The times they are a’changin’, observed Bob Dylan, that reluctant winner of the Nobel Prize for literature. The changin’ times include a few changes in our Executive Board for 2017. The results of the election of officers at the November Harvest Dinner are as follows: Mary Cusack is stepping up to take the helm, and we appreciate her willingness to serve as President. The organization will continue to benefit from her leadership skills. With Mary’s move to that office, we welcome Maren Claus, who is joining the Board for the first time to serve as Director at Large. And many thanks to those officers who will continue in their duties: Dave Dunatchik, Secretary; Sandy Belth, Director of Education; and Stephen Anderson, Communications Director.

Finally, our thanks and appreciation go to Nancy White for her eight years of leadership and support on the Board, serving first as President and then Past President. Her historical knowledge and eye for detail have been invaluable.

Several Master Gardeners noticed the reminders in Roots and Shoots to take photos of examples of beautiful plant material and landscapes to submit to the annual photo contest, and they did! Votes were logged at the Harvest Dinner and the winner of this year’s contest is Mary Cusack. Her lovely photo will grace the cover of the 2017 *folia and flora*, and she will receive a gift certificate from May’s Greenhouse. The second place winner was Barb Coffman, and her photo will grace the 2017 Garden Fair booklet.

Other good news: Diana Dingman is the hard-working recipient of the award for the most entries to this year’s Monroe County Fair. The recipient of this award receives a certificate for $50, which is small recognition, no doubt, for the commitment and the many hours that went into preparing numerous entries in several categories.

Congratulations to Mary and Barb and Di!

One last plea from this column to download the membership form from our website, and send it, ASAP, along with a check for $10 made out to MCMGA, to the Extension office at 3400 S. Walnut Street, 47401. The last three pages of the form may still be unfamiliar to members, but our advisor explains that Purdue now annually requires those pages.

Please be sure the next general meeting is on your calendar. January 24, 6:30, at the Extension office, and come early to socialize and enjoy refreshments. There will be a lot of catching up to do, so let’s pack the room with gardeners!

Last but definitely not least, this writer is putting down the keyboard and turning over this column to new ideas, new style, and new gardening thoughts from Mary Cusack. It has been an honor and a great pleasure, and a lot of fun, too, to serve as president of this organization, an organization that represents so much of the very best of Monroe County.

Happy Holidays!

- Evelyn Harrell, MCMGA President
GARDEN FAIR NEWS

A hearty welcome to our new MG interns who will complete their class this month. Your addition to our group will energize us with your new ideas and commitment to gardening. We know you have some volunteer hours to complete this winter so we hope you will join us in planning for Garden Fair ’17 on April 1. This will be the 8th annual Fair which is our MCMGA gift to the community. Planned as a fun, educational, and spirit-lifting day for gardeners and those who appreciate the many lovely gardens in Monroe County, it is a big undertaking. We need those who can help plan, organize and implement the many areas in the project. In the Oct. Roots and Shoots, a full listing of committees is included. Besides earning hours for your participation on a committee, it’s a great way to meet many other Master Gardeners as we work together. If you can’t work on a committee, we can still use your energy and skills on April 1 as we prepare the Armory, greet our guests, and clean-up at the end of the day. Contact MG Board member Nancy White at nwhite38@hotmail.com, if you can volunteer to help with the Garden Fair, 2017. And remember, all proceeds from the Fair go to our MG grant program which in past years has awarded over $12,000 in grants to local non-profit agencies for small gardening and horticulture projects.

CALLING SOME NEW VENDORS: Mary Cusack is our Garden Fair vendor chair and is always looking for new vendors. If you know of any commercial or non-profit agencies who might want to participate, pass that information on to Mary and her committee can make contact. We are interested in new vendors who will sell live plants, landscaping businesses, new environmental groups, and any gardening businesses new to town that you might know.

MASTER GARDENER INFORMATION BOOTH: Susan Eastman will again serve as our MG Info Booth Chair. This booth distributes free garden catalogues, free garden information and tree seedlings, and, of course, answers to tough garden questions. As you start to get the 2017 garden catalogues soon, keep those outdated ones and pass these on to Susan for our MG booth. Visitors love to get these.

State Garden Tour – hosted by MCMGA

Friday, June 16, 2017

Plans are underway to host a 1 day garden tour for Indiana Master Gardeners. This is in response to the State Master Gardener Conference moving to an every other year basis.
A core committee consisting of Eryn Cusack, Mary Cusack, Trish Gustaitis, Vicky St. Myers and Amy Thompson have mapped out the two tour routes which consists of a walking tour, or a bus tour.
We will meet at the Monroe County fairgrounds to kick off the day. In addition to visiting our Demonstration Garden at the fairgrounds, we will have speakers Michael Homoya (Indiana Landscape prior to 1816) and Natalie Marinova (Landscaping with Native Plants).
We will then continue on to Wylie House native garden, Eco Logic, Monroe County Courthouse native landscape, Harvest Moon Flower Farm, and Dunn’s Woods with stops determined on which tour is chosen.

Everyone, however, will end up at the beautiful grounds of Oliver Winery for a tour of the landscape and refreshments.
After returning to the Fairgrounds, we will bid adieu to all and hope our out of town guests will choose to stay further into the weekend to experience “Taste of Bloomington” and the “Bloomington Garden Club Tours”. It is a wonderful opportunity to showcase all that Bloomington has to offer.
If you are interested in helping out with this venture, (many hands are needed at many different levels of planning and implementing), please jot a note to:

- Mary Cusack
Master Gardener
Monroe County Volunteer Work Day

On October 22, in efforts to help the city of Bloomington manage a wooded area located in Lower Cascades Park, a number of Monroe County Master Gardener classmates & a handful of community members met with city employees, Katie Kogler & Peter Slothower, of Bloomington’s Department of Parks & Recreation-Natural Resources. The group’s goal that afternoon was to assist in removing Lonicera and Asian Bush Honeysuckle from an area equaling approximately one acre. The work zone was in a flat bottomed valley with a small drainage stream banked on either side by steep graded slopes covered in large stones, a variety of tall straight standing trees, and an understory growth dominated by what appeared as a 4’ - 12’ tall blanket of Asian Bush Honeysuckle.

After introductions & gearing up, Katie & Peter led the group of nine on a short walk to the work area. While passing sections of the park that had already been part of an ongoing effort by the community to diminish the invasive honeysuckle, everyone shared fun, interesting, and informative knowledge of the different native plant species that were seen beginning to reestablish. Picking up the distinct acorns from a large Quercus Macrocarpa, Bur Oak and catching the edible seeds from the Impatiens Capensis, Jewelweed, it was easy to appreciate Indiana’s native woodland diversity.

Asian Bush Honeysuckle threatens that species diversity. A few of its unlikable characteristics include: promoting soil erosion, shading out native understory plant species, releasing chemicals into the soil that can inhibit other plants growth, & reducing habitat quality & area for native animal species. Stated in; FNR-IDNR-414 – Department of Forestry & Natural Resources, Purdue University & the Indiana Department of Natural Resources, Division of Forestry, “Tree regeneration in this oak woodland is largely absent because of shady conditions on the forest floor from the overtopping canopy of Asian Bush Honeysuckle, an aggressive, invasive species found throughout Indiana.”

With a few hours of sawing, pulling, dragging, and stacking, the group had finished the goal they set off to accomplish. Many comments were made to the direction of the quick satisfaction felt from the work they had just done together. With that said, it was a daunting thing to look up either bank and see the aforementioned blanket of green that still remained. That afternoon’s work was one step of many towards an overall objective to get Bloomington’s managed lands to a state that should not require such intensive management practices.

It was a joy to be part of this community effort and hopefully more like it are to come.

- Brett Mominee
  Master Gardener Intern

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Dates to Remember

Annual Garden Fair
Saturday, April 1

State Garden Tour
Friday, June 16

Monroe County Fair
July 21-July 29

Indiana State Fair
August 4-August 20
Hypertufa Workshop at Hilltop Garden and Nature Center

With thanks to a grant from the Monroe County Master Gardener Association, 16 seniors were able to participate in a hypertufa workshop conducted by Master Gardener Charlotte Griffin on October 22 at Hilltop.

Charlotte Griffin did a wonderful job of introducing participants to the story of hypertufa and showing us how to make the mixture and use it to create rustic, (relatively) lightweight planting containers that can take many forms, have the durability of concrete, and are able to tolerate winter temperatures. Hypertufa is porous - absorbing water and releasing it slowly - and is ideal for alpine gardens and succulents. It can be used for other types of plants as well; just pay attention to their water needs.

Mix the dry ingredients thoroughly, then add water until the mix reaches the look and consistency of cottage cheese. Add water a little at a time; check periodically that when a handful of the mix is squeezed, only three or four drops of water come out. Note: Portland cement is caustic and dusty. A mask and gloves are recommended when mixing, and you may want to use gloves when working the dampened hypertufa mix with your hands.

The hypertufa mix is packed tightly into forms or molds. Walls should be at least an inch thick -- more as the size of the object increases. We made planting containers and wall planters, but hypertufa can also be used to make bird baths, stepping stones, and other outdoor decorative objects. Pebbles, glass, or bits of tile can be embedded in the surface; cement dyes can be added for color.

Like cement, hypertufa must be cured. The finished object should be wrapped in plastic and not moved or handled for up to 36 hours. Left wrapped in plastic, objects will cure completely in 30 days. The pot should sound hollow and be fairly light when it is fully cured.

Hypertufa gets its name from tufa, a porous limestone rock formed when groundwater is supersaturated with calcium carbonate and the mineral precipitates out above ground. In the U.S., tufa rock is found in Ohio, Nevada and California; it can also be found in England, Croatia, Armenia, western Australia, South Africa, and other locations around the world. In early times, it was used construct buildings, aqueducts, and watering troughs for livestock.

Hypertufa is a mix of Portland cement (which contains calcium carbonate), peat moss, and vermiculite. The mixture is porous like tufa, but lighter in weight. Many recipes can be found on the internet; we used a mix of 1 part Portland cement to 1.5 parts peat moss and 1.5 parts vermiculite.

Article Continued on page 5
Hypertufa Workshop (continued from page 4)

When first cured, hypertufa is quite alkaline. Charlotte said that some people simply use neutral soil and let regular watering wash away the alkalinity over time. It is also possible to set the planter outside (after the 30-day curing period) and let the rain and snow wash over it for a few months – Charlotte’s preferred method. Another option is putting fresh water on the planter every day for 5 to 10 days until your hands no longer feel soapy when you put them in the water. A faster (but, according to Charlotte, somewhat controversial) option is to immerse the planter for 30 minutes in a solution of ¼ cup vinegar and 1 gallon water. Dry thoroughly before planting.

Because the container is porous, protect the surface you put it on with a waterproof barrier. If you are putting your planter on a surface that might mold, you may need to create some air space between the planter and the surface.

The Endwright Center wants to thank the Master Gardener Association for the grant that made this workshop possible at a very affordable cost for seniors -- not only those who are members of the Endwright Center but also other seniors in Bloomington and throughout the county.

The Endwright Center is part of the Area 10 Agency on Aging. Endwright offers fitness facilities and a fitness consultant, computer and electronics help, social events, interest groups, programs and classes on nutrition, yoga, music and other creative arts, and many other activities; many are free or offered at reduced rates for members. Membership is open to those 50 and older in a six-county area. The Endwright Center is located at 631 W. Edgewood Dr. in Ellettsville. For more information, go to: http://www.area10agency.org/endwright

Master Garden Annual Harvest Dinner

On Tuesday, November 15 we again celebrated all the programs, many volunteers and especially the Veterans with our annual Harvest Dinner. The food tables were filled with all sorts of goodies from your own recipes and some were from our own MCMGA recipe booklet. Thanks to the gracious folks from Sherwood Oaks we had some Christmas music in the background too!

A big Thank You goes out to our refreshment committee for all the hard work that went in to making the Harvest Dinner during our November meeting a great success. This includes Mary Cusack, Peggy Rees-Krebs, Donna Terry, Penny Austin, Tom Lovell, Cindy Benson, Nancy Page, Ann McEndarfer and Amy Thompson. A very special Thank You goes to Nancy and Ann for their wonderful table centerpieces! Finally I would like to THANK everyone who has helped out this year to make my job as the Meeting Director go smoothly and for your efforts in volunteering to help out with refreshments and setting up the meeting rooms.

As we look towards 2017, our next meeting will be Tuesday, January 24, 2017 at 6:30pm at the Extension Office. We do not have a sign-up sheet yet for this meeting, so I’m looking for volunteers to help setup the room and to bring refreshments. Please call or text me (812.325.3130) or email me (jeff.schafer1@comcast.net).

I hope everyone has a wonderful and safe holiday season and I hope to see ALL of you at the January meeting.

-Jeff Schafer
Meeting Director
**Winter Reading Suggestions**

**The Snow Child** by: **Eowyn Ivey**

Set in pioneer Alaska, there is much about gardening, farming and surviving during brutal times. A kindly, childless couple build a snow girl that weens to come to life.

**The Edge of the Orchard** by: **Tracy Chevalier**

1838: James and Sadie Goodenough have settled where their wagon got stuck – in the muddy, stagnant swamps of northwest Ohio. They and their five children work relentlessly to tame their patch of land, buying saplings from a local tree man known as John Appleseed so they can cultivate the fifty apple trees required to stake their claim on the property. But the orchard they plant sows the seeds of a long battle. James loves the apples, reminders of an easier life back in Connecticut; while Sadie prefers the applejack they make, an alcoholic refuge from brutal frontier life.

1853: Their youngest child Robert is wandering through Gold Rush California. Restless and haunted by the broken family he left behind, he has made his way alone across the country. In the redwood and giant sequoia groves he finds some solace, collecting seeds for a naturalist who sells plants from the new world to the gardeners of England. But you can run only so far, even in America, and when Robert’s past makes an unexpected appearance he must decide whether to strike out again or stake his own claim to a home at last.

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**About MCMGA ...**

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**Monroe County Master Gardeners Association**

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