

SPEAKERS BUREAU 2026 TOPICS

Topic	Description
African Violets and Other House Plants	We'll start with a brief history of house plants, their light requirements, soil, and watering needs and continue with a brief discussion of the benefits of growing house plants. Then we'll do a deeper dive into key aspects, including propagation, of one of the most popular house plants, African violets, which currently have over 19,000 named hybrids!
All About Ferns	Ferns provide beautiful contrast and interest to a shady and partially shady garden. In "All about Ferns", you will learn about the characteristics of ferns, indoor and outdoor growing tips, the many different varieties of ferns and even some fun fern facts and folklore.
Alliums	There are over 800 species of this hardy herbaceous plant. They are grown for the beauty of their flowers, but more so because they are edible. Think garlic, leek, onion! This presentation discusses what are alliums and how you can grow them.
Aquatic Container Gardening	You may have a water garden on your patio or porch with minimal effort and expense. See the needs for growing waterlilies, lotus and other aquatic plants. (The principles also generally apply for ponds.)
Basic Botany for Gardeners	Botany is the scientific study of plants. Having a basic understanding of plant biology can help you be a better gardener. The basic anatomy of roots, stems, leaves is presented, along with the life cycle of flowering plants, with the production of fruits and seeds.
Butterfly Gardening: Plant It and They Will Come!	This presentation looks at why butterflies matter, why they're in trouble, and what we can do in our yards to help them. A successful butterfly garden must include what these marvelous insects need: both host plants and nectar plants. It's no surprise – butterfly gardening is, for the most part, native plant gardening. We'll explore several examples of Ohio butterflies, and which plants will attract them and help conserve them.

Color through the Seasons – Choosing the Right Shrubs and Companion Plants	The gardening calendar doesn't only last 6 months of the year. It is possible to have four seasons of color and interest. Plants that can fulfill multiple roles can help gardeners achieve that goal. The advantages of using shrubs for the backbone of the year-round garden are explored. This presentation also examines companion plants that provide seasonal interest and support this versatile framework of the landscape border.
Composting: Let it Rot	This presentation will walk you through what goes on in a compost pile, how to build one of your own, and how to use that wonderful black gold in your gardens. The Master Gardeners will be ready to answer all your questions about composting, including where to get the ingredients and what might go wrong.
Container Vegetable Gardening	Vegetables growing just outside your door is easy and fun! Learn how to grow your favorite vegetables in containers—even potatoes! Choosing the right containers, proper soil, watering, and much more are part of this presentation
Cool Weather Vegetable Gardening	Learn how a gardener, with good planning, can extend the growing season by introducing vegetables that like cool temperatures into their garden. This presentation provides the information necessary to keep a vegetable garden active from March until November and beyond.
Creative Container Gardening	Container Gardening is a way to make gardening accessible to everyone. Containers can be grown on patios, backyards and porches. This presentation will share with you the planting and care basics and give you an understanding of the design principles to make a creative container garden. With this knowledge and your creativity, you can make your own one-of-a-kind planting
Design Tips for Planning a Gorgeous Perennial Garden	Cuyahoga County Master Gardeners will introduce elements of landscape design to help you plan a spectacular low maintenance perennial bed or border.
Down and Dirty – All About the Master Gardener Volunteer Program	This program explains what the Master Gardener Volunteer program is all about and explains the steps to become one.

Embracing Life in the Garden	A healthy garden is full of life! Bees and butterflies, hummingbirds, beetles, flies, moths, wasps, spiders - They all live together in harmony. They have evolved together over thousands of years and developed essential relationships with one another. Each one has a purpose, a role to fill to keep things in balance in their tiny ecosystem. This talk relates how you can help keep our ecosystems healthy on Planet Earth, and how you can contribute simply by doing what you love to do – gardening!
England's Crown Jewel: The Chelsea Flower Show	Considered the world's top garden show, you'll see spectacular photos of this annual London event and expand your knowledge of Great Britain's enduring horticultural legacy. Huge "Show Gardens," exquisite garden sculpture, and the "Great," a massive white tent an acre in size, showcasing exhibits from 60 of the UK's finest nurseries.
Everything You Always Wanted to Know About Hydrangeas	There's a beautiful hydrangea for every garden. Learn about the different types and how to care for them.
Fall Planting for Spring Harvest	A presentation broken down by winter vegetable gardening and fall flower gardening. Planting vegetables in late summer and fall for harvest in late winter and spring – addresses site requirements, suggested plantings, and methods and plant suggestions for perennials, biennials, and hardy annuals. Emphasis is on vegetables, but also mention of flowers.
Fragrance in the Garden	Learn about the sense of smell in the garden, the reasons for fragrance (attraction of pollinators, survival), what parts are fragrant, timing of scent, and utilizing scent in the placement of plants in the garden. Demonstrations of scented essential oils allow you to experience the fragrances.
Forcing Bulbs	Want to have blooming flowers inside to brighten cold winter days? This talk covers the basics of forcing bulbs to bloom and covers what types of bulbs work best.
Garden History: Evolution of American Homes and Landscape	See the evolution of American home construction and landscape design from the settlers' era to present. This overview includes many landscape accessories.

Garden History: Evolution of Western Landscape	Trace the evolution of gardens in the Western World from the beginning to the present. This survey contains pictures and paintings of Western gardens over time, including some Eastern influence.
Garden History: Notable American Landscapes	Tour notable American landscapes from the Colonial and early Federal Eras through the Gilded Age. See many of America's great homes and their gardens.
Garden History: Thomas Jefferson Landscape Architect	A garden history presentation using the life of Thomas Jefferson to illustrate the horticultural influences which shaped him for producing his landscape architectural and garden projects. Extensive pictures include Colonial Williamsburg, Monticello, Poplar Forest and the University of Virginia. Historic garden restoration and design considerations are included.
Gardening in the Shade	Shade doesn't have to limit your ability to create a beautiful and interesting garden. Learn about planning your shade garden and plants that will thrive in less than full sun.
Going Underground with Bulbs, Rhizomes, Corms and Tubers	An overview of how to grow healthy, beautiful bulbs in your garden which shows some familiar favorites as well as some of the more unusual bulbs available and presents a plan for three-season color in your own garden. For bulbs, corms, tubers and rhizomes, the presentation addresses the history, different kinds, growing requirements and care, and pests and diseases.
Ground Covers	Defines ground covers and their uses. Presents best ground covers for various landscape problems. Pros and Cons of the 5 most popular ground covers are discussed. Planting strategies are included.
Heirloom Vegetables and Flowers	Growing heirloom vegetables and flowers has become very popular. But beyond being a gardening trend, there are pleasures and advantages in growing these delicious and beautiful plants. In this presentation, you will learn why heirlooms are important, what to consider when growing heirlooms, the difference between hybrids and heirlooms, seed-saving, as well as common and Ohio based heirloom plants and varieties and general gardening tips.

Herbs: Spice Up Your Garden and Cooking with Herbs	A discussion of herbs and the multitude of their uses, including ornamental, culinary, fragrances, where and how they may be grown in the landscape or garden; herbs for beginners; herb cultivation, harvesting and preservation. Details are provided for culinary and aromatic herbs.
How to Keep the Unwanted at Bay: The Problem of Wildlife in our Gardens	Do you have deer, chipmunks, skunks, or rabbits frolicking in your garden? Have they ever dined uninvitedly on your carefully tended plants? This talk will focus on the problem of wildlife in our gardens and what we can do about it. Learn about deer and rabbit resistant plants and suggest humane options for repelling and eliminating these pesky critters from our gardens.
How to Multiply and Divide Perennials to Get Free Plants	Shocked at the price of a new perennial at garden centers this year? Master Gardeners will help you fight inflation by teaching you how to create new plants from those you already own. This presentation will focus on when and how to divide perennials, how to grow new plants from cuttings, propagating by “layering”, and how to harvest and store your own seeds. Your garden and your pocketbook will thank you for increasing your plant numbers without spending a dime!
Hydrangeas	Why aren't my hydrangeas blooming? This is one of the most common questions asked about these beautiful blooming shrubs. In this presentation learn about the six most common species of hydrangeas, the best conditions for growing each type, and advice on how and when to prune them.
Hydroponics	This presentation briefly discusses the history of hydroponics, the six basic types of hydroponics growing methods, the current world hydroponics trends, the overall advantages and disadvantages of hydroponics, and finally shows a working commercial example of a significant hydroponic system in the heart of Cleveland Ohio.
Learning from our Gardening Challenges	In this talk three garden challenges faced by our own Master Gardeners in their yards are presented along with their path to a resolution. Come be a garden sleuth and help figure out what went wrong!

Lovable Lavender	Lavender is one of the most popular garden herbs around. It is a fragrant, versatile and easy to grow plant, with uses in all types of gardens. Learn more about the different Lavender varieties, the history of lavender, how to create the best growing environment, how to use them in cooking and in crafts and more.
Monet's Garden	Claude Monet's gardens and paintings illustrate the key elements of garden design.
Native North American Perennials for Your Garden	Learn the history of native plants in North America and Ohio, the differences between exotic, naturalized and noxious plants and suggestions for sun and shade.
Native Plants: Rugged, Easy-Care Survivors	With the wild swings in our weather, gardeners need plants that are tough and can survive. Native plants have evolved to withstand our region's characteristics. Gardeners not only want rugged plants but also easy to care for plants. This presentation covers trees and shrubs, perennials, and grasses that are native to our region and can withstand our climate. Also covered: using rain gardens to solve some problems caused by the weather.
Orchids: Can I Grow Orchids in My Home?	This presentation attempts to dispel many of the myths about the difficulty of growing orchids, covers the 5 easiest types a beginner should try, and provides other general information about orchid cultivation.
Organic Gardening	Ever wonder what Organic Gardening entails? This presentation covers soil basics, plant selection and care, as well as fertilizing and pest control.
Ornamental Grasses	How and why to use ornamental grasses in the landscape. Discussion of different species of ornamental grasses.
Ornamental Vines	Vines can be unpredictable and adventuresome. But they are adaptable, hardy, lovely to look at, intoxicating to breathe in, and can have four season interest in the garden.
Overwintering Patio Plants	We work to brighten our patios or yards with containers each Spring. But as Fall approaches we need to plan what plants we can overwinter and how to do it. This presentation will help you plan and succeed in overwintering a wide range of plants.

Pest Control Without Chemicals	Managing garden pests in your vegetable garden without chemicals may be easier than you think. Some basic practices in conjunction with using a few natural products will allow for the production of healthy chemical-free vegetables. Addressed are the three most effective non-chemical supplements to combat pests, the most common pests based on vegetable family and subfamily groupings, and some aids to provide you with all the information you need for the garden.
Phenology: Nature's Calendar	Phenology is the study of cyclical natural events that happen in response to seasonal and climate changes in the environment. Using these observations, scientists can develop a yearly calendar of when certain events will occur, just by tracking temperature. This presentation explores the history of phenology, the development of a calendar by Ohio State and how we can do some citizen-science observing and exploring on our own. This is a good presentation to show in late winter...in anticipation of spring!
Plant Nutrients and Fertilizers	Just like animals and humans, plants need proper nutrition to be their best. In this talk you will learn all about the nutrients needed and how to supply them to your plants.
The Power of Pollinators	The vital role of pollinators for our plant life, food supply and economy is illustrated, with an overview of several types of pollinators and measures that may be taken to support the health and numbers of pollinators. This presentation is composed of three modules. "The Power of Pollinators" was created by a partnership between The Xerces Society for Invertebrate Conservation, The University of Wisconsin-Madison Center for Integrated Agricultural Systems, and The Ohio State University Bee Lab and Pollinarium.
Pruning: When, Where, and How	Interested in improving the appearance and increasing the vigor of your landscape plants? This presentation discusses the appropriate time and proper technique for pruning shrubs and deadheading flowering plants.

Putting Your Garden to Bed	As fall winds down and winter approaches, gardeners need to address some basic maintenance that will make their work in the spring much easier. This presentation explains the basic chores for preparing for winter. Topics covered will include lawns, roses, evergreens and shrubs, flower beds, vegetable gardens, containers and tools.
Raised Bed Gardening	Raised bed gardens date back to colonial times. They are great for people with mobility issues, can provide higher yields and work in all kinds of spaces. This presentation discusses the pros and cons and shows you how to build a raised bed garden.
Rain Gardens and Rain Barrels	This demonstration presentation provides answers to what are they, where to locate, how big should they be, how to attach the barrel to a structure and what plants will benefit from them.
Seed Starting	This is a demonstration presentation on how to have success with seed starting. Participants will learn about proper containers, planting, light, heat, how to set up an area at home, when to start, how to water, how to prevent dampening off, and how to harden off.
Shade Gardening	Sometimes people view gardening in shade as a negative, but did you know that shade gardens offer the largest selection of plants for your garden? This talk presents the ins and outs of shade gardening and shows you some of the multitude of trees, shrubs and flowers that can be grown in the shade.
Soil Testing	Soil Testing is the best way to learn about your soil, what's good about it, and what it needs. This presentation includes how to collect and prepare the soil samples, and understanding the information received. Did you know that your soil should be tested about every 3 years!
Success with Succulents	Succulents can be more than "Hens and Chicks. This presentation introduces you to many unusual varieties, teaches you how to grow and care for them and helps you to design interesting planters.

10 Essentials of Vegetable Gardening	The talk is designed to get everyone to grow some of their own food by outlining 10 simple things they can do to have their own vegetable garden that doesn't involve tilling, or major effort, time, or money.
Vegetable Gardening– All You Need to Know	How to start a vegetable garden from scratch. While aimed at helping the beginner, there are lots of tips for the more experienced gardener. Container gardening is touched upon. Easy-to-grow variety recommendations are included.
Vegetable Gardening in Small Spaces	Today many of us have smaller spaces in which to garden. This presentation covers multiple options to overcome this issue.
Waking the Garden in Spring	A month-by-month discussion of garden chores that need to be done from March through June. The program includes clean-up, fertilization, pruning and planting of lawns, flower beds, trees, roses and vegetables. A very practical approach for homeowners.
Weeds!	This PowerPoint presentation describes who and what they are, how they reproduce, how to control them and other topics related to these unwanted plants in our gardens.
When and How Do I Harvest	Growing vegetables has great rewards! Whether enjoying them immediately in a salad, as a dinner dish, or canning and freezing for later use–this presentation includes all you need to know about the right time to harvest and how to do it!