

ROOTS AND SHOOTS

Monroe County Master Gardener Association Newsletter

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TWO MEMBERS RECEIVE SCHOLARSHIPS TO MG STATE CONFERENCE

By Helen Hollingsworth

Vickie St. Meyer and Barb Cappy were winners in the drawing to receive \$100 scholarships to the Purdue State Master Gardener Conference which will be held on September 27-29 at Aztar Executive Conference Center in Evansville. Alternates to receive the scholarships are Joanna Howe and Nancy O'Kane. The drawings were held at the July 17 general meeting at the Monroe County Fairgrounds.

The State MG Conference is a gardener's feast, featuring outstanding speakers, useful demonstrations and garden topics, and several field trip opportunities. Registrations for the conference are due soon. See Rosie Lerner's article below.

2007 MASTER GARDENER STATE CONFERENCE SEPTEMBER 27-29 — EVANSVILLE

By Rosie Lerner, Purdue University

Reservations arrive daily with participation from almost every section of the state. What a wonderful opportunity to learn from one another about plant sales and garden walks and to inspire new ideas for our MG groups. Conference reservation deadline is August 15.

You can download a copy of the program and registration information from our website:

<http://www.ces.purdue.edu/ces/Vanderburgh/mastergardener/StateMGConference2007.pdf>

Yes, non-smoking hotel rooms are still available. If anyone in your group was turned away because only smoking rooms were left, please know that the situation has been corrected. Hotel reservation deadline is July 26!

Each group represented may bring a prepared display no larger than 24" x 36" along with any information you may want to distribute.

VOLUNTEER HOURS — KEEP THEM COMING

By Amy Thompson

Today I had a wonderful surprise in the mail — Master Gardener Volunteer Record sheets from six different volunteers! Keep turning them in! I am required to do an impact report on Master Gardener activities in Monroe County for the state by September 15th, so I will appreciate receiving any hours that can be reported prior to that date.

I have had several inquiries about turning in hours from past years. I know there are quite a few members who have not turned in hours for a number of years; if you can reasonably re-create your hours, they will count — so dig out your old calendars and crumpled post-it notes and turn them in. Just don't pad in hours that you can't prove to yourself you completed...we're working on the honor system for this year.

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MEMBER NEWS

BY NANCY WHITE

Master Gardeners Honored at WonderLab

The staff of WonderLab has laid a brick in the Wonder Walk in honor of Master Gardeners. Several members of the WonderGarden support crew attended a reception on July 17 honoring the donors of the new bricks. Representing Master Gardeners were (pictured, left to right) Nancy White, Barb Cappy, Jackie Gilkey, and Mike Engber. Be sure to see our brick right under the sundial at the opening of the garden. Notice also the plaque that has been placed on the gate thanking us for our contributions to the garden.



New Echinaceas

Have you seen the amazing new colors for these hardy perennials? Several well-visited commercial websites are now showing these in colors of red, coral, bright yellow, and green. Why not investigate going beyond our old-familiar purple coneflower by growing some of the new hybrids such as Vintage Wine (dark claret red), Green Envy, After Midnight (medium pink), Fragrant Angel (white), Harvest Moon (yellow), Razz-a-ma-taz (short pink), and Summer Sky (short bi-color). These are all very hardy, make great cut flowers, and provide a magnet for butterflies when blooming and for birds who feast on the seeds during the fall.

Last Field Trip Comes in October

Come join us for our last field trip of the season as we visit the gardens at Oliver Winery on October 8. In order to have the Winery horticulturist be our guide, we must schedule on this date at 3:00 p.m. After the guided tour, tasting in the winery can be enjoyed. If you haven't already signed up for this field trip, contact Nancy White or Ann McEndarfer to get your name on the contact list.

MG General Meeting on September 25

The September MG General meeting features Linda Thompson, Environmental Planner for the City of Bloomington, who will give a program, *Naturalizing Landscapes*. The focus will be on habitat stewardship. Education hours will be available for participants. The meeting will be held on Tuesday, September 25, at St. Marks Church on the east 46 Bypass. Ample parking is available to the south of the entry door. Enter the church drive from the Bypass entrance right behind Starbucks. Be sure to join us for this interesting program.

Thinking about Bulbs?

If you are already thinking about ordering some bulbs for fall planting, you might be interested in ordering very long distance, perhaps from the famed bulb companies around Amsterdam. During a recent visit to one of the largest bulb garden in Holland, Keukenhof Gardens, we were given information on ordering for direct shipment to the United States, since bulbs cannot be brought through customs without lengthy registration paperwork. Many suppliers, including those that supply bulbs to Keukenhof have websites, and it is possible to order catalogues. Here are some websites for starters. Walter Blom Company at www.info@walterblom.nl; Warmenhoven Export www.info@warmenhoven-export.com. To contact Keukenhof Garden direct, go to www.info@keukenhof.nl. If you have some other suppliers that you have tried, let us know so we can share that information in *Roots and Shoots*.

Horticulture Magazine's website, hortmag.com, has an interesting article on growing heirloom bulbs, especially tulips. The article is called *Building a Bulb Collection* by Marty Ross. The authors have developed what they call a bulb museum in their garden in Kansas City with many rare bulbs gleaned from several sources including exchanges sponsored by the American Daffodil Society and from the Hortus Bulborum in Holland. Most of their collection date back to before 1900 and are extremely hardy. The article notes that bulbs from the Hortus Bulborum can be ordered in the United States from www.oldhousegardens.com.



YOUR MCMGA BOARD – CHANGES FOR 2008

By Amy Thompson

As a result of the membership approval of the revisions to the MCMGA bylaws at the July 17th general meeting, a few changes occur in the positions on the MG board beginning in 2008. Following is a list of the new board positions that will change with the revision of the bylaws, along with a description of the role each plays in helping the MCMGA run smoothly. Though some of the names of the positions and some duties were re-assigned, much of the work of the board will remain unchanged. The MCMGA board typically meets 10 out of 12 months on the first Monday of the month, although that schedule is occasionally adjusted to avoid holidays. Members are always welcome at board meetings! If you would be interested in serving in a board position or on the nominating committee, please contact MCMGA president Marilyn Brinley at mlbrinley@aol.com or at 824-1318.

President - The president presides at all meetings of the Monroe County Master Gardener Association and the executive board and is in charge of the general supervision of the affairs of the organization. The president appoints (or can delegate the appointment) of all committee chairmen and committee members not spelled out in the bylaws. The president represents the MCMGA on the Monroe County Extension Board.

Vice President for Programs - The vice president for programs performs the duties of the president in the event of the president's absence. This person chairs the program committee. The vice president for programs works closely with the vice president for education to plan meetings.

Vice President for Education - The vice president for education chairs the education committee and is responsible for arranging educational opportunities for new members, our general membership, and the community at large. The vice president for education works closely with the vice president for programs to plan meetings. The vice president for education works closely with the extension educator and assists with the intern training program.

Treasurer - The treasurer is the bonded fiscal agent of the association. The treasurer receives and keeps a safe account of all monies. The treasurer prepares the annual budget and presents it for approval at the first board meeting of the new fiscal year and also prepares the records for an annual audit by an audit committee. The treasurer pays all incurred bills. The treasurer completes all required state and federal forms as needed to maintain not-for-profit status for the association. The treasurer also works with the director of records to assure that all active members pay dues.

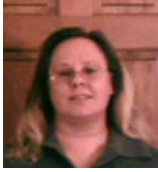
Secretary - The secretary keeps the written record of the board meetings, maintains a current membership list, conducts the general correspondence, and is in charge of maintaining many association records. The secretary works in cooperation with the director of communication and the journalist as needed, to prepare and mail notices of meetings and events and to update and revise the membership directory.

Director of Communication - The director of communication chairs the communication committee and is responsible for overseeing the maintenance the MCMGA website and mailing lists of both email and postal addresses. The director of communication is responsible for all bulk email to members, including newsletters. The director of communication is also responsible for annual updating *Folia and Flora*, the membership directory.

Director of Records - The director of records maintains current and permanent records of members' volunteer and education hours. The director of records communicates volunteer and education hour information to the extension educator to facilitate cohesive record keeping. The director of records is responsible for obtaining and archiving any materials pertaining to the Monroe County Master Gardener Association. The director of records may appoint an archivist.

Journalist - The journalist is in charge of composing print and electronic newsletters. The journalist works in cooperation with the director of communication, vice president for programs, vice president for education and secretary to include notices of meetings and events. The journalist is responsible for mailing print editions of *Roots and Shoots* newsletters and for forwarding the electronic editions of *Roots and Shoots* to the director of communication for transmittal to members.

(continued on page 4)



FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DESK

By Marilyn Brinley

Now that the dog days of summer are here, I am looking forward to a chance to sit back and take a break now that the fair is over. So many members have worked hard to get our demonstration garden ready for the fair, and the results of their efforts show in the delightful garden we now have. Others have volunteered their time to help out with the gardening exhibits. I thank all who have helped in any way to make our fair a successful event.

We had a wonderful turnout for our July general meeting, despite the earlier downpour. Fortunately, the rain helped us to pull those last stubborn weeds as we prepared the garden for the fair. The business meeting went well, with past president Mary Jane Hall explaining the need for changing our existing bylaws. The vote was overwhelmingly in favor of the changes.

So now your board will get to work, establishing a nominating committee and asking for people to step forward who might be interested in being on next year's board. As we must now follow the rules provided by the new bylaws, the slate of officers must be ready for voting at our annual Holiday Party. The new board will then take office as of January 1, 2008. This is necessary so that the board's terms will coincide with our fiscal year.

Again, thank you all for your hard work, for your dedication, for your support to our association. I believe that these new bylaws will only make us a better and stronger organization. Grab your ice tea or your lemonade and sit back and enjoy the fruits of your labors. You deserve it.

YOUR MCMGA BOARD — CHANGES FOR 2008 (continued from page 3)

Director at Large – The director at large is the liaison with other Master Gardener Associations and attends any state advisory committee meetings or arranges for a representative from the MCMGA to attend.

Change in Terms of Office

The new bylaws call for elections to be held at the final general meeting of the fiscal year. Elections for 2008 will be held at annual Holiday meeting in late 2007. Look for information in *Roots and Shoots* for the details of that meeting. The slate of officers for the 2008 elections will appear in an upcoming edition *Roots and Shoots*.

In order to provide continuity to the board from year to year, the terms of office of the board members will be staggered. Beginning in 2008, the following officers will be elected for a **two-year term**: vice president for programs, director of records, treasurer, and journalist. In 2008 the following officers will be elected for a **one-year term**, with election for two-year terms beginning in 2009 and in odd numbered years thereafter: president, vice president for education, director of communications, and director at large.

All the business of the board and bylaws and revisions can become rather tedious and dull, especially when the reason we are all involved with the association is because we love plants and gardening and want to share our knowledge with others. However the business-side of the association also needs to be tended if our association is going to grow and be successful. Having been in a county which had no formal association, I can tell you that having a group that offers opportunities and events and so many dimensions to the Master Gardener program more than makes up for the “un-fun” part of things. Truthfully, and I think most of our current board members would agree, even when we have lots of business agenda items to cover, I enjoy the board meetings, and we always seem to have some laughs.

MARK YOUR CALENDAR!

August 24—SIDHDIS Plant Sale

September 15—General Meeting, 6:30 p.m.

September 27-29—Purdue State MG Conference

October 13—Hendricks County Symposium, Adventures in Gardening



A GOOD BOOK ABOUT GROUNDCOVERS

by M. Susan Osborne

Groundcovers by Nan Sinton and David C. Michener, published by Houghton Mifflin Company, 2001.

More than 400 flowering and foliage groundcovers are presented in *Groundcovers* by Nan Sinton and David C. Michener. This book is a Taylor's Guide and the Series Editor is Frances Tenenbaum. The book has been awarded the golden seal of approval by the American Horticultural Society.

Have you ever had a barren spot for which mulching did little to enhance the area? Have you ever just wanted something simple, low growing, with no maintenance, something seasonal that did well in our Indiana Zone 5b to remedy the problem? With this purpose in mind, I discovered *Groundcovers* when I attended the American Horticultural Society's Symposium this past February in Indianapolis. Nan Sinton facilitated the symposium, so naturally her book was available for sale. I contemplated purchasing the book since there were other books available, but thought this one would aide me in choosing the correct plants for a shady garden area at my home. It appears that I made the correct choice.

Groundcovers is, in my opinion, a typical Taylor's Guide – an authoritative and intelligently organized guide. The bulk of the book is an encyclopedia. Listings are from Acanthus to Zauschneria. However, the first twenty-five pages offer a fresh look at groundcovers. The authors prepare readers for planting by emphasizing the importance of good soil for thriving plants, as well as information on purchasing plants – which ones and how many. They discuss propagation through cuttings and divisions and how to use groundcovers to solve problems. They touch lightly on the invasive exotics and move into design issues offering stylish solutions. These pages, written concisely and clearly, offer priceless information.

Don't you just love a good picture book of gardens? I especially enjoy seeing pictures of plants at their peak in the books I read. In *Groundcovers*, a Gallery of Plants is offered with over 120 pages (yes, that's pages, not pictures) of photographs (two to a page, which adds up to over 240 pictures). The prints are DY-NO-MITE, and each picture offers a few brief lines – Latin name, common name, sun and soil requirements, brief description, zone, and a page number for you to refer to in the encyclopedia section – about the plants.

The final section is the Encyclopedia of Plants where plants are listed alphabetically. The description includes the Latin name, brief information on the plant, strategies for growing and using the plant, and species and hybrids in the plant family. Not too much information, but enough for you to know about the plant to aide you in your selections.

Groundcovers is not a lengthy book, yet it emphasizes the importance of using groundcovers to solve garden problems. This book not only includes the ordinary or familiar groundcovers, but introduces information on more than 400 of the new, the old, and the unusual plants that are proving to be dynamic groundcovers. *Groundcovers* assists in creating a beautiful garden that is easy to maintain and a joy to behold. I encourage you to consider reading the text, especially if you have a bare spot in your garden. Enjoy!

NOW IS THE TIME TO START IMPROVING YOUR LAWN

Tired of the way your lawn looks? If it hasn't looked up to par this summer, reseeding your lawn is an option. Mid-August is the best time to seed a new lawn or overseed an existing lawn, but planning should start now. If the lawn is just thin and needs a little help, fall is the best time to fertilize your lawn and control weeds. Depending on its condition, you have some options to improve your lawn:

1. If the lawn is in fairly good shape but thin and with a fair population of weeds, you can improve the lawn dramatically with applying 1 lb N/1000 sq ft in September and 1.25 lb N/1000 sq ft in November. You may even consider applying three applications of 1.0 lb N/1000 each in September, October, and November for very thin lawns. An application of a broadleaf herbicide in mid-October should take care of most of the broadleaf weeds like clover and dandelion. This is the option to choose if you don't want to spend a lot of time and effort improving your lawn.

2. If your lawn is very thin and weedy, but doesn't have serious soil problems such as compaction, you can follow one of two courses of action. The first is to mow very low in early to mid August and then use a power overseeder to cut in turfgrass seed. Keep mowing the turf at 1.0 inch until the new seedlings are in the 3-5 leaf stage, which could take up to 1.5 months. The other option is to leave the grass at your regular mowing height, apply a nonselective herbicide like glyphosate (Roundup) while the grass is still actively growing, wait about 5 days, and then use a power seeder to cut in seed. Aerifying the lawn in many different directions prior to cutting in the seed will also help to improve the germination and establishment of the new grass. Be sure to keep the lawn well-watered until the new seedlings are established. You can improve establishment by applying a starter fertilizer (high in P but low in N and K) at 1.0 lb P2O5/1000 sq. ft. prior to seeding and then about 4 weeks after germination. Then follow the fertilization and weed control steps listed under option 1 above.

3. If your lawn is very thin, weedy, and has serious soil problems such as compaction or bad drainage, apply Roundup in early August to kill the existing vegetation. Be sure the lawn is well-watered and growing in order to kill it most effectively (sounds counter-productive, doesn't it? After about five days, till the soil as deep as possible, rake the surface smooth, and then seed. Follow the seeding with a light rolling to improve the seed soil contact, and then keep the lawn well-watered until the new seedlings are established. To improve establishment, apply a starter fertilizer (high in P but low in N and K) at 1.0 lb P2O5/1000 sq. ft. prior to seeding and then about 4 weeks after germination. Then follow the fertilization and weed control steps listed under option 1 above. Back by popular demand is a series of photos when we renovated a then neighbor's lawn in 2000.

More details can be found in [AY-13 "Lawn Improvement Programs"](#).

ADVENTURES IN GARDENING PRESENTED BY HENDRICKS COUNTY MASTER GARDENERS

Come join other gardeners and earn six hours education credit at the Hendricks County Master Gardeners symposium, *Adventures in Gardening*, on Saturday, October 13, 8:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Fee is \$35, which includes a continental breakfast and lunch. Deadline for registration is October 5. Session titles include Trees, Rain Gardening, Wet Lands and Their Importance, Lily Care and Propagation, and Monarch Butterflies. Call Janet Cunningham (317-745-9260) at the extension office for information. Visit website www.hendricksgardeners.com for map.

YOUR MCMGA BOARD AT WORK

Editor's Note: The MCMGA board is composed of the president, two vice presidents, two secretaries, two treasurers, two journalists, two state advisory committee representatives, one webmaster, one Fair Board representative, and the extension educator, a total of fourteen people. The board meets monthly and makes decisions on behalf of the membership on topics that come before the board. The bylaws printed in our membership guide provide a description of the duties of the MCMGA officers. This month and in future months, members of the board will describe the work they do on your behalf.

President Marilyn Brinley

According to the bylaws, "The president shall preside at all meetings of the Monroe County Master Gardener Association and the Executive Board and shall be charged with the general supervision of the affairs of the organization and have the authority to co-sign checks."

So what does this mean in real life? My duties as president require me to be available and accountable to the board members, to the general members and to the Extension Agent. I often spend time either on the phone or reading and answering emails concerning Master Gardener business. I am in charge of finding a suitable meeting place for each board meeting and then a week before each meeting, I put together an agenda and email the board members, reminding them of the upcoming meeting. I co-sign checks for our treasurer and am charged with the duty of presiding at board and general meetings. In addition, I must ensure that all board members are doing their respective jobs in a timely manner.

Another of the president's duties is to ensure that a chairperson is named for each committee and making sure the chairperson has the necessary personnel and resources available to meet the stated goal. Often this requires many phone calls and emails on my part in order to find someone who is willing to chair a committee.

Fortunately, I have a willing and able board behind me every step of the way. Amy Thompson provides much valuable and insightful advice, and our members are always there, ready to jump in when needed. There is only so much one person can do without assistance.

Primarily, I see the president's job as being as much a cheerleader as a leader. I want to motivate our members to do all that they can do to grow as people and gardeners as well as Master Gardeners. I want to see our organization and our people do well, and I know very well that if we are successful, it is due to your efforts, not mine. In the end, the president is here to serve this association and its members.

SIDHDIS PLANT SALE

The Southern Indiana Daylily, Hosta, Daffodil, and Iris society will hold its 12th annual plant sale on August 25, from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. This is an excellent opportunity to buy some old favorites as well as some newer varieties. The sale will be held at the United Pentecostal Church of Highland Village in conjunction with a craft fair.

DRY FIBER-LINED HANGING BASKET?

A fiber-lined hanging basket tends to dry out fast! A way to keep moisture in the soil is to line the basket with heavy-gauge, black plastic cut into a circle and inserted between the liner and the soil. If your basket seems to retain too much water, try puncturing the plastic in three places between the top and the bottom of the basket with an ice pick or other sharp object midway to allow a little water to escape.

SHOWY FOLIAGE FOR SHADE GARDENS

By B. Rosie Lerner, Horticulturalist, Purdue University

You don't have to live in the tropics to have a stunning foliage display in your shade garden. Midwest gardeners have a wonderful foliage palette that can fill in areas among other perennials, or even star as the focal point.

Of course, everyone thinks of hosta for showy shade-loving foliage, and there are an awesome number of cultivars to choose from. They come in various shades of green and blue and accented with white, cream or yellow. There also is an amazing array of leaf textures to choose from, including ribbed, waffled, corrugated, glossy and wavy.

Ferns are another obvious choice for shade and are a diverse group of plants, when you consider their sizes and textures. Many ferns are quite hardy, although they thrive best when moisture is reliable. Hardy ferns for our area include maidenhair (*Adiantum sp.*); lady and Japanese painted (*Athyrium sp.*); ostrich (*Matteuccia*); royal and cinnamon (*Osmunda sp.*); and Christmas and holly (*Polystichum sp.*).

Siberian bugloss (*Brunnera macrophylla*) forms a tidy 1-1.5 foot clump of heart-shaped leaves, and some variegated selections are particularly attractive. In early spring, their small, blue flowers -- similar to forget-me-not -- are a nice bonus.

The white-edged leaves of variegated Solomon's seal (*Polygonatum odoratum* 'Variegatum') grow from upright, arching stems that can be up to 3 feet tall. White blooms are borne on the lower side of the upper stem in late spring.

Bethlehem sage (*Pulmonaria saccharata*) forms a compact clump up to 1.5 foot tall and about 2 feet in diameter. This plant features dark green leaves dappled with white splotches and small pink flowers, which change to blue as they mature. Several cultivars are available, including 'British Sterling' and 'Excalibur' (both noted for silver leaves edged in green), and 'Janet Fisk' and 'Margery Fish' (both of which have larger white spots). 'Sissinghurst White' bears white flowers.

The spear-shaped leaves of the painted arum (*Arum italicum* 'Pictum') lend a rather exotic appearance and have dark green and cream marbling. The greenish-white flowers, similar to Jack-in-the-pulpit, appear briefly in late spring and are followed by tall stalks with orange-red berries in midsummer.

Speaking of exotic, the leaves of umbrella plant (*Darmera peltata*) reach up to 18 inches in diameter and form clumps up to 3 feet tall and 4 feet wide. The plant has large clusters of small whitish-pink flowers that bloom before the leaves emerge in early spring. This plant is best sited on the shady bank of a pond or stream, where the roots will stay moist and cool. It is actually native to northern California and Oregon but is more popular in English gardens.

Another plant that demands plentiful moisture is *Rodgersia*. Like umbrella plant, *Rodgersia* is best sited on the shady bank of a pond or stream. This plant's large compound leaves are made of five to seven leaflets, each up to 8 inches long. Its large clusters of white-to-pink flowers are an added bonus in late spring to midsummer, but the plant's foliage is quite interesting by itself. The bronzeleaf form is *Rodgersia podophylla*.

Although most ornamental grasses prefer full sun, *Hakonechloa* shows off best in partial shade and features bright yellow leaves contrasted by narrow green stripes. This is a very well behaved grass, forming a dense clump about 1-1.5 foot tall. Although it might be marginally hardy in some areas, it will survive in protected areas if sited in well-drained soil.

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES COMPILED BY NANCY WHITE

Location	Time	Jobs	Contact
State Fair Purdue Education Booth	August 12	Educating fairgoers	Preston Gwinn, 876-2999
Monroe County Fair	July 22-29	various	Esther Minnick, 876-4523; Diana Young, 339-0040; Carol Cobine, 333-8314; Mary Jane Hall, 824-2762
Hilltop Garden & Nature Center	year around	various	855-2799
Templeton Garden Project	spring/fall	teaching children	Nancy White, 824-4426
MG Demonstration Garden	seasonal	various	Marsha Trowbridge - 876-1493
T. C. Steele SHS	seasonal	various	Steve Doty, 988-2785
Cheryl's Garden	seasonal	various	Larime Wilson, 333-9705
Flatwoods Park Butterfly Gardens	seasonal	various	Cathy Meyer, 349,2800
MCMGA Horticulture Hotline	year around	inquiries and research	Amy Thompson, 349-2575
MCMGA Speakers Bureau	year around	various	Amy Thompson, 349-2575
MCMGA Newsletter	year around	writing, stapling, labeling	Helen Hollingsworth, 332-7313
MCMGA Web Site	year around	various	Barb Hays, 332-4032
MG Program Committee Member	year around	plan MG programs	Ann McEndarfer, 334-1801 Nancy White, 824-4426
Middle Way House	seasonal	various	Clara Wilson, 333-7404
Wylie House	year around	various	Sherry Wise, 855-6224
Bloomington Hospitality House	year around	educate seniors	Rene Thompson, 353-3000
Mother Hubbard's Cupboard	year around	education, resource	Libby Yarnell, 355-6843
WonderLab Garden	2 times monthly	various	Nancy White, 824-4426
Garton Farm	year around	Assess grounds, develop plans	Michael Bell, 336-6141

PLEASE WEAR YOUR NAME BADGE WHEN VOLUNTEERING.

GARDEN QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

By Rosie Lerner, Consumer Horticulture Specialist, Purdue University

Q. Some years ago, I had a list of plants in the garden that were compatible and those that weren't. If you have such information, could you include it in your "question and answer" column? It's too late for this season, but we'd have it for next.

A. The principles of "companion planting" are based on the belief that certain plants can benefit others when planted in combination or nearby. Such strategies can include using specific plants to draw pests away from the main crop, inter-planting with nitrogen-fixing legumes, suppression of pests or diseases by certain plants and, in general, strength through diversity.

On the other hand, some plants have the ability to suppress, or even kill, other plants by secreting specific chemicals into the soil. This type of relationship (allelopathy) is commonly demonstrated by the black walnut tree suppressing many other plants, including tomatoes.

Specific benefits of companion planting can be difficult to document scientifically compared to other gardening techniques and is much debated among gardeners and scientists. One of the most sensible and well-documented discussions is offered by the National Sustainable Agriculture Information Service at <http://attra.ncat.org/attra-pub/complant.html>, including a traditional companion planting chart for home gardeners at <http://attra.ncat.org/attra-pub/complant.html#chart>.

Q. We have hollyhocks planted near our back door. For the last couple of years, about the time they are blooming good, they start to get lesions on their leaves. The lesions are a brownish color. After a short time, these leaves drop off and eventually kill the plant for that season. Last year we got some fungicide and sprayed on them, but it did not seem to correct the problem. We were wondering if this is a fungus or a bug problem, and what we can use to eliminate it.

A. Hollyhocks are susceptible to a number of different leaf spot diseases, but, by far, the most common and destructive is known as rust. This fungus begins by causing tiny pinhead-sized brown spots on the undersides of the leaves. At the same time, the top of the leaf shows a larger yellow-to-orange-to-tan spot. Eventually, the spots get larger and join together as the disease spreads to the stems and even the green parts of flowers. The leaves then shrivel and turn brown giving the plants a blighted appearance. You can see photos and a brief discussion, courtesy of the Purdue Plant and Pest Diagnostic Lab http://www.ppd.l.purdue.edu/PPDL/weeklypics/Weekly_Picture6-8-99.html.

The disease is especially favored by damp and/or humid weather. Fungal spores are produced in the brown-raised spots on the lower leaf surface and overwinter in plant debris. Removing infected leaves promptly, and cleaning up all plant residue at the end of the growing season is critical to reducing the spread of the disease.

Some fungicides, such as chlorothalonil, mancozeb and sulfur, are labeled for use in controlling hollyhock rust. But, keep in mind that fungicides are preventative, not curative. They can only protect healthy foliage from becoming infected. If the plant is heavily diseased, it is too late to apply fungicides. Always consult the label for recommended rates and safety information BEFORE you apply.

Q. Is there an animal that will eat every tomato on 18 plants and leave no trace, or should we suspect a human animal?

A. It is difficult to know which of the potential culprits is responsible, without knowing a bit more about the situation. Most animal pests will leave some sort of calling card, if you look closely for animal tracks, animal droppings, or damaged fruit from beaks or teeth.

If the fruits are disappearing during the day, the more likely suspects are squirrels and/or birds. Of course, the size of the fruit would also be a factor. Birds can easily pluck cherry or grape tomatoes but aren't likely to be removing large fruits from the plant. If the culprit is on night shift, suspect raccoons, which are known for consuming large quantities of fruit.

You could do a bit of sleuthing by sprinkling a light dusting of flour on the surface of the garden all around the plants, then look for the tracks made by the intruder. You can compare your evidence to the chart of tracks provided by the USDA/APHIS Wildlife Services <http://www.entm.purdue.edu/Wildlife/TRACKS.htm>. Links from there will provide information on controlling and preventing wildlife damage to home, gardens and landscapes.

MGS AT THE FAIR

Compiled by Amy Thompson

Master Gardeners were busy volunteering at the Monroe County Fair last month. The Extension Office and the Fair Board very sincerely appreciate the work of Master Gardeners during the 2007 Monroe County Fair.

Open Class Veggies/Herbs/Fruits/Seeds & Grains

Larime Wilson, superintendent, Nancy Fee, Peggy Rees-Krebs, Paul Hummel, Carol Reynolds, Dale Calabrese, Marsha Trowbridge, Dan Nichols, Charlotte Griffin, Bernadette de Leon, Joyce Peden, Marsha Trowbridge

Check-in - Dale Calabrese, Nancy Fee, Paul Hummel, Peggy Rees-Krebs, Carol Reynolds

Floral Design – Mary Jane Hall & Linda Burke, superintendents, Dot Owen

Cut Flowers & Potted Plants – Esther Minnick & Diana Young, superintendents, Nancy Fee, Andrya Lowther, Dot Owen, Kaylie Scherer, Barb Cappy, Dale Calabrese, Joyce Peden, Barb Baynes, Lee Todd, Marci Ankrom, Carole Reynolds, Herman Young

Master Gardener Information Booth – Carol Cobine, coordinator, Susan Bucove, Vicky St. Myers, Dan Nichols, Mary Young, John Behringer, Dot Owen, Nancy O’Kane, Joe Phillips, Kaylie Scherer, Kim Scherer, Andrya Lowther, Linda Burke, Jeff Schafer, Karen O’Brien, Lee Todd, Marci Ankrom, Dale Calabrese, Barb Cappy, Beth Murray, Jeanie Cox, Charlotte Griffin, David Dunatchik, Laramie Wilson

Garden Chats - Diana Young and Esther Minnick, coordinators, Richard Cates, Joanna Howe, Barb Hays, Robin Nordstrom

Demo Garden Volunteers – Marsha Trowbridge, chair,, Peggy Rees Krebs, Joanna Howe, Bethany Murray, Andrya Lowther, Karen O’Brien, Jeff Schafer, Dan Nichols, Esther Minnick, Herman Young, Diana Young, Vicky St. Myers, Jeannie Cox

Name Tags - Megan Wilson, Joyce Peden

Judging - Marsha Trowbridge, Dan Nichols

Assist judging: Dan Nichols, Carol Reynolds, Marsha Trowbridge

Display: Joyce Peden, Megan Wilson

Check-out and cleanup: Bernadette de Leon, Charlotte Griffin

A big thank you goes also to all those who worked on the April board/intern meeting and at the July MCMGA general meeting!

Please forgive any omission, it was completely unintentional!

LADY BEETLES ARE OUT! THE BENEFITS OF THE ASIAN LADY BEETLE

By Timothy J. Gibb, Extension Entomologist, Purdue University

Most everyone in the state knows something about the Asian Lady beetle. Most of what homeowners know falls in the negative category. It is hard to erase the experience of living with thousands of annoying and smelly lady beetles inside a home during the winter. However, to be fair, we must also consider the benefits of these beetles.

Like all lady beetles, the Asian Lady Beetle spends the entire summer out of doors, in trees, shrubs and on crops, searching for and destroying pest insects, especially aphids. Without the protection provided by lady beetles, many plants would be seriously damaged. The bottom line is that the presence of lady beetles translates into economic gains due to increased harvests, reduced need for tree or plant replacement and reduced insecticide costs. In addition, when lady beetles substitute for pesticides by killing pest insects, we can be assured of increased health and safety for people and the environment.

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**When was the last time you submitted
your volunteer and education hours?
It's time to send them! See page 1.**

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