On July 27, over 15 Master Gardeners and some spouses gathered to do the intake for the open class potted plants, cut flowers, and flower arrangements. Under the expert supervision of Esther and Lloyd Minnick, Diana and Herman Young, and Nancy Deckard, the tables were organized for each classification, and entry books were prepared. The flowers started arriving at 9:00 a.m. and continued until noon. The last rush of entries was the largest, and all involved in intake were hustling to tag and place the entries. This observer thought the shelves were full earlier and that there was greater participation over previous years. Perhaps our frequent rains have stimulated that. What fun it was to see all the entries from Master Gardeners. We have indeed had a busy flowery summer.

After noon, the judges did their work, and the ribbons were awarded. Grand prize winners were moved to a special gazebo for viewing during the rest of the County Fair.

Special thanks go to the supervising committee who accomplished the complete set up on the Community Building Patio and who also coordinated the Open Class Vegetable and Herb classifications. That event was held on July 25, and the display of veggies and herbs was lovely.

If you didn’t volunteer this year at the flower exhibit and competition, be sure to get involved next year. It’s always a highlight of the Fair, at least for me.
All your renown is like the summer flower that blooms and dies;  
because the sunny glow which brings it forth,  
soon slays with parching power.

Alighieri Dante

And there we are. It’s August and gardens are parched. It can be challenging to get into the habit of checking plants and plots for moisture content because we wished so hard for it to stop raining just a month ago. The often cool and always rainy spring had a measurable impact on garden produce. Too wet, too chilly, and then too hot, and some things decided to bolt. If it has been a frustrating growing season, take heart. In only seven months early spring vegetables will be taking center stage.

There were 19 Master Gardeners in attendance on July 21 to clean up the demonstration garden. They may have been psyched up to tough out another annual cleanup, but it was a beautiful, warm and dry evening, and just a pleasure to be outdoors and helping with the transformation. Thank you, Diana Young, for getting us organized. And thanks to Stephen Anderson, Dorothy Cole-Kiser, Kay Cunningham, Mary and Eryn Cusack, Nancy Deckard, Jan Greenwood, Karen King, Peggy Rees-Krebs, Susan Lovell, Tom Lovell, Abe Morris, Dot Owen, Don and Susan Sachtjen, Dorothy Wilson, and Herman Young.

Monroe County Fair

The Monroe County Fair is part of an American tradition where Fair fun and Fair food and Fair exhibits provide at least one evening’s entertainment each year for 1000’s of Fair fans. Master Gardeners contributed three Garden Chats and an information booth, and helped set up the Community Building’s patio for exhibits of flowers, fruits, and vegetables grown by members of the community. If you missed it this year, plan on being part of this local tradition next year.

(continued on page 3)
Notice of proposed MCMGA bylaws revision

By Mary Cusack

We encourage everyone to attend our September 22 general meeting at 6:30 p.m. in the extension office meeting room when members will vote on the proposed bylaws revisions.

The bylaws committee, composed of Mary Cusack, Helen Hollingsworth, and Nancy White, have worked in conjunction with the MCMGA executive board, to propose several changes to our bylaws. These changes will help the organization run more smoothly and also delineate more clearly certain responsibilities of committees along with renaming board positions for consistency. We urge you to review these changes.

These revisions are posted on our website, mcmga.net, and by clicking on Proposed Bylaws Revisions on the home page, you can read them at your leisure. All revisions appear in italics for ease of viewing.

We thank you for your time in reviewing these proposals and look forward to seeing you at the general meeting on September 22.

Master Gardener September general meeting

(continued from page 2)

September is nearly here, school is in full swing, and the 2016 year for Master Gardeners is already on the minds of many members. The general meeting will be held on Tuesday, September 22. The September meeting always has a flavor of its own. Our own Lynn Courson will be one of the speakers to show us how to have the best possible color early next year. You may not be thinking about spring flowers just now when you’re up to your ears in corn and zucchini, and Japanese beetles, but you’ll be glad next spring that you took the time to join your gardening friends for the evening and picked up those special pointers to help you enjoy a special spring show of color just when you needed it most.

Also, at the September general meeting we will discuss and vote on the proposed changes to the bylaws. The bylaws are online at www.mcmga.net. Immediately under the proposed changes are the current bylaws for easy comparison. Please spend a few minutes to think about what these changes will mean and come with any questions you might have.
This year’s Monroe County Fair featured three Garden Chats. These are hour-long presentations, free to fairgoers, on various garden-related topics.

On July 29, Master Gardeners Esther Minnick and Diana Young presented *Heirloom Tomato Varieties and Tomato Testing*. This presentation was a real crowd pleaser with 35 attendees. Esther displayed 28 varieties of heirloom tomatoes and told where and when each was introduced.

As Esther described the background of each tomato, Diana sliced the tomato variety and offered samples to everyone. Those in attendance sampled such varieties as Peach Blow Slutton, Besser, Italian Heirloom, Purple Bumblebee, Golden Jubilee, Sun Sugar, Black Krim, Green Zebra, Big Boy, German Strawberry, Indigo Kumquat, Ruby Nuteimato, Part of the Bull, Mortgage Lifter, Mexican Midget, Golden Rave, Swiss Alpine, Pearl, and Lucky Tiger, to name a few.

Esther also delighted the attendees with her culinary treats of green tomato bread, tomato preserves, and quiche with fresh tomatoes. She generously shared her recipes with handouts to take home along with a 2013 Nutritional Study on Tomatoes. She also recommended a book, *Epic Tomatoes*, by Craig LeHoullier.

I can offer my opinion as a food critic. I don't like store bought tomatoes, nor do I like slices of tomatoes on a hamburger from a restaurant. I don’t care for tomatoes in my salad. I would like to say for the record that I would eat Esther's heirloom tomatoes any time. Between heirloom tomatoes and store bought tomatoes, absolutely there is no comparison. If Esther should ever offer you a sample of her green tomato bread, tomato preserves, or quiche with fresh tomatoes, accept it fast before it disappears. Thanks, Esther and Diana, for the wonderful experience.
Been to the Biltmore?

By Nancy White

Are you thinking that a late summer or fall short trip may be in your future? If so, consider spending some pleasant time in Asheville, North Carolina, at the Biltmore Estate. The massive home and surrounding gardens, forest, farms, and winery are an easy drive and will not disappoint whether you enjoy visiting lovely homes with stunning furniture and décor, or love to hike the well-maintained trails, visit a working farm or winery, or just get lost in amazing plantings of perennials, annuals, and astounding trees.

The estate was designed and built in 1895 by George Vanderbilt, grandson of Cornelius Vanderbilt, and is the oldest family-owned and maintained residence in the United States. Several great-great grandchildren of George and Edith Vanderbilt still live on the property.

This trip, we decided to focus on the grounds and the gardens. We have toured the home, all 52 rooms of it, in past years. Frederick Law Olmsted was commissioned to design the gardens surrounding the house and the Conservatory area. Since that time, there has been continuous development of surrounding areas as well as maintenance of the original plantings.

An area about five miles from the home houses the working winery, demonstration farm, a building housing family memorabilia and history, and a creamery. The Vanderbilts were fond of their homemade ice cream and milk products, all made at the farm and distributed for many years by horse cart to the surrounding area families.

(continued on page 6)
And then there are the gardens, oh, the glorious gardens! If you like to tour and touch and admire the wide variety of trees such as golden raintrees, numerous Japanese maples, river birch, purple leaf European beech, and conifers of every size and variety, that alone would be worth the trip. But you won’t want to miss the Olmsted-designed formal gardens with geometric patterns using espaliered fruit trees, rose bushes, and blooming shrubs lining the stone walls. Masses of colorful annuals are laid out in patterns that are as stunning from the heights of the forest trails as they are close-up. Everywhere are flowering shrubs and rose bushes.

Approaching the conservatory from the back forest trail was almost like having one of the family or even Olmsted himself give us a tour. The conservatory was designed to house the horticulture and gardening classes that drew great numbers of students and visitors to hear Olmsted and his associates lecture on this new American form of garden design. Now the conservatory houses orchids and numerous tropics and serves as a winter storage area for specimens that cannot tolerate the Asheville winters. High output heaters were noted in the many conservatory rooms.

I couldn’t help myself when I saw the grounds crews doing the maintenance work early in the morning. I spoke with a man pruning bushes who informed me that there were about 2000 workers on the property and that included 30-40 certified horticulturists and arborists. A young woman answered my questions about fertilizing processes by telling me that workers hose-spray all annuals on the grounds weekly during spring and summer and that the formal gardens and shrubs are all served by an underground sprinkler system. Around the home itself the focus is on massive planters with lovely combinations of dwarf trees, perennials, grasses and annuals. Color combinations were stunning in all areas with traditional reds and whites, pinks and purples, and then splashy use of oranges with purples and reds. Around every corner was a new delight of plant materials and color.

The Biltmore Estate is open year round. Put the Biltmore on your bucket list.
As I compose this piece, we have had several glorious summer days in a row with blue skies, low humidity, and no rain. Our night for demonstration garden clean up was similar—warm but with a surprising cool breeze. Our loyal group of volunteers worked hard in the garden then took a little break for snacks and a cool drink. Too quickly they were back to work to try to finish the garden before dark. What a great job they did! Special thanks to our small but wonderful group of volunteers who contributed refreshments for the evening: Karen King, a fresh fruit tray; Angie Fender, a beautiful veggie tray; Tom Lovell, lovely cold apple cider; and a buffalo chicken wing dip from my kitchen. A hearty "thank you" to all who shared their time and talent so that all garden workers could have a healthy snack.

It is time to look ahead to our general meeting in September. Plan to attend the general meeting on Tuesday, September 22 at 6:30 p.m. at the extension office. The refreshment committee will have treats available starting at 6:00 p.m. September refreshment committee members are Mary Cusack, Nancy White, Angie Fender, Dorothy Wilson, and Connie Clark. Our program will be *Daffodils and Spring Bulbs*, presented by Lynn Courson, Master Gardener and Sara Kinne, American Daffodil Society. You will earn an education hour for attending this program.

And finally—a reminder that our November Harvest Dinner will take place once again at the Sherwood Oaks Christian Church Fellowship Hall. It will again be a pot luck dinner. I will have sign-up sheets at the September meeting for volunteers to monitor the food tables to keep things neat and tidy and to help with drinks. Our speaker will be Jonas Carpenter, Bread & Roses Nursery, and his topic is to be announced. Hope to see you in September and again on November 10 for the Harvest Dinner.
Monroe County Fair

Photos by Nancy White

Esther Minnick (grand champion) with her winning vegetables.

Lynn Courson arranges a display of potted plant entries.

Gazebo showcases cut flower and potted plants grand prize winners.

Master Gardeners Sydley Skolnik and Deb Thompson arrange open class cut flower entries.

Evelyn Harrell and David Dunatchik staff the Monroe County Master Gardener booth.

Ribbons are displayed at the zinnias and sunflowers table.

Volunteers arranged the open class tomato exhibit.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Volunteer opportunities</strong> compiled by Mary Cusack</th>
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<tr>
<th><strong>Time</strong></th>
<th><strong>Jobs</strong></th>
<th><strong>Contact</strong></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Bloomington Community Orchards, 2120 S. Highland Avenue (Winslow Woods Park) <a href="http://www.bloomingtoncommunityorchard.org">www.bloomingtoncommunityorchard.org</a></strong></td>
<td>seasonal</td>
<td>maintenance, all levels of expertise welcome</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Cheryl’s Garden at Karst Farm Park, 2450 S. Endwright Road, Bloomington</strong></td>
<td>during growing season</td>
<td>help w/ design and maintenance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Courthouse Native Garden Downtown Square</strong></td>
<td>seasonal</td>
<td>maintenance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Flatwoods Park Butterfly Gardens 9499 W. Flatwoods Rd., Gosport, IN Near Ellettsville</strong></td>
<td>seasonal</td>
<td>maintenance/rejuvenation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Growing Opportunities Hydroponic Garden Stone Belt Facility—Tenth St., Bloomington</strong></td>
<td>year around</td>
<td>education &amp; maintenance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Hilltop Garden &amp; Nature Center 2367 E. Tenth St., Bloomington <a href="http://www.hilltop.indiana.edu/~landscap/hilltop">www.hilltop.indiana.edu/~landscap/hilltop</a></strong></td>
<td>year around</td>
<td>maintenance of gardens for shade, herbs, pollinators, containers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Hinkle-Garton Farmstead 2920 E. Tenth St., Bloomington <a href="http://www.facebook.com/HinkleGartenFarmstead">www.facebook.com/HinkleGartenFarmstead</a></strong></td>
<td>year around</td>
<td>herb, orchard, butterfly, &amp; woodland gardens, invasives removal, soil reclamation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Hoosier Hills Food Bank</strong> The Food Bank garden is located at Will Detmer Park, 4140 West Vernal Pike</td>
<td>year around</td>
<td>plant, harvest, and compost; training provided</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Middle Way House Roof Top Garden <a href="mailto:garden@middleywayhouse.org">garden@middleywayhouse.org</a></strong></td>
<td>seasonal</td>
<td>scheduled workdays</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mother Hubbard’s Cupboard 1100 W. Allen St., Bloomington mhfoodpantry.org/getinvolved/volunteer</strong></td>
<td>year around</td>
<td>seasonal garden tasks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Wonderlab Garden 308 W. Fourth St., Bloomington</strong></td>
<td>seasonal</td>
<td>education, supervision of volunteers, maintenance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Wylie House 307 E. Second St., Bloomington</strong></td>
<td>year around</td>
<td>maintenance of heirloom garden, seed saving</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>MCMGA Volunteer Opportunities</strong></td>
<td>year around</td>
<td>various</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Remember to wear your badge when volunteering and keep a record of your hours.

Keep a copy of any volunteer records forms you submit to the extension office
The purple landscape

By Rosie Lerner, Purdue Extension Consumer Horticulturist

Trees and shrubs with colorful foliage can add a steady supply of interest in the landscape throughout the growing season. Purple foliage is quite popular among plant breeders and garden enthusiasts. Here are some possibilities to consider.

**Small to Medium Trees**

*Japanese Maple*  There are many cultivars available in the trade. Some have purple foliage all summer while others may be purple only in spring and/or autumn.

*Redbud “Forest Pansy”*  This particular cultivar of redbud has rich purple leaves as they emerge in spring fading to deep greenish purple by summer’s end. Some specimens may have purplish red to orange fall color.

*Crabapples*  There are a number of cultivars with purplish green foliage. Look also for those that are resistant to apple scab and fireblight diseases.

*Purple-leaf Plum*  While quite popular, this species is quite susceptible to a number of insect and disease problems, so it may be short-lived in the landscape.

**Shrubs**

*Weigela*  There are several cultivars of Weigela in the trade that feature purple foliage in addition to pink flowers that are particularly attractive to hummingbirds.

*Ninebark*  Several cultivars of this native shrub feature pinkish white blooms in spring and interesting peeling bark for winter interest in addition to purple foliage during the growing season.

*Smokebush (also known as Smoketree)*  Numerous cultivars available featuring purple foliage. This plant can be grown either as a large, mult-stemmed shrub or a small, single trunk tree. The name smoke refers to the pinkish-purple hairy puffs of flower stalks that remain on the plant throughout the summer.

*Elderberry “Black Beauty” and “Black Lace”*  Both feature dark purple foliage throughout the growing season, along with large clusters of small pink flowers in early summer, followed by dark purple berries. Plants can get quite large but can tolerate hard pruning.

*Diervilla “Kodiak Black”*  This is a dark purple leaved cultivar of the native shrub that also bears yellow flowers in summer. This species is also known as bush honeysuckle, not to be confused with the invasive alien honeysuckle species.
Q. For the last few years we have noticed some green blobs on our gravel drive. It only grows in size when it rains and dries up and turns black when the weather is sunny. It looks like turkey droppings and feels like jelly when wet. It is very unsightly and gets tracked into the house. We never saw this stuff until the last few years and only on limestone gravel. It seems to grow and spread up and down the drive. Is this some kind of new land algae? Does it start and grow because of the lime from the gravel? This may not be your area of expertise, but if you know what this stuff is let me know and how to get rid of it. – D.V.

A. It sounds like it could be a terrestrial algae known as *Nostoc*, which can grow on stone, concrete, grave, and even on the lawn, especially on compacted turf. This algae stays dormant until the right conditions come along—warm moisture, and we’ve had plenty of that this summer! And the slimy blobs are more than just unsightly; they are really slippery, so they can be, especially on smooth surfaces such as patios and greenhouse floors. Anything you can do to aerate and dry the area will help control it, but there’s not much you can do about the rain. Copper sulfate may help knock it back, but control will be short-term, and unless conditions dry, the algae will return. Note that raking the algae may just help spread it around.

Additional info about Nostoc is available at Ohio State University Hort Shorts and Michigan State Extension’s Nostoc article.

Q. Can you tell me what kind of tree I have growing in the barnyard? It has several trunks about three feet off the ground. It has bark, like grape vine. It is shaped like an umbrella and about ten feet tall. It has a lot of dead wood like a mock orange. Right now it has a little (hard to see) long narrow white flower – H.M.

A. I was thinking the shrub might be *Physocarpus*, more commonly known as ninebark, but it would have large clusters of small blossoms rather than a long narrow flower. A picture can say a thousand words, so the saying goes. You can bring a photo or, better yet, a live sample of a twig with leaves and flowers attached to your local county office of Purdue Extension. Contact information is at https://extension.purdue.edu/pages/CountyOffices.aspx. Or you can submit a photo or sample directly to the Purdue Plant and Pest Diagnostic Laboratory, www.ppdl.purdue.edu.
Cooperative Extension Service
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Bloomington, IN 47401

Monroe County Master Gardeners Association

Helping others grow!

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Master Gardener Calendar

August 6, 6:00-7:30 p.m., Indianapolis Museum of Art, Gardening for Pollinators—a walk/talk in the garden with Sue Nord Peiffer, included with admission. For information, see Special Events at mcmga.net.

September 17-18, Purdue Rainscaping Education Program, IUPUC campus, Columbus. For information, see https://ag.purdue.edu/extension/rainscaping/Documents/Rainscaping_Final_Web.pdf

September 22, 6:30 p.m., MCMGA general meeting, extension office meeting room, program by Lynn Courson and Sara Kinne, 1 hour credit.

September 22-25, 2015 International Master Gardener Conference, Council Bluffs, Iowa, registration closes on August 31. For information, see Special Events at mcmga.net.