

Roots and Shoots

September 2006 Volume 22, Issue 9

SEPTEMBER GENERAL MEETING

by Ann McEndarfer



The next MCMGA general meeting will be held on September 26th at 6:00 p.m. at Hilltop Garden and Nature Center. Hilltop is located at 2301 East 10th Street behind Tulip Tree Apartments. Please note the earlier time. Our speakers will be Marilyn Brimley,

who will present information on growing orchids, and Marcia Figuerido, who will speak about accessible gardening and the development of the enabling garden at Hilltop. Our programs carry two hours of advanced training credit for certified Master Gardeners or two education hours for those not yet certified.

The November General Meeting will be our holiday party/pitch-in which will be held on Tuesday, November 28, at the First United Church, located at 2420 East Third Street, same as last year.

The after dinner speaker will be Gordon Elsbury, owner of Elsbury's Greenhouse in Hope, Indiana. Mr. Elsbury has been in the nursery business for about thirty years and is one of the five biggest sellers of plants in the state. If you purchased mums at Mays Greenhouse, you own plants which came from Elsbury's.

Our November program will focus on the care, growing, and re-blooming of poinsettias. For those of us who have tried, and failed, to make our holiday plants bloom the following year, this should be interesting information. Mr. Elsbury will bring 20 to 30 Poinsettia plants of different varieties, including several new varieties, for us to see. These plants will be for sale at the end of the program. If you want to get a head start on your holiday decorating, Elsbury's Greenhouse will have its Holiday Open House the weekend of November 24th – 26th.



Upcoming Events

- ◆ Friday, September 22 & Saturday, September 23, MG State Conference, Hamilton Co. 4H Fairgrounds, Noblesville, IN
- ◆ Tuesday, September 26, 6:00 p.m., MCMGA General Meeting at Hilltop Garden & Nature Center, 2301 E. 10th Street (behind Tulip Tree Apartments)
- ◆ Saturday, October 21, 7:00 a.m.—10:00 p.m., Bus Day Trip to Missouri Botanical Garden
- ◆ Tuesday, November 28, Holiday Dinner, First United Church, East 3rd. Street

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MEMBER NEWS BY NANCY WHITE



If you haven't been to see the WonderGarden at WonderLab Museum recently, take a quiet walk there some day soon. Several of our MG members have been working there this summer, assisting the WonderLab staff and educating volunteers as the beautifully designed and implemented garden goes through its first summer using volunteer help. The garden contains so many interesting perennials, shrubs, ground covers, and young trees in such a small space. Right now is a good time to see late summer perennials in full maturity. The MG team can use others as we wind down the blooming season and make plans for next year. If you need volunteer hours or just want to help maintain this downtown highlight, contact Nancy White or Jeanne Gunning, WonderLab volunteer coordinator, 337-1337. Your help will be greatly appreciated.

Are Chipmunks and Japanese Beetles Universal?

Speaking of the WonderGarden, some of us worked there recently with a team of super volunteer graduate student from the IU SPEA (School of Public and Environmental Affairs). One volunteer was newly arrived in Bloomington from her home in California. She announced that she had never seen a chipmunk or a Japanese beetle and that she is not sure these inhabit her state. We promised to contact her right away next summer when the Japanese beetles arrive. She should not go uneducated about such important things! Our MG training is all about education, isn't it?

MCMGA at Indiana State Fair

Many thanks to Preston Gwinn who coordinated all of our MG volunteers who manned the state Master Gardener booth in the Horticulture Building at the Indiana State Fair. There were lots of questions about weeds, insect damage, garden design, and of course, the ever-popular lawn weed issues. Having the new system with a computer and large monitor overhead really saved time and gave visitors lots more information. Thanks to all who represented Monroe County Master Gardeners on August 13.

Share Your Gardening Expertise!

The MCMGA program committee plans programs for our general meetings and is always looking for new ideas to include in our yearly schedule. Do you have some skill or knowledge about garden issues you can share with our group? Perhaps you have located a new supplier of garden plants or hardscaping. If you have some good ideas for general meeting programs or for trips we can schedule, be sure and pass those along to Ann McEndarfer or Nancy White.

Save the Date

Don't look now, but the holidays are right around the corner, and MG members will join to celebrate a late Thanksgiving, early Hanukkah, early Christmas, and a very early New Year's Even on Tuesday, November 28, at the First United Church for our holiday dinner. This special evening is always a high point of our year as we bring our favorite dish to share with friends and family and other MG members. This year a very special program is planned, so you want to be there. More on our holiday dinner later, but for now, save the date!

Trees, All Seasons, All Reasons Fieldtrip

For those who attended the February advanced training on trees and for all others who love to see new varieties as well as old favorites, join us for our final fieldtrip of the season on Friday, October 6. We will take a tour of the IU Arboretum on Tenth Street on the IU campus. This event is free, and we will have a chance to see how the approaching fall is displayed in these native Indiana and non-native varieties. Guests are welcome, time will be late afternoon, and we are negotiating some easy parking for the tour. If you want to attend, get your name on the contact list by emailing or phoning Ann McEndarfer or Nancy White.

LETTER FROM AMY THOMPSON, EXTENSION EDUCATOR



Dear Monroe County Master Gardeners,
Please send in your volunteer hours to either the Extension Office or to Mary Hawkins as soon as possible. These hours need to be reported to Purdue by September 30th of each year.

I appreciate all your volunteer efforts, but want to send a special thanks to all the volunteers who worked on projects for the fair. I hope you had a chance to visit the Master Gardener Demonstration Garden; it looked wonderful thanks to all the hard work of Lydia Anderson and her group of volunteers. Laramie Wilson, Ester Minnick, Diana Young and Mary Jane Hall did a wonderful job as project superintendents for the vegetables and herbs, cut flowers and potted plants and the floral design open class exhibits. Their jobs were made easier by all the Master Gardeners who assisted them. Next year I hope all of you will consider exhibiting in one of these open class categories. The superintendents and I are looking for suggestions to boost the number of exhibits in these categories; if you have any ideas, please let us know. Thanks to Carol Cobine for taking charge of the Master Gardener booth and arranging all of the volunteers to staff the booth. I appreciate everyone who came and worked a shift, on the often sweltering patio. Next year we would like to make the Master Gardener booth more interactive. If you have suggestions for displays or activities we might include, please share them with me. Thanks should also go to Preston Gwinn who did a garden chat on Nut Growing on Thursday evening during the fair. I hope I'm not leaving anyone out!

I will be on vacation from October 3rd through the 11th. Rather than having volunteers come in and staff the office during that time, I would like to have a pool of volunteers who the Extension Office staff could call or email to respond to questions from the public. You would certainly be able to have access to the reference material there if needed, and any mailing that needed to be sent out would be sent through our office. I think this makes better use of everyone's time and does not require someone to be there to work a volunteer shift during the slow time year when there may be few questions to respond to. If you are willing to serve in this role, please let me know so that I can add your name to the list of people the office staff may call during my vacation.

The Extension Office along with the Monroe County SWCD and the Monroe County Parks Department are presenting a Master Naturalist Class this fall. This program is similar to the Master Gardener program but focuses on natural resources. If any of you would like more information about this class, please let me know.

Cheers, Amy

FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DESK BY MARILYN BRINLEY

Fall is just around the corner. With the change of seasons come thoughts of readying our gardens for the next growing season. How many of us are ready to clear out spent foliage, plant spring bulbs, and plan next year's gardens?

Likewise, it is already time for us to begin planning for next year's Master Gardener activities. We are currently looking for individuals who might be interested in being on the 2007 board. Anyone interested may contact me at MLBrinley@aol.com or call 824-1318 for more information. In addition, you may be contacted soon by a member of our nominating committee.

We also are in need of a person or two to chair the Demonstration Garden at the fairgrounds. The chairperson(s) would be responsible for overseeing the care and tending of the gardens. Look for more information soon.

As you begin to put away this year's garden and look toward next year's, please consider how you might fit in with our fine organization's workings for 2007.



IN THE GROW: QUESTION AND ANSWER

By B. Rosie Lerner, Purdue Extension Consumer Horticulturist

Q. We have a yellow peach tree and a white peach tree. Both have had great fruit in the past. The yellow one was loaded this year, and usually the fruit ripens around the first week in July. Toward the end of June, the fruit started rotting before it was ripe! The white peach tree has several peaches on it, but they don't seem to mature. The fruit is the size of a small walnut and very hard. I have a friend who also says her peaches are not maturing. I have not been good about spraying the trees. I guess I need to start, but I'm not sure where to start. Thanks for any help you can suggest.

A. The extreme high temperatures during much of July have likely caused fruit to mature more quickly. And the humid, rainy, warm weather has been just perfect for development of the brown rot fungal disease on the fruit. Brown rot can quickly enlarge to completely cover the fruit in a couple of days! It's too late now to do much about it. Remove and discard infected fruit both on the tree and those that have fallen. Preventative fungicides can be applied to protect developing fruit but need to be applied earlier, beginning pre-bloom to prevent infection. More information on controlling pests in home fruit plantings can be found in [Purdue Extension Bulletin ID-146](#) available online.

Not all peaches are created equal. Some varieties take longer to mature than others; however, in general, the white cultivars are not particularly late in maturing. But there are some peach cultivars that normally ripen in early to mid June, while others ripen in late August to mid September! And really heavy fruit loads result in much smaller fruit. It's hard to say without seeing a sample, but if the fruit are still only the size of walnuts, I would guess that the fruit have failed to develop due to inadequate pollination, most likely related to weather during flowering time. Small consolation, but at least the Japanese beetles, raccoons and other varmints won't get any either!

Q. I have a good-sized peach tree in my yard. It looks healthy and produces fruit. The problem is that the peaches get heavy and fall off the tree before they are ripe. What can we do to help this?

A. Many Indiana peach trees are experiencing a bumper load of fruit this year, so much so that branches are bending and breaking, and the tree is not able to support the excess fruit. Thinning the fruit to optimal spacing early after fruit set makes better-sized fruit, less risk of limb breakage and less fruit drop. Peaches should be thinned to about 6 to 8 inches apart, either by hand for small trees or by using a pole to knock off young fruit for larger trees.

Q. I am new to Indiana and need information on the growing and care of the mandevilla plant. I was under the impression upon purchasing this plant that it would grow outside year in and year out. Now I'm told that I have to take the plant in during the winter months. PLEASE help me...

A. Mandevilla is a woody vine that is only winter hardy to the tropics, but it can be overwintered indoors as a houseplant. Mandevilla should be brought in before temperatures drop below 50 F. You may need to trim the plant back to make it more manageable indoors. Place in bright, indirect sunlight and water as needed when the top inch of the soil begins to dry.

After danger of frost is past in spring, mandevilla can be moved back outside. Plant them in shade by sinking the pots to make them easier to lift in autumn. Or, grow them as container plants on the patio. Since they are vines, they will need a trellis for support. You may want to prune them back hard before moving them back outdoors to make room for new spring growth.

Q. We went to the garden last night and found these black bugs eating our tomato plants. We have never seen them before, and they are really tearing up our patch. Can you tell me what they are and what to use to get rid of them?

A. I need more of a description to be able to identify the culprit for sure. If the bugs were eating the fruit rather than the plants, I suspect the four-spotted sap beetle. They are particularly attracted to ripe fruits that have cracked or are otherwise wounded. So keeping the plants harvested frequently can help, as can a strong spray of plain water from the garden hose.

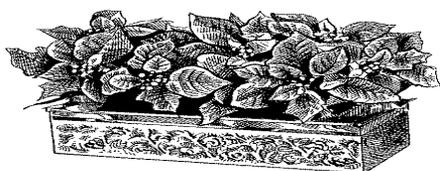
But, if the little black bugs are primarily eating the foliage, I suspect them to be flea beetles, which can walk or fly, but frequently jump when disturbed. Flea beetles are usually more problematic on potatoes and eggplant

(continued on page 5)

**EDITOR'S REMINDER:
2006 MASTER GARDENER STATE CONFERENCE**

The MG State Conference on Friday, September 22 and Saturday, September 23 at the Hamilton County 4H Fairgrounds, 2003 E. Pleasant Street, Noblesville, IN, promises to be a memorable event. Featured speakers include Allan Armitage, Peggy Sellers, Jo Ellen Meyers Sharp, Rosie Lerner, and a host of favorites. One pre-conference event is still available, while the CSI event is filled. Schedules for both days feature concurrent sessions on a wide variety of gardening topics to thrill any gardener. Attendance at all sessions, including one preconference event, equals 15 education hours.

See the August issue of *Roots and Shoots* for a brochure and registration form. Register soon so that you won't miss out on the sessions you especially want to attend.



Time to renew your membership! Look for a membership renewal blank in the October issue of *Roots and Shoots*!

In the Grow: Question and Answer (continued from page 4)

but also attack tomatoes and green peppers. Several insecticides are labeled for use on tomatoes against flea beetles, including carbaryl, permethrin, esfenvalerate and cyfluthrin. Check the label for the required number of days between application and harvest. Always read and follow ALL label directions and precautions BEFORE you apply!

Q. We have several trees in our yard (mostly near our pond) that have a light greenish-blue fungus-like appearance on the bark. It may have been there for a couple of years but has gotten worse just recently and is very noticeable. On some of the trees, the bark is splitting. Do you know what this is and if there's anything we can do to cure it? Or are we going to lose the trees?

A. You are describing what is likely to be lichens, harmless symbiotic organisms composed of a combination of fungi and either algae or cyanobacteria. Together, they live as one organism and are only using the bark of your tree for anchorage; lichens are not parasites. More information on lichens can be found at <http://www.ppd1.purdue.edu/ppdl/weeklypics/1-12-04.html>.

Q. My dad has a grape arbor, and a few years ago he put mulch around the base of the vines. Ever since, it seems to have a fungus. He has sprayed it, but it is not working. The grapes turn black before they ever get ripe. I don't know where to go for more info. I know this is not very much info, but it is all I know.

A. Grapes are quite susceptible to a fungal disease called "black rot," which attacks canes, tendrils, leaves and fruit. The disease is most destructive in warm, humid weather. There's not much that can be done this late in the season. However, it is possible to control the disease in the future with a combination of sound cultural practices, fungicides and resistant varieties. For more information on preventing and controlling black rot of grapes, see <http://www.ces.purdue.edu/extmedia/BP/BP-36.html> and <http://www.hort.purdue.edu/ext/HO-45.pdf>.

Q. Just wondering if you can prune tomato plants back so that they will put forth more effort on the tomatoes themselves, instead of so many leaves?

A. Ah, but it takes a lot of foliage to produce a great crop of tomatoes! First, the foliage is making carbohydrates through photosynthesis, much of which is stored in those luscious ripening fruit! Second, good coverage of foliage over the fruit provides protection from excessive sunlight, which would otherwise cause blistering and or cracking of the fruit's skin.

On the other hand, over-fertilizing with nitrogen can lead to excessive production of leaves at the expense of flowers and fruit. But, as long as the plants are also producing lots of flowers and fruits in addition to lots of foliage, be thankful.

MY FAVORITE BOOK FOR SHADE GARDENING

BY M. SUSAN OSBORNE



Making the Most of Shade: How to Plan, Plant, and Grow a Fabulous Garden that Lightens Up the Shadows by Larry Hodgson. Holtzbrinck Publishers, 2005; \$15.61 paperback through Amazon.com.

Many gardeners view shade in their garden as a problem; because they think they are limited in possible shrubs, plants, or annuals for those shady sites, not to mention the problems of ever-present tree roots that sap moisture and prohibit many popular plants from thriving.

In my acres of jungle, I don't complain about having lots of shade, because I have learned to adjust and have learned that shade is not necessarily the enemy. Beautiful, constant-blooming sun plants occupy only a small spot in my yard, while the majority of my gardening is challenged by large oak and hickory trees, roots that seem to travel for miles, and abundant shade. The upside of shade gardening, I have found, is constant coolness provided by the trees, fewer weeds to contend with, less watering, and fewer problems with insects and diseases, which for me, makes gardening a whole lot less effort!

Larry Hodgson's book, *Making the Most of Shade*, designed for gardeners of all levels, offers information appropriate for beginning gardeners as well as information and techniques for more experienced gardeners. The majority of the book is given to plants themselves. *Part I: Creating a Showcase of Shade* discusses accepting shade, making shade, gardening in shade, solving shade problems, and designing in shade. This section provides wonderful photographs of gardens we all dream of establishing, along with suggestions for shade garden design, lists with plant information, excellent suggestions, information on pests and diseases and pictures, pictures, pictures! *Part II: The Best of the Best for Shade* outlines and discusses in detail various shade plants – perennials, annuals, bulbs, ferns, grasses and climbing plants.

In *Part II*, I learned that shade garden choices extend beyond astilbes, hostas and ferns. Hodgson showcases many options, so your shade garden goes from ho-hum to WOW! Every plant is given two full pages of information and a color photograph, usually plants during their finest hour. Each plant profile includes bloom and growth information and light and soil preferences, as well as zone and propagation information. He continues with growing tips, recommendations from personal experience and from other gardeners, and specific top performers as well as substitutes. Even with all the information offered, reading is easy without being overwhelmed with Latin terms and scientific explanations. Hodgson presents refreshingly honest plant reviews, outlining flaws as well as assets. More than 200 descriptions of both familiar and unusual shade loving plants provide a plethora of choices!

Most importantly, Larry Hodgson makes clear that you CAN have a beautiful garden in the shade. I encourage all who are challenged by a shady area in their garden to take time to read this book. Not only is the content informative, but also entertaining as you read his descriptions of individual plants and his opinions. He is a truly remarkable and knowledgeable author, shade gardener, and expert in his field.

TUBAKIA (ACTINOPELITE) LEAF SPOT ON OAK

By Gail Ruhl, Plant Disease Diagnostician, Purdue University

Tubakia leaf spot (formerly called Actinopelte leaf spot), is a common late-season fungal disease of oaks. Although all species of oak appear to be susceptible to this disease, oaks in the red oak group such as black, red and pin oak, appear to be most susceptible. Symptoms include small to large dark brown or reddish-brown spots or blotches. Spotting that occurs on leaf veins may cause large extended areas of dead leaf tissue along the veins. If trees are heavily infected with Tubakia leaf spot, premature defoliation may occur; however, disease usually develops late enough in the season such that adverse affects on the health of trees are minimal. Fungicide sprays are not recommended. Maintain good tree vigor by watering during drought stress periods and fertilizing trees appropriately. Refer to [HO-140 Fertilizing Woody Plants](#)



**MISSOURI BOTANICAL GARDEN AND CHIHULY GLASS IN THE GARDEN
BUS DAY TRIP**

The Morgan County Master Gardener Association is hosting a bus trip to Missouri Botanical Gardens on Saturday, October 21, 2006. We have timed tickets to view the Dale Chihuly Glass in the Garden exhibit in the Climatron. Our timed tickets are for noon Central Time which should be about one hour after we arrive. You will need to start your visit at the Climatron anytime from noon to 12:30 CT, but you may stay as long as you like once admitted. In total, you'll have about four hours at the garden and an hour for the shops that we pass on Shaw Boulevard near the entrance.

Cost

The cost of the day trip (members \$45 and non-members \$50) includes bus transportation from Mooresville, all entrance fees, snacks and bottled water on the bus, and a baggie of fish food. Not included in the cost are meals, purchases at any site, and tram tours. You will receive a confirmation letter within two weeks of making your paid reservation.

Note: If you have a membership at a reciprocal garden, you do not need to pay admission. Please go to www.mobot.org and click on membership information to find a complete list of reciprocal gardens or call Trena Trusty at 317-996-2746. You will need to present your valid membership card at the entrance for admission. Subtract \$7 from your reservation fee if you have a reciprocal membership.

Itinerary for October 21, 2006 (EDT)

7:00 a.m. – Bus leaves from Marsh in Mooresville

9:30 a.m. – Rest stop

noon – Arrive at Missouri Botanical Gardens

1:00 p.m. – Go to the Climatron for the Chihuly Exhibit

4:00 p.m. - Board bus and go to shops at the corner of Shaw Boulevard

5 p.m. – Board bus

7:30 p.m.-Rest stop

10 p.m. – Arrive back at Marsh

This is an approximate schedule and may vary a bit based on group preferences, traffic delays, weather and such. Plan for the weather and bring a camera!

A review of What's in Bloom from previous years at the Missouri Botanical website indicates that there should be plenty of fall color. Water lilies and other aquatics will be in bloom. Roses, mums, asters and annuals are still blooming well, and apparently the gourds are a sight to see in Kemper Gardens. Go to www.mobot.org for more info.

Register by September 30

To register for this day trip, send your name, address, telephone number, best time to contact, and an email address if available to

Trena Trusty
6895 State Road 39,
Martinsville, IN 46151

Include check made out to Morgan County Master Gardener Association. Registrations must be received by September 30. For any questions call Trena Trusty at 317-996-2746.

A GOOD YEAR FOR CHIGGERS

By Tom Turpin, Extension Specialist, Purdue University

If you have ever had chiggers, you know what this article is about. If not, consider yourself lucky! Chiggers have been known to make outdoors people, including hikers, picnickers, wild-blackberry pickers or even lawn-sitters miserable. Given the chance, these creatures will feed on us and, in the process, produce an itchy, red welt. And this is why we don't like chiggers.

These pests are not insects; they are mites. The name chigger, or jigger as they are sometimes called, is based on the word chigoe or flea. Chiggers have also been called "red bugs," because of their red or orange color. Chiggers are very tiny creatures, smaller than newsprint periods. But even though they are small, chiggers create a lot of misery when attacking humans.

Here's the scoop on chiggers. Several species of these mites exist in the United States. The adult stage is not parasitic and spends the winter in the soil. On the first warm days of the spring, the adult crawls from the soil and deposits eggs. The eggs hatch into the juvenile stage. It is this stage that attacks animals.

The immature chigger crawls upon plants and waits until an animal comes by. The hungry chigger drops or crawls onto the unfortunate host and begins to look for a feeding site. On humans, chiggers often end up where clothing fits tightly to the skin. Such locations as waistbands, collars, bras and tops of socks are prime locations for chigger feeding. In addition, wrinkled skin, such as in ankles, armpits, back of the knees and elbows, is frequently attacked.

The baby chigger doesn't take blood from the host. It feeds by injecting digestive juices into the skin of the animal and then sucking up the partially digested cells. Within three to four hours, a red, itchy welt will develop at the feeding site. The chigger will feed for three to four days before dropping from the host. But the welt and the itching can continue for a week or longer.

As anyone who has ever been the victim of chiggers knows, these little mites can create more misery for their size than almost any creature known. To be sure, the damage they do to humans is not a major medical problem. But having chiggers is not something we are likely to forget.

So what can you do to avoid getting chiggers? The first thing is to avoid locations where chiggers are likely to be found. In general, chiggers are more common in damp areas with tall grass or weeds. If frequenting such habitats, avoid wearing sleeveless shirts, shorts and sandals. It is also a good idea to tuck pant legs into boots and button collars and cuffs.

When returning from locations that might harbor chiggers, remove clothing as soon as possible. A warm soapy shower will also reduce the number of bites that you receive. Chiggers can stay in clothing, so it is advisable to launder in hot water any clothing that was worn on outdoor jaunts before wearing again. The use of insect repellents prior to entering chigger-infested habitat is also effective in reducing incidents of chigger bites.

Chigger infestations can vary widely from spot to spot within infested areas. For instance, a 10-square-foot section of a lawn might have a heavy infestation of chiggers while the rest of the lawn has none. This means that, on occasion, people sitting in one section of a lawn will all get chigger bites while others nearby will receive no bites at all.

Once a chigger has started feeding, there is not much you can do. Treating with ointments useful to reduce itching will provide some temporary relief. But, generally, if you have managed to become a host to a group of chiggers, you will experience a week to 10 days of itching and discomfort. But don't think you are special if you have managed to get chiggers. Chiggers aren't choosy about their food sources. Small mammals, snakes, turtles and birds also serve as hosts to these little mites.

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES COMPILED BY NANCY WHITE

Location	Time	Jobs	Contact
Hilltop Garden & Nature Center	year around	various	Stori Snyder, 855-2799 or email stlsnyde@indiana.edu
Templeton Garden Project	spring/fall	teaching children	Nancy White, 824-4426
MG Demonstration Garden	seasonal	various	Lydia Anderson, 825-2961, landers@wormsway.com
T. C. Steele SHS	seasonal	various	Steve Doty, 988-2785
Cheryl's Garden	seasonal	various	Larime Wilson, 333-9705
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, stapling, labeling	Helen Hollingsworth, 332-7313
MCMGA Web Site	year around	various	Barb Hays, 332-4032
MG Program Committee Member	year around	plan MG programs	Ann McEndarfer, 334-1801 Nancy White, 824-4426
Middle Way House	seasonal	various	Clara Wilson, 333-7404
Wylie House	year around	various	Sherry Brunoehler, 855-6224
Bloomington Hospitality House	year around	educate seniors	Rene Thompson, 353-3000
Mother Hubbard's Cupboard	year around	education, resource	Libby Yarnell, 355-6843
Clear Creek School	spring/on-going	identification, education	Charlie Hawk, 824-7969
Indiana State Fair	Sunday, August 13 9 a.m.-9 p.m.	answer questions	Preston Gwinn, 876-2999
WonderLab Garden	2 times monthly	various	Nancy White, 824-4426
Garton Farm	year around	Assess grounds, develop plans	Michael Bell, 336-6141

PLEASE WEAR YOUR NAME BADGE WHEN VOLUNTEERING.

FALL LAWN SEEDING TIPS

By Ward Upham, Extension Associate

The keys to successful lawn seeding are proper rates, even dispersal, good seed to soil contact and proper watering. Evenness is best achieved by carefully calibrating the seeder or by adjusting the seeder to a low setting and making several passes to ensure even distribution. Seeding a little on the heavy side with close overlapping is better than missing areas altogether, especially for the bunch-type tall fescue, which does not spread. Multiple seeder passes in opposite directions should help avoid this problem.

A more serious error in seeding is using the improper rate. For tall fescue, aim for 6 to 8 pounds of seed per 1,000 square feet for new areas and about half as much for overseeding. Using too much seed results in a lawn more prone to disease and damage from stress. The best way to avoid such a mistake is to determine the square footage of the yard first, and then calculate the amount of seed. Using too little seed can also be detrimental and result in clumpy turf that is not as visually pleasing.

Establishing good seed to soil contact is essential for good germination rates. Slit seeders achieve good contact at the time of seeding by dropping seed directly behind the blade that slices a furrow into the soil. Packing wheels then follow to close the furrow. The same result can be accomplished by using a verticut before broadcasting the seed and then verticutting a second time.

Core aerators can also be used to seed grass. Go over an area at least three times in different directions, and then broadcast the seed. Germination will occur in the aeration holes. Since those holes stay moister than a traditional seedbed, this method requires less watering. If seeding worked soil, use light hand raking to mix the seed into the soil. A leaf rake often works better than a garden rake as it mixes the seed in more shallowly.

Newly planted areas should be watered lightly, but often. Soil should be kept constantly moist but not waterlogged. During hot days, you may need to water three times a day. If you are unable to do this, germination will be slowed. Cool, calm days may require watering only every couple of days. As the grass plants come up, gradually decrease watering to once a week if you don't receive rain. Let the plants tell you when to water. If you can push the blades down and they don't spring back up quickly, the lawn needs water.

Once seed sprouts, try to minimize how much traffic (foot, mower, dog, etc.) seeded areas receive until the seedlings are a little more robust and are ready to be mowed. Begin mowing once seedlings reach 3 to 4 inches tall.

SAVING SEEDS FROM FRUIT TREES

By Ward Upham, Extension Associate

Though it is possible to grow fruit trees from seed saved from your own trees, these plants will not come true from seed. In other words, these seed-grown plants will not have the same characteristics as the original, and the fruit produced will likely be small and of poor quality. It can be very disappointing to spend years caring for a fruit tree until it is old enough to fruit, only to find the fruit is not worth keeping. In order to retain the good fruiting characteristics of specific varieties, these trees must be reproduced vegetatively. Vegetative techniques include rooting cuttings, grafting, layering and tissue culture. Apple trees are most commonly reproduced by grafting. For a good discussion of grafting, go to the Missouri pub titled "Grafting" at <http://muextension.missouri.edu/xplor/agguides/hort/g06971.htm>



Pears are most often reproduced by cleft grafting or T-Budding. Peaches, cherries and apricots are also T-budded. A helpful publication on T-budding is the Oklahoma State pub titled "Propagating Peaches by "T"-Budding". It can be found at: <http://pods.dasnr.okstate.edu/docushare/dsweb/Get/Document-1045/F-6227web.pdf>

STRESSED PLANTS MAY LOOK LIKE EARLY FALL

By B. Rosie Lerner, Purdue Extension, Consumer Horticulturist

Many of our landscape plants are under stress from one or more factors this summer, including excessive heat and humidity, insect feeding and disease infection. Some trees are losing leaves already and may be turning color before they drop. This early defoliation is common when plants are under stress, and this season has been quite challenging for many trees, both old and young.

The recent intense heat and humidity make it difficult for plants to keep up with water and cooling requirements, even when soil moisture might be plentiful. One of the ways that plants cool themselves is through the process of transpiration, the evaporative loss of water from the foliage.

When relative humidity is high, transpiration is reduced, so plant tissues may overheat. When the transpiration rate is low, there is also reduced movement of water from the surrounding soil into the roots. So plants can still be in moisture stress despite having sufficient soil moisture. The rate of photosynthesis (carbohydrate production) is also reduced when heat and humidity are excessive.

Stressed plants are often more susceptible to disease and insects. The warm, humid and frequently rainy conditions have been perfect for many fungal and bacterial disease pathogens. Such diseases may start out as spots that then get larger and may lead to leaf drop. Insects, such as borers, may be more likely to infest weakened trees.

Plants that are under such stress may initiate what appears to be fall color change and eventual leaf drop. Generally speaking, most plants can cope with early foliage loss, but other stresses may also take their toll. Plants that were already in trouble before the excessive heat and humidity may not fare as well or perhaps even succumb. But most plants that are otherwise healthy will recover just fine.

There is still plenty of summer to get through yet, so we gardeners will just have to wait and see what Mother Nature has in store for us!

HARVESTING WINTER SQUASH

By Ward Upham, Extension Associate

Summer squash such as zucchini and scallop are harvested while immature but winter squash such as acorn, hubbard and butternut are harvested later, in the mature stage, after the rind is tough and seeds have developed. We normally think September is the time that winter squash are harvested. There are two main characteristics that help tell us when winter squash are mature: color and rind toughness.

Winter squash change color as they become mature. Butternut changes from light beige to deep tan. Acorn is a deep green color but has a ground spot that changes from yellow to orange when ripe. Gray or orange is the mature color for hubbard.

Hard, tough rind is another characteristic of mature winter squash.

This is easily checked by trying to puncture the rind with your thumb-nail or fingernail. If it easily penetrates the skin, the squash is not yet mature and will lose water through the skin -- causing the fruit to dry and shrivel. Also, immature fruit will be of low quality. The stem should also be dry enough that excessive water doesn't drip from the stem.

Winter squash should be stored cool with elevated humidity. Ideal conditions would be 55 to 60 degrees F and 50 to 70 percent relative humidity. Under such conditions, acorn squash will usually last about 5 to 8 weeks, butternuts 2 to 3 months and hubbards 5 to 6 months.



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**Attend the Master Gardener General Meeting on Tuesday,
September 26 at 6 p.m. at Hilltop Garden & Nature Center.**

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