

Hydrangea heaven – inside and outside – abounds at 814 Luray Drive, Ashland, home of Gary and Celeste Gerwig, July “Yard of the Month” winners. Hydrangeas from one end to the other... “We are a hydrangea family,” according to Celeste Gerwig. But that is not all in the way of flowers, etc.

Art of Gardening Club members Sally Ahlers and Claudia Dunn awarded the Gerwigs \$50 gift certificates from the club as well as from Farm and Home Hardware July 3.

Art of Gardening scouts, President Kathy Bargar, Carolyn Brown, Pat Edwards and Dunn, decided the winning yard. Bargar noted “a raised garden in the back along with an above ground pool.” Curb appeal also made it a winner and is ultimately what won the committee over.

Also, a plus: “Color provided by a wealth of annuals, in beds as well as in flower boxes. Interesting tree selection in the front yard (which will provide shade in the upcoming years),” according to Edwards. “Picket fence added both charm as well as design. White rocking chairs drew eyes to the front door. Overall...so well balanced and immaculately maintained,” she added.

Mrs. Gerwig has found a way that hydrangeas will stay for weeks in standing water. “Put them in alum.” Alum acts as a preservative.

The couple, he with four brothers and she with three brothers and one sister, are the parents of five adopted sons and two adopted daughters. “Of the seven we’ve adopted, the oldest four are on their own,” Gerwig said. Since 2017 they also foster medically fragile children.

Jennifer Goss has been employed two years as a nurse in the Gerwig household for the special needs children. She tends to two children currently.

The Gerwigs have a grape arbor which is raised for the leaves. Concord grapes has the best rolling leaf for making yebette, a Syrian dish which is a big hit enjoyed by the children.

Since 2010 the Gerwigs have resided at the Luray Drive address. They used to live by UH Samaritan on Vernon Avenue.

“Both of our families are in the grocery store business.” If the name Gerwig sounds familiar, Gerwig is related to Gerwig’s White Barn. He said his grandfather started the grocery store in 1951. His dad and his dad’s two brothers took over in 1963. Now the youngest brother’s son, Dennis, Jr., is the owner. Mrs. Gerwig from the Akron area told of involvement with various grocery stores in her family growing up.

A tour of the yard by Mrs. Gerwig included starting with the raised gardens. She said that “Marigolds are good in keeping insects and animals away.” She pointed out lavender, Japanese egg plants, tomatoes (German Johnson’s), potatoes, green beans, green and yellow onion, zinnias, dahlias, carnations, AND blueberries. She said her husband also raises mums.

The window boxes in front contain pansies. Geraniums, vincas and dahlias are featured in the five front flowerpots displayed on brick.

The back yard also highlights a sandbox, a handicap accessible JennSwing and a heated pool.

Don’t forget the hydrangeas! Colorful hydrangeas span the right side of the house. They’re in front. You can get your fill of hydrangeas at the Gerwigs.

Gerwig who grew up on a farm retired from a 31-year career at Verizon. He does most of the gardening. They both have enough to keep busy. Gerwig acknowledged, “The older I get, the simpler I want it.” That remains to be seen.