

November 2011

Roots and Shoots

Monroe County Master Gardener Association Newsletter

Volume 27, Issue 11



Join us for our annual holiday pitch-in dinner

It's less than four weeks until we meet for the Monroe County Master Gardener Association's annual holiday pitch-in dinner. This annual event offers wonderful dishes and desserts that are provided by members, plus meats, cheeses, and drinks provided by the organization.

By
Evelyn
Harrell

We will gather on Tuesday, November 29 at 6:30 p.m. in the Great Hall at First United Methodist Church, northeast corner of Fourth and Washington for dinner, board election, and speaker. There is some on-street parking, and also parking across the street from the church in the old post office parking lot. Enter the building through the door directly across the street from the old post office door. It may be marked as the PDO door. Take the hall to your left, and use the elevator just around the corner to your right. The Great Hall is on the third floor. Turn left out of the elevator, then left again into the large room.

In addition to your dish to share, please bring your own washable dinner service, including plate, utensils, glass, and napkin, for yourself as well as guests, to take home with you to wash, so we can be good stewards of the environment.

Since this is a holiday event and we want to have plenty of food and drink for all, reservations are very important! Please call the extension office (349-2575) by November 18 or email ear4841@comcast.net to reserve your places at the table. As always, guests are welcome.

Cathy Teeters, of Cathy Teeters Beautiful Weddings, a florist for 35 years, will be our speaker. Her topic is *Caring for Holiday Gift Plants*, and an hour of education credit is available. Check out Cathy's website for a glimpse at her creative designs and arrangements.

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Special points of interest

- Prepare your special recipe for the annual pitch-in dinner this month*
- Check out the slate of officers before we vote at our November meeting*
- Buy Master Gardener apparel online; see the web address on page 3*
- Bloomington joins an impressive list of cities in winning America in Bloom 2010 awards*
- Always wanted to tour the IU Jordan Greenhouse that you've passed so many times? Find out how on page 5*

Member News

Our annual membership book, *Folia and Flora*, is being prepared right now so that we can have copies to members at our January 2012 general meeting. Please help the process by sending your membership form and \$10 fee to the Extension Office as soon as possible. It is important for communication and planning activities to have all members listed in *Folia and Flora*. Membership forms are available on our website. Don't put this off until tomorrow. Do it today—assure that your information will be listed with all the other Master Gardeners.



By
Nancy
White

Officer election at our November 29 meeting

At our November holiday pitch-in dinner and general meeting on Tuesday, November 29, election of officers will be held. Be there to cast your ballot. The slate arranged by the nominating committee is featured in this issue.

Master Gardener joins Purdue Extension Board

Congratulations to member Melissa Britton for being nominated as a new member of the Purdue Extension Board. She will join the board in January, 2012.

Come see the extension activities display at the extension office

Master Gardeners are invited to attend the annual meeting of the Purdue Extension Council which will be held on Monday, November 28, 3:30-5:00 p.m. at the extension office. A display will highlight extension activities for this year, and new extension board members will be elected. The council is the community arm of the extension and serves to publicize extension outreach and its variety of offerings.

Have you reported your volunteer and education hours?

Just a reminder that Amy will gladly accept all education and volunteer hours that you have accumulated this year plus any from years past as well. Now's the time to get current with your hours before 2012 begins.

Grant winners are reporting their progress

Using the proceeds of the annual spring Garden Fair that we sponsor, our board awards small grants for garden projects to community groups. Master Gardener grant winners for 2011 are finishing their final reports, and these reports will be on display at our November holiday pitch-in dinner and general meeting.

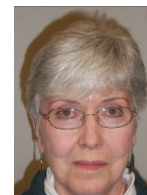
Master Gardeners help out during WFIU drive

Again this year, Preston Gwinn and his committee will be helping to answer the phones during the WFIU annual funding campaign on IU's campus on Sunday, November 6, 9:30 a.m. until noon. Thanks to Preston for organizing this community service activity for Master Gardeners.

2011 MCMGA slate of officers

Once again, it is time to elect officers for our MCMGA board of directors. Our bylaws state that this year, the offices of vice president for programs, treasurer, journalist, and director of records are to be elected. The election will take place at our Tuesday, November 29 holiday dinner and general meeting, and nominations will be accepted from the floor. The following nominees are presented for your consideration.

Vice President for Programs: Evelyn Harrell received her Master Gardeners training in 2009 and is now at the advanced level. She serves on committees for the Garden Fair and Garden Walk and volunteers at the Master Gardener booths at the Indiana Garden and Patio Show and the Indiana State Fair.



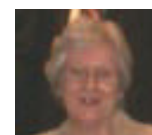
Evelyn Harrell

Treasurer: Diana Young was in the intern class of 1998 and currently is at the bronze level. Diana delights in flowers of all kinds, especially daylilies, and is known by all for her heirloom seed activities. She volunteers at the Demo Garden and the Monroe County Fair. Her job as treasurer is to manage our monies, pay all expenses, and plan the yearly budget.



Diana Young

Journalist: Helen Hollingsworth received her intern training in 2000 and currently is at the silver level. She volunteers for the Bloomington Garden Club Garden Walk, edits *Roots and Shoots*, and presents programs for various garden clubs. She also enjoys redesigning her home garden for low maintenance.



Helen Hollingsworth

Director of Records: Dan Pyle received his Master Gardener training on 2011. He gardens mostly in vegetables and herbs, with a focus on peppers. He also enjoys working on computers and playing video games.



Dan Pyle

Want to add something to your Christmas list?

Did you know that new Master Gardener merchandise is available through the Master Gardener Webstore? You can visit the store anytime at http://www.frecklesgraphics.com/Master_Gardener. Click on *New Gear* to see tee shirts, casual shirts, jackets, sweatshirts and hats for men and women plus aprons, travel mugs, license plates and more. Freckles Graphics is a Lafayette company and will send the items directly to you. And the best part, a portion of the sales revenue will come back to the state Purdue Master Gardener program. Call 1-800-449-8774 for more details on merchandise and ordering.

By
Nancy
White

Garden Fair news

Peggy Reis Krebs has agreed to chair the vendor committee for our 2012 Garden Fair on April 21, 9:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m. at the National Guard Armory. Peggy is already contacting our vendors from last year and some new ones as well. She can use some help with this work. Please contact her if you can volunteer some time during the late fall and winter. All work that is done now or later for the fair planning and activities counts as volunteer hours. If you have an idea for a new vendor who may like to participate, please contact Peggy.

By
Nancy
White

Other Garden Fair committees need more members also. Below are committees and contact persons. Please volunteer; we need your help.

David Dunatchik—Physical Arrangements

Evelyn Harrell—Café

Nancy White—Publicity

Jeff Schafer—Education Seminars

Diana Young—Finance

Diann Lock—Door Prizes

Susan Eastman—Master Gardener Information Booth

TBA—Master Gardener Sales

America in Bloom

Recently 2011 America in Bloom winning cities were announced at the AIB National Convention in Washington, D.C. As a winner in two categories in 2010, in the population category for 50,000 and above and also in the urban forestry award, Bloomington welcomes the following into the America in Bloom family of cities.

By
Nancy
White

Population Categories

Winning City

Under 4,000

Sackets Harbor, New York

4,000-10,000

Gallipolis, Ohio

10,000-15,000

Bexley, Ohio

15,000-25,000

Arroyo Grande, California

23,000-50,000

Holland, Michigan

50,000-150,000

Fayetteville, Arkansas

New this year to the competition are several special awards. Rising Sun, Indiana, won an award for the best city entrance.

Sign up for January field trip at holiday pitch-in dinner

On Tuesday, January 10, during the month known for frigid temps, we'll be touring the IU's Jordan Hall Greenhouse on East Third Street at 3:00 p.m. Be sure to sign up at the holiday pitch-in dinner to join us at the greenhouse for a tour through the exotic and spring-green greenhouse environment that's guaranteed to be a relief from the mid-winter blues.

By
Evelyn
Harrell

Later in the month plan to attend the Master Gardener general meeting on January 24 at 6:30 p.m. at the extension office. We'll start off with refreshments, followed by updates on the Garden Fair and other subjects. Our speakers will be Monroe County Naturalist Cathy Meyer, and Sandy Belth, Master Gardener intern. The title of their presentation is *Pollinators Beyond Bees*. The meeting will end about 8:30 p.m., and two education hours are available.

Indiana Heritage Corps at work in state parks

DNR recently received grant funding through the Office of Faith-based and Community Initiatives to administer Indiana Heritage Corps. This is a unique AmeriCorps program (United State's version of the Peace Corps) in which we'll have the opportunity to clean, restore, and construct 20 miles of trails at four different state parks throughout the state. DNR is recruiting current and future college students before the first of the year.

Submitted
by
Diana
Young

Do you know of anyone that might be interested in having a state park in their backyard for eight months while they clean up trails and earn college internship credit? DNR is looking to recruit 23 members to begin their service in late January. Indiana Heritage Corps is an unpaid opportunity, but DNR will be providing on-site housing, living allowance, education stipend and hands-on experience.

Indiana Heritage Corps Members should be at least 17 years of age, U.S. Citizen or lawful permanent resident, be able to pass a strict FBI background check, and be able to make an eight month commitment to the program (January 23—August 17).

Self-motivated candidates with a strong interest in natural resources, improving communities, and working outdoors are required at the following locations:

- Pokagon State Park—Angola, Indiana (NE Indiana)
- Fort Harrison State Park—Indianapolis, Indiana (Central Indiana)
- Brown County State Park—Nashville, Indiana (South Central Indiana)
- O'Bannon Woods State Park—Corydon, Indiana (Southern Indiana)

Participant benefits include paid training, hands-on experience, ongoing support network of AmeriCorps members, on-site housing for eight months (travel trailers located at each of the properties), living allowance of \$335 per month (taxed and dispersed to members evenly during the eight months), education award of \$2,750 (before taxes) upon completion of service to pay off student loans or apply toward more schooling.

For information about this opportunity, see www.Indianaintern.net or call Amanda Ricketts, Indiana Department of Natural Resources at (317) 220-4878 (office/cell).

Wood ash in the garden

Wood stoves and fireplaces are great for warming gardeners' chilly hands and feet, but what are we to do with the resulting ashes? Many gardening books advise throwing these ashes in the garden.

By
Rosie
Lerner,
Extension
Consumer
Horticulture
Specialist

Wood ash does have fertilizer value, the amount varying somewhat with the species of wood being used. Generally, wood ash contains less than 10 percent potash, one percent phosphate and trace amounts of micro-nutrients such as iron, manganese, boron, copper and zinc. Trace amounts of heavy metals such as lead, cadmium, nickel and chromium also may be present. Wood ash does not contain nitrogen.

The largest component of wood ash (about 25 percent) is calcium carbonate, a common liming material that increases soil alkalinity. Wood ash has a very fine particle size, so it reacts rapidly and completely in the soil. Although small amounts of nutrients are applied with wood ash, the main effect is that of a liming agent.

Increasing the alkalinity of the soil does affect plant nutrition. Nutrients are most readily available to plants when the soil is slightly acidic. As soil alkalinity increases and the pH rises above 7.0, nutrients such as phosphorus, iron, boron, manganese, copper, zinc and potassium become chemically tied to the soil and less available for plant use.

Applying small amounts of wood ash to most soils will not adversely affect your garden crops, and the ash does help replenish some nutrients. But because wood ash increases soil pH, adding large amounts can do more harm than good. Keep in mind that wood ash that has been exposed to the weather, particularly rainfall, has lost a lot of its potency, including nutrients.

Specific recommendations for the use of wood ash in the garden are difficult to make because soil composition and reaction varies from garden to garden. Acidic soils (pH less than 5.5) will likely be improved by wood ash addition. Soils that are slightly acidic (pH 6.0 to 6.5) should not be harmed by the application of 20 pounds per 100 square feet annually, if the ash is worked into the soil about 6 inches or so. However, if your soil is neutral or alkaline (pH 7.0 or greater), find another way to dispose of wood ash. If you don't know your soil's acidity or alkalinity level, have it tested for pH.

Crop tolerance to alkaline soil also should be considered. Some plants, such as asparagus and juniper, are more tolerant of slightly alkaline conditions than "acid-loving" plants, such as potatoes, rhododendrons and blueberries. Wood ash should never be used on acid-loving plants.

Web Castings

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

Brrrr! What a range of weather: needed rain, high winds, gorgeous sunny fall days, and now, frosty frost. Do we live in Indiana, or what?!



By
Karen
Sparks

This is that time of year when I am (or should be) deciding what to bring in, whether it's doing nicely in a pot or in the garden beds, and I am venturing out with a bucket and a shovel. Since we have already had frost, some of that decision-making has been done for me. The lemon balm, related to mint, I think, has practically become invasive and needs no help from me; it's on its own. No indoor help needed.

I want to focus on herbs, and I have a beautiful small rosemary shrub that I am really ignorant about. Can it even make it through the winters here? Well, there happens to be a site focusing on Bloomington that answers many of my herb questions:

<http://www.gardenguides.com/108937-herb-growing-bloomington.html>

This next website does also mention Bloomington, but has a different zone assigned; zone 6 instead of 5b, as in the last link. Hmm... I've always gone with 5b, to be on the safe side:

http://www.ehow.com/about_6710353_herb-growing-bloomington_.html

So, what do you do with YOUR rosemary? Or your lemon balm 'weeds'? I decided to look for recipes, since I have really never used either very much, and here are links with many choices. Infusing oil with rosemary and rubbing it under the skin of a roast turkey sounds interesting, and don't we just have turkey on the horizon? Also, lemon balm tea or sugar syrup or even schnapps recipes are intriguing:

<http://allrecipes.com/Recipes/herbs-and-spices/herbs/rosemary/main.aspx>

<http://oldfashionedliving.com/lemonbalm.html>

If you have any favorite rosemary or lemon balm recipes, or are using other herbs you have in your garden, please pass your recipes along to me (Karen.K.Sparks@me.com) and I will share them or their links next month, just in 'thyme' for Christmas.

Let's hope for more 'balm-y' weather, and have a great Thanksgiving.

Grow a windowsill of flavor this winter

Although the outdoor garden may be getting ready for its long winter nap, you can continue to harvest the fresh flavor of herbs by growing a windowsill garden.

Many herbs, including dill, parsley, thyme, chives, oregano, and mint, are adaptable to growing indoors in a sunny window. While some of these herbs may grow to be several feet tall in the garden, thankfully, they will be much smaller in the indoor garden where their root systems are restricted to small pots. Take cuttings from outdoor plants before frost, or grow new plants from seeds.

By
Rosie
Lerner,
Extension
Consumer
Horticulture
Specialist

'Tis the season to sage

Thanksgiving dinners filled with the fragrance of sage-dusted turkey and dressing may be an American tradition, so you may be surprised to find out that the sage plant (*Salvia officinalis*) is native to the Mediterranean.

By
Rosie
Lerner,
Extension
Consumer
Horticulturist



Berggarten sage

Today sage is primarily used as a culinary herb, but in older times it was a common medicinal plant. The origin of the salvia name from the Latin *salvus*, "to save," and *salvere*, "to heal," underscores its medicinal value.

Sage is actually a diverse group of herbs belonging to the genus *Salvia*. Many species are well-adapted to the home garden. Common sage, *S. officinalis*, is grown for its leathery gray-green foliage on 1.5-2-foot-tall stems, which become slightly woody with age. Frequent cutting of the stems will encourage stronger new growth to emerge.

Plants can be propagated by division, stem cuttings or seed. There are a number of cultivars available in variegated foliage colors: 'Berggarten' with its large, dusty blue-green leaves; 'Tricolor' with red, white and green leaves; 'Purpurea' in purple; and 'Icterina' with yellow-edged green leaves.



Purpurea sage

Sage performs best in full sun with well-drained soil. Garden sage will grow easily from seed, though harvest will be small the first year. After its second growing season, sage should be trimmed back in the spring to avoid the center of the plant becoming semi-woody.

If left to flower, sage will produce blue blooms that attract butterflies; however, this leaves less oil content, which results in reduced flavor in the leaves. Sage plants should provide a dependable supply of fresh-cut leaves for 3-5 years after which the plants should be replaced or divided to rejuvenate.

Improved cultivars of lamb's ears

Lamb's ear, also called stachys or betony, is a mat-forming, dense, white/gray woolly perennial. The leaves are extremely hairy and very soft to the touch, thus the name *lamb's ear*. Gardeners grow it primarily for foliage effect, not for its flowers. Years when spring and summer bring torrents of rain and high humidity, common lamb's ear can deteriorate into an unsightly mess. One variety, 'Countess Helene Von Stein', is readily available and one of the best because it has larger leaves, is more heat and humidity resistant, and does not bear flowers. Another useful cultivar, 'Silver Carpet', also does not produce flower spikes and is somewhat less vigorous than the species.

By
Helen
Hollingsworth

Potatoes turning green

Whether store-bought or homegrown, potatoes will turn green when they are exposed to light. Most folks know that they shouldn't eat potatoes that have turned green, or at least cut away the affected portion. But it's not actually the green color that is the problem.

The green color comes from the pigment chlorophyll, produced as a response to light. The potato tuber that we eat is actually a modified stem structure that grows underground. The "eyes" of the potato tuber are buds, which will sprout into shoots.

Chlorophyll itself is not toxic; however, another response of the potato tuber to light exposure is increased production of a colorless alkaloid called solanine. The amount of solanine increases with the length of exposure and the intensity of light.

Consuming a large quantity of solanine can cause illness, or even death in extreme cases. However, most people are not likely to eat enough of the affected tissue to cause illness, because of solanine's bitter taste.

The highest concentration of solanine is in the skin of the potato; removing the green portion will also remove most of the toxin. Sprouts of the eyes are also high in solanine and should be removed before cooking.

Potatoes will turn green when growing too close to the soil surface, as well as when stored under even low light conditions -- thus, the recommendations to mound potato plants in the garden and store harvested potatoes in complete darkness.

The next time you see a green potato, be thankful for that color change. It's warning you of the presence of toxic solanine.

By
Rosie
Lerner,
Extension
Consumer
Horticulturist,
Purdue
University

Rhododendrons and azaleas in clay or alkaline soil?

Rhododendrons and azaleas prefer acid soil, and they need more air in the root zone than any other garden plants. They also need a constant moisture supply. These essentials are reasons why growing rhododendrons in Monroe County is such a challenge. These shrubs, of which there are approximately 800 species and more than 10,000 named varieties, are surface rooters and thrive on mulch composed of pine needles, oak leaves, and bark or chips. Avoid disturbing the soil near the plants to prevent disturbing their roots.

Since rhododendrons and azaleas dislike clay or alkaline soil, try planting them on the north side of a building in raised beds that are one to two feet above the original soil level. Prepare the soil by mixing organic material into the top foot of native soil, then fill the bed above it with a mixture of organic material [50%], soil [30%], and sand [20%]. This mixture will hold both air and moisture. Water often when nature does not offer a good supply.

By
Helen
Hollingsworth

Prepare garden tools and equipment for winter

Though you may have thought your gardening chores were behind you, don't forget to tuck your gardening tools into bed for the winter. Too often we forget to prepare our tools and equipment for their winter hiatus, but a little bit of attention now will be rewarded with years of good service from gardening tools.

By
Rosie
Lerner,
Extension
Consumer
Horticulture
Specialist

It's hard to know when to call the gardening season quits some years. Just when we think we've mowed the lawn for the last time, we get a couple of weeks of mild temperatures that bring back the green blades of grass. Newly planted flowers, trees and shrubs should be watered thoroughly every week or so right up until the ground freezes, especially if rainfall is lacking.

But as freezing temperatures become more frequent, you can start to prepare your tools by giving them a thorough cleaning. Those steel wool barbecue-grill scrubbing pads are great for removing caked-on soil from shovels, hoes, trowels and spades. Scrub the blades and handles with soap and water, and allow them to dry completely before storing. Be sure to rub a little linseed oil or similar protector over wood handles to keep the wood from drying and splitting. Sharpening your tools now will help ensure a quick start in spring when the gardening bug bites.

Drain water from garden hoses and sprinklers, and hang them to dry before coiling the hoses for storage. Now is a good time to replace washers and repair leaks. Hoses left outdoors during the winter are likely to crack and split, especially if they still have water inside.

Rinse and dry your fertilizer/pesticide spreader and oil all moving parts. Pesticide sprayers should be rinsed and allowed to drip dry before storing. The best way to dispose of unused chemicals in the sprayer is to apply the product as directed on the label. Store unused pesticides in their original containers with the label intact. Be sure to place all pesticides away from children's and pets' reach in either a locked cabinet or a storage shelf at least 4 feet off the ground and protected from both freezing temperatures and excessive heat.

When you are fairly certain your lawn has seen its last mowing for this season, run your mower until it is out of fuel. Changing the mower's spark plug and sharpening the blades now will save you some time next spring. There are some products available that are supposed to help stabilize fuel so it can be stored over winter, but it is still best to drain or use up leftover fuel. Similarly, use up or drain fuel from the garden tiller before storing. If your equipment has a 4-cycle engine, drain and replace the crankcase oil. Clean the machine by scraping off matted grass and wiping off accumulated oil. Lubricate moving parts according to the manufacturer's directions.

Ahh, now you can finally relax and enjoy the fruits of your gardening labor curled up next to the fireplace with your favorite gardening book!

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/>.

November 2011

Cooperative Extension Service
3400 South Walnut Street
Bloomington, IN 47401

FIRST CLASS MAIL
RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED



**Our annual holiday pitch-in dinner is on
Tuesday, November 29 at 6:30 p.m. Bring a
special dish to share plus your table service.**

2011 MCMGA Board

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812-349-2575 afthompson@purdue.edu
Hours Report: <http://www.four-h.purdue.edu/mg/>

Education opportunities

November 19, 10:30 a.m.-noon, *Decorating with Greens*, presented by the Madison County Master Gardeners at the Anderson Public Library, Anderson, Indiana. This is a free event. Contact Madison County Extension Office, 765-641-9514 or orick@purdue.edu for more information.

March 3, 2012, 8:30 a.m.-3:00 p.m., *Spring Tonic*, presented by the Hoosier Hills Master Gardeners at the Orange County Community Center in Paoli, Indiana. Registration information will be available at a later date.

October 4-6 2012, 2012 Purdue Master Gardener State Conference, Noblesville, Indiana. More information and registration information will be available at a later date.

Compiled
by
Nancy
White