

Roots and Shoots

Volume 31, Issue 1

January 2015

Monroe County Master Gardeners Association

General meeting on January 27

By Amy Thompson and Susan Lovell



Special points of interest:

- ◆ February 15 is the deadline for accepting MCMGA grant applications
- ◆ Clematis is a member of the buttercup family
- ◆ Carolus Linnaeus in 1753 created the plant naming system used today
- ◆ A variety of tree barks adds to winter view
- ◆ Don't create a 'volcano' around a tree trunk when mulching

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As we look ahead to the New Year, please join us for our first general meeting of 2015. Mark your calendars for January 27 at 6:30 p.m. in the extension office meeting room. As usual, we will have refreshments available starting at 6:00 p.m. Our membership guide, *2015 folia and flora* will be distributed. If you cannot attend, please arrange to have a friend pick up your guide to save on mailing costs.

Ellen Jacquart, Northern Stewardship Director for The Nature Conservancy and a Monroe County resident, will discuss *Report IN! Reporting Invasive Species in Indiana*. She will discuss the importance of invasive species, provide an overview of how to identify some of the most common culprits, and provide information on how Master Gardeners and other citizens can help collect and input information on the locations and abundance of invasive species. The purpose of this mapping project is to improve management and control. She currently leads the Invasive Plant Advisory Committee which reports to the Invasive Species Council. Two hours of education credit will be available.

Members providing refreshments for our January 27 general meeting are Mary Hoffmann, Mary Cusack, Dale Wilkens, Marilyn Bourke, Nancy White, Gloria Noone, and Nancy Deckard. Volunteers are needed to bring tasty and healthy snacks to every meeting. Remember in addition to the education hours earned while attending meetings, volunteers hours for food and drink preparation time also are earned.

Many volunteers have already signed up to bring refreshments to our general meetings. However, there is still a need for help with treats for our Demo Garden workers on July 21. A sign-up sheet will be available at the January meeting in case you are interested.

Member news

By Evelyn Harrell



The January general meeting of Monroe County Master Gardeners is always interesting. The weather can be cold, or snowy, or even “weather most foul” as the poet might say, and yet they come. Dozens of gardeners, bundled to the earlobes with so many layers of fleece and fluffy filler that we’ve had to put the coats and scarves in another location just to make room for seating and socializing. And isn’t that wonderful!! People are glad to see each other, and eager to discuss green things. Conversation flows, snacks are demolished, and there is an energy in the air that helps to launch the organization’s new year and the promise of another growing season just ahead.

Be sure to join all the action. We will firm up the committees for the 2015 Garden Fair. Check out Nancy White’s column for the names of members of many committees. In addition, the Spring Thyme Café will be meeting to cook up a menu. Members volunteering for the Café include Pam Vanzant, Mary Hawkins, Gloria Noone, Angela Fender, Camille Rice, Deb Thompson, Ivy McCammon, Jackie Gilkey, Muff Johnson, Nancy Miller, Susan Sachtjen, Dorothy Wilson, Stephen Anderson, Cindy Benson, M-C Paul, Jan Greenwood and Trish Gustaitis. With plenty of room for more! Sign-up sheets for committees of your choice will be available. Consider working more than one shift that day if you are looking for volunteer hours and would enjoy different experiences.

At our January 27 meeting, the very busy Ellen Jacquart will be our speaker, and members will acquire two hours of education credit. It will be a fun evening for all. The promises of the new year will stretch before us, with January nearly behind us. Doesn’t get much better than that!

Absolutely last call to get those memberships in. If you are one of those who keeps moving this item from list to list, but without ever getting it done, download the form from the website, fill it out and mail it in. Crossing this item off your list is a great way to start the New Year, and then raise a toast to yourself! The 2015 edition of *folia and flora* will go to print before the January meeting. Plan on picking up your copy on January 27.

Here’s wishing you all a happy and prosperous New Year!

If you cannot attend our general meeting on January 27, please arrange to have a friend pick up your *folia and flora* membership guide to save on mailing costs.

FYI

By Nancy White



Take a look at the current committee lists for the Garden Fair. If you want to add your name to any of these lists, please contact Nancy White or the committee chair. And remember, you can serve on more than one committee and spread your volunteer hours. All time spent prior to the Garden Fair or on event day counts as volunteer hours. Garden Fair is a large undertaking, and your help will assure that it is successful. We need you!

Garden Fair committees

CAFÉ: Evelyn Harrell, chair; Pam Vanzant, Mary Hawkins, Gloria Noone, Angela Fender, Camille Rice, Deb Thompson, Ivy McCammon, Jackie Gilkey, Muff Johnson, Nancy Miller, Susan Sachtjen, Dorothy Wilson, Stephen Anderson, Cindy Benson, M-C Paul, Jan Greenwood, Trish Gustaitis

DOOR PRIZES: Judy Hawkins, chair; Barb Brunner

EDUCATION SEMINARS: Sandy Belth, chair; Lynn Courson

FINANCIAL: Diana Young, chair; Dot Owen, Diane Gregory, Josh Bennett, Pam Hall, Nancy Deckard

MASTER GARDENER INFORMATION BOOTH: Susan Eastman, chair; Don Sachtjen, Sue Sachtjen, Marilyn Bourke, Helen Hollingsworth, Ann McEndarfer, Gloria Noone, Nancy Page, Moya Andrews, Diane Gregory, Sandy Belth,

MASTER GARDENER SALES: Don and Sue Sachtjen

PHYSICAL ARRANGEMENTS: Linda and John Emerson, co-chairs; Penny Austin, Marilyn Bourke, Deb Thompson

PUBLICITY: Nancy White, chair; Ann McEndarfer, Sandy Belth, Ida Bouvier, Stephen Anderson

VENDORS: Karen King, chair; Muff Johnson, Lynn Courson, Susan Lovell

Garden Fair update

◆The “Early Bird” reduced rate of \$65 for commercial vendor booths will expire on January 28. If you plan to take a booth or know of someone who will, note this early cutoff date. And if you have an idea for a new vendor, contact Karen King. The commercial vendor application is on our website.

◆Since our Garden Fair date is early (March 28 this year), the small postcard reminders will be available at our January 27 general meeting. These can be mailed to friends or placed on worksite bulletin boards. Posters with additional information will be available at a later date. If you still have a yard sign from last year, please alert Nancy White since we try to keep track of the signs.

MCMGA grant applications

By Nancy White

Applications for our non-profit grants for 2015 horticulture projects will be accepted until February 15. Any non-profit can apply for these grants which will be awarded by March 15 for the upcoming gardening season. The application form will be available soon at the extension office and on our website. Please spread the word about these important grants. The funds for these grants come from our annual Garden Fair proceeds. In the last four years, we have awarded 27 grants to school groups, senior citizen groups, family shelters, community food sites, preschools, and many others.

Gardener's corner: clematis

From University of Illinois Extension

What has often been termed the Queen of the Vines, clematis can offer rich, striking beauty as does royalty, said Greg Stack, University of Illinois Extension horticulturist.

"At the same time, it can be very temperamental just as some royalty can be," said Stack. "But once you have decided to include clematis in your garden, there are a few things that should be noted so your 'royal resident' will find your garden to its liking."

Clematis are members of the buttercup family and have well over 300 species and countless man-made hybrids in the group. Not all of these are suited to Midwestern gardens and so selection needs to be done carefully. Clematis are mainly woody, climbing plants.

In the wild, clematis is often found growing at the edge of woodlots where they climb through the tree limbs to reach full sun while their roots remain in the shade. Success with clematis starts with proper soil preparation, planting and after planting pruning. Clematis prefers a cool, moist, well drained soil for best growth. They do not like poorly drained soils especially those that stay wet over the winter. While it is true that clematis prefers alkaline soils, they will grow successfully in soils that are neutral (pH 7.0) to slightly alkaline (pH 7.5).



From http://urbanext.illinois.edu/gardenerscorner/issue_05/spring_02_05.cfm

In the grow

By Rosie Lerner, Purdue Extension Consumer Horticulturist



Q. I have small evergreen trees planted in my yard. They are the small, slow-growing type. They are around 8 years old. Every fall the yellow jackets start swarming around them, crawling in and out of the inside of the tree. They don't seem to hurt it, but it looks like they are trying to find something—acting like a honey bee on a flower. But these have no flowers. They don't bother us as long as we don't get too close. Could you tell me why this is happening? C.K., Shoals, Indiana



Yellow Jacket

Photo courtesy of John Obermeyer/
Purdue Entomology

A. Our Purdue entomologists advise that yellow jackets commonly scavenge for food in the fall, and it is likely they are attracted to tree resin or sap that has some sugar content. Scavenging yellow jackets are less aggressive than are those that are protecting a nest. And you are correct; they will not harm the trees and will generally not attack unless provoked. We commend you for aiming for a peaceful coexistence!

More information can be found in the Purdue Extension publication E-44, *Social Bees and Wasps*, at <http://extension.entm.purdue.edu/publications/E-44.pdf>.

Q. We have several maple trees in our neighborhood afflicted with this black spot (see attached photo) last year. We're looking for information on cause, prevention, health risk factors (to the trees), treatment and long-term prognosis for the infected trees.



A. While I can't confirm a diagnosis from this photo alone, a fungal disease called tar spot would be a good guess. Tar spot is a common disease on silver maple and is primarily considered to be a cosmetic problem rather than a serious threat. The Purdue Plant and Pest Diagnostic Laboratory has additional information on tar spot at <http://www.ppd.l.purdue.edu/PPDL/weekypics/1-19-09.html>.

To confirm a diagnosis, you can bring a sample to your Purdue Extension office in your county. Find contact information at <http://www3.ag.purdue.edu/counties/>. Or you may submit a sample directly to the PPDL. See <http://www.ppd.l.purdue.edu> for instructions. (continued on page 6)

In the grow (continued from page 5)

Q. I am looking for some information on what I believe is a mulberry plant. When we recently moved, we discovered that our dog kept going over to eat this particular plant—no other ones, just this one. We had no idea what it was or if it was good for her. We had heard that dogs liked certain plants so we thought it was okay. Regretfully, our upstairs neighbor decided to chop it down and, although it grew back, I'm wondering if there is any way to root it and grow it as a houseplant?



Photo provided

A. Your plant certainly looks to be a mulberry. It is notoriously weedy and, as you've already observed, cutting it back will usually result in its resprouting. Cuttings from the twig tips will likely root any time during the growing season, but you could use rooting hormone from a garden center to increase the rooting.

However, I recommend that you not allow your dog to continue munching on the mulberry. Mulberry has a white, milky sap that can cause irritation or allergic reactions. Dogs and other animals will eat plants that can make them ill or worse, so I would not rely on the dog's judgment! Please consult your veterinarian before allowing your dog to eat plants.

What is pleaching?

Pleaching is a method of training tree growth in which branches are interwoven and plaited together to form a hedge or an arbor. Trees that can be pleached include apple, beech, buttonwood, peach, and pear.

2015 Perennial Plant of the Year *Geranium x cantabrigiense* 'Biokovo' By University of Illinois Extension

The Perennial Plant Association membership has voted, and the 2015 Perennial Plant of the Year is *Geranium x cantabrigiense* 'Biokovo'.

“That is a big name for this excellent ground-cover-type perennial that only reaches 6 to 10 inches high,” said Martha Smith, a University of Illinois Extension educator.

'Biokovo' is a cultivar of Cambridge Geranium and is a naturally occurring hybrid found in the Biokovo Mountains of the Dalmatia region of present-day Croatia.



Photo by Todd Boland

Blooming in late spring, 'Biokovo' has delightful masses of five-petaled white flowers, that are about 3/4 inch diameter, and are tinged pink at the base of each petal and have darker pink center stamens.

“The overall effect is that of a blushing pink geranium,” Smith said. “An interesting attraction is the flower 'bud' is somewhat inflated as it is actually made up of the sepals, which are redder than the petals. When the flower opens, the lightly tinged pink flowers provide a handsome contrast to the sepals and stamens.”

She added that the aromatic foliage has rounded leaf edges, is a medium green color, and is semi-evergreen in most climates. “This geranium is a spreading, rhizomatous plant, meaning it does spread by sending out runners. However, not being a deeply rooted perennial, removal is not strenuous. Best garden placement is as a ground cover or in the front of the border. It also does well in rock gardens,” Smith noted.

'Biokovo' does well in average, medium, well-drained soil in full sun to part shade. Smith said it is easy to grow and only requires deadheading (removing old flowers) to keep it looking good. “It forms an attractive mound that offers scarlet and orange fall colors to your garden. Cut away any dead foliage in the spring and 'Biokovo' is ready for the garden season,” she said.

Plant 'Biokovo' next to Japanese painted fern. Pick up color echoes between the pink flowers and maroon foliage tones that contrast with the silver streaks in the fern fronds. Smith also noted that this flower pairs nicely with late-spring blooming Penstemon such as 'Prairie Dusk' with clear purple flowers or 'Pink Rock Candy,' offering bright pink flowers on compact stems.

Demystifying botanic language

By Sandra Mason, University of Illinois Extension Educator

Every leisure, hobby, or sport gardener quickly learns the language of gardening such as:

- Annual—plant that lives for one year, or one day if the price tag exceeds gardener's budget.
- Bed—horizontal area often worked in outdoors and seldom slept in indoors.
- Deadhead—process of removing old flowers to keep weedy plants from reseeding in the flower bed instead dispersing a trail of wayward seeds from the garden to the compost pile.
- Debug—process of whacking Japanese beetles off roses.
- Sucker—indeed born every minute from tree roots.
- Water—verb "to water" as in "I can't believe I have to water these plants again"; also noun as in "Will it ever start (or stop) falling from the sky"?

Certain gardening language, however, can induce stuttering and stammering even in the most gifted gardeners; the scientific language of plant names, also called botanical language.

We owe a lot to Carolus Linnaeus who back in 1753 got fed up with the old plant naming system. Necessity shmessity. I'm convinced frustration is the mother of invention.

Before Linnaeus, species names were long and tedious: *Rosa carolina fragrans foliis medio tenuis serratis*. Just rolls right off your tongue. Doesn't it? Linnaeus in his infinite wisdom came up with the binomial system where plants would have two names combined to make their distinct species name.

Now before your eyes start glossing over and you wonder if there is more coffee in the coffeepot, botanic names are significant to the novice gardener as well as the seasoned professional. Botanic names show plant relationships throughout the world and are internationally recognized. When purchasing plants it's a guarantee of sorts as to what you are getting. Botanic names are often descriptive so they can reveal clues to plant characteristics or growing conditions.

Common names such as daisy and sunflower have an inherent problem. They vary wildly from place to place. For example Black-eyed Susan is a common name for many different plants. Some are annuals. Some are biennials. Some are perennial. Some have two-inch flowers and some have four-inch flowers. There is even a Black-eyed Susan vine. Without the botanic name you have no idea what to expect.

From <http://web.extension.illinois.edu/cfiv/homeowners/080117.html>

Volunteer opportunities

compiled by Mary Cusack

| Location | Time | Jobs | Contact |
|---|---------------------------------|--|--|
| Bloomington Community Orchards , 2120 S. Highland Avenue | seasonal | maintenance all levels of expertise welcome | Stacey Decker getinvolved@bloomingtoncommunityorchard.org bloomingtoncommunityorchard.org |
| Cheryl's Garden at Karst Farm Park , 2450 S. Endwright Road | summer during growing season | help with design and maintenance | Linda Emerson 812-345-2913 (cell) |
| Flatwoods Park Butterfly Garden , 9499 W. Flatwoods Rd., Gosport, IN | seasonal | maintenance and rejuvenation | Cathy Meyer 812-349-2805 |
| Hilltop Gardens 2367 E. 10th St. | year around | maintaining gardens | Charlotte Griffin 812-345-8128 |
| Hinkle-Garton Farmstead 2920 E. 10th St. | year around | invasive species removal, soil reclama- tion and more | Danielle Bachant-Bell 812-360-6544 (text) hgfvolunteers@gmail.com facebook.com/HinkleGartonFarmstead |
| Hoosier Hills Food Bank Garden , 7480 N. Howard Road | year around | plant, harvest, and compost | Ryan Jochim, 812-334-8374 hhfoodbank.org/volunteer.php |
| Middle Way House Roof Top Garden , a domestic violence shelter | seasonal | scheduled work- days at the garden | Toby Strout, director 812-333-7404 garden@middlewayhouse.org |
| Mother Hubbard's Cupboard 1100 W. Allen St. | year around | various garden tasks | Kendra Brewer, coordinator garden@mhcfoodpantry.org |
| T. C. Steele , 4220 T. C. Steele Rd., Nashville | seasonal | maintenance, in- vasive species removal, restorations | Anthony Joslin, leave a message at 812-988-278 tcsteele.org |
| WonderGarden , 308 W. Fourth St. | twice a year | maintenance, planting, mulching | Nancy White, 812-824-4426 nwhite38@hotmail.com wonderlab.org/exhibits/wondergarden |
| Wylie House , 307 E. Second St. | year around | growing/saving seeds and maintenance | Sherry Wise, 812-855-6224 indiana.edu/~libwylie/garden.html |
| MCMGA Demonstration Garden , Fairgrounds | year around | select gardens and plan the event | Herman Young, 812-322-5700 Jeanie Cox, 812-360-3587 |
| MCMGA Garden Walk Committee | year around | select gardens and plan the event | Mary Jane Hall, 812-345-3985 gardenz4ever@hotmail.com |
| MCMGA Horticulture Hotline | year around | answer inquiries and research | Amy Thompson, 812-349-2572 afthompson@purdue.edu |
| MCMGA Program Committee | year around | Help plan MG programs | Sandy Belth, 812-825-8353, belthbirds@aol.com Susan Lovell, 812-339-5914, smlovell@indiana.edu |
| MCMGA Speakers Bureau | year around | research and plan speakers | Amy Thompson, 812-349-2572 afthompson@purdue.edu |
| MCMGA Website | year around | various jobs asso- ciated with the website | Stephen Anderson, 812-360-1216 mcmga.net |

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

In appreciation of bark

By Rosie Lerner, Purdue Extension Consumer Horticulturist

The winter landscape may seem a bit bland at first glance. But if you look closely, you'll find that quite a few plants have interesting bark that is actually easier to appreciate without the distraction of leaves and flowers.

Bark often changes over time, so that a species that starts out with thin, smooth bark on twigs and young branches may become thick and flaky or change in color as the plant matures. Beautiful bark comes in many forms, including smooth, shiny, ridged, flaky, blocky or peeling.

Among the better-known candidates for ornamental bark are the birches, the paper bark birch (*Betula papyrifera*) most obvious. As the tree gets a few years of age, the outer white bark peels off in horizontal sheets to reveal reddish-brown bark beneath. There are several other birch species with attractive bark, including European white birch (*Betula pendula*) with white, non-peeling bark eventually mottled with black, sweet birch (*Betula lenta*) with shiny, reddish-brown bark and river birch (*Betula nigra*) with peeling, scaly bark mottled with cinnamon brown, beige and orange.

Some of the most beautiful bark belongs to the cherry (*Prunus*) species, many of which are lustrous, shiny and characterized by horizontal grayish-brown markings that are very distinctive. The native black cherry (*Prunus serotina*) has attractive grayish-black bark, but, due to its prolific production of seedling offspring, can be quite a nuisance species. Nanking cherry (*Prunus tomentosa*) is a shrubby cherry with reddish-brown, shiny and peeling bark. But the best of all cherries is the paperbark cherry (*Prunus serrula*) with its rich, shiny, reddish-brown bark that peels with age to resemble satin ribbons. Sadly, this species is only marginally hardy in northern and central Indiana.

Japanese tree lilac (*Syringa reticulata*) is quite different from the shrub lilacs, distinguished by reddish-brown bark, turning gray and scaly with age, and has prominent horizontal markings similar to cherry bark.

Paperbark Maple (*Acer griseum*) is one of my personal all-time favorites, distinguished by rich, cinnamon brown peeling bark, especially breathtaking in winter with snow on the ground and backlighting from low-angled sunlight.

American hophornbeam (*Ostrya virginiana*) is somewhat similar to shagbark hickory (*Carya ovata*); its grayish-brown bark peeling in vertical strips that curve away from the trunk at the top and the bottom, remaining attached in the middle.

(continued on page 11)

In appreciation of bark (continued from page 10)

The sycamore or American planetree (Platanus sp.) is noted by mottled bark with large patches of gray brown peeling away to reveal creamy inner bark. The London planetree (*Platanus x acerifolia*) has an even more distinguished bark, with creamy white, brown and pistachio green mottling.

Lacebark elm (Ulmus parvifolia) has a fabulous mottled bark of gray, green, brown and orange. Also called Chinese elm, this species should NOT be confused with the weedy, nuisance Siberian elm (*Ulmus pumila*).

Kousa dogwood (Cornus kousa) is another tree with outstanding mottled bark with gray, light and dark brown.

American beech (Fagus grandifolia) is well known for its smooth, light gray to nearly silver bark. European beech (*Fagus sylvatica*) also has a smooth bark but is darker gray that ages gracefully.

Yellowwood (Cladrastis lutea) is a native species that is somewhat similar to beech bark character, though much smaller in height and spread. Another bonus is the fragrant white flowers in spring.

Turkish Filbert (Corylus colurna) develops a grayish-brown outerbark that flakes with age to reveal an orangy-brown innerbark.

Kentucky coffeetree (Gymnocladus dioicus) has a handsome texture characterized by rugged dark brown, scaly ridges.

Sassafras (Sassafras albidum) is distinguished in both color and texture with reddish-brown, deeply ridged bark.

Black Gum (Nyssa sylvatica) is another native species distinguished by dark grayish-brown black bark that with age breaks up into a pattern of blocks.

American hornbeam (Carpinus caroliniana) has a smooth, bluish-gray bark that lies over rippled hardwood below, giving the effect of flexed muscles. The European hornbeam (*Carpinus betulus*) has similar but grayer bark.

Though these are some of the more notable species with attractive bark, once you're more aware of bark as a character, you'll start to notice bark on many plants.

**Monroe County
Master Gardeners
Association**

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Helping others grow!



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Mulching around trees

Placing mulch, such as ground bark, straw, or composted leaves, over soil around plants and trees offers several advantages. Mulch reduces moisture evaporation from soil, reduces weed growth, insulates the soil from temperature extremes, and makes garden or yard look tidy.

A word of caution, however, about applying mulch around trees: thick mulch placed close to the trunk of a tree causes tree roots to encircle the tree trunk in search for moisture and nutrients instead of spreading its roots downward and out into the soil. This is called girdling. To prevent girdling, place mulch at least a foot or two away from the base of a tree's trunk.