Our September 22 general meeting and the autumnal equinox on September 23 arrive just one day apart to remind us of a change in our gardening habits as we harvest and prepare our gardens for the long winter season. As we transition to fall, we’re also be transitioning into our program year, so plan to sign up for committees and activities you especially want to participate in.

Plan to join us on September 22 at 6:00 p.m. at the county extension office for our September Master Gardener meeting. The refreshment committee will have drinks and snacks available starting at 6:00 p.m. September refreshment committee members are Mary Cusack, Nancy White, Angie Fender, Dorothy Wilson, and Connie Clark.

The general meeting, which is always a busy one, will start promptly at 6:30 p.m. Our speakers will be Lynn Courson, Master Gardener, and Sara Kinne, American Daffodil Society, and their topic will be *Daffodils and Spring Bulbs*. One education hour may be earned.

Special thanks to our wonderful refreshment committee members, Angie Fender, Karen King, Tom Lovell, Diana Young, and Herman Young, who provided healthy and colorful snacks and drinks for the Demo Garden work night volunteers.

A brief reminder about our meeting scheduled on November 10. Once again we look forward to our Harvest Dinner. The meal will be a pot luck meal including appetizer, main dish, salad, side dish and dessert. Look for a sign up sheet at the September 22 meeting for volunteers to sign up to help set up the tables, monitor the food tables to keep things orderly, and to assist with drinks. Our speaker will be Jonas Carpenter, Bread and Roses Nursery, topic to be announced. One education hour may be earned.
Where did the summer go? It seems like it was just yesterday that we enjoyed the gardens of Susan Eastman and Diane Gregory and Mike Bennett and Donna Terry on the 2015 Garden Walk. And who can forget June 13, National Weed Your Garden Day! or the fantastic weather we enjoyed while cleaning up the Demonstration Garden. Plus we remember with appreciation the Master Gardeners who gave their support to the Monroe County Fair.

August has been a slow month, allowing many members to catch a breath after the struggle to keep up with the gardening challenges caused by record amounts of rain.

Diana and Herman Young and Don and Susan Sachtjen staffed the Purdue Master Gardener booth at the State Fair. It is a wonderful opportunity to help people find solutions to all kinds of gardening questions.

The Canadian poet Robert Finch reminds us of this annual transition into fall:

But now in September the garden has cooled,  
and with it my possessiveness.  
The sun warms my back instead of beating on my head ...  
The harvest has dwindled, and I have grown apart  
from the intense midsummer relationship that brought it on.

Monroe County Master Gardeners will transition to the 2016 calendar of activities at the Tuesday, September 22 general meeting to be held at the Extension Office. We will discuss and vote on the proposed changes to the MCMGA bylaws. Go to www.mcmga.net to find the bylaws and click on Proposed Bylaws Changes. The changes are italicized. Please review them before we vote on September 22. The proposed changes clean up some language, change some titles, and impact the ballot of candidates to be voted on at the November harvest dinner and general meeting.

It is not too early to download the membership form from that same website, fill it out, and select the activities you are interested in. Extra forms will be available at the September meeting.

September stands for sign-up. Yes, sign-up sheets will be available for many different opportunities for volunteer hours. There are 11 volunteer projects listed in folia and flora. Find your niche. Also, here is a reminder to take photos of that perfect fall flower or that eye-catching composition before the end of the summer season puts an end to the flowers. One such photo will win the competition at the November meeting and will grace the cover of the 2016 folia and flora. As late as October someone may have a pretty pile of pumpkins, or a memorable arrangement of corn stalks. Someone’s photo may remind us that the gardening experience is more than just the summer months.

See you on September 22!
An important announcement

By Nancy White

You probably don’t realize this, but the 2016 Garden Fair is only seven short months away. For our new members and interns, the Garden Fair is the MCMGA annual spring event that helps to usher in the new growing season. Each year the event highlights local vendors and non-profits that foster education and support for gardeners. 2016 will mark the seventh Garden Fair at the Indiana National Guard Armory. In such a short time, parts of the Garden Fair have achieved tradition status. Fair visitors look forward to the free trees or shrubs, and they talk about the homemade pies, enjoy their giveaway garden catalogues, and anticipate visiting their favorite vendors.

The Garden Fair’s success depends on the commitment of all our members. To make it happen each year we need planners, organizers, cooks, writers, photographers, set-up folks, educators, and so many others. What we need is you and all you can contribute. At the September 22 general meeting, you will have an opportunity to sign up for a Garden Fair committee. Some committees start soon and complete their work before Fair day. Other committees work on Fair Day only. There are a variety of jobs, and you can volunteer for any that fit your personal schedule.

Be sure to look for the sign-up sheets on September 22. Think spring and the MCMGA Garden Fair!

Notice of Bylaw Change vote at September 22 general meeting

Please take time to log onto mcmga.net to view bylaws changes to be voted upon at the September 22 general meeting. Revisions appear in italics online for ease of viewing.

In general, these suggested changes to the bylaws involve a few name changes for board positions and a realignment of duties for some board positions.
This year’s Monroe County Fair featured three Garden Chats. These are hour-long presentations, free to fairgoers, on various garden-related topics.

On July 30. Phil O’Connor from Vilonia Nursery presented American Chestnut: What's New? Phil spoke about the magnificent American chestnut tree. The height to the first branch reached 50-70 feet. The United States had approximately three billion American chestnut trees that reached 100 feet in height and 30 feet in diameter. The wood from one tree could fill four railcars. The nuts were a main food source for many people in the Midwest and mountain areas.

In 1934 a fungal attack on the chestnut trees’ bark began, and twenty years later there were no large stands of American chestnut trees left in the wild. The roots and shoots still spout, however, and the American Chestnut Foundation is working diligently to save the chestnuts to bring them back. The foundation must plant each sprout while it is viable. Breeders have crossed the American clapper low spreading form with the Chinese chestnut which has gray green saw tooth leathery leaves and is resistant to the blight. The foundation then crosses this combo three times with the American chestnut. The Chestnut Foundation has succeeded with a live tree that lives for 10-15 years before it succumbs to the blight.

Phil passed around a leaf of the horse chestnut tree that seemed sacred as he explained the start had been procured from Anne Frank’s yard. This leaf is from the yard of the author of the Diary of Anne Frank, from the tree she writes about in her yard.

The American Chestnut Foundation presented the Indianapolis Children’s Museum with three saplings from Anne's yard. All three saplings died. They presented the State Capital Building with one which survives. The foundation also presented the Vilonia Nursery with three saplings. One was accidentally run over with a lawn mower. The other two survive, and that is the large leaf passed around at the Garden Chat. It brings tears to my eyes to think of the experience.
New special interest garden group

Curious about African violets? Having difficulty getting your violets to bloom? Consider joining the Central Indiana African Violet Club! This club was launched in August, and our members share a passion for growing African violets, streptocarpus, and a variety of gesneriads. It’s a great way to learn from the experts, increase your plant collection, and grow!

For more information contact Terri Vicenzi at 812-272-2974 or email Terrivicenzi@gmail.com.

Time to order bulbs

To assure the best selection, it’s time now to purchase or order spring bulbs. Bulbs are inexpensive, take little care after planting, and brighten the garden as it takes on new life. Local retail outlets and catalogues with color pictures entice the buyer. This year, set aside some space to try some new varieties or color combinations.

Always looking for deer resistant plantings, I am encouraged by the variety of sizes and colors of allium, and the deer walk right past them. Members of the onion family, some of my recent allium favorites include Globe Master, Mount Everest (white), and Shubertii (rose/purple). A stunning variety that now resides in WonderGarden at WonderLab is the albopilosum or Star of Persia. It has huge 10” globes of amethyst-violet florets with metallic highlights that resemble fireworks when in bloom.

And if you are interested in developing or enlarging a woodland setting, try planting a variety of bulbs that are deer and rodent resistant naturalizers. Anemone Blanda (Grecian Windflower), Galanthus, Narcissi, Chionodoxa (Glory of the Snow), Scilla, Camassia, Eremurus (Foxtail lily), Brodiaea, Ipheion (Spring Starflower), and Allium are a few to consider.

Bulbs can be planted from mid-October until the ground freezes to ensure a lovely spring.
Children’s butterfly project at Middle Way House

By Lauren Beth Jobe

The Rooftop at Middle Way House received funding from the Monroe County Master Gardeners Association to teach the children we serve in our garden education program about butterflies through hands-on lessons and activities. Throughout the summer, our lessons focused on the important role that butterflies play in our ecosystem as pollinators.

The lessons covered a variety of topics related to butterflies, including planting habitat, the four stages of metamorphosis, pollination and pollinators, camouflage and colors in nature, pollution and its effects on migration, and the importance of the sun. The children created a butterfly habitat in the garden on the Rooftop by planting over 80 host and nectar plants that many butterfly species enjoy. These plants provide essential food and shelter for all the life stages of a butterfly. The children also had the opportunity to care for and harvest a variety of fruits, vegetables, and herbs growing on the Rooftop.

Through this experience, the children gained an understanding of the connection between pollinators, such as bees and butterflies, and the fruits that we eat.

Once the habitat was planted, we purchased butterfly hatching kits so that the children could observe first-hand the four stages of metamorphosis: egg, larva, pupa, and adult butterfly. First we observed the caterpillars grow larger each day and shed multiple exoskeletons in the process. Then we watched the larvae climb to the top of their habitat and change into chrysalides, where they underwent a weeklong transformation before emerging as beautiful Painted Lady butterflies. After observing and caring for the adult butterflies for a few days, we had a celebration where we released the butterflies into our garden.

In the first weeks of August, we were excited to discover that our butterfly garden had become home to multiple Monarch and Black Swallowtail butterfly larvae. We found several of these caterpillars munching on our milkweed, verbena, and fennel plants. By the end of August, we even spotted a few vibrant green chrysalides hanging from the cosmos. This fall at the Rooftop, we are taking additional steps to protect our perennial butterfly habitat over winter, doing our part to ensure the wellbeing of butterflies passing through Bloomington in the future. Pollinators, and butterflies in particular, are such an essential part of every garden, and we look forward to seeing them on the Rooftop for years to come, thanks to the Monroe County Master Gardeners Association!
Late-season bloomers
By Rosie Lerner, Purdue Extension Consumer Horticulturist

Just when the colors of summer flowers are fading, late-blooming perennials are ready to take center stage. In addition to the usual fare of coneflowers, mums and ornamental grasses, many lesser-known characters are ready to perform.

*Agastache foeniculum*, also known as Blue Giant Hyssop, packs 4-5 inch long dense spikes of bright blue flowers on three foot tall, upright plants. Butterflies and hummingbirds love this plant, as do bees.

Japanese Anemone (*Anemone x hybrida*) offers 2-3 inch blooms in various shades of pink or white atop a two to four foot mound of foliage. Anemone performs best in morning sun/afternoon shade with rich, moist soil. Grapeleaf Anemone (*A. vitifolia*) also blooms in early fall and is a bit more stress tolerant.

Several Asters bloom in the fall, most notable being *Aster x frikartii*, featuring lavender blue, daisy-like blooms with yellow centers on 3-foot stems. The Michaelmas Daisy (*A. novi-belgii*), is taller and has a more violet-purple bloom, though there are white-, red- and pink-blooming and compact cultivars available.

Butterfly Bush (*Buddleia davidii*) is a woody shrub, but in our area it is best maintained as if it were an herbaceous perennial, meaning to remove all of the above-ground foliage in winter. If left from year to year, the wood tends to be open and weak. But, since it flowers on current season’s growth, forcing new stems to develop each spring will still result in blooms in late summer and early fall. Butterfly bush is lavender to purple in color, but many selections are available in white, pink and even yellow.

Bluebeard (*Caryopteris x clandonensis*) should also be treated as if an herbaceous perennial by cutting it to the ground each winter. The lovely, blue flowers are accompanied by grey-green fragrant foliage and, though it flowers best in full sun, will perform reasonably well even in part shade.

The bugbanes sound a bit better when called by their botanical name of Cimicifuga. *C. ramosa* flowers in early fall with fragrant white to pinkish-white blooms on bronze to blackish-purple foliage. Closely related Kamchatka bugbane (*C. simplex*) bears white bottle-brush type flower spikes on arching sprigs of green foliage. Both species are sure to chase away your end-of-summer blues. The bugbanes prefer cool, moist locations and should be sited with afternoon shade.

Joe-Pye Weed (*Eupatorium purpureum*) commands attention with 5-7-foot tall plants crowned by huge clusters of fine-textured purple blooms. Closely related *E. maculatum* has purple mottling on the stems.
Science project resources
By Rosie Lerner, Purdue Extension Consumer Horticulturist

School science fairs often put students and parents on the hunt for project ideas. Of course, the point of these projects is for students, not parents, to learn how to plan and implement science! But, naturally, parents want to help their kids succeed. There are limitless resources available these days, especially with the help of the Internet.

One of the most beneficial things moms and dads can do is to help their children find resources that teach them how to conduct science. A great little book called *Plant Science Biology Projects* by David Hershey (Wiley Press) helps teach kids about the process of designing experiments. This includes how to pose questions (hypotheses) that are answerable, and what sorts of plant responses are measurable.

There also are many websites—so many as to boggle the mind! Here are a few that might warrant a closer look:

**USDA-ARS Science for Kids**

Click on the green *Science Projects* button. The site is filled with information to help kids understand the process of scientific experimentation and how to get started. It also contains project ideas from an array of disciplines, including botany, chemistry, environmental science, medicine and zoology. It's a great starting place for beginners as well as older students.

**Internet Public Library for Kids: Science Fair Project Resource Guide**

Internet Public Library2 has put together a useful resource for those who want to participate in or run a science fair. The site provides scientific methodology tips, project ideas, a section on writing and presenting results, and links to additional resources. A feature unique to this site allows students to ask the staff librarians questions.

**Agriculture in the Classroom (sections for kids and teens)**

This site has a lot of cool features you can search by grade level, content area and state, among others. There’s a handy, interactive map of the U.S. where you can look up agricultural facts related to your state. Like the other sites, there are sections on how to choose topics and design experiments, but this one also has a nice section on how to write a bibliography. The site is so robust it can take some patience to find the content you’re hunting for. Here are a couple of shortcuts that might help: [www.agclassroom.org/kids/science.htm](http://www.agclassroom.org/kids/science.htm) and [www.agclassroom.org/teen/](http://www.agclassroom.org/teen/)

**Discovery Channel Science Fair Central**

This site has a lot of resources and hints for selecting and implementing your ideas, including a student handbook and additional factsheets on astronomy, biology, botany, chemistry, earth science and physical science projects. There’s a virtual lab where kids can practice designing and conducting a project.
## Volunteer opportunities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Jobs</th>
<th>Contact</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Bloomington Community Orchards,</strong>&lt;br&gt;2120 S. Highland Avenue (Winslow Woods Park)&lt;br&gt;www.bloomingtoncommunityorchard.org</td>
<td>seasonal</td>
<td>maintenance, all levels of expertise welcome</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Cheryl's Garden at Karst Farm Park,</strong>&lt;br&gt;2450 S. Endwright Road, Bloomington</td>
<td>during growing season</td>
<td>help w/ design and maintenance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Courthouse Native Garden</strong>&lt;br&gt;Downtown Square</td>
<td>seasonal</td>
<td>maintenance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Flatwoods Park Butterfly Gardens</strong>&lt;br&gt;9499 W. Flatwoods Rd., Gosport, IN&lt;br&gt;Near Ellettsville</td>
<td>seasonal</td>
<td>maintenance/rejuvenation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Growing Opportunities</strong>&lt;br&gt;Hydroponic Garden&lt;br&gt;Stone Belt Facility—Tenth St., Bloomington</td>
<td>year around</td>
<td>education &amp; maintenance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Hilltop Garden &amp; Nature Center</strong>&lt;br&gt;2367 E. Tenth St., Bloomington&lt;br&gt;www.hilltop.indiana.edu/~landscap/hilltop</td>
<td>year around</td>
<td>maintenance of gardens for shade, herbs, pollinators, containers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Hinkle-Garton Farmstead</strong>&lt;br&gt;2920 E. Tenth St., Bloomington&lt;br&gt;www.facebook.com/HinkleGartonFarmstead</td>
<td>year around</td>
<td>herb, orchard, butterfly, &amp; woodland gardens, invasives removal, soil reclamation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Hoosier Hills Food Bank</strong>&lt;br&gt;The Food Bank garden is located at Will Detmer Park, 4140 West Vernal Pike</td>
<td>year around</td>
<td>plant, harvest, and compost; training provided</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Middle Way House Roof Top Garden</strong>&lt;br&gt;<a href="mailto:garden@middlewayhouse.org">garden@middlewayhouse.org</a></td>
<td>seasonal</td>
<td>scheduled workdays</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mother Hubbard’s Cupboard</strong>&lt;br&gt;1100 W. Allen St., Bloomington&lt;br&gt;mhcfoodpantry.org/getinvolved/volunteer</td>
<td>year around</td>
<td>seasonal garden tasks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>T. C. Steele</strong>&lt;br&gt;4220 T. C. Steele Rd., Nashville&lt;br&gt;Wwww.tcsteele.org</td>
<td>seasonal</td>
<td>maintenance, invasives removal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Wonderlab Garden</strong>&lt;br&gt;308 W. Fourth St., Bloomington</td>
<td>seasonal</td>
<td>education, supervision of volunteers, maintenance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Wylie House</strong>&lt;br&gt;307 E. Second St., Bloomington</td>
<td>year around</td>
<td>maintenance of heirloom garden, seed saving</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>MCMGA Volunteer Opportunities</strong></td>
<td>year around</td>
<td>various</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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.
Every so often, gardeners find a deformed-looking flower or stem that appears as if the plant has bulked up on steroids. The stem or flower stalk will appear somewhat squashed and splayed, sometimes splitting in two or more sections. Or it may appear that two or more stalks have merged together to form one distorted structure.

This odd growth is called fasciation, which literally translates to banding or bundling. Fasciation is thought to be caused by a hormonal imbalance. In some cases, this imbalance could be a random genetic mutation or, in other cases, induced by one or more environmental factors, including bacteria, fungi, virus, insects, frost, and physical damage to the growing point.

The good news is that fasciation itself is not "contagious" and does not spread through a planting. And just because a particular plant exhibited fasciation one season does not necessarily mean it will again in the future. In most cases, fasciation is just a random oddity.

Some plants are actually valued for their fasciations, most notably the cockscomb Celosia, a popular bedding plant flower, and the fantail willow, an ornamental shrub also popular for floral arrangements.
In the grow
By Rosie Lerner, Purdue Extension Consumer Horticulturist

Q. Is there any way you could help in figuring out what is wrong with our lilac? – C.B. via email.

A. Lilacs are quite susceptible to a fungal disease called powdery mildew, which causes a grayish-white, powdery coating of spores and fungal structures on the surface of leaves, stems, flower petals and fruit.

According to the Purdue Plant and Pest Diagnostic Laboratory, the best method of control is prevention. Practices that will decrease the severity of powdery mildew include avoiding planting cultivars highly susceptible and alleviating high humidity by spacing plants far enough apart to allow good air movement to quickly dry the foliage. Although chemical control is seldom warrant- ed in the home landscape for powdery mildew, preventative fungicide sprays are available for use on prized ornamentals that require protection.

The siting of your plant looks like it might suffer from lack of good air circulation, being in the corner, and also not much area for good root growth. Is this also a shady location? If so, replacing the lilac with a better adapted species might be the best option.

Q. I am a loyal reader of your “Green Thumb.” I’m having trouble with several peony bushes (two out of 12). The stems turn black and the foliage dies. Is this something that will spread to the other peonies? Some of my beds are crowded and don’t get good air flow, but these peonies are on the border and not at all crowded. – S.S., English, Indiana.

A. Peonies are susceptible to a couple of common fungal diseases—leaf blotch and botrytis blight. Leaf blotch is also called red spot or measles. The numerous common names reflect the various symptoms, including blotches on leaves and stems and small red spots (measles). The fungus overwinters on plant debris and tends to be present every year once it occurs.

Botrytis blight also causes blackening of leaves, stems and flowers and is especially prevalent in wet seasons, so it would be a prime suspect this year. There are a few fungicides labeled for use on peonies for this disease, but they would have to be applied early and often to protect the leaves from infection rather than wait until after the disease is present.

For both diseases, good sanitation is the best prevention strategy, including removal of infected foliage as it appears. Fall-clean by removal of plant tops and fallen leaves at the end of the season can help lessen the amount of overwintering inoculum.
Cooperative Extension Service
3400 South Walnut Street
Bloomington, IN 47401

Monroe County Master Gardeners Association

Helping others grow!

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2015 MCMGA Board

President: Evelyn Harrell
812-339-0572 ear4841@comcast.net

Vice President—Programs: Susan Lovell
812-339-5914 smlovell@indiana.edu

Vice President—Education: Sandy Belth
812-825-8553 belthbirds@aol.com

Secretary: David Dunatchik
812-332-2331 dddunatchik@att.net

Treasurer: Diana Young
812-339-0040 young-diana@att.net

Journalist: Helen Hollingsworth
812-332-7313 hhollin59@att.net

Director—Communications: Stephen Anderson
812-360-1216 stephen_ace@yahoo.com

Director—Records: Abe Morris
812-606-5577 abemorris7@gmail.com

Director at Large: Mary Cusack
812-824-6366 marycus@gmail.com

Acting Fair Board Representative: Diana Young
812-339-0040 young-diana@att.net

Past President: Nancy White
812-824-4426 nwhite38@hotmail.com

Extension Educator: Amy Thompson
812-349-2575 athompson@purdue.edu

Master Gardener Calendar

September 17-18, Purdue Rainscaping Education Program, IUPUC campus, Columbus. For information, see https://ag.purdue.edu/extension/rainscaping/Documents/Rainscaping_Final_Web.pdf

September 22, 6:30 p.m., MCMGA general meeting, extension office meeting room, program by Lynn Courson and Sara Kinne, 1 hour credit; vote on bylaws changes and sign up for Garden Fair and MCMGA committees

September 22-25, 2015 International Master Gardener Conference, Council Bluffs, Iowa. For information, see Special Events at mcmga.net.