

Monroe County Master Gardener Association Newsletter



ROOTS AND SHOOTS

December 2007 Volume 23, Issue 12

REPORT MASTER GARDENER ACTIVITIES



By
Amy

Thompson

You may be rolling your eyes and shaking your head and thinking NOT AGAIN. Yes, I am again writing about reporting volunteer and educational activities. I feel like I've been beating this same drum for quite some time, but folks still have questions and we are still in the transition period, so I want to ensure that everyone understands the requirements. As you may be aware, the Monroe County Extension Office and the MCMGA have adopted the statewide Master Gardener guidelines. Some of the guidelines are highlighted below.

Active Status: Once an individual has completed the necessary requirements and is certified as a Master Gardener, this does not mean he/she is a Master Gardener for life. Master Gardeners must recertify each year to remain on the "active" list and maintain the Master Gardener designation.

Master Gardener Recertification is achieved by fulfilling the following requirements:

1. Donating a minimum of twelve (12) hours of volunteer service each year (calendar year beginning January 1 and ending December 31) and
2. Completing a minimum of six (6) hours educational training each year through any of the following options:
 - ◆ Participation in state, regional, national, or international Master Gardener conferences.
 - ◆ Participation in county-sponsored advanced training sessions.
 - ◆ Participation in any other programs approved by the local program coordinator(s).

More on What Counts....

I am very flexible about what is approved for continuing education. Don't feel that you must attend only MCMGA events to earn educational credits. In fact I encourage you to attend outside events and share the knowledge you gain with our members by writing a newsletter article or providing a short summary of the training at a MCMGA meeting. These outside experiences bring new information and opportunities to our organization. If you are looking for outside educational opportunities, there are many available locally. Some examples include classes through the city of Bloomington Parks and Recreation department, Hilltop and other local gardening groups in which you are involved. For volunteer activities, please remember that these activities should result in an educational outcome. You should not just be providing free labor. If you ever have any questions please let me know!

What if you can't meet the annual requirement?

For a number of different reasons you may have difficulty meeting the requirement of volunteer or educational hours. If a person is inactive for three years or less, there is no penalty. The person can start volunteering and completing training hours again to become active. However, if a person is inactive for more than three years, the following is required:

- 1) Purchase a new manual or CD. (continued on page 3)

MEMBER NEWS



A Festive Evening

Our Holiday Party was a success on November 27, when 56 members and guests enjoyed a carry-in banquet, a short business meeting, and a program on Flower Arranging. Many thanks go to Gloria Noone and her arrangements committee, Becky Nyberg, Diane and Herman Young, Charlotte Griffin, Betsy Mangan, and Marsha Trowbridge for planning the dinner and arranging the decorations at First United Church.

By Nancy White
At the brief business meeting, minor wording changes to our bylaws were accepted and board members were elected for staggered terms. Attendees also completed a survey from Monroe County Parks and Recreation regarding current opportunities at county parks and future planning.

Following the business meeting, Susan Eastman, local MG, demonstrated her expertise by completing seven holiday arrangements using easily accessible flowers and greenery. She stressed that prior to making arrangements, the designer should (1) assess the location for the arrangement, (2) decide on the purpose, and (3) choose the flowers and greenery. Some of her materials were purchased locally, and some were gathered from her own garden. Plant material used in the arrangements included mums, carnations, hemlock bows, and holly creatively arranged in baskets gathered from second-hand stores and garage sales. When completed, the arrangements were given to a lucky guest at each table. We thank Susan for sharing her ideas and techniques to stimulate our own creations.

2008 Master Gardener Board Elected

The MG Board and their terms of office are as follows:

President, Marilyn Brinley, 2008

Vice President—Programs, Nancy White, 2008-09

Vice President—Education, Bob Baird, 2008

Secretary, Barb Cappy, 2008

Treasurer, Diana Young, 2008-9

Director—Communication, Barb Hays, 2008

Director—Records, Susan Osborne, 2008-9

Journalist, Helen Hollingsworth, 2008-9

Director at Large, Herman Young, 2008

Next MG General Meeting Is January 25, 2008

Our next MG General Meeting will be at 6:30 p.m. on January 25, 2008, at the BACC, 349 South Walnut Street (next to the Chocolate Moose). There will be ample parking. Programming ideas for 2008 will be discussed, and an education session will be included as well as the first business meeting for the newly elected MG Board. Watch the January issue of Roots and Shoots for additional details.

Don't Toss Garden Catalogues!

As the new garden catalogues start coming to your house, keep some to share with fellow MG's at an upcoming meeting. You may have a real gem among your favorites.

Gift Ideas for Gardeners

Need some last minute gift ideas for gardening friends and relatives? Besides those wonderful choices at the bookstores or from IU Press, you might want to consider some of the following:

- ◆ A subscription to *Horticulture Magazine* (see hortmag.com or call 1-877-436-7764)
- ◆ A subscription to *Outdoor Indiana Magazine* (see www.in.gov/publications)
- ◆ Some items from the store at Kidsgardening.org. Kidsgardening is associated with the National Gardening Association, offers free newsletters, and is a good on-line store for materials for use with youth and children interested in gardening. They also have a resource directory, fundraising ideas, and projects for those who work with scouts, church groups, and schools in gardening and environmental issues. Take a look.
- ◆ Master Gardener calendars—contact Nancy White. A few are available.

HORTICULTURE PROGRAM IN INDIANAPOLIS

By Nancy White The winter months are always full of chances to gain some education hours, both here in the county and in other locations. As soon as classes, workshops and seminars are announced, we will publish them in *Roots and Shoots*. Additionally, members can visit the Purdue MG website for more information. This website is www.ces.purdue.edu/index.shtml.

Horticulture Magazine and the Indianapolis Museum of Art will again team up to present an all day education session on February 14, 2008, at the Christian Theological Seminary close to the Butler University Campus in north Indianapolis. The title this year is *Patterns in Gardening, Discovering and Enhancing the Hidden Dimensions of Your Garden*. Many MCMGA members have attended this workshop in past years and find it to be very valuable and entertaining. See the complete [Program Schedule](#) or [click here](#) to download a PDF version of the printed brochure.

Program

- 8:00 a.m. Registration
- 8:45 a.m. Wild about Patterns by Nan Blake Sinton, Horticulture Magazine
- 9:15 a.m. Why Use Patterns in the Garden by Valerie Easton
- 10:15 a.m. Stretch break and book sale
- 10:45 a.m. Clever Clematis by Raymond J. Evison
- 11:45 a.m. Questions with the morning speakers
- Noon Lunch, book sale, and informal chat with the speakers
- 1:15 p.m. Lighting Reveals New Dimensions by Jan Moyer
- 2:15 p.m. Native Trees Anchor the Site by Gary Koller
- 3:15 p.m. Questions with the afternoon speakers

If you have a question or would like to request a printed version of a Symposia Series brochure, email gardenprograms@fwpubs.com or call toll-free at 1-877-GDN-PROG (877-436-7764).

Save the Date! The 2008 State Master Gardener Conference will be held September 26 – 28 in Indianapolis. Check this webpage for updates in the future <http://www.indymgconf.org/>

REPORT MASTER GARDENER ACTIVITIES (continued from page 1)

2) Take the Master Gardener class sessions on all pests, plant problems and pesticides (or watch a video on these topics available from the Extension Office). 3) Pass the final exam given to Monroe County Master Gardener intern class members. If a person fails, he or she must retake the entire course.

What do I need to do now?

If you have not yet reported your Master Gardener efforts for 2007, please turn in your activity report ASAP. Activity report forms can be found online at www.mcmga.net or call our office, and we can send you a form. If in 2007 you were not able to complete the required volunteer/educational hours, please realize that your name will be put on an inactive list and that you will have two additional years to re-activate by completing volunteer and educational hours. If you are inactive for three years, you will have to go through the re-certification process. If you have any questions, let me know either by email afthompson@purdue.edu or phone 349-2575.

FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DESK



The year is nearly over, and the gardens are now asleep for the season. This year definitely held some challenges, but that is part of the allure of gardening. After all, no garden is ever the same from year to year. So what will next year bring? Good weather? Abundant crops? Beautiful flowers?

By Marilyn Brinley Though many questions remain, some things are definite. There will be weather. It will snow, it will rain, it will be cloudy, it will be sunny. Plants will find a way to survive, if not flourish, and we gardeners will still manage to take it all in stride.

Brinley This past week was our annual Holiday Party, and we had about 50 members and guests in attendance. After some delicious food and socializing, we got down to business. A vote was held and the word “secretary” was added in the new bylaws. Our secretary was grateful that she would not be elected for life, after all. Then we moved onto the elections of officers. As no nominations came from the floor, the slate of officers as given was approved. Several members also received badges, having either attained certification or advanced their status. Finally, the business portion of the program ended, and we were treated to a practical demonstration of creating floral displays for the home.

I would like to thank all those who have given of their time and themselves this past year. We have accomplished some wonderful things, and that can only happen if our members are active and involved. So to all of you, I say thank you. I thank all of my committee chairs and their committee members. Mary Hawkins once again chaired the Garden Walk and Picnic. Larime Wilson headed the work at Cheryl's Garden at Karst Farm Park. Marcia Trowbridge took over the task of caring for the Demonstration Garden at the fairgrounds. Mary Jane Hall led the efforts to revise the organization's bylaws. As usual, Preston Gwinn worked the booths at the State Fair and the Patio Show in Indianapolis. Nancy White has been busy at Wonder Lab. Meanwhile, Esther Minnick, Diana Young, Carol Cobine, Larime Wilson, and Mary Jane Hall were successful in keeping things moving well at the Monroe County Fair. Linda Blair filled in for Mary Jane at the last minute. Susan Osborne and Becky Nyberg were the nominating committee. Our wonderful vice-presidents, Ann McEndarfer and Nancy White, arranged for some very enjoyable field trips for our members. Many thanks to you!

Finally, I wish to thank all of my board members, and especially those who are retiring from the board: Ann McEndarfer, vice- president; Mary Hawkins, secretary; Dale Calabrese, treasurer; Gino Brancolini, state advisory committee member; and Irvin Shelton, fair board representative. Thanks also to new and returning board members: Nancy White, Bob Baird, Barb Cappy, Diana Young, Herman Young, Helen Hollingsworth, Susan Osborne, and Barb Hays. Thank you, Preston Gwinn, for agreeing to be our new fair board representative. Mary Jane Hall has been an unofficial ex-officio officer of the board, and we are grateful for her wisdom and guidance. There is one person who has done much to make our organization a success. We are truly lucky to have Amy Thompson leading us. Thanks, Amy.

Put simply, nothing would be possible without the hard work and dedication of all of these fine people. If I have inadvertently left anyone out, I apologize. You all have my gratitude and admiration. Thank you to all our members for another enjoyable year.

MARK YOUR CALENDAR!

Our next MG General Meeting is January 25, 2008, at 6:30 p.m. at the BACC, 349 South Walnut Street (next to the Chocolate Moose). There will be ample parking. Plan to attend!

GOT GALLS?

By Amy Thompson I have driven on Smith Road for many years and wondered about the plant disease that was affecting a tree that can easily be seen from the road. I never paid much attention in the summer to

this tree, but in the winter its affliction is hard to miss. In the accompanying picture you can see the incredible number of galls which have formed on this tree. If you attended the MCMGA Holiday party on November 27, you had the opportunity to view the samples.

The first step in the process of diagnosing plant problems is to identify the host. I had driven by this tree hundreds of times and knew what I thought it was, but when I actually stopped by to collect a sample on my way to the IU-Purdue football game (my family is used to me jumping out of the car to retrieve plant samples...although I suppose it looks a bit strange to the rest of the world), I found out I had been wrong all along.

The tree was in fact a bitternut hickory. It was easy to identify once we were up close to the tree because of the tightly interlacing ridges in the bark and the sulphur yellow buds which were easy to spot both on twigs which had fallen to the ground and on branches that could be seen from the ground.

Galls can be caused by a number of different agents including insects, bacteria and fungi. I did some quick internet searching to see if I could diagnosis the cause of this problem but had little luck. Fortunately, I also knew I would soon be attending a training session where the director of the Purdue Plant and Pest Diagnosis Lab, Gail Ruhl, would be presenting a program.

I trucked the sample up to Lebanon for the training, but before I could show it to Gail, one of the other Extension Educators had proposed a tentative diagnosis: Phomopsis Gall. Gail concurred that this might be the cause but offered to take the sample and confirm the diagnosis. Below is the text of an email I received from Gail shortly after delivering the sample. If I hear back that Gail has found another cause of this problem, I will update you in a future issue of *Roots and Shoots*.

The galls appear similar to those produced by gall-forming fungal species of Phomopsis. I will incubate some of the less decayed galls to see if I can confirm the presence of a Phomopsis and will forward results to you.

The warty growths produced by Phomopsis can range from small twig galls to very large trunk burls. It is not known how the disease infects, but infection may occur at any time throughout the growing season. It is thought that fungal spores initially enter young twigs through wounds and the fungus then progresses into the branches. Galls can occur singly or in clusters and range in size. When multiple galls occur, small branches may be girdled and killed. Attached galls eventually die after several years and turn black in color.

Literature lists no chemical controls for Phomopsis gall. Cultural practices should include increasing tree vigor by watering during dry periods, mulching, proper pruning, and fertilizing when necessary. If feasible, remove and dispose of all diseased branches during dry periods, at least six inches below the gall. This should help reduce the amount of inoculum (fungal spores present) and lessen the potential of new infections.



MISTLETOE (*PHORADENDRON LEUCARPUM*)

By Mary Welch-Keesey, Purdue University Consumer Horticulture Specialist, and Martha Bailey, volunteer, at [White River Gardens](#)

Mistletoe is the common name for shrubs in the *Viscaceae* family, most of which are parasitic. The ancients considered the plants to be mystical because mistletoe would suddenly appear in trees but did not have roots. They did not realize that fruit-eating birds distributed mistletoe seed by rubbing their beaks against the trees and via their droppings.

The plant was considered sacred in pre-Christian Europe. It was variously credited with curing diseases, rendering poisons harmless, and protecting the house from ghosts. It became associated with the Christmas season because the Druids were said to welcome the new year with branches of mistletoe.

Over the centuries the berries have had medicinal uses; the Native Americans used the shrub long before the Europeans arrived in America. **However, the berries are toxic if they are eaten.**

American mistletoe (*Phoradendron leucarpum*) and English mistletoe (*Viscum album*) are similar in appearance. The American generic name is based on the Greek Phor meaning "thief" and dendron meaning "tree" because it steals the life juices from the host tree. The English generic name refers to its sticky white berries. The American mistletoe is the plant which is available in North American holiday markets.

Mistletoe forms a drooping yellowish evergreen bush about 2-3 feet long on the branch of a host tree. It has thickly crowded, forking branches with oval to lance-shaped leathery leaves about 2 inches long, arranged in pairs, each opposite the other on the branch. The flowers, in compact spikes, are bisexual, unisexual, or regular. They are yellower than the leaves and appear in the late winter; they soon give rise to one-seeded, white berries, which when ripe are filled with a sticky, semi-transparent pulp.

After germination a modified root penetrates the bark of the host tree and forms a connection through which water and nutrients pass from host to parasite. Mistletoes contain chlorophyll and can make some of their own food. Species in America parasitize many deciduous trees, including oaks. Mistletoes are slow-growing but persistent; their natural death is determined by the death of the hosts. They are pests of many ornamental, timber, and crop trees. The only effective control measure is complete removal of the parasite from the host.

One custom which the English and Americans share is that of kissing under the mistletoe, a practice that originated in England in the 19th Century. Since the berries are toxic, it is wise, when bringing a spray into the house, to hang the plant high enough that children cannot reach it. **Berries of all mistletoes contain toxic compounds that are poisonous to animals and humans.** Often, plastic berries are substituted for real ones to prevent poisoning and increase shelf life.

TIME TO THINK ABOUT SHRUBS

By Helen Hollingsworth
According to Tom Tyler and Jo Ellen Meyers Sharp, authors of one of my favorite gardening books, *Indiana Gardener's Guide*, we're into the season for fertilizing shrubs. Tyler and Sharp suggest in their section on shrubs, "*For best results, fertilize shrubs in early November.... There is no advantage to fertilizing during planting time or even in the first year. Wait until the second year after planting to begin a fertilizing program.*" They suggest broadcasting a light application of 12-12-12 on the root zone of shrubs. Because our fall season has been so warm recently, I've delayed fertilizing shrubs until December (and one especially warm year, in January) to avoid stimulating growth. Finding 12-12-12 fertilizer in late fall was especially difficult one fall, so now I stock up early in the season.

YOUR MCMGA BOARD AT WORK

Editor's Note: The MCMGA board is composed of the president, two vice presidents, two secretaries, two treasurers, two journalists, two state advisory committee representatives, one webmaster, one Fair Board representative, and the extension educator, a total of fourteen people. The board meets monthly and makes decisions on behalf of the membership on topics that come before the board. The bylaws printed in our membership guide provide a description of the duties of the MCMGA officers. This month and in future months, members of the board will describe the work they do on your behalf.

Herman Young, Director at Large

As a representative of this office, it has been my duty to attend all state advisory committee meetings. Unfortunately, there have not been meetings for some time. This position has been changed in the new bylaws to director at large. I now will be a liaison between other Master Gardener groups and also attend any meetings of the state advisory committee.

I have been very supportive of the board and help with many of the functions of the organization, such as Senior Expo, Flower & Patio Show, Demo Garden, County Fair, and Indiana State fair. It has been a pleasure to serve on this board and look forward to another good year.

MIDWEST REGIONAL MASTER GARDENER CONFERENCE

Several Monroe County Master Gardeners have attended the Purdue Master Garden conference held each fall held in various location throughout the state and open to Indiana Master Gardeners. Now you have an opportunity to attend a regional conference next summer.

The Midwest Regional Master Gardener Conference will be held on July 16-19, 2008, in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. The conference title is *Gardening through the Continuum of Life*, and will be hosted by SouthEast Wisconsin Master Gardeners for the Wisconsin Master Gardener Association and UW Extension Master Gardener Program. The conference location is Four Points by Sheraton Milwaukee Airport Hotel and Convention Center, Milwaukee, Wisconsin

Speakers include Michael Weishan of the Victory Garden, Melinda Myers of Great Lakes Gardener, Edward Lyon, Executive Director of Janesville Rotary Gardens, and Gene Rothert, enabling garden author, educator and manager of Chicago Botanical Garden's Buehler Enabling Garden & Horticulture Therapy Services

The conference also offers six fantastic motor coach tours to (20+) private gardens in the area.

To register, log on to www.premierwebplatform.com/southeastwisconsinmgardeners or contact Doris Fons at 414-425-6072 for a registration packet. For general information, contact [Susan Mahr](mailto:Susan.Mahr@uwex.edu) (608-265-4504)

LOOKING FOR PLANT INFORMATION?

Submitted by Amy Thompson Missouri Botanical Garden Kemper Center Home Gardening provides a web based plant information site.

[PlantFinder](http://www.mobot.org/gardeninghelp/plantfinder/Alpha.asp) <http://www.mobot.org/gardeninghelp/plantfinder/Alpha.asp>.

You can look up, view a photo and read about the over 4,000 plants which are growing or have been grown in the Kemper Center display gardens (plus selected additions) by garden location, scientific name or common name. Search online for plants that meet any of 40 characteristics or uses, including height, bloom time, flower color, good fall color, attracts hummingbirds, and more. Produce individualized lists of plants. Access detailed pest information on plants in the "Problems" section of each plant description. Here's a wonderful site to explore on a cold winter day.

CENTRAL INDIANA GARDEN CALENDAR FOR DECEMBER

By Steve Mayer,
Horticulture Edu-
cator, Marion
County

The numbers in parentheses in the calendar entries are links to related Purdue Extension publications. HO = Horticulture, ADM = Animal Damage Management, FNR = Forestry and Natural Resources.

FIRST WEEK

You can lightly prune evergreens such as yew and holly now to furnish material for holiday decorations that you can make yourself. ([HO-22](#))

Winterize your mower and sharpen the blade so it will be in good condition next spring.

If the weather is mild, moles can be active day and night throughout the year. Trapping is still the most reliable method of mole control. ([ADM-10](#))

Purchase your holiday gift plants early for a good selection of high quality plants.

Prepare for the winter storms ahead. Purdue has online resources to help you and your plants weather the blustery cold. <http://www.ces.purdue.edu/eden/>

SECOND WEEK

Research has shown that the poinsettia is not a dangerous plant. The Indiana Poison Center recognizes this and has placed the poinsettia on their "plants with no symptoms" list. ([HO-73](#))

Many house plants do not require much, if any, fertilizer during the winter months since their growth rate is usually reduced. ([HO-39](#))

Garden tools should be cleaned, sharpened and oiled before storage. Drain and lubricate sprayers. When you bring your poinsettia home, be sure to have it sleeved or covered to prevent damage if outdoor temperatures are near 50 degrees F or lower. ([HO-73](#))

Insects can become a nuisance in the house when brought inside with firewood. To help avoid the problem, bring firewood indoors only as needed (burn the wood within a day or two). ([HO-67](#))

THIRD WEEK

To avoid lawn damage, do not shovel or plow snow with deicing salts onto turf areas. Clear the snow before putting down salt. Use salt only when needed and avoid excess applications. ([HO-142](#))

African violets may flower more profusely if additional fluorescent light is provided. ([HO-10](#))

Enjoy the color of evergreens in the winter landscape. Evaluate your landscape to determine if you need to add some needle evergreens this spring. <http://web.extension.uiuc.edu/champaign/homeowners/021207.html>

Save the cardboard cylinders from holiday wrapping paper. When cut into 4-inch sections, they can be used as biodegradable cutworm collars around transplants next spring.

Do not prune evergreens if the wood is frozen. Frozen branches are more brittle and can be damaged during the pruning process. ([HO-4](#))

FOURTH WEEK

Assess the energy efficiency of your landscape during the winter as well as the summer. Plants can be used to lower your energy bill and save money. <http://www.oznet.ksu.edu/library/hort2/c627.pdf>

Do not prune grapevines until late winter or early spring since pruned vines are more susceptible to cold injury than unpruned vines. ([HO-45](#))

Evergreen windbreaks can block up to 75 percent of the winter wind around the home. This can reduce winter heating costs up to 15 to 25 percent. Plan your windbreak now. ([FNR-38](#)) (large PDF document)

The foliage of the creeping lilyturf (liriope) ground cover is usually evergreen into mid-winter but brown by early spring. Wait until early spring to shear or mow to the ground. <http://www.mobot.org/gardeninghelp/plantfinder/Plant.asp?code=A620>

Begin planning next year's vegetable garden. Send for some seed catalogs to help you plan your garden wisely. ([HO-32](#))

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES COMPILED BY NANCY WHITE

Location	Time	Jobs	Contact
Hilltop Garden and Nature Center	year around	various	Greg Speicher, 855-2799 or gspeiche@indiana.edu
Templeton Garden Project	spring/fall	teaching children	Nancy White, 824-4426
MG Demonstration Garden	seasonal	various	Marsha Trowbridge - 876-1493
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	Nancy White, 824-4426 Bob Baird, 331-1308
Middle Way House	seasonal	various	Clara Wilson, 333-7404
Wylie House	year around	various	Sherry Wise, 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
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.

PLAN YOUR VEGETABLE GARDEN NOW

By Steve
Mayer, Extension
Educator,
Marion County

Don't plant your vegetables this spring without doing some planning this winter. Good planning is essential for a productive garden. Evaluate the current garden location. If the site has become too shady, it may be time to move the garden plot. Full sun is best, but most vegetables will grow well if they receive 6-8 hours of direct sun.

Keep the vegetable garden away from trees and shrubs that rob water and nutrients. If you have enough space, do not plant closer than the tree is tall and remember to allow for growth of the tree. Locate the garden well away from black walnut trees since they can injure some plants.

The garden should be close to a source of water. Avoid low areas since vegetables require well-drained soil. Amend heavy clay soil with several inches of organic matter such as compost.

Plan to obtain a soil test before planting if it has not been done in 3-5 years. This will provide needed information on soil pH and nutrients. You can collect a sample anytime the soil is not frozen or too wet. Consult Purdue Extension publication HO-71 for proper soil sampling techniques.

Select vegetable cultivars (cultivated varieties) carefully. Be sure to plant cultivars adapted to this part of the Midwest. Try some new plants on a trial basis but always include varieties that have proven their success here.

Choose disease resistant vegetable cultivars whenever possible. Diseases such as Fusarium or Verticillium wilt cannot be controlled once they infect the tomato plants so selecting cultivars resistant to these diseases is highly recommended.

Make a sketch of the garden area before spring. Show the name of the vegetable and the row location. Give the distance between rows and between plants within the row. Include the expected planting date and any other useful information.

It is often better to make shorter rows in the garden rather than one or two long rows. This is particularly important for the pollination of sweet corn.

To extend the harvest period, stagger the planting dates. For example, plant smaller amounts of snap beans every 2 weeks (as late as early August) rather than a single large planting.

Place perennial crops such as asparagus and rhubarb together on one side of the garden. This will make it more convenient as the garden is tilled each year. Many people like to place taller vegetables like sweet corn and pole beans on the north side of the garden to reduce shading of other plants.

To reduce potential insect and disease problems, avoid planting the same crop in the same location year after year. If possible, rotate vegetables into a new part of the garden each year for several years. Do not rotate plants with others in the same family (tomato, pepper, eggplant and potato).

If space is at a premium, use succession planting. This involves planting a vegetable in the same space during the same year after the first vegetable is harvested. Green beans, for instance, could be followed by a planting of cabbage for fall harvest.

Use the vertical space in your garden. Use cages for your tomatoes and train cucumbers to grow on a fence or trellis. More production per square foot can be obtained with pole beans than bush beans.

Keep a garden record for the season. Write down the amounts of seeds and cultivars used and where purchased. Mark the date you planted and harvested each crop, and indicate which vegetable crops and cultivars did well or poorly. Record specific garden pest problems and when they occurred.

Finally, don't bite off more than you can chew. Allow time for needed chores like thinning, irrigation, weed control and other pest management. A smaller, properly tended garden will be more productive and satisfying than a larger garden receiving minimal attention.

A GARDEN DESIGN RESOURCE

By
Amy
Thompson

They're predicting snow showers this evening, my car was frosted over again this morning, winter is here. If you can't do much outdoor gardening during these short, cold days, it does provide you with a great time to plan new gardens or think about renovating old ones. A garden design resource you might be interested in as you plan for the next growing season is available from the University of Illinois Extension Service. Stepping Stones to Perennial Garden Design at <http://web.extension.uiuc.edu/gardendesign/introduction.html> provides six sections of information: introduction, site assessment, garden style and design, perennial selection, perennial placement and bed preparation and maintenance. There is also an extensive list of resources. You might consider checking out this resource on one of our dreary winter days.

EARTH-FRIENDLY GIFTS AND WRAPPINGS

By Mary Welch-Keeseey,
Purdue University Consumer Horticulture Specialist, and Martha Bailey, volunteer, at [White River Gardens](#)

When selecting gifts and wrappings, consider those that can be recycled.

When giving (homemade) cookies, cake, candy, etc., place the cookies in a cookie jar that the recipient can keep. Or, use a plastic refrigerator box or a basket that the recipient can use later.

To decorate a bottle, jar, or canister, make a miniature wreath of vines or use greenery to encircle the container.

Give a healthy potted plant with instructions for its care.

Give a toolbox with a small assortment of tools.

Give gift certificates for food, flowers, sports, or entertainment.

Wrap a gift in handkerchiefs or bandannas that will become part of the gift.

Put a gift in a Christmas stocking or tote bag that becomes part of the gift.

Wrap a gift in the sports page of the newspaper for the sportsperson, the cartoon pages for a child, or the stock quotations for a business person.

Wrap a gift in plain brown paper and decorate it with greenery, your own personal artwork or pages from the children's coloring book.

Purchase wrapping paper made from recycled paper.

Paste old Christmas cards on old shopping bags and use them to hold awkwardly shaped gifts.

Use old maps or posters, leftover wallpaper, pages from old calendars, or old sheet music to wrap packages.

Reuse wrappings, tissues, and ribbons from gifts that were received previously.

December 2007 Volume 23, Issue 12

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HAPPY HOLIDAYS

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