

St Marys Garden Club Newsletter

July 2021

Dates and Events --

Zoom meeting is Tuesday, July 13.

Announcements—

Garden to-dos for July

Keep flowers watered, deadheaded, and clipped back or pinched back when they need it. If you can reach them, clip off the seed heads on your crape myrtles to encourage bloom through September. Make sure your plants are mulched to keep the soil temperature cooler. Water containers every day if there is no rain.

Plant annuals such as celosia, coleus, crossandra, impatiens, kalanchoe, nicotiana, ornamental peppers, portulaca, torenia, salvia. Also plant lima beans, eggplant, okra, Southern peas, peppers, and watermelon.

The Garden Maven's Advice to the "Floralorn"

Dear Garden Maven,

I have a problem with a group of filthy, loud, obnoxious geese that are making themselves at home in my backyard beside the pond. They defile my grass with their feces. They act like they own the place and have a real attitude when I try to scare them off. Oh, waddle I do?

Unwilling Goose Girl

Dear Goose Girl,

Canada geese are an exception to the rule that "All Canadians are Nice". Your lawn can end up like a stinking, slimy mud pit. They eat your grass. They carry diseases like avian flu, cryptosporidiosis, and e coli. They are very aggressive if you threaten them, especially if they have managed to build a nest in your yard. To say something good about them, they mate for life, and the male goose will defend his spouse and goslings to the death. So you don't want to threaten his family. There is a good reason that a flock of geese is called a "gang". And they are protected by the Migratory Bird Act. So no cement shoes.

Geese need easy access to food and water to drink every 30 minutes. They spend most of the day grazing in the grass and nibbling at the nice new shoots in your lawn. The way to get rid of them is to make your yard as inhospitable as possible. If it is like the Ritz Carlton now, with bird feeders, open spaces, and easy access to water, turn it into the birdie version of an EconoLodge. Get rid of any birdfeeders for the season. God willing, in the fall they will fly off to somewhere else and you can feed your well-mannered songbirds again. Tall grasses make them feel nervous, so let the grass at the edge of the pond grow 20 inches tall, or plant some other plant that impedes them. Hopefully they will go to your neighbor's yard and stay there. Try to get your neighbors to stop feeding them if they are doing this. Talk of E coli may help in this regard.

Decoys, repellents, loud noises, sudden lights, and reflective balloons can scare them. You can get a wind activated coyote decoy for \$69. It looks like it is running and would scare me off. It is also not quite as attractive as other lawn ornaments. A swan decoy that floats in the pond (anchored by a long piece of line to your yard) is a more attractive solution. Geese and swans try to avoid each other. Or get a real dog with a bad temper.

Synthetic grape flavor is used in professional goose repellent. A cheaper version of the exact chemical is unsweetened grape koolaid. Mix 5 packs in a gallon of water and spray on your lawn. Watch the gang gag and race to other parts.

The Goose-D-Fence is a retractable "fence" with fishing line. It covers 250 feet with 2 fishing lines, which the geese do not like to cross, and which reflect light which scares them off. It can supposedly be set up and taken down in 10 minutes. It looks unobtrusive and is available for \$79.

Lots of options, good luck with your goose problem!

The Maven

Plant Hero of the Month: Crinum's are blooming.