

## Thoughts from the Garden

By

Ray Mikula

September, 2022

September is the month for relief from summers blistering heat and heralds the new Fall season. Some of the earliest leaves, like those from the Black Gum tree will start to change and many of the flowering plants are nearing their end. But our bee population still needs flowers for a food source. Fall flowers are not as numerous as Spring and Summer flowers but make sure you have them on hand for the pollinators. I love the beauty of pineapple sage. Tall spires of small bright red trumpets are triggered to bloom by the autumnal equinox producing a bright show for the end of September and October. Tickseed sunflower, a self seeding annual, adorn the roadsides when the matching yellow school busses start ferrying our children to and from school. ( If you grab some seed heads from them in October and sprinkle the seed in an open garden space you can have some in your yard next fall). Some bulbs like Saffron crocus or colchicum will brighten a garden patch as well as Toad Lilly. Japanese anemone start their bloom period now as well as aster and chrysanthemum. Annuals like marigold and zinnia can reach their peak bloom in fall. Cosmos, Thai ginger and curcuma ginger show off there fragrant flowers now as well.

For some indoor plants, this is also the time when equal days and nights make poinsettias and Christmas cactus begin the budding process for indoor winter splendor if kept in a room with only natural light.

Our hummingbird population will hang around most of September until every one of their offspring have left on their migration. Then the last parent will leave. It's a little crazy that you would send your kids off on the biggest journey of their lives without you or a map, but they do it successfully each year. It's good to leave your feeders out for a couple weeks after they leave to provide for late travelers.

On a different note, Guy Mussey, the extension agent in Stafford county, is retiring and we wish him well. His many years of experience and vast knowledge of plants and insects have been of great value to our community. He has trained most of the Master Gardeners in the Rappahannock area as well as Master Naturalist, Tree Stewards, and Lawn program workers. He has been there for support and answered so many of our questions about plants. His teaching style and wit made learning easy. He will truly be missed.

Correspondingly, the Master Gardener training class, which usually begins in September, will not take place until a replacement agent can be found. Until then contact the help desk at [VCEStafford.helpdesk@gmail.com](mailto:VCEStafford.helpdesk@gmail.com) or call (540)658-800 ext. 1056 and Lisa Ellis can help answer your questions on plants. You can also find some enlightening garden talks from Master Gardeners by checking out the calendar at [MGACRA.org](http://MGACRA.org).

Till the next time, enjoy your Garden.