



## **Spring 2006      President's Message by Anita Lanning**

Spring is a special time of the year. It's a time of anticipation. Many of us have our gardens started or at least dreamed about. When I go to the nurseries I am dazzled by the plants at the nursery and want to take them all home. In our living room (garden) we have tomatoes, snapdragons, petunias, salvia, onions, impatiens, delphiniums, campanula, and columbine growing. A friend went on vacation and we got to enjoy the beauty of crocus she had planted in a container and brought indoors. Dogs aren't especially great at this time of the year! Ours has just brought half the garden mud with him into the house.

It is my desire that we will have a good turn out at our Region Meeting April 8<sup>th</sup> in Mansfield. Our National and Regional Web Master, Frank Mitch, is going to get us all acquainted/reacquainted with our websites? Frank does such a great job keeping this all updated.

We will break for lunch and then come back to the gatehouse for a short business meeting followed by a presentation on trees by Bill Jones, a member of the Findlay Men and Women's Garden Club. Bill was a presenter on the Phenology Garden at our One Day Conference held in Findlay last summer and what a great job he did on that.

We try to have meetings that are interesting and informative to all as well as a good time and good fellowship. We have made so many, many good gardening friends over the years and you can too. Central Great Lakes is the largest region in the organization. Our region has the current National President, two past national presidents, three national directors and three alternate directors. Many of our regional presidents and officers from many clubs attend our regional meetings. Come and get acquainted. This is a time to learn from other knowledgeable gardeners.

Be sure and mark your calendar to join us at ATI in Wooster, Saturday, June 17 for our Summer One Day Conference. Registration forms are available in this issue of the JAB.

It is my hope that you have all sent your ballots in to the national office. This is the way to have a say in the organization.

In a couple of weeks we'll be heading down south to Spartanburg, SC for our summer National Conference. I hope to see many of you there as well.

Have a great growing year!

## **A Message from Our National President Dale Davies**

It is now Spring. As I write this March has been a nice month so far. I'm looking forward to the convention in Spartanburg and hope a number of you will be attending. I still have some committees to fill and to appoint chairs for. These are inactive committees that are falling by the wayside. The Book Review Committee holds interest for committee members but not for a Chair position.

The Regional Summer Conference at Wooster looks to be another great day. Information about it is provided in this issue. I encourage you to strongly consider having a good number of people from your club to attend. The more the better. As has been noted in the past, we get out of something, no more than we put in. I find that many put in more than they receive, for there are many hard workers in this organization. We need to give support to the endeavors of our clubs.

Nominations for the many awards is another way to participate in support of our region. Rodney Toth has nominating forms for both regional and national awards.

Vote and return your ballot.

See you in Spartanburg and in Wooster. Have a good summer.

### **Regional Meetings**

Not too many members of any of the clubs in the region attend the meetings held by the region. The summer conference is usually better attended than the spring and fall meetings in Mansfield. In the spring and fall meetings the program consists of an instructional session in the morning. In past meetings we have learned about the various kinds of daffodils, tulips, and dahlias. Also we have learned the finer points in how to judge these flowers. At the meeting this April Frank Mitch, our regional and national web master, will instruct us on gardening on the web. After the morning session we adjourn to a buffet for

lunch. The afternoon session begins with the business meeting. We have the usual elements of a business meeting, reading of the minutes, treasurer's report and reports from committee chairs. Our region is especially endowed with national directors who report on their activities. The regional committees are: judging, Johnny Appleseed Broadcaster, awards, and youth gardening. At the meeting last October it was reported that the Kent club was leaving the national. At this meeting the then National President, Bill Carney, from Youngstown, asked for some thought and input he could take to the next national directors' meeting. The question of staying affiliated with the American Horticultural Society was discussed. It was noted that each year the cost of our affiliation would go up and how would we meet this increase. The national had enough money for 2006 but not beyond that. It was suggested that the national could borrow from or use the E & I Fund which has a balance of \$680,000. The interest from this fund is used by the national for scholarships. We questioned whether this fund could be used for general operations of the club or was it restricted to scholarships. Also it was concluded that if money were borrowed from the fund it would not be paid back.

It was decided that we had not received many advantages from our affiliation with the AHS. We did not get new members from them. Most of us did not use the AHS membership card for admission to gardens etc.

(Editor's note - this was the most interesting business meeting of the club I have attended. Partly as a result of our recommendations the national directors have come up with this new option on dues which we are voting on now. The results of this vote will be announced at the national convention.)

After the business meeting we have a program. Several of these have been presented by members of the Kingwood Center staff. One program was presented by Charles Applegate on the various kinds of daffodils. Another was a slide show of the gardens at Kingwood at various times of the year.

The fall meeting is scheduled for October 14th at the Kingwood Center gate house. Details in your local club newsletters.

## **Come to Wonderful Wooster This June!**

The Great Lakes Regional Summer Conference will be a fun and learning-filled day on Saturday June 17, 2006. We will be meeting at ATI, an agricultural branch of the Ohio State University, located in Wooster, Ohio. Rooms will be available at an apartment-style residence building, which means we will have living areas and kitchens. I am working on obtaining speakers from Ohio State and we will also have the opportunity to view the fabulous test and research gardens located at ATI. Mark the weekend on your calendars. If you haven't attended a summer conference recently, make this the year.

Any questions can be directed to: Mary Ann Ferguson-Rich 330-630-9625

### **Schedule**

This schedule is subject to change depending on weather and speakers.

8:00 - 9:00	Registration and Check in
9:00	Welcome
9:00 - 10:00	Business Meeting
10:00 - 12:00	Tour of ATI and the Secrest Arboretum
12:00 - 1:00	Picnic Lunch
1:30 - 2:15	Fruit Cultivation
15 minute break	
2:30 -3:00	Grape Cultivation
15 minute break	
3:15 - 4:00	Bee Culture
10 minute break	
4:10 - 5:00	Landscaping Primer
5:30	Dinner/Banquet

REGISTRATION DEADLINE: MAY 28, 2006

## CENTRAL GREAT LAKES REGION SUMMER ONE-DAY CONFERENCE

**Rooms on campus:** 22.50 per person for a quad  
26.00 per person for a triple  
35.00 per person for a double (Couples would be 70.00)  
60.00 per person for a single

These are rooms in an apartment-like setting. They are air-conditioned and linens are provided. Each unit comes with a private bath. The bunk beds will all be placed down on the floor. Some units have steps to climb to the bedroom area. If you want a room without steps, please let the conference chairman know right away as several rooms with no steps can be reserved.

Please note with whom you will be sharing a room if you are sending in the form separately.

The conference will be held on the campus of Ohio State's Agriculture and Technical Institute in Wooster, Ohio, home of the beautiful Secrest Arboretum.

If you have any dietary needs please list them on this form.

We plan on having a picnic/box lunch at the arboretum if weather permits.

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### Registration Form

Name of Member \_\_\_\_\_ Spouse \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

Club Represented \_\_\_\_\_ Room requested: \_\_\_\_\_

Cost per person \$40.00 includes lunch, dinner, seminars and speakers.  
Make checks payable to the Men's Garden Club of Akron. Send to:  
Mary Ann Ferguson-Rich, 1166 Broadview Rd., Tallmadge, OH 44278  
mafr43@hotmail.com

Special requests: \_\_\_\_\_

Central Great Lakes One-Day Regional Conference  
Saturday, June 17, 2006  
At ATI in Wooster, Ohio

MAPS AND DIRECTIONS WILL BE SENT TO ALL

## Formosan Termites in Mulch

(Editor's note - This article was sent by Joseph Alessi Jr., the editor of the Youngstown club's newsletter. The Back Acre News, the newsletter of the Findlay club also had an article on this subject in its March, 2006 issue.)

If you use mulch around your house be very careful about buying mulch this year. In the hurricane in New Orleans many trees were blown over. These trees were then turned into mulch and the state is trying to get rid of tons and tons of this mulch to any state or company who will come and haul it away. So it will be showing up in Home Depot and Lowes at dirt cheap prices with one huge problem; Formosan Termites will be the bonus in many of those bags. New Orleans is one of the few areas in the country where the Formosan Termite has gotten a strong hold and most of the trees blown down were already badly infested with these termites. Now we may have the worst case of transporting a problem to all parts of the country that we have ever had. These termites can eat a house in no time at all and we have no good control against them, so tell your friends that own homes to avoid cheap mulch and know where it came from.

**Origins:** We've long realized that transporting people and goods (particularly plants and food crops) from one region to another can result in our also inadvertently carrying unseen little critters into areas where they are not normally found, and that unleashing bugs and other animals into new environments can have disastrous consequences. Free from predators, natural defenses, and other factors that may ordinarily keep them in check, these creatures can wreak havoc by preying on (or crowding out) other plants and animals.

One such accidental transplantation occurred around the time of World War II, when the Formosan subterranean termite was introduced into the United States by ships that carried the species from China to U.S. coastal towns. This species of termite has since established itself throughout the southern United States (including Hawaii and southern California),

where it poses a threat to trees and the timber industry, as well as just about anything — utility poles, homes, buildings, ships — constructed wholly or partially from wood.

Back in October 2005, Louisiana State University's (LSU) Agricultural Center (AgCenter) issued a warning about the potential spread of Formosan subterranean termites into new areas from southern Louisiana through the reuse of wooden building materials taken from homes damaged by Hurricane Katrina and installed in new structures elsewhere. As the LSU AgCenter notes, termites can be spread through the movement of many different kinds of wood products, including mulch:

This termite hitches a ride to new areas in infested cellulose. At the time of this writing, the number one method of spreading the Formosan subterranean termite is infested railroad ties. The second most important method of spreading the Formosan subterranean termite is infested utility poles. Other methods of spreading the termite include: wood from structures, lumber, pallets, landscape timbers, wood used in the oil industry, firewood, trees, woody plants, sawdust, mulch, wood in boats, potted plants, mobile homes, homes and paper.

(Editor's note - At this point I will interrupt Mr. Alessi's article to include some material on this subject that was published in The Akron Beacon Journal, written by by a staff writer of the paper and the county extension agent.)

This article claims that this termite tale is nothing but mulch. The article points out that the Louisiana Department of Agriculture and Forestry and the Louisiana State University Agricultural Center said that this rumor is not true. The article also states that even the man whose e-mail started the rumor acknowledges that it is incorrect. This man is an employee of the National Park Service which may have made this rumor more believable. Also such situations have occurred in the past. The article then points out the Louisiana quarantine which Mr. Alessi's article includes. Another state also hit by the hurricane was Mississippi. It has had a quarantine in

place since 2002 on 25 counties with widespread infestations of Formosan termites

The article points out that there are other reasons not to worry. Even if mulch were to be made from infested wood, it's unlikely the termites could survive the chipping and bagging processes. Also it is thought that these termites could not survive Ohio's cold winters, so it's unlikely they would become established in our state. The article says that even though this e-mail was incorrect it does have an upside. It raises awareness that all kinds of species often become invasive when they are spread to areas where nature never intended them to live, and they can cause great damage when there are no natural means of controlling them.

(Back to Mr. Alessi's article.)

However, although the particular scenario described in the message quoted at the head of this page might be possible, it isn't likely because the Louisiana Department of Agriculture and Forestry imposed a quarantine on several parishes back in October 2005 specifically to prevent the accidental movement of Formosan subterranean termite to other areas. To try to prevent moving termites to other areas, the Louisiana Department of Agriculture and Forestry on Oct. 3 imposed a quarantine for the Formosan subterranean termite in Calcasieu, Cameron, Jefferson, Jefferson Davis, Orleans, Plaquemines, St. Bernard, St. Charles, St. John the Baptist, St. Tammany, Tangipahoa and Washington parishes. According to that agency's Assistant Commissioner, the disposal of wood-based debris within those parishes is being monitored to ensure that the end results are not transported outside the quarantined area:

All woody debris in the quarantined areas is going to an approved landfill within the designated quarantine area. There are a multitude of government (state and federal) agencies that are looking at this debris every day as it is deposited into these landfills. The contractors mulching and hauling the debris know the regulations and are abiding by them according to the quarantine requirements. If there is anyone with knowledge of debris moving out of a quarantine area,

they should contact our 24-hour hotline at 225-925-3763.

Entomologists we've contacted have said they aren't sure whether termites could survive the mulching, packaging, and transporting process in the first place (and in any case, there are a number of mitigating factors that could halt the spread of Formosan subterranean termites transported to other areas, such as the fact that they are rarely found above 35° N latitude because the colder temperatures typical of higher latitudes prevent their eggs from hatching).

For those homeowners who find themselves dealing with termite infestations (whatever the cause), there are good sites on the web that provide information about termite control methods

On this point, an accompanying newspaper article talks about ways to protect your house. It's a good idea to inspect mulch before using it. Slit open the bags, and leave them in the open for a day. Inspect the mulch periodically and look for little 1/4 inch long white moving things; they are worker termites. Even if the mulch is clean there are steps that you can take to keep termites and other bugs from using mulch to gain easy access to your house. Leave a six to eight inch strip of bare soil between the mulch and the house. Keep all wooden parts of the house foundation at least six inches above the soil. Keep mulch levels several inches below siding and wood parts of the house. Remove wood debris and dead trees, stumps, and roots near the structure. Never store firewood, lumber or paper against the foundation of in a crawl space.

(Editor's note - Even though this rumor was incorrect, it could happen if the quarantine was bypassed in some way and our winters have not been too cold recently. On a similar subject. Several years ago I saw an article in the paper that said there was a good way to insulate your basement and thereby save money on heating bills. It said instead of throwing away the leaves you rake up put them into plastic bags and pile the bags around the foundation of your home. This proved to be a bad idea. One or more rats decided these bags would make a warm, cozy home and moved in. I got rid of them by removing the bags.)

## Let the Earth Awaken!

Spring (Vernal) Equinox

(From the March 2006 issue of The Germinator, the newsletter of the Men's Garden Club of Youngstown)

To begin a story on the vernal equinox we should begin by explaining what the equinox is. In simplest terms it is the time of the year when the sun rises and sets exactly 12 hours apart. This happens twice a year. In the spring the sun moves northward to the point where it is at the most northern location. This is called the Summer Solstice.

The exact date and time of the vernal equinox changes a little each year, but generally occurs around March 20th. This year the equinox occurs on March 20th at 1:19 PM.

Since the vernal equinox occurs during the sun's movement north, it is considered a time of rebirth for the soil and the spirit. The warming associated with the vernal equinox brings renewed hope for the upcoming summer season and the potential for bountiful harvest and abundant life.

In the olden days of Europe the equinoxes would be used as a marker for seeds to be planted in the spring and harvested in the fall (the autumnal equinox). Rituals and other celebrations in the hopes of pleasing the god(s) of their culture would generally accompany plantings. One such goddess, Eostre, represented new life and fertility. Legend has it that a bird whose wings had been frozen by the cold of winter once saved her.

This process turned the bird into a hare that could lay eggs. These are the main symbols for the holiday we call Easter, the name may have come from the goddess. Eggs represent new life and beginnings while the hare represents fertility.

Speaking of fertility, the equinox was also used as a time for young lovers to pledge their devotion to each other. These pledges would eventually lead to marriage or other commitments come early spring.

## Things To Do - Now

(This article was written by Joseph Alessi Jr. the editor of the Germinator. It was published in the Youngstown Vindicator and sent to me by e-mail by Mr. Alessi)

It's time to put the books aside. Every would be green thumbed gardener has been dreaming of their garden each time their eyes or mind wandered from the cold pages in front of them. Peering through the window, trying to imagine what that snow covered garden would become, they know that now is the time to start seed indoors, then follow up with spade or tiller and get ready to play in the garden,

At this time of year every gardener must ask themselves a few questions. Were you able to complete the chores last fall and during the winter months? Do you have your tools cleaned, plants or seed selected, according to your overall garden plan? Did you clean the garden of its leaves and other debris? If you answered yes, then you are ahead of many other gardeners. However, if it's a no, then it's time to get busy and begin making some preparations before you can turn the soil.

Assuming that you have done little since last fall to prepare your garden, look at some of the first things you need to do

Finish garden cleanup, pull all weeds while young  
Add nutrients recommended by your soil test.

Be on the lookout for pests.

Note where you need to replace spring bulbs

Side dress emerging perennials with compost.

Divide summer and fall blooming perennials with 3" shoots. Cut back any dead parts.

Wait to prune spring flowering shrubs until after they finish blooming.

Cut ornamental grass left standing to three or four inches above the ground

Remove the mulch that you had placed to protect tender plants. Add new mulch around perennials, but don't cover them.

Pull and remove any annuals left in the ground.

Get moving now, enjoy the garden and the good earth.

### Inside This Issue

President's Message	1
Message from Dale Davies	2
Summer Regional Conference	3,4
Termites in Mulch	5,6
Let the Earth Awaken Things To Do - Now	7

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**Deadline for next issue: September 1**

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