

OVER THE GARDEN FENCE

May 2023

Events

- May 13—Plant Sale
- May 22—Master Gardener monthly meeting—Ann Brown
- Spring—Lunch & Learn Series
<https://mastergardener.osu.edu/HHHLNL22-23> All programs and links are on our County Calendar

Keep Ticks Away—*Nan Needs*



Gardeners have frequently used Sulphur powder to adjust soil pH, making soil more acidic. But Sulphur has other interesting uses. It has fungicidal and antimicrobial properties. Sublimed Sulphur USP (pharmaceutical grade) is used to treat acne, rosacea, and psoriasis. Powdered Sulphur (garden grade) applied to plant leaves acts as a deer, rabbit, and insect repellent. Sulphur can also be used as an effective tick and chigger repellent, especially if you do not like applying DEET or permethrin.

An easy way to apply is to simply put some sublimed sulphur (if using garden grade Sulphur mix 50/50 with baby powder) in an old sock. Then just whack the sock against the skin around your ankles. It can also be used on clothing. Powdered Sulphur has a very low toxicity and is safe to use.

Children in the Garden — *Molly Gassaway*

The preschool students from the Community Center have had a great spring semester investigating in the Children's Garden with Community Food Initiatives. Lessons included learning all about parts of a plant, pollinators, worms, compost, and more. The kiddos helped weed some garden beds, made garden art, completed scavenger hunts, and enjoyed searching for worms, but their favorite garden activity was simply EXPLORING THE GARDEN. They loved to see new plants coming up and new flower buds open with each visit; new critters crawling around and buzzing by. The youth of our area thanks you, Master Gardeners, for maintaining this amazing learning garden!



Plant of the Month— *Lee Gregg*



Grape fern -*Botrychium virginianum*



Botrychium virginianum, commonly called the **grape or rattle-snake fern**, is a small woodland fern often overlooked because of its small size (12"). It's in a family of small ferns, the Ophioglossaceae, but unlike its

relatives, the grape fern's leaves persist during the summer. The grape fern gets its name from the fertile frond (leaf) which is completely devoted to bearing spores. *Botrychium* share this trait, i.e. having all the spores on a specialized frond, with the ostrich fern whose sporophylls persist in the winter, adding a bit of winter interest to the garden.





Dear Flora,



Dear Flora,

I recently bought a stick of bamboo in water that has tiny roots and a few tiny leaves at the top. How can I propagate it? *Lucky Boo*

Dear Lucky,

Thank you for your question. I'm guessing that, because the plant you purchased was growing in water, it is the popular *Dracaena sanderiana*, also known as "Lucky Bamboo" or "Chinese Water Bamboo," and a few other names. If so, you may have noticed that, unlike bamboo, which is hollow, your plant has a solid core. This is because it is actually more

closely related to asparagus than bamboo. I guess "Lucky Asparagus" doesn't sound quite as interesting.

Because of the small roots and leaves, it sounds as if your plant is still quite young. You might think of it as a tiny tree, with the stalk being the trunk. As it matures, branches will grow from this main stalk where the leaves are now. Once these offshoots (branches) are about five inches long, they can be cut and placed in water and can develop into another plant. Several sources give good information about propagating Lucky Bamboo. One I found helpful is at www.epicgardening.com/luckybamboo-care.

There are some things you can do to help your plant mature more quickly. If you would like to continue to grow it in water, place a layer of pebbles in the dish, so that the roots have more room to grow. Another option is to plant it in soil. You will want to use a soil that drains well, like a cactus or succulent plant mix. The sources I consulted said that your plant will grow faster and might live longer if grown in soil. The average life of the Lucky Bamboo plant is one to two years.

It is important to water your plant regularly, so that it does not dry out, if you plant it in soil. If you continue to grow it in water, change the water weekly and replace it with tepid, chlorine-free (or distilled) water each time. It is also a good idea to rinse the roots each time, to reduce the chance of developing a disease.

When your plant has matured and after you have pruned a "branch" off, you can put wax or paraffin on the main stalk at the site of the cutting. This can prevent disease or pests from damaging your plant.

Good luck with your Lucky Bamboo! Please let me know if you have other questions. You might also find these additional websites helpful and interesting. Besides suggestions for taking care of your plant, they also give information about the history of Lucky Bamboo and the traditions related to it.

www.gardenpaths.com/plants/houseplants/grow-lucky-bamboo

www.loveplanting.com/dracaena-sanderiana



Digging Deeper – Ceil Weldon



On Monday, April 24, we met at Karen Durniat-Suerhstedt's home for a tour of her naturalized farm. Originally the house and property served as her father's hunting camp and the family's summer vacation home. The 140-acre farm was established on a deep mine site outside Glouster. Her father started naturalizing it and was also instrumental in bringing wild turkey back into the area. Karen has enjoyed visiting it her entire life and finally decided to move there full-time 7 years ago. Since moving in she has spent a lot of time fighting invasives and maintaining the native landscape. On our tour we saw Trillium, May-Apple, Rue Anemone, Ramps, Sweet White Violet, Wild Geranium, Golden Ragwort, Wild Blue Phlox, Bull Thistle, Harebell Bluebells, Downy Yellow Violet, Jack-in-the-Pulpit and Sweet Cicely. Terrie also spotted Blood Root. As Karen said, this enchanting property has a lot of local history as well as family history.