gardening Association, to promote and build food gardens in communities across the country.

GARDEN TIPS FOR JANUARY

ORNAMENTALS
- Brush off heavy snow from trees and shrubs
- To reduce injury, allow ice to melt naturally from plants.
- Check stored summer bulbs to be sure they are not rotting or drying out.
- Limbs damaged by ice or snow should be pruned off promptly to prevent bark from tearing.
- Sow pansy seeds indoors.

HOUSEPLANTS
- Wash dust off plant leaves on a regular basis. This allows the leaves to gather light more efficiently and will result in better growth.
- Set pots of humidity-loving house plants on trays filled with pebbles and water.
- Kill mealy bugs on plants by wiping them off with a cotton ball soaked in rubbing alcohol.
- Insecticidal soap sprays can be safely applied to most house plants for the control of insect pests.
- To clean heavily encrusted clay pots, scrub them with a steel wool pad after they have soaked overnight in a solution of 1 gallon of water, and one cup each of white vinegar and household bleach.

MISCELLANEOUS
All Month
- Store wood ashes in sealed, fireproof containers. Apply a dusting around lilacs, baby’s breath, asters, lilies, and roses in spring. Do not apply to acid-loving plants. Excess ashes may be composted.
- Check fruit trees for evidence of rodent injury to bark.
- Avoid foot traffic on frozen lawns as this may injure turf grasses.

Week 1-2
- Christmas tree boughs can be used to mulch garden perennials.
- If you didn’t get your bulbs planted before the ground froze, plant them immediately in individual peat pots and place the pots in flats. Set them outside where it is cold and bury the bulbs under thick blankets of leaves. Transplant them into the garden any time weather permits.
- Seed and nursery catalogs arrive. While reviewing garden catalogs, look for plants with improved insect, disease, and drought-tolerance.
- Old Christmas trees can be recycled outdoors as a feeding station for birds. String garlands of peanuts, popcorn, cranberries, and fruits through their boughs.

- Missouri Botanical Garden-

UPCOMING EVENTS

January 6: Salt River Master Gardener Meeting, 7 p.m. Sesquicentennial Building, Palmyra MO. Call Sue for details at 573-795-2334.

January 8-10: Great Plains Vegetable Growers Conference, Missouri Western State University, St. Joseph, MO. A great workshop for market gardeners as well as commercial vegetable growers. For details and to register http://www.greatplainsgrowersconference.org/ or call the Buchanan County Extension office at 816-279-1691.

February 7: Beginning beekeeping workshop, Macon High School cafeteria, 9-4, $35 per person, proceeds support North Central Missouri Beekeeper’s Association. Contact Bill or Tammy to register at 660-214-0132 or georges@chbeekeeping.com. Workshop is limited to 30 people. Jim and Valerie Duever will teach this workshop.

February 21: Beginning beekeeping workshop, Adair County Extension Center, 503 E. Northtown Rd., Kirksville, 9-4. $15 per individual or $25 per couple or two people from the same farm, includes handouts/materials and lunch. Call 660-665-9866 to register. Jim and Valerie Duever will teach this workshop.

March 21: Beginning Gardener workshop, Jacob’s Vineyard and Winery, Kirksville, MO. Geared toward those wanting to learn the basics of growing and preserving their own food. No cost to attend, but please RSVP to 660-665-9866 or schutterjl@missouri.edu.

April 4: Spring Forward Into Gardening, Kirksville Middle School, 9:00-3:30, more details soon.

Summer 2015: Advanced beekeeping workshop. August 20, 2015: Master Gardener training in Kirksville; Thursdays, 1:30-4:30 pm. If you are interested in MG training contact me. We must have 10 to have a class. If you are not able to take MG training face-to-face or live in a county too far from the training site, then consider taking the online training and doing it at your own pace. The next class will start in January. Sign up on the state Master Gardener homepage at http://mg.missouri.edu/.

Garden Talk!