

December 2010

Roots and Shoots

Monroe County Master Gardener Association Newsletter

Volume 26, Issue 12



Master Gardeners and interns celebrate!

Master Gardeners celebrated at our annual pitch-in holiday dinner and general meeting with our 2010 interns on November 30 at Sherwood Oaks Fellowship Hall. Extension educator Amy Thompson introduced the class and awarded their certificates.



Shown above front, left to right are Katrina Ladwig, Janet Delong, Linda Emerson, Patricia Crites, and Harriet Fulton. In back are Kay Cunningham, Lea Woodward, and Karen sparks. Not pictured are Virginia Abel, Mary Ackerman, Kathy Baker, Julia Bebeau, Lauren Bikoff, Melissa Britton, Donetta Cothran, Lisa Denlinger, Tanya Gehres, David Hunt, Susan Kinser, David Parkhurst, and Connie Peppler.

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Special points of interest:

- We need volunteers at the 2011 Garden Fair*
- Apple trees do not reproduce true from seeds*
- Honey bees are fascinating creatures*
- Poinsettias can be harmful to pets*
- Visit English gardens in July with Rosie and Mike*
- Learn how to care for drought-stressed turf and how to protect your gardens from diseases*

Member News

On Tuesday, November 30, over 60 MCMGA members and guests met at the Sherwood Oaks Church Fellowship Hall for our annual pitch-in holiday dinner and meeting. A grand array of carry-in dishes and meat trays were enjoyed along with good gardening conversation. During the general meeting, Amy Thompson introduced graduates of the 2010 intern class. Officers were elected, and members thanked dinner committee members Vicky St. Myers, chair, Helen Hollingsworth, Susan Eastman, Diana Young, Beth Murray, Esther Minnick for their work in decorating the tables and purchasing and preparing the board's contribution to our meal.



By
Nancy
White

Dan Gluesencamp, owner of Designscape in Nashville, presented our program, *Hollies for Southern Indiana*.

Many thanks to our all who made the dinner a festive occasion and a hearty welcome to our new Master Gardener interns.

2011 board members elected

Our newly elected 2011 board will begin their terms of office on January 1. Newly elected in November were Nancy White, president; Evelyn Harrell, vice president for programs; Jeff Schafer, vice president for education; David Dunatchik, secretary; Barbara Hays, director of communications; and Herman Young, director at large. Entering their second year on the board are Diana Young, treasurer; Dan Nichols, director of records; and Helen Hollingsworth, journalist. Members are always welcome at board meetings which are held the first Monday of each month at the Extension Office.

Gain winter volunteer hours by writing for *Roots and Shoots*

We welcome new writers for *Roots and Shoots*!. Why not gain some volunteer hours by reading and reviewing garden books or researching a topic that interests you and will most likely interest others also? Deadlines for each issue are published in our membership guide, *Folia and Flora*, which will be distributed at our January general meeting. Journalist Helen Hollingsworth can provide more information on how to get started.

Master Gardeners volunteer at Hilltop

Recently several Master Gardeners spent some late fall time planting daffodils and other bulbs at Hilltop. Charlotte Griffin organized this work session on short notice, and we congratulate her on her leadership and offers thanks to all who volunteered. Your work will enrich the site for years to come.

Will you be in the book?

The deadline is fast approaching for sending in our membership applications. If you wish to have your contact information in our membership guide, *Folia and Flora*, your membership renewal application and \$10 fee must be received on or before January 1, 2011. Being listed in our information book is extremely important. Find the membership form on our website, and mail the form along with your check to the extension office as soon as possible.

Reproducing Apple Trees

Every so often we receive a question about how to make apple seeds germinate. Often, the person is looking for a way to reproduce an apple tree that is dying. Unfortunately, apple trees do not come true from seed. In other words, the apple seed produces trees that differ from the parent. It is extremely unlikely that any apple produced from seed will bear quality fruit. About one in every 80,000 apple seedlings will produce commercial quality fruit.



Submitted
by Amy
Thompson,
Extension
Educator

So how do you reproduce an apple that is like the parent? The most common way is by grafting. Grafting is a procedure that joins two plants together. The upper part (or scion) becomes the top part of the tree, while the lower part (or stock) provides the root system or part of the trunk. Apples are relatively easy to graft. How to graft is beyond the scope of this newsletter, but local libraries should have materials that cover the procedure, or you can find an excellent publication on the web at <http://extension.missouri.edu/explorepdf/agguides/hort/g06971.pdf>.

Our Garden Fair needs volunteers!

At our annual pitch-in holiday dinner and general meeting, members were asked to volunteer for committees for our 2011 Garden Fair, scheduled for Saturday, April 23, at the National Guard Armory. If you missed the sign up and would like to volunteer, contact any of the Garden Fair coordinators: David Dunatchik, Dian Lock, Jeff Schafer, or Nancy White. We need volunteers, Garden Fair a fun project, and what a great way to welcome spring.

By
Nancy
White

Need more information on the Garden Fair? Here are the 2011 details:

Date: Saturday, April 23, 9:00 a.m.—3:00 p.m.

Place: National Guard Armory, 3280 S. Walnut Street

Available: Over 35 commercial and non-profit vendors of garden related products and services, food service, door prizes, inside and outside booths.

Public is invited.

Plan to volunteer in an area of interest by contacting one of the coordinators.

In memoriam

We were saddened to learn of the death of Greg Speichert, Hilltop director, on November 4. Greg was a creative force in the local gardening community and was supportive of our efforts. He welcomed Master Gardeners among Hilltop volunteers and was always willing to advise and share his knowledge with others. He will be missed. A memorial service is planned for Saturday, December 4, at 10:30 a.m., at the Cedar Hall Auditorium, Union Street Center on the IU campus, 445 N. Union Street.

Web Castings

Some 'pre-digested' web offerings provided by local Master Gardeners and their friends.

Book it! Love the book review idea; hope it is taking off. I have dibs on reviewing Michael Pollan's 2006 book, *The Omnivore's Dilemma*, which I had no idea was about agriculture or horticulture, really, 'til I dove in. Half way through, I love it!



By
Karen
Sparks

The Garden Diary. Do you keep a useful garden journal or diary? I have good intentions, along with stacks of little notes, plant info sticks, dusty pencil drawings, and a hefty ten-year garden journal that I really will get caught up on. It was a wonderful gift last year, which I treasure, published by Lee Valley Tools. John Ashton has authored a similar five-year journal available from Amazon. BUT, maybe there is something on the web that I could use, at least in transition, while I gradually get caught up with my own handwritten journal; a keepsake, really. I searched and found a promising Frugal Village page of links, but half of them were out of date and led nowhere. Better: www.plantjotter.com. This seems the most promising of the online journal sites, and while there is a small fee (first 30 days free trial, then less than \$2 a month, or \$45 for three years) I may actually try it. If you have found more/better online, share with me, and I will pass it along. (Note: at this writing, I have still not tried PlantJotter—at this time of year, who has time?—but if/when I do, I will review it here; or, maybe one of you already has experience with it?).

The 'Professors' are in... Another site from Amy T., this time a sort of blog written by several professors who post from very diverse universities (hosted by Washington State and including Michigan State, U of Minnesota, and Virginia Tech.). They post gardening mysteries (How/why did this tree get pruned this way? What is this strange plant?) followed by the solutions. 'The Garden Professors' answer various questions, all very entertaining and informative. Here is the web address: <https://sharepoint.cahnrs.wsu.edu/blogs/urbanhort/default.aspx>. Poking around this blog, I discovered the idea of adding vodka to my paperwhite narcissi this winter, when I force them, to make them less floppy. Do you believe that would work? Is it a myth? Poke around yourself and find out! (Hint: Look for November 17 blog issue.) The vodka is for the bulbs, now, remember that. If for you, maybe they will just 'look' less floppy? Or, you won't care?! (Sorry!)

Prune it now? Local Master Gardener Jo Prentice has shared a wealth of web info for me to pass along, and I will quote her directly on one piece of it. From Jo: "This reference is a useful site on pruning: http://gardening.about.com/od/maintenance/a/spring_pruning.htm. I was faced with the urge to do more fall clean-up than usual and decided to find out if more restraint would be advisable. This site gives guidelines on perennials to cut back in spring and which to prune in fall. The amsonia will have to wait until spring for its 'cut.' Unfortunately, I had already cut back the astilbe and the cardinal flowers."

Wow, talk about timing! I was just eyeballing my astilbe and more. Thanks, Jo, excellent. And, happy holidays to all! I'll be back next year.

Book about honey bees makes fascinating reading

A Short History of the Honey Bee: Humans, Flowers, and Bees in the Eternal Chase for Honey by E Readicker-Henderson, Images by Ilona, Timber Press, 2009



By
M Susan
Osborne

Do you ever wonder about the honey bee? Seriously, until you began gardening did you ever give them much thought? I didn't and believed honey bees and yellow jackets were one and the same. Then I began hearing the concerns of honey bee extinction and realized I needed to learn more; I needed to see what I could do (or not do) to contribute to a bee's well-being. In the August/September 2009 issue of *Horticulture*, this book appeared on the reading list and therefore piqued my interest. *Honey Bee* is a quick read with whimsical yet engaging text and amazing photography. Thus, I began my journey to learn more about the honey bee.

Honey Bee consists of eleven chapters, an acknowledgements page, a bibliography, and incredible photography (I emphasize incredible) all within 161 pages. Chapter titles include *The First Taste, The Magic, In the Hive, Dancing with Bees, From Nectar to Honey, Living with Bees, The Sting, The Danger, The Fragrant Work, Beyond Honey, and The Taste of the World*. I was amazed at the amount of information the author included within each chapter. I learned the ancients valued and treasured honey and considered honey "a kind of magic: treasured for its purity, the fact that it never spoils, it never corrupts". The world holds somewhere between 16,000 and 20,000 species of bees, but only seven make honey and bees have been on earth for more than 100 million years. Some honeys never crystallize; however, crystallization is actually a sign of a more pure honey. Bee's wax has been used for not only long-burning, clear candles, but also by artisans to create models, priests to preserve bodies, tablets for Roman school children, and legal tender to pay taxes in Europe many years ago.

The author is passionate about the honey bee, and his narrative will have you experiencing a bee's life journey from inside the hive, to the fields, blossom to blossom, and finally the harvest. E Readicker-Henderson quotes Shakespeare, Von Frisch, Aristotle, and even the U.S. Dept of Agriculture to assist you in understanding the beauty and importance of the honey bee. The author explains the story of the honey bee as a complex web—one that weaves together insects, flowers, and humans. E Readicker-Henderson is very poetic in his telling, he beautifully distills nature's complexity into a story that is both educational and delightful. I learned a simple truth from reading this book: we can't live without bees. Bees offer us fine gifts—their pollination skills, their ability to survive the ages, and their "liquid gold" for all to feast upon.

If you are looking for a great source regarding honey bees I encourage you to read *A Short History of the Honey Bee*. I believe you would be delighted with the contents, and if you purchase the book, a portion of the book's sales is donated to *The Foundation for the Preservation of Honey Bees*.

Gardens of England trip in July

Mike Dana and Rosie Lerner from the Purdue Department of Horticulture and Landscape Architecture have planned a Master Gardener advanced training/study abroad opportunity on the Gardens of England for July, 2011, and the trip now open for enrollment.

By
Rosie Lerner,
State MG
Coordinator

England and Its Gardens International Study Abroad for Purdue Master Gardeners July 6—19, 2011 Course Fee: (not including airfare) \$3240 per person double occupancy \$3970 per person single occupancy

The program flier can be downloaded from our webpage at <http://www.hort.purdue.edu/ext/eaig/main.html>. To register for the course, contact our secretary, Tammy Goodale <tgoodale@purdue.edu> 765-494-1296 or call 1-888-398-4636 and asked to be transferred to Tammy at 41296. To discuss more details, call or e-mail Rosie at 765-494-1311 or rosie@purdue.edu or Mike at 765-494-5923 or dana@purdue.edu .

Garden cleanup essentials

One of the best ways to protect our gardens from disease next year is to practice good sanitation. Leaving dead or diseased plants and plant parts in the garden will provide a wonderful place for these diseases to overwinter. Dead vegetables and flowers should be pulled up and destroyed. Be sure to rake up all fallen, rotted fruit that may have already dropped off the plant.

By Larry
Caplan,
Extension
Educator,
Vanderburgh
County

Normally, I like to put my yard waste in the compost pile, or till it straight into the garden. But it's generally not a good idea to put heavily diseased plant material in the compost bin. Why is that?

Unless you are really on top of compost maintenance throughout the fall and spring, the pile will never get to the 160 degrees necessary to kill most of the spores. Frequent turning brings material from the top and outside of the pile to the center and bottom, where most of the heat generates. Inadequate turning and moisture monitoring will leave a large percentage of the yard waste outside the hottest areas, so they won't be pasteurized. Even though you will have rich compost next spring, there could be large amounts of fungal spores within it, ready to infest your garden plants.

Although it pains me to say this, a better option might be to bag up your heavily diseased plants and set them out on yard trash pickup day. Burning it is not recommended, due to air pollution and health risks.

As you finish cleaning up the garden, be sure to clean your tools, too. Remove any dirt and plant debris left behind on tillers, shovels and pruners, and spray them down with disinfectant. Once dry, dress them with a light coat of oil to prevent rusting. Then, spend the winter reading up on all the diseases you saw this year, so you'll know what to look for and how to protect your plants, next year.

Poinsettias and pets

Poinsettia pulcherrima (*Euphorbia pulcherrima*) (spurge family)

TOXICITY RATING: Low.

ANIMALS AFFECTED: All animals can be affected, but pets are more likely to come into contact with Poinsettia than are livestock.

DANGEROUS PARTS OF PLANT: Leaves and stems primarily, but all parts may be toxic.

CLASS OF SIGNS: Skin, mouth, eye, and stomach irritation.



PLANT DESCRIPTION: People commonly display this potted plant (fig. 8) in houses and offices in the wintertime. These 1 to 4 feet tall plants with yellow stems bear alternate, coarsely toothed, smooth, green leaves. The top leaves turn red. Although many people mistake them for petals, they function as "bracts", calling attention to the true flowers which are tiny, yellow, and clustered at the top of the plant. The inconspicuous fruits are small, green, three-lobed, fleshy capsules.

SIGNS: The milky sap (a latex) is irritating to skin, eyes, and mucus membranes. Once considered extremely poisonous, toxicity is more likely to manifest as irritation, discomfort, rash, and stomach upset. Nausea and vomiting may occur if sufficient quantities are consumed. Typically, animals will show head-shaking, salivation, and pawing or rubbing at the mouth or eyes.

FIRST AID: Wash sap off the animal to prevent further ingestion. Call a veterinarian if the eyes are affected, or if signs do not resolve in a few minutes.

PREVENTION: Poinsettia should not be allowed near curious animals.

The International Master Gardener Search for Excellence is the recognition program of Master Gardener volunteer work throughout the United States and Canada. **Search for Excellence** has seven categories in which Master Gardeners can demonstrate their outstanding contributions to their communities. Awards will be given out at the International Master Gardener Conference in Charleston, West Virginia October 11-14, 2011.

For information on past winners and the application procedure go to: http://www.extension.org/pages/International_Master_Gardener_Search_for_Excellence .

This could be your last issue of *Roots and Shoots*!

All Master Gardener membership renewals must be received at the extension office on or before January 1, 2011. To keep *Roots and Shoots* coming, renew today! Members will receive our membership handbook, *Folio and Flora*, at our January general meeting.

Drought causing problems and questions for many

Earlier this fall we made recommendations on how to recuperate lawns after a drought; however, rain has not returned and now we must further adjust our maintenance practices in unirrigated turf areas. The majority of Indiana has received 4-8 inches less than normal rainfall amounts during the last 90 days. Below are some strategies on how to cope with the current situation in unirrigated turf areas.

By
Aaron
Patton,
Turfgrass
Specialist,
Purdue
University

Should I still fertilize in late November or early December?

There are three strategies that could be used.

- Option 1. First, applying 0.5-1.0 lbs N/1000 ft² now with a quick-release nitrogen (N) source and anticipate that rains will return. Keep in mind that drought stressed plants will not take up nitrogen, and so a response to nitrogen fertilization will only occur after a rainfall occurs and the plant has a chance to take-up the nutrient. Additionally, this option will likely result in the loss of some nitrogen via volatilization.
- Option 2. A second strategy would be to wait to fertilize until after the next rainfall. With either of these options the turf must still be green and photosynthesizing at the time of application and the soil temperatures should be >32 °F or ideally >40 °F.
- Option 3. Rains do not return and no fertilizer is applied.

Normally we would recommend fertilizing about 1.0 lb N/1000 ft² in September and November in lawns. This year it may be that many areas receive only one fall application or none prior to winter due to drought. Weak turf that enters winter dormancy will emerge in the spring weak and be more susceptible to weed invasion next year.

Although aggressive fall fertilization is usually recommended to help our turf recover from drought, we may need to increase fertilizations next spring by 25% or more to help encourage growth and an improvement in turf density in order to help reduce weed pressure.

Should I apply a herbicide right now?

- Herbicides are ineffective on drought-stressed weeds and can be damaging on drought-stressed turf, especially when temperatures are warm. If the lawn is >50% green, then herbicides can be applied.
- Avoid the temptation to apply herbicides in a dormant (brown) lawn even though weedy species may be obvious.
- It is better to hold off on applying fall broadleaf herbicides until rain returns and the turf and weeds being growing again. Although fall applications are better than spring applications for broadleaf control, spring applications can still be effective at controlling broadleaf weeds.

Should I seed right now?

- Seed between December and February as a dormant seeding. The seed will lie there dormant (un-germinated) until warm temperatures return in the spring. This option can be effective for Kentucky bluegrass, perennial ryegrass, and tall fescue. For tall fescue and perennial ryegrass it may be worth waiting until late December to seed to ensure that soil temperatures are cool enough to prevent any immediate germination.

Can I aerify lawns right now?

- Most soils in Indiana are too dry to aerate.
- Unirrigated home lawns should be aerified in the spring instead of this fall.

Volunteer opportunities compiled by Nancy White

Location	Time	Jobs	Contact
Hilltop Garden and Nature Center	year around	various	
MG Demonstration Garden	seasonal	various	Bethany Murray, 339-8876, bethany.murray@gmail.com
Bloomington Community Orchard	seasonal	various	Amy Countryman
T. C. Steele SHS	seasonal	various	Davie Kean, 988-2785
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 articles	Helen Hollingsworth, 332-7313
MCMGA Web Site	year around	various	Barbara Hays, 332-4032
MG Program Committee Member	year around	plan MG programs	Vicky St. Myers, 323-7072 Jeff Schafer, 325-3130
Middle Way House	seasonal	various	Clara Wilson, 333-7404
Wylie House	year around	various	Sherry Wise, 855-6224
Mother Hubbard's Cupboard	year around	education, resource	Stephanie Solomon, 334-8374
WonderLab Garden	2 times monthly	various	Nancy White, 824-4426
Hoosier Hills Foodbank	year around	various	Jessica Williams, 334-8374
Cheryl's Garden at Karst Farm Park	summer 2010	design and maintain	Nancy Fee, 332-1940

Please wear your name badge when volunteering.

Remember to report 2010 hours only at <http://www.four-h.purdue.edu/mg/>.

December 2010

Cooperative Extension Service
Health Building
119 West Seventh Street
Bloomington, IN 47404

FIRST CLASS MAIL
RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED



December is the last chance to renew your Master Gardener membership. Renewal forms can be printed from our website, mcmga.net.

2010 MCMGA Board

President: Nancy White
812-824-4426 nwhite38@hotmail.com
Vice President—Programs: Vicky St. Myers
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Vice President—Education: Jeff Schafer
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Fair Board Representative: Preston Gwinn
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Extension Educator: Amy Thompson
812-349-2575 afthompson@purdue.edu
2010 Hours: <http://www.four-h.purdue.edu/mg/>

2011 Master Gardener Calendar

Saturday, January 22, 2011, 8:00—4:00
CST, *The Show for Gardeners by Gardeners*,
Porter County Expo Center. Admission: \$10.
For information, call 219-465-3555 or visit
www.pcgarden.info .

Saturday, February 19, 2011, 8:30—2:30;
Once Upon a Garden, presented by the Gib-
son County Master Gardeners, Princeton
Community High School, Princeton. Cost is
\$40 and includes lunch. For information,
call 812-385-3491.

Saturday, March 5, 2011, 8:00—3:30, pre-
sented by Madison County Master Garden-
ers, Madison County 4-H Fairgrounds, Alex-
andria. For information, contact John Orick
at 765-641-9514.