



# THE GARDEN GABBER



NEWSLETTER OF  
THE GARDENERS OF GREATER AKRON

Affiliated with The Gardeners of America Inc.,  
The Men's Garden Clubs of America, Central Great Lakes Gardeners

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## Monday, July 15

Make plans to attend each monthly meeting. It's a great opportunity to socialize, enjoy good food, and to learn more about gardening and our environment.

**When:** Monday, July 15, 2013  
5:30 p.m. – Social Hour  
6:30 p.m. – Dinner

**Where:** St. George's Fellowship Center  
St. George's Antiochian Orthodox Church  
3204 Ridgewood Road  
Copley OH

**Program:** Denise Ellsworth

Denise Ellsworth has been our speaker several times in past meetings. Then she was the educator of the Summit County Extension Agency. Now she is the expert on pollinators at O.A.R.D.C. (Ohio Agricultural Research and Development Center).

Board Meeting: July 22 at 7:00 p m at Faith Lutheran Church, 2726 West Market Street, Fairlawn, Ohio. All members are invited to attend board meetings.

Club web site: <http://gogakron.org>

## **President's Message - Sam Morlan**

The season of bugs and disease is here again as usual. We seem to have a problem of too much rain then extended dry periods. I have adopted IPM (integrated pest management) for insect control allowing Mother Nature to take her course in balancing between good bug and bad bug. For Japanese Beetles I drop them into a container of soapy water. If you hold the container under the beetle and tap it from on top most of the time they will fall of their own accord into your container, this is an escape mechanism beetles use instead of trying to fly away. The only plant I use Sevin on is Hollyhocks.

Fungal diseases are another problem. The key is to spray early before you see any signs of disease and often, after a rain and every 7-10 days if it does not rain. Powdery mildew is host specific so one spray does not always fit every plant; you have to do some label reading or ask questions at a garden center.

I have a few words to say about our national convention that some of us attended last week. I have been to two nationals so far and both of them have been very entertaining in many ways. First, you get a chance to meet and make new friends from all over the country and learn about how their clubs are doing and the many novel ways they keep their clubs going. This year's meet was full of educational seminars that had a wide range of topics along with garden and history tours that were exceptional. I believe we may have had the largest contingent with 14 attendees. I urge everyone to consider attending our regional conference and the next national conference as well, the friendships and the knowledge gained is worth your time and effort.

A similar problem that came up when talking to other club members from across the country is the drop in volunteerism especially when it comes to filling elected positions. Some clubs have had the same president for 5 years and we are showing signs of having the same problem. I was reluctant when first asked to become the second vice president mainly because of a fear of public speaking. I still have a slight problem with it but the rewards of going through the process and accomplishing the different tasks has been very rewarding. We need some new faces and new ideas to keep the club active and relevant. I urge any of you that have time to commit some of it to the club and to please consider at least coming to some board meetings and let us know what you think the club should be doing. I know there are many out there who are potential and capable officers that would be an asset to the club, so please give it some thought.

I would like to thank the members that helped on the garlic mustard pull, Lora Avens, Grace Cochran, Charles Keach, Robert and Christine Freitag.

## **Member News**

Marlene Myers Poling, wife of David Poling, passed way on Friday June 21. She and David had been married for 57 years; she is survived by three children and eight grandchildren. Marlene was born in Portage Lakes and attended Coventry High School and the University of Akron. She worked at and was the owner of Akron Steel Fabricators. She and David were long time residents of a beautiful old stone house in Sharon Center. She had suffered for several years from Alzheimer's. Our condolences to David and the rest of the family.

## **National Convention**

Several of our club members recently returned from the national convention of the Gardeners of America/ Men's Garden Clubs of America at Springfield, Illinois. Attending were Frank and Eileen Field, Graham and Claire Reinke, Frank and Amy Mitch, Les and Carol Knight, Sam and Connie Williams, Sam Morlan and Lora Avens, Jack Cochran, and Leroy Hart; eleven members and three spouses.

Some statistics of the convention: Of the 38 clubs in 14 states that are in the national club 16 from nine states were represented. The states represented were Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Mississippi, Missouri, Ohio, Texas and Wisconsin. There were also four at-large members, people who are life members of the club but whose clubs are no longer members of the national. They were the president of the national and his wife from South Carolina and a former national president and his wife from Texas. There were 38 men and 39 women members in attendance. Our club had the greatest number in attendance with our 14, eight men three women members and three female spouses. The club from Green Bay, Wisconsin was second with eleven in attendance, two men and nine women.

Thursday was a full day at the motel with seminars on "Bodysmart Gardening", "Native Plants", "Make and Take Herb Activity", "Gourds", and "Birding". The afternoon was Board of Directors and Executive Committee meetings. After dinner was the annual photography show with photos from many club members, a man from Youngstown was the big winner.

Friday was the travel day with visits to Lincoln's home and the botanical garden. Luncheon and the memorial service were at the botanical garden. Ralph Bowman, Burlen Southers, Ivan Hertle, and John Martindale from our club were remembered. In the afternoon we visited the garden at a private home on the shore of Lake Springfield, a garden that covered the back yards of five adjacent homes and the garden of the Illinois executive mansion. Here we received a reception from the company that produces the Proven Winners flowers and each person received two plants. The after dinner program was "Floral Design"; the presenter talked about the principles of floral design while she constructed several floral arrangements.

Saturday was another day at the motel with seminars: "Make and Take Floral Activity", "Square Foot Gardening", "Pruning Trees, Shrubs & Vines", "Butterflies and Moths", "Transitioning Club Officers", "Wildflowers", "Kids and Nature", "Honey Bees" by Frank Mitch, "Gladiolas" by Bill Laning. After dinner some national awards were presented; Frank Mitch received an award for his service to the national. The program was a presentation about Lincoln by Hugh Earnhart from the Youngstown club "What the Country Looked Like in Lincoln's Time". Hugh is a retired professor of history at Youngstown U.

Sunday was an extra day of travel; we visited the old Illinois State Capitol, in use from 1833 to 1876; the Lincoln Herdon Law Office, across the street from the capitol; the Lincoln Museum and Lincoln's Tomb. Springfield is truly the Land of Lincoln.

(Editor's note - Some of you may question why I spent a whole page of the newsletter on what is nothing but old history. I did so because I, and I think all of the other club members who were at the convention, had such a good time at the convention. I hoped that if I could show you, the members who had not attended the convention, what you had missed you might be inspired to attend the convention next year. Unfortunately, there may not be a convention next year because no club has come forward to volunteer to be the host for a convention. Could our club be the host for next year's convention?

## **Pruning Basics**

### **“What You Should Know Before Making the First Cut”**

Presented by Larry Miller, Arborist and Head Gardener, Lincoln Memorial Garden, Springfield, Illinois.  
(Reprinted with his permission.)

**Warning** - Improper pruning can actually bring about the death of plants by providing access for pathogens to enter healthy tissue that otherwise would not be available. We seldom realize this fact as trees and shrubs do not fall over dead the moment we prune them incorrectly. They die slowly over several years and the initial cause goes undetected.

#### **Basic Questions to Ask Yourself Before Making That First Cut**

**Why Prune?** Have a reason such as: plant vigor and health, improve flower and fruit quality, growth habit, plant beauty, utility, and safety, etc.

**When to Prune?** Time of year is important to most plants depending on their sap flow, flowering and fruiting time, and the life cycle of pests of particular host plants. For information on the best time of year to prune consult your local Cooperative Extension Service because pruning times change depending on the part of the country in which you live. Pruning times in warmer states are different than in colder states. For example: in Central Illinois (and northeast Ohio) pruning of Maples, Ash, Walnut, Hickory, Linden, and Birch in late winter to mid Spring will result in the sap “bleeding” out rapidly and leaving you wondering if it is going to bleed to death. Pruning Oaks in the growing season attracts the Oak Beetle which can carry a deadly disease called Oak Wilt. Apple trees must be pruned at a specific time of the year to ensure a healthy, abundant crop. Some shrubs, such as Yews, can grow new stems in a short time and be too tender during the cold season and “burn” off by freezing.

**What to Prune?** Broken, diseased, crossing branches are easy to spot and should be removed. Too many branches are determined when leaves are present only on the tips of the stems or branches and branches begin to die inside the canopy. Size of a plant when it is mature is often a consideration as many trees and shrubs are planted when they are small in spaces where they will become too large when they mature. The height and width of a plant can be contained by pruning when they are young, small in size, and will experience less pruning shock.

**Where to Prune?** Making clean, smooth cuts at the proper place on the plant is critical. Leaving “stubs” of cut branches invites insects and diseases leading to rot and the demise of the plant. Torn bark increases the plant’s effort to scar over the wound. Generally cuts should be made at nodes, branch collars, or ½ inch above buds on small stems or on plants which do not have nodes or branch collars, such as roses or other brambles. To prune a large branch make the first cut several inches from the branch collar, cutting only part way through the branch from the underside of the branch; make the second cut the same distance from the first cut, cutting only part way through the branch from the top side of the branch, make the third cut at the branch collar, cutting downward on the branch. This three cut method will prevent the branch from splitting which may occur if only one cut is made. Smaller branches can be cut with one cut at the branch collar. Cut as close to the collar as possible so no stub is left. For plants that have buds remove the tip of the plant by cutting 1/2 inch above the terminal bud.

**What Do I Use?** Tools are important. Cheap tools often do not work properly and make wounds which the

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plant cannot close; therefore, invest in good quality tools. They will last a lifetime. Hand pruning shears and a small to medium limb saw is all you need. There are other tools such as loppers and pole saws that can be helpful and sometimes are required. Pole saws can be very dangerous and used with caution around phone or power lines, but when needed can be rented. Loppers are great for faster cutting, but for the home owner a saw is just as good. Good tools cost more but are worth it as they last a long time and are better for your plants. Note: never use a saw made for cutting lumber to cut a live tree.

Sterilize cutting tools by soaking the cutting surface with alcohol or hydrogen peroxide for about ten minutes after cutting each plant to reduce the risk of spreading diseases from one plant to another.

**How Much Should I Prune?** Generally, no more than one fourth of the branches of the plants branch crown should be removed in one year.

**Where Do I Start?** Consider pruning only those branches you can reach with both feet on the ground. Do not use ladders and do not climb into the tree. Never prune near telephone or power lines. Your hospital or funeral bill will be higher than hiring a professional to prune those limbs and branches you cannot reach. Young trees can be pruned after planting. Some researchers believe trees should be pruned upon planting, others believe pruning should not occur until the second or third year when the roots are better established. Bare root plantings can be pruned the first year as they have many more roots than a plant which has been field grown or grown in a pot. Consider the structural strength of the tree. Start at the base of the tree and look up. Any limb or branch which is smaller in diameter than one above it should be removed. This directs the plants energy to provide better strength and spacing of essential limbs and branches. Remove any broken, dead, and crossing or touching branches. Remove any branches which do not conform with the symmetry of the other branches.

**Shrubs and Vines** Pruning guidelines are similar as for trees. Some shrubs, such as Yews, Yellow Cedar, Privet, etc, tolerate shearing. Some shrubs, such as Burning Bush etc, require cutting each stem individually. Vine pruning varies by species. Grape vines are usually pruned back heavily to promote strong stem development and they produce on new growth. These cuts should be made at the bud nodes where leaves or branches are located. Consult your Extension Service for specific timing and method of pruning your shrubs and vines.

**Root Pruning** is required when roots are growing around the base or trunk of the tree instead of growing away from the tree. These are called “Girdling Roots”. They should be cut by using a wood chisel to cut them through and relieving the “choking” action they have on the trunk of the tree. Maples often have “Girdling Roots” when they have not grown in place from seed.

**How Do I Find Professional Help?** Search the yellow pages for certified arborists who are insured. Anyone can call himself an arborist but only those who have been tested and continue with education through the International Society of Arboriculture can claim to be certified arborists. Ask to see their current certification card and proof of insurance.

Now you have the basics. But there is much more you should know. If you still want to prune your trees, shrubs, and/or vines, seek more detailed information from the Cooperative Extension Service. There are many excellent guides to help you manage your particular plants. Not all plants are pruned in the same manner. If you use the internet be certain the information you get applies to your part of the country.