ATHENS COUNTY MASTER GARDENERS

OVER THE GARDEN FENCE

November 2025

Events

- **November 24 —Master Gardener monthly meeting—Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Athens 6:00 pm**
- **Lunch & Learn Webinar series every two weeks https://mastergardener.osu.edu/LNL25**

A Day in the Woods

Zella Nisley

. Attending a Day in the Woods workshop is always worth your money! Lots of expertise (OSU Co. extension, ODNR, Soil and water and Forestry sta) excellent information sessions, great hands-on experiences, AND a pretty good lunch - ALL for $20. This held true for the Native Shrub Identification Workshop!

Approximately 50 people engaged on this cool sunny (3 layer) day to learn (or instruct) about native shrubs and small trees. Four of our Master Gardeners participated (Laura Caple, Joke Harnish, Kelly Capuzzi and me.) Participants were divided into two group sessions before lunch. Dave Aplsey (ODNR) conducted an indoor visual presentation. Native shrubs provide diversity, aesthetic qualities, as well as feed wildlife healthily, and give us medicinal or food products.

The other group, led by Jim Downs (OSU Extension), gathered outside around tables with a variety of native shrub branches/leaves displayed. The participants, armed with an abbreviated key and a field guide were tasked with identification. Equally helpful were nearby instructors, as some of the species were absent in the key or guide! Now, also experientially, was evidence of those of us who skimped on layered clothing. This was loud teeth chattering and movement towards any sunlight for warmth.

After lunch the participants and instructors divided into 3 groups, with options of an easy, moderate or more di cult walk/hike to identify native shrubs found near the Education Center. These hikes proved to be very informative. The more di cult hike's reward was the Leatherwood shrub (Dirac palustris). Laura, Joke and I traversed the moderate hike to Meditative cave to witness Wild Hydrangea (Hydrangea aborescens deer candy) hanging from the upper rock edge of the cave. Can you guess the reason for this precarious habitat? Yes, it is a four letter word that starts with a "D".

Among the many elements o ered, here are a few favored tidbits: When not in bloom, native Blackhaw Viburnum can be confused with invasive Privet. Both have opposite branching. The secret is knowing about their buds, bark textures, and foliage features, made more evident with age. The beautiful spring foliage Fringe tree (Chionanthus Virginicus) with a Lilac aroma is related to the Ash tree, therefore prone to the Asian Ash borer. A possible solution, if infected, is to cut down the tree allowing a sprout to grow in it's place.

Green shrubs in March, are most likely invasive. These should be marked and eradicated in a later season with less likely harm to nearby native plants.

(I appreciated the candid nature of the native tree experts, sharing their discomfort when perplexed with imported species found in the central part of Bishop Education center. The wild outskirts, with thriving native species, was their obvious happy place!)

Resources: Ohio Division of Wildlife Small Trees & Shrubs of Ohio field guide Pub 5551 R0125 Book: Web sight: "Woody Plants of Ohio" by Lucy Braun go.osu.edu/treeid (contains videos of shrubs)

How Can I Help? Saving Nature with Your Yard

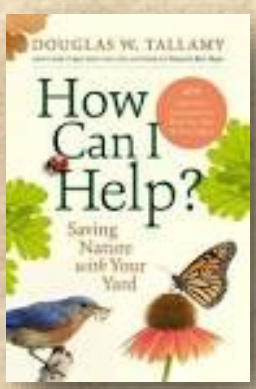
by Doug Tallamy

Marcia Burchby

Environmental advocate and entomologist Doug Tallamy has a new book How Can I Help?: Saving Nature with Your Yard (2025) which is available at the Athens Public Library. Tallamy answers the questions most often asked after his lectures, with practical actions that homeowners and gardeners can take as they strive to make an ecological difference and join others who are pursuing backyard conservation.

Topics range from ecology, evolution, biodiversity and conservation to restoration, native plants, invasive species, home landscaping, pest control and how to support wildlife at home. As Tallamy states in his introduction, "The good news is that we *are* learning how to restore the ecological damage we have wrought in so many places and we are starting to act on that new knowledge. There is momentum in the pace of change, and I have written this book, in part, to try to keep that momentum going."

Some of the specific steps that Tallamy recommends are:



--shrink the size of your lawn; create 'no go' zones around trees

--avoid using fertilizers

--plant a handful of native species and reduce/eliminate invasive species

--allow leaves to sit untouched

--add features for microhabitats and provide places for insects to nest and overwinter

--manage pests responsibly, avoid pesticides

--reduce light pollution and use yellow light bulbs that will not attract nocturnal insects

For more inspiration and information, find Doug Tallamy on YouTube or Google "Homegrown National Park".

In the Garden

- **Compost leaves**
- **Compost dead plants**
- **Dispose of diseased plants**
- **Open new garden beds for next year**
- **Take soil samples**
- **Apply lime or sulfur**

Doug Tallamy Lecture

Ceil Weldon

On October 15 the OCEES 2025 Darwin Lecture was presented at O.U. by Dr. Douglas Tallamy who inspired the full auditorium with a lecture on "Nature's Best Hope". Master Gardeners were well represented. Dr. Tallamy began by stating that entomologist Edward O Wilson of Harvard has shown that unless we save nature on half of the planet, most of the flowering plants and pollinators will go extinct. Without the flowering plants and pollinators, the human race will go extinct. The presentation provided extensive information on both what is currently happening to decimate pollinators and plants as well as how we, as individuals, can and must act to help slow and correct the current loss of plants and pollinators. Tallamy understands that most people want to take part in conservation efforts and is encouraging that *one person can make a difference!*

Butternut squash salad with Chilies

CFI, Discovery Kitchen

INGREDIENTS

1 medium butternut squash

1 or 2 fresh jalapenos, diced

3 Tbsp vinegar (whatever you have on hand is fine)

4 ounces feta cheese (about half of a regular package, optional)

1/3 c dried cranberries, apples, or raisins

olive oil

salt

pepper

Optional toppings: Toasted seeds/nuts and minced fresh herbs

DIRECTIONS

Peel squash and slice in half lengthwise. Scoop out seeds and pulp with a spoon.

Using a box grater, vegetable peeler or food processor, grate squash. Watch your hands! Season with salt/pepper and set aside in a large bowl.

Add cranberries, diced jalapenos, and vinegar. Crumble in feta cheese.

Drizzle in olive oil and stir well. Taste and add more salt, pepper, or vinegar if needed, until perfectly balanced. Add a drizzle of honey if the squash isn't already sweet enough. For optimum flavor/texture, chill a couple hours before serving then serve coolor at room temp. We love this salad sprinkled with toasted seeds/nuts and a tiny sprinkle of chives or parsley.

Ceil Weldon

The October Master Gardener meeting featured Professor Harold Perkins presenting on “The Benefit of Trees – Why Urban Forests are Social Nature”. Mr. Perkins is a professor of Geography specializing in Urban Ecology and Environmental Geography. He explained how urban trees serve as Ecological, Social and Political Drivers. Historically they designate the affluent versus the less affluent sections of a city. Mr. Perkins described the positive aspects of trees in urban centers as they affect the environmental impacts: by reducing energy usage and the effects of storm water; social impacts: by lowering crime and by bringing people together; and the economic impacts: homes on wooded lots sell for more money and people spend more money in business districts with trees lined streets. He also explained the possible negative impacts of poor tree choices and maintenance and then stressed that trees used in an urban setting must be pruned into shape during early growth to create more resilient growth.