



HORT SHORTS



May-June 2000



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CHECK OUT THESE FEATURES:

Hort Shorts Plant of the Month

Hort Shorts for Seedlings

Hort Shorts Pesky Pests

Hort Shorts Website of the Month

The Ohio State University,
The United States
Department of Agriculture,
and
Lucas County
Commissioners Cooperating
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Urban & Consumer Program
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Urban & Consumer
Horticulture



Welcome to the 1st edition of "Hort Shorts", an educational newsletter of the Consumer and Urban Horticulture Program at The Ohio State University Extension Lucas County. The program is supported by the following governmental entities:

City of Maumee, City of Sylvania, City of Toledo, Springfield Township, Sylvania Township, Village of Holland, Village of Ottawa Hills, and Lucas County

The program focus includes involvement with tree/plant health care education, gypsy moth education and suppression coordination, the Master Gardener Volunteer program, youth gardening, and green industry training.

Sit back and enjoy this "kick-off" edition. We look forward to newsletters highlighting horticultural issues that are timely, relevant, and educational for the

PLANT OF THE MONTH:

BOTTLEBRUSH BUCKEYE. . . *Aesculus parviflora*

Each issue will highlight a plant of the month. Being that this is the first edition of "Hort Shorts", I felt it only appropriate that a buckeye was the first highlighted plant.

The bottlebrush buckeye (*Aesculus parviflora*) is a summer-flowering spectacle few plants can rival. The bold foliage of this plant fills out a broad, mounding form accented with white spikes of flowers in late spring to early summer. This plant is effectively used to develop naturalistic plantings under shade trees. It's excellent for mass plantings, large shrub borders, or as a distinct single lawn specimen.

This broad, mounting shrub is often wider than tall, reaching 8 to 12 feet tall and 8 to 15 feet wide. It is multistemmed with upright slender branches. Suckers grow at the plant base but aren't overly aggressive.



The compound leaves are large with five to seven leaflets, each usually 5 to 8 inches long. That gives foliage a bold texture. The medium green leaves stay healthy and nearly pest-free all season. With good conditions in fall, the foliage turns a bright yellow before the leaves drop.

Summer blooms are a spectacular feature of bottlebrush buckeye in June and July. The erect spikes of flowers are 12 inches tall and 3 inches wide, with pink stamens extending beyond the petals like bottle brushes. Each stem usually ends in a flower spike. Quite spectacular in full-bloom.

By autumn a few light brown fruits are fully formed on each flower cluster. They split open to release one or two smooth brown seeds. Plants can be grown from these seeds if you plant them right away and never allow them to dry out.

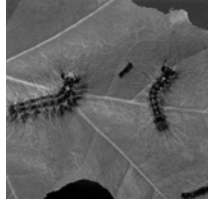
The bottlebrush buckeye is hardy in zones 4 to 8 (we are in zone 5 in NW Ohio). Plants are well adapted to shade, but will prosper in sun with enough moisture. They do best in acidic, moist, well-drained, rich soils. During dry periods, a little extra water will keep the plants attractive. Fertilize lightly each year after the foliage emerges to keep the plants growing. The bottlebrush buckeye is free from serious pest problems and easy to maintain.

This publication is provided to assist you in receiving the horticultural information necessary to enhance the quality of life for you and your family. If you have any additions or deletions to our mailing list – please call Amy Stone or Barbara Northrup at 243-MOTH (6684). Visit our website at <http://www.ag.ohio-state.edu/>

HORT SHORTS GYPSY MOTH UPDATE

Gypsy moth caterpillars began hatching in Lucas County on Thursday, April 20, this year. Warmer than normal temperatures during late April and early May pushed the leaf-eating pests a little ahead of schedule. On May 10, the Ohio Department of Agriculture began spraying more than 42,000 acres in 14 Ohio counties. Although overall state gypsy moth populations were high this season, Lucas County populations were less than in previous years.

The ODA did spray one block in Lucas County this year. The St. James Woods area completed the application in the fall of 1999, was surveyed, and met the qualifications for the aerial spray treatment. Ottawa Park and Crossgates Park were also sprayed through a separate contract with the City of Toledo. In all three areas, *Bacillus thuringiensis var. kurstaki* was applied by airplane at the treetop levels.



Entomophaga Update

Entomophaga maimaiga is a common disease in gypsy moth populations in its native country of Japan. The fungus was first released in the United States in 1910 as part of a program to introduce natural enemies of gypsy moth. Scientists found no evidence that the fungus had become established and the project was abandoned a few years later. However, the fungus appeared unexpectedly in several northeastern states in 1989 and caused high mortality in many gypsy moth populations. Scientists have several theories, but the strange reappearance of the fungus is a mystery. Additional introductions have occurred, and the fungus also is spreading naturally. In 1999, Lucas County Extension collected and distributed *Entomophaga* to residents who requested the fungus.

Currently there is a list of people with gypsy moths in their landscape that are interested in receiving the fungus as a means of control.

Weather conditions will determine the amount of fungus that will be distributed this summer. We are also mapping the distribution so that all areas that are dealing with the gypsy moth will be included, rather than one particular location receiving all of the fungus.

Although it is not likely to be a "silver bullet" for control of the gypsy moth, *Entomophaga maimaiga* should improve the ability to manage this pest in Lucas County.

HORT SHORTS WEBSITE OF THE MONTH

When searching the web, have you ever typed in a gardening topic and had so many matches that it took hours just to get through them? Among the very interesting and informational pages, are usually some unworthy and timewasting pages. If you are looking for the latest scientific and researched based information, you will have to check out this site - <http://plantfacts.ohio-state.edu/>

This web page includes FactSheets from Ohio State University Extension, and other land grant colleges across the country. You can search for a specific state or region, or do a general search of the entire country. This site is a definitive bookmark site, one that you will return to over and over. Check it out!

HORT SHORTS FOR SEEDLINGS

Hopefully, we have entered the frost-free days of the year. Now would be a great time to plant annual flowers and warm-season vegetables outdoors. Planting sites for annuals should be well drained and in full sun or partial shade, depending on plant species preference. Plant roots fail to thrive in wet soil, so drainage is very important. Adjust the soil pH to 6.0 - 7.0 to achieve the best growth for most annuals and vegetables. Soils containing high amounts of organic matter, called muck soils, can have soil pH's ranging from 5.5 to 6.0. At planting, lightly break apart root masses to prevent "root balling." This procedure will ensure rapid root expansion into surrounding soil. Water plants, as soon as possible after planting, to hasten root establishment.

Now is also the perfect time to plant warm-season vegetables such as beans, eggplants, melons, squashes, peppers, pumpkins, and tomatoes. It is highly desirable to plant vegetables in raised beds when soil drainage is a problem. Mulching your garden soil can help conserve moisture and help suppress weeds. Support tall plants with cages or stakes when needed. Soil tests are the best way to discover and correct the nutrient needs, if necessary, of any garden.

HORT SHORTS PESKY PESTS

May/June Beetles Bumbling



May/June beetles have been flying around porch lights at night, bumbling into door and window screens, and generally making a nuisance of themselves. The slightly oblong and dark reddish brown beetles, feed at night on foliage and flowers and normally cause little damage. However, several reports from across Ohio this season highlight that these beetles can occasionally cause problems. Dr. Dave Shetlar, the BugDoc with OSU Extension reported that he had received phone calls concerning serious defoliation of oaks and maples from these beetles.

The defoliation caused by this critter involved the removal of all of the leaf tissue with the exception of the main veins. These beetles are night feeders, so the casual observer may be left a little in the dark trying to explain the damage, unless they use a flashlight and go exploring at night. Larvae of these beetles are white grubs, with feeding habits similar to Japanese beetle grubs. Although damage may appear severe, the beetles only fly for a few weeks leaving plenty of time for defoliated trees to produce new leaves

COMING NEXT ISSUE:

Asian Long Horned Beetle — A Real Lemon
When it Comes to Imports!
Turf Tips on White Grubs — White
Grubs Bugging You?
Garden Day Trips —
Tiptoe through the Tulips