

# Roots and Shoots

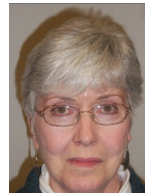
Monroe County Master Gardener Association Newsletter

Volume 27, Issue 12



## Master Gardener committees plan for 2012

Here's an update about the fun and informative programs and trips we have to look forward to in 2012.



By  
Evelyn  
Harrell

Karen King, Susan Lovell, Nancy White, Dan Pyle, and Amy Thompson volunteered to help with the program committee, and sat down in October to put together interesting learning opportunities for the new year. On January 24, Cathy Meyer, naturalist with Monroe County Parks & Recreation and Sandy Belth, Master Gardener intern, will present a program titled *Pollinators Beyond Bees*. At our March 27 meeting, Gordon Elsbery will join us. Mr. Elsbery is now the manager of the Flower and Herb Barn near Gatesville in Brown County. As a former nursery owner, he has a wealth of knowledge to share.

Other dedicated Master Gardeners also met in October to plan field trips, and they came up with some new and interesting ideas. It will hardly seem like winter when we visit the IU Botanical Conservatory on Tuesday, January 10 at 3:00 p.m. We will have an opportunity to tour the greenhouse guided by a professional. On Saturday, February 25, we will motor over to The Hobbit Farm for a *Midwinter's Blues Herbal Getaway*, where we will learn about an array of herbs and an amazing number of ways to use them, including a highly recommended lunch built around herbs. Cost per person is \$35.

Thank you to committee members Chris Johnson, Cindy Benson, Ann McEndarfer, and Mary Jane Hall. It was really nice to be hosted by Mary Jane in her office's conference room. Thanks!

Look for more information on these trips and programs in *Folia and Flora*, our membership handbook, which will be available at our January meeting.

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### Special points of interest

*Evelyn Harrell is seeking members to join 2012 refreshment committees; call Evelyn to volunteer.*

*How many perennials and shrubs are purple? Rosie Lerner knows!*

*Poison ivy can get you any month of the year.*

*Are squirrels digging up your fall bulbs? You are not alone.*

*Karen Sparks offers interesting web sites to help with seasonal shopping.*

## Member News

If you were not able to attend, the annual holiday dinner on Tuesday, November 29, it was a lovely, well-attended get together planned by Evelyn Harrell and Jeff Schafer and their committee, Diana Young, Esther Minnick, Helen Hollingsworth, Mary Ackerman, Susan Eastman, Chris Johnson, Martha Tarbah, and Jeff Schafer. After announcements and a wonderful pitch-in meal, an election of officers was held, and Amy Thompson awarded badges to several members.



By  
Nancy  
White

Our speaker, Cathy Teeters, local florist, engaged us with helpful information and demonstrations of favorite holiday plants and their care. Many thanks to all who helped to make this last meeting of the year a welcome addition to the busy holiday schedule.

### **Newly certified members**

Congratulations to Mary Ackerman, Keith Barnhardt, Patty Crites, and Kay Cunningham, who earned certification badges in September, and John Emerson and Karen Sparks, who earned their certification this month.

### **Board members elected to two-year terms**

Welcome to our newly elected Master Gardeners Association board members, Evelyn Harrell, vice president for programs; Helen Hollingsworth, journalist; Diana Young, treasurer; and Dan Pyle, director of records. They will begin serving their terms on January 1, 2012.

### **Sign up for 2012 refreshment committee assignments**

Evelyn Harrell, vice president for programs, urges all to sign up for refreshment committees for our 2012 meetings. If you have not yet volunteered, please contact her by email or phone to get your favorite date. Our general meeting dates for 2012 are January 24, March 27, May 22, July 17 or 24 (depending on Monroe County Fair dates), September 25, and November 27.

### **Have you renewed your membership?**

Please be sure to get your membership application and \$10 fee in to the extension office right away if you have not already done so. It is important to have all members recorded in *Folia and Flora*, our membership handbook, which goes to press early in January.

### **Tips for winter storage**

A recent article on-line from *Horticulture Magazine* outlines how we can successfully store garden items so they are ready for our next season. The article suggests cleaning every metal surface of hand tools and then coating the metal with a spray lubricant such as WS-40. Also suggested is to sharpen edges of shovels with a file. Cutting edges of pruners and loppers may need to be professionally sharpened. Power tools also should be lubricated and the motor engaged until remaining gasoline is gone. Chemicals such as fertilizers, herbicides, and pesticides are best stored in a cool, dry place, out of reach of children and pets. Additional valuable tips on winter storage can be found in the full article at [hortmag.com/weekly-tips](http://hortmag.com/weekly-tips).

## More gifts for gardeners

Here are some other gardener-lovers gift ideas for the holiday season:

By  
Nancy  
White

- a garden plant organizer makes it easier to record information from plant tags and to record your planting dates and successes and failures from the current growing season, Look for these at local bookstores or from *Horticulture Magazine's* booklist at [hortmag.com](http://hortmag.com) .
- plant markers make a nice stocking stuffer and are still available at local hardware stores.
- your favorite gardener (that might just be you) may like a new garden book or a subscription to a garden magazine.
- for some winter fun, why not adopt a new houseplant like a gorgeous orchid or cyclamen.
- with our ever-changing drought/flood cycles, a rain gauge is a helpful tool for any gardener. The professional rain gauge available at [www.windandweather.com](http://www.windandweather.com) is advertised as the most accurate one available and measures accumulation to the nearest hundredth of an inch. Rain gauges may also be found at local garden suppliers.

## Squirrels—industrious artful dodgers

An eye-opening article on tree squirrels in the September/October issue of *American Gardener Magazine* stuns readers with the premise that “To them [squirrels], human beings are either a vending machine or a threat, and there’s no middle ground.”

By  
Nancy  
White

Having unsuccessfully tried out the threat part after planting fall bulbs, I read more to find that gardeners should disturb the soil in several places when planting bulbs to fool the foraging visitor or even coat the bulbs in pepper spray or garlic to make the bulbs less likely to be eaten.

One suggestion seems to be against common senses, but Steve Sullivan, Senior Curator of Urban Ecology at Chicago Academy of Science’s Notebaert Nature Museum, has had luck feeding squirrels in another location to divert them from bothering newly planted bulbs. Sullivan also says that squirrels, most at home in forested areas, have adapted very well to urban environments with our birdhouses to raid, bird feeders to visit, and assorted fruits, veggies, and flowers to steal.

So, unless you are happy to be the squirrels’ human vending machine, you may have to continue finding ways to out-fox these artful dodgers in our trees and gardens.

## Winter gardens to visit

While a thick blanket of winter snow might keep even diehard gardeners out of yard work for now, a visit to one of the many midwestern glass-house gardens may help you get your plant fix. In addition to seasonal plant displays, many of these gardens offer classes, art exhibits and other ways to beat the winter doldrums. Check the website or call for program changes.

By  
Rosie  
Lerner,  
Extension  
Consumer  
Horticulturist

### **Indianapolis:**

[White River Gardens](#), 317-630-3252 Visit the “Holiday Trainland” exhibit in the Hilbert Conservatory through December 30. The collection of model trains is set among tropical plants and the Purdue University Poinsettia Cultivar trials.

[Indianapolis Museum of Art](#), 317-920-2660 Winter at the Oldfields-Lilly House & Gardens features a beautiful winter landscape outdoors and seasonal holiday decorations indoors.

[Garfield Park Conservatory](#), 317-327-7184 Though the conservatory's poinsettia show ends December 16, the plants are on sale December 17-24.

### **Fort Wayne:**

[Foellinger-Freimann Botanical Conservatory](#), 260-427-6440 Victorian Holiday Poinsettia Showcase through January 8.

### **Chicago Area:**

[Garfield Conservatory \(Chicago\)](#), 312-746-5100 Holiday Flower Fest through January 8

[Lincoln Park Conservatory \(Chicago\)](#), 312-742-7736 Winter Flower and Train Show through January 8

[Chicago Botanic Garden \(Glencoe\)](#), 847-835-5440 The greenhouse gardens range from a tropical rain forest to desert cacti gardens.

[Morton Arboretum \(Lisle\)](#), 630-968-0074 Madrigal dinners, model trains, snowshoeing and evergreen express trolley tours.

### **Cincinnati:**

[Krohn Conservatory](#), 513-352-4080 Bavarian Holiday through January 1

[Civic Garden Center](#), 513-221-0981

## The Color Purple

Purple is all the rage among gardeners, and Mother Nature's palette is well endowed with shades of purple flowers, fruit and foliage.

By  
Rosie  
Lerner,  
Extension  
Consumer  
Horticulturist

Looking for perennials with purple flowers? Consider bear's britches (Acanthus), Agapanthus, ornamental onion (Allium), columbine (Aquilegia), Aster, Astilbe, Baptisia, swan river daisy (Brachycome), Siberian bugloss (Brunnera), bellflower (Campanula), Delphinium, foxglove (Digitalis), coneflower (Echinacea), joe pye weed (Eupatorium), Hosta, Iris, lavender, Liatris, flax (Linum), purple toadflax (Linaria), bluebells (Mertensia), catmint (Nepeta), Russian sage (Perovskia), Jacob's ladder (Polemonium), lungwort (Pulmonaria), Salvia, Stoke's Aster (Stokesia), meadow rue (Thalictrum), thyme and Veronica.

There are only a small handful of hardy shrubs with purple or blue flowers, including beautyberry (Callicarpa), bluebeard (Caryopteris), smokebush (Cotinus), rose-of-sharon (Hibiscus), Rhododendron and lilac. Those with purple fruit include chokeberry (Aronia), beautyberry (Callicarpa), silky dogwood (Cornus amomum) and arrowwood Viburnum (Viburnum dentatum).

Although green foliage provides a great backdrop for flowers and fruit, a little purple foliage can perk up your garden design. Plants sporting purple leaves look showy throughout the growing season, even when nothing is in bloom. When you consider that most flowering shrubs and perennials are only in flower for a few weeks, colorful foliage can provide a more consistent contrast to green foliage.

Perennials and ground covers with selected cultivars of purple foliage include bugleweed (Ajuga), Canna, black snakeroot (Cimicifuga), joe pye weed (Eupatorium), alumroot (Heuchera) and Penstemon 'Husker Red'. Shrubs or small trees that feature at least some cultivars with purple foliage include smokebush (Cotinus), Japanese maple, Elderberry (Sambucus) and Weigela.

## 2012 Perennial Plant of the Year—*Brunnera m.* 'Jack Frost'

The program, Perennial Plant of the Year, promotes the use of perennials that exhibit these qualities: low maintenance, easy propagation, multiple seasonal interest, and wide range of planting zones. *Brunnera macrophylla* 'Jack Frost' is the 2012 Perennial Plant of the Year. Runnersup for 2012 honors were *Panicum virgatum* 'Northwind', *Heuchera* 'Caramel' and *Chelone lyonii* 'Hot Lips'.

Past winners include *Baptisia Australis* (2010), *Hakonechloa macra* 'Aureola' (2009), *Geranium* 'Rozanne' (2008), *Nepeta* 'Walker's Low' (2007), *Dianthus gratianopolitanus* 'Feuerhexe' (2006), *Helleborus xhybridus* (2005), and *Athvrium niponicum* 'Pictum' (2004).

## Shrubs to behead

Many shrubs can benefit from occasional or even routine pruning to remove damaged stems, keep the plant in size, rejuvenate for greater flower production or to maintain a formal shape. But there are a few species that should routinely be cut to the ground, at least in our mid-western climate.

By  
Rosie  
Lerner,  
Extension  
Consumer  
Horticulturist

Some shrubs will actually dieback to the ground most winters and then send up new twigs the following spring, effectively performing as if they were herbaceous perennials. With other species, the stems may not actually dieback completely, but their wood becomes weak and spindly if it does survive.

The following plants are best cut back all the way to the ground by late winter, before spring growth begins. Fortunately, these plants bloom on new season's growth so they will still provide summer flowers, despite having to start from scratch each year.

<b>Common Name</b>	<b>Botanical Name</b>
Glossy Abelia	<i>Abelia x grandiflora</i>
Butterfly Bush	<i>Buddleia</i> sp
Beautyberry	<i>Callicarpa</i> sp.
Bluebeard	<i>Caryopteris x clandonensis</i>
Smooth Hydrangea	<i>Hydrangea arborescens</i> (such as Annabelle' and Grandiflora ')
Bigleaf Hydrangea	<i>Hydrangea macrophylla</i> (those cultivars that bloom on new wood, such as Endless Summer' and All Summer Beauty')
Bushclover	<i>Lespedeza</i> sp
Russian sage	<i>Perovskia atriplicifolia</i>

## Poison ivy year-round problem

Poison ivy is so adaptable that it grows under very different conditions, so it looks different in different seasons. You can get poison ivy from pulling it in winter, and you can get it in your lungs if you burn it and breathe the smoke. You can get poison ivy from touching the plant or from touching something that has touched the plant, such as your tools, clothes or dog. Using a weed eater to remove poison ivy may result in poison ivy oil on your trousers. Avoid using a weed eater while bare-legged; you can get scratches while splattered with sap from poison ivy and end up in the emergency room. Some people appear to be immune to poison ivy; others become immune. However, you can gain or lose immunity, so don't assume you can't get it if you never have before. We change as we age.

## Web Castings

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

As we approach the holidays, my thoughts turn to gift-giving with a gardening theme. There is always that magazine subscription to *Organic Gardening Magazine* at <http://www.organicgardening.com> . Or a mail order gift or gift certificate from White Flower Farm at <http://www.whiteflowerfarm.com/index.html>. (You should know up front that I am not recommending only these specific commercial sites, but rather just the idea of it, a starting point. Same with what follows. Google away!)



By  
Karen  
Sparks

With an eye on recent economic issues, perhaps your goal is to shop locally, and support local merchants, farms, and garden centers. With that in mind, you might consider this link to the Local Growers Guild: <http://localgrowers.org/members.html>

A gift certificate for lawn or garden care services could also be appropriate, especially for friends or family who can no longer rake, mow, dig or plant, and might be provided by you yourself; your time at certain tasks given with a particular job in mind or a certain number of your valuable hours. I could not locate any website for small-scale planting/digging, and a couple of phone numbers were not connected or just did not answer. I tried!

For ordering online, or over the phone, I have tried to track down area businesses that offers lawn or garden care services and found a local business, developed here and in operation for 11 years. You can connect with them at <http://www.greenscapers.com/contact.php> .

While Greenscapers deals mostly with lawn issues, Mays Greenhouse is more involved with plants, flowers, and supplies and is open year round. They are found online at <http://www.maysgreenhouse.net/> and do have gift certificates in any amount that are good for five years (in case you don't want to spend it all at once). They also have organic-based fertilizer and more. They are about as local as it gets, having been founded here 45 years ago. I am surely preaching to the choir here, and you may also know of other local greenhouses; again, it's the idea I am trying to get across.

Finally, the website <http://www.groworganic.com/> has abundant gift ideas, including sets of colorful gardening tools for kids, which they claim have been checked for safety. I like the idea of involving the next generation whenever possible.

Here's wishing you a wonderful holiday season with your own past and future generations!

## Tour gardens of Italy next summer

You are invited to join a study tour, *Renaissance Gardens of Italy*, on June 7—18, 2012 as part of the International Study Abroad for Purdue Master Gardeners. Course fee (not including airfare) is \$3485 per person double occupancy or \$4115 per person single occupancy

By  
Rosie  
Lerner,  
Master  
Gardener  
State  
Coordinator

The group will visit and study such notable gardens and sites as Villas Medici Castello and Fiesole, Garzoni, Gamberaia, Lante, D'Este, Gregoriana, Boboli Gardens at the Pitti Palace, Sacro Bosco, Ninfa, the Vatican, and a commercial organic farm to learn about production of olives and grapes for wine and oil. Free time in Florence, Rome, Montepulciano, and Vatican City will round out our experiences.

Purdue Master Gardeners and our Study Abroad alums have first opportunity to register. As always, our priority for enrollment is Master Gardeners, but you are welcome to sponsor one guest. If we don't fill the class with Purdue MGs and our program Alums, we will open enrollment to MGs from other states.

The program flier can be downloaded from our webpage at [www.hort.purdue.edu/ext/rgoi](http://www.hort.purdue.edu/ext/rgoi), but if you have any trouble downloading, don't hesitate to contact Tammy to ask that one be mailed to you. Enrollment opens Thursday, November 17, 2011 at 1:00 PM Eastern Standard Time.

New this year is the choice to register online or by phone.

1. On-line, go to: [www.hort.purdue.edu/ext/rgoi](http://www.hort.purdue.edu/ext/rgoi), click the link to online registration and complete the form. A "time stamp" will be affixed when you hit the "Submit" button to indicate your registration priority.
2. By phone, call toll-free 1-888-EXT-INFO (398-4636) and ask to be transferred to Tammy Goodale in Hort. & L. A. or dial her directly at 1-765-494-1296. Your registration priority will be time stamped once you have completed providing your registration details to Tammy.

To discuss more details, call or email Rosie (765-494-1311/[rosie@purdue.edu](mailto:rosie@purdue.edu)) or Mike (765-494-5923/[dana@purdue.edu](mailto:dana@purdue.edu)).



## Hats off!

Congratulations to Mary Ackerman, Keith Barnhardt, Patty Crites, Kay Cunningham, John Emerson and Karen Sparks, certified Master Gardeners.

## Holiday dinner provided excellent food, fellowship, and education



Keith Barnhardt, John Emerson and Linda Emerson visit before dinner.



Susan Eastman designed table decorations for the holiday dinner.



Our speaker, Cathy Teeters, discussed care for these holiday plants that she brought .



Mary Jane Hall and Penny Austin prepared for the winter weather



Debbie Harding, Jeanie Cox, Kathy Baxter, Chris Johnson and Paula Lawrence enjoyed dinner.



Cindy Benson and Mary Carol Paul admire holiday plants.

## Harvest holiday greenery from your landscape

Give your home the festive mood of the holidays by bringing a bit of your landscape evergreens indoors. Wreaths, swags, garlands and centerpieces can all be made from plants that are commonly found in the home landscape.

By  
Rosie  
Lerner,  
Extension  
Consumer  
Horticulture  
Specialist

Some of the best materials to cut include balsam and Douglas fir, yew, holly, boxwood and juniper. Pines boughs are attractive in arrangements, but this is not a good time to prune them. If pine branches cannot be cut from your tree inconspicuously, look for boughs at nurseries, garden centers, florists or Christmas tree sales. Needles of hemlock and spruce drop easily and should not be used for indoor decorations.

Privet, barberry, English ivy and rhododendron provide an attractive contrast to the needled foliage. Dried grasses, herbs, berries, cones and seed pods can help add color to a holiday display.

In the warm, dry environment of the home, cut greens will dry out very quickly, so keep the cut ends of the branches in water at all times. Sprays are available to help cut down on moisture loss and somewhat extend the life of cut greens. Plastic and lacquer hobby sprays or plant resin anti-transpirants can be used. However, these sprays leave a very sticky residue and should only be used if decorations will be placed outdoors or out of reach indoors.

Evergreen decorations can be a fire hazard as they age and dry. Avoid placing near fireplaces, heat ducts, televisions, candles or other sources of heat or flame. Commercially prepared flame-retardant sprays are available at many Christmas tree vendors and craft supply stores. A homemade flame retardant of four tablespoons of boric acid, nine tablespoons borax and two quarts of water can be sprayed on the foliage. Another recipe calls for five tablespoons of borax and four tablespoons Epsom salts in two quarts of water. These flame retardants are not foolproof, so the best precaution is to discard decorations before they become dry and brittle.

More information on making holiday wreaths and other festive decorations from landscape materials is available online at <http://www.hort.purdue.edu/ext/HO-22.pdf> or by contacting the Purdue Extension office in your county and asking for publication HO-22, "Holiday Greens."

## Volunteer opportunities compiled by Nancy White

Location	Time	Jobs	Contact
Hilltop Garden and Nature Center	year around	various	Charlotte Griffin, 345-8128
MG Demonstration Garden	seasonal	various	Bethany Murray, 339-8876, bethany.murray@gmail.com
Bloomington Community Orchard	seasonal	various	Stacey Decker, getinvolved@bloomingtoncommunityorchard.org
Cheryl's Garden at Karst Farm Park	summer	design and maintain	Nancy Fee, 332-1940
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	Evelyn Harrell, 339-0572 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

**Please wear your name badge when volunteering.**

**Remember to report 2010/2011 hours only at <http://www.four-h.purdue.edu/mg/>.**

**December 2011**

Cooperative Extension Service  
3400 South Walnut Street  
Bloomington, IN 47401

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**Mark your calendar for the MCMGA general meeting on Tuesday, January 24, 2012  
Topic: *Pollinators Beyond Bees* with Cathy Meyer and Sandy Belth**

## **2011 MCMGA Board**

**President:** Nancy White  
812-824-4426 nwhite38@hotmail.com  
**Vice President—Programs:** Evelyn Harrell  
812-339-0572 ear4841@comcast.net  
**Vice President—Education:** Jeff Schafer  
812-325-3130 jeff.schafer1@comcast.net  
**Treasurer:** Diana Young  
812-339-0040 young-Diana@att.net  
**Secretary:** David Dunatchik  
812-332-2331 dddunatchik@att.net  
**Journalists:** Helen Hollingsworth  
812-332-7313 hlhollin@indiana.edu  
**Director at Large:** Herman Young  
812-339-0040 hoyoung@indiana.edu  
**Director—Communications:** Barbara Hays  
812-332-4032 barbsblooms@att.net  
**Director—Records:** Dan Nichols  
812-331-7412 nicholsdg@yahoo.com  
**Fair Board Representative:** Preston Gwinn  
812-876-2999 pgwinn@bluemarble.net  
**Extension Educator:** Amy Thompson  
812-349-2575 afthompson@purdue.edu  
**Hours Report:** <http://www.four-h.purdue.edu/mg/>

## **Education opportunity**

*Once Upon a Garden* training seminar provided by Gibson County Master Gardeners is a popular one with some of our members, and you might like to consider attending this year. The seminar is an all day event and qualifies for education hours. Here are the details:

**Date:** Saturday, February 23, 7:30 a.m.—2:30 pm (Central Standard Time)

**Cost:** \$40, including breakfast and lunch

**Topics:** *The Medicine Chest in Your Backyard: Uses of Herbs; Landscaper, It's Not Rocket Science; New and Unusual Plants; Neighbors Against Bad Bugs; Making a Patio Garden from a Wading Pool.*

**Registration:** contact 812-385-3491 (Hans) or 812-385-4921 (June)

By  
Nancy  
White