

# Roots and Shoots

Volume 30, Issue 12

December 2014

## Monroe County Master Gardeners Association

### Harvest dinner celebrates our year

By Susan Lovell



#### Special points of interest:

- ◆Which houseplants are helpful in removing these indoor pollutants: benzene, toluene, octane, trichloroethylene (TCE), and alphapinene?
- ◆Is your Master Gardener membership up to date?
- ◆Some Indiana native plants are excellent for landscaping
- ◆Christmas cacti like cooler temperatures
- ◆Philadelphia Flower Show is February 27-March 8

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Our harvest dinner on Tuesday, November 11, celebrated another year of programs, speakers, and many volunteer hours. The food was healthy and tasty with lots of variety. Thanks so much to the refreshment committee, Penny Austin, Susan Sachtjen, Mary Cusack, Marilyn Brinley, Nancy Page, and Muff Johnson. All took turns making sure the food table was neat and drinks replenished. At the end of the evening, the room was returned to pristine condition in record time.

Special thanks go to Bob Baird and Ann McEndarfer for our lovely seasonal decorations. A big salute also to Paula Perron for arranging our entertainment, *The Sounds of Indiana Chorus*, who performed a selection of patriotic songs in celebration of Veterans Day. Our speaker for the evening was Linda Chapman, and we learned so much about her life on and love of her Harvest Moon Flower Farm. A special acknowledgement to Amy Thompson and Abe Morris for their assistance with the technical part of the program.

Finally, thanks to Evelyn Harrell for her constant encouragement and support; David and Jane Dunatchik for taking on the preservation of the table covers; Robin Nordstrom and Diana and Herman Young for helping close up for the evening. I am sure that there are many others I've missed, but please know that events like this could not happen without the willingness of all to help out and you are much appreciated.

As we look ahead, our January meeting is scheduled for January 27, 2015. Our refreshment volunteers will be Mary Cusack, Dale Wilkins, Marilyn Bourke, Nancy White, Gloria Noone, Mary Hoffman, and Nancy Deckard. I will be in touch in mid-January to complete our plans. For now, everyone enjoy the upcoming holidays and dream of spring.

## Member news

By Evelyn Harrell



Eighty master gardeners and guests enjoyed the annual harvest dinner at the November general meeting. Even with a separate table designated for desserts, food display required a third buffet table to hold all the casseroles, veggies, salads, and so much more. It truly was a dinner representative of a bountiful harvest. Please read Susan Lovell's expression of appreciation to her committee in these pages. They and table decorators Ann McEndarfer and Bob Baird put on a lovely event. Each of eleven tables had a colorful centerpiece for some lucky person to take home.

The evening's speaker, Linda Chapman, owns Harvest Moon Flower Farm. She described how her dream started with just four acres and is still growing with the addition of another nine acres and six hoop houses. She detailed the many ways the farm has diversified its effort in order to succeed, including the need to plan months in advance in order to have her product available when desired. Her product now includes cut-flowers for the spring market for Easter, Mother's Day, and graduations, plus a year-round supply of greens for several local restaurants. She has added flowers for weddings, flower starts, bedding plants, and dried flower wreaths. Linda said her success is due to always thinking ahead by weeks and months in order to be ready for the next demand. Instead of using a computer for this planning, she does most of it in her head while making deliveries in her car. Robin Nordstrom suggested a field trip to Linda's Farm. A great idea—we'll see if we can get an invitation.

Want a suggestion for flower arranging? Linda said she decides on a color scheme that pleases her, and then starts with lisianthus in the center of the vase and surrounds it with complementary filler flowers.

Members cast their ballots for their choice of a photo for the cover of the 2015 *folia and flora*. Congratulations, Deborah Thompson! Her lovely pink peony in its prime took the prize.

### **Urban Woodlands Project featured in H-T**

September's speaker, Heather Reynolds, was featured in Bob Baird's H-T column on November 1. In it the ecologist described the Urban Woodlands Project and the interaction of invasive plants, soil, and native plants. It's a nice addition to our September education opportunity. The article can be found in the H-T archives.

### **Master Gardener program committee at work**

Sandy Belth convened members of the program committee at her home to identify speakers for educational opportunities for 2015. Lynn Courson, Dorothy Wilson, Lea Woodard, and Trish Gustaitus joined Sandy and Amy Thompson.

### **Renewed your MCMGA membership for 2015?**

It is not too late to send in your membership form and dues for inclusion in *folia and flora*. Please do it soon. Our January 27 general meeting is not far off, and planning for the 2015 Garden Fair will start in earnest.

## Houseplants and indoor pollution-

Submitted by Amy Thompson



Researchers at the University of Georgia tested a number of common houseplants for their ability to remove organic volatiles from indoor environments. The indoor pollutants included benzene, toluene, octane, trichloroethylene (TCE), and alpha-pinene. Houseplants were rated as superior, intermediate, or poor to reflect their ability to remove all volatiles. None of the plants appeared to have been damaged by the volatiles.

### Superior Removal Efficiency

Hemigraphis alternata: Red Ivy  
Hedera helix: English Ivy  
Tradescantia pallida: Wandering Jew  
Hoya carnosa: Porcelain Flower

### Intermediate Removal Efficiency

Ficus benjamina: Weeping fig  
Polyscia fruticosa: Ming aralia  
Fittonia argyroneura: Silver Nerve Plant  
Sansevieria trifasciata: Mother-in-Law's Tongue  
Gusmania sp.: Type of Bromeliad  
Anthurium andreanum: Flamingo Flower  
Schefflera elegantissima: False aralia

### Poor Removal Efficiency

Peperomia clusiifolia: Peperomia  
Chlorophytum comosum: Spider plant

Howea belmoreana: Sentry palm  
Spathiphyllum wallisii: Peace Lily  
Schefflera arboricola: Hawaiian Elf  
Schefflera Codiaeum variegatum: Croton  
Calathea roseopicta: Peacock Plant  
Aspidistra elatior: Cast Iron Plant  
Maranta leuconeura: Prayer Plant  
Dracaena fragrans: Corn Plant  
Ficus elastica: India Rubber Plant  
Dieffenbachia seguine: Dumbcane  
Philodendron scandens: Philodendron  
Syngonium podophyllum: Nephytis, Arrowhead Vine  
Epipremnum aureum: Pothos  
Pelargonium graveolens: Rose Geranium (Ward Upham)

From <http://www.hfrr.ksu.edu/doc4028.ashx>

## Gardening under a tree

If you've been yearning to have a garden under the canopy of a large tree, where plants must compete with the tree's roots for nutrients and water and will likely have low light, consider *Midwest Living's* list of plants that do well in such situations. See the plant list online at:

<http://www.midwestliving.com/garden/ideas/best-plants-under-big-trees/>.

By Nancy White



In 2009, members of Bloomington horticulture, university, and community groups banded together to prepare the city's entry in the national *America in Bloom* competition. Led by Gretchen Scott (local realtor and MCMGA member, now deceased) and many other community leaders, committees organized activities, photographed locales, planned routes for the judges' visits, and raised funds for the various activities. In October 2010, a delegation attended the *America in Bloom* annual symposium in St. Louis and were delighted to bring the winner's trophy for our population group to Bloomington. Lee Huss, Bloomington urban forester, also won the AIB award as outstanding urban forester for 2010.

Many activities that were part of the competition continue to engage local residents, including the *Best Front Yard* contest judged each spring by our MCMGA members and organized by Mary Jane Hall and Dot Owen. *Bloomington in Bloom* is our hometown, and we are proud to continue the legacy. Additional information can be found at [aib@americainbloom.org](mailto:aib@americainbloom.org).

### **AIB Winning Communities for 2014**

The following communities were announced as the 2014 outstanding examples of garden design, community involvement in horticulture initiatives, environmental applications, cleanliness, urban forestry, and other criteria as developed by the *America in Bloom* organization. Congratulations go to McCall, ID, Gallapolis, Ohio, Estes Park, CO, Washington, MO, Ottawa, IL, Calabasas, CA, Holland, MI, and Fayetteville, AK. Holland, MI was announced as the symposium site for 2015.

### **Planning Ahead**

The annual Philadelphia Flower Show, oldest and largest flower show in the United States with more than 10 acres of gardens under roof, has announced its dates, February 27-March 8, 2015. The theme will be *Celebrating the Magic of Movies*. Growers, universities, cities, and hundreds of vendors of garden related products and services make this a very exhausting but worthwhile adventure. Just don't try to do it in one day! Information on speakers, daily activities, registration, and housing options can be found at [theflowershow.com](http://theflowershow.com).

### **Garden Fair update**

At our September and November general meetings, members signed up for committees for the 2015 Garden Fair. If you did not get a chance to add your name to a list, please consider joining one of the following committees that could use some additional help. Contact Nancy White if you can volunteer. (continued on page 10)

## In the grow

By Rosie Lerner, Extension Consumer Horticulturist, Purdue



**Q.** We have several firebushes whose leaves never turn that spectacular red in the fall. They just remain green until they fall off. We have fed them spring and fall, and yet there are several other firebushes, treated the same, whose leaves do change color. Any suggestions? J.L., Terre Haute, Indiana

**A.** Fall color or lack thereof is affected by a number of factors, including genetics of the plant and environmental conditions such as temperature, soil moisture and sunlight. While nutrition certainly also contributes, it sounds like you have some plants that lack the genetic disposition for good fall color. This is not likely to improve over time.

Firebush, or burning bush, is considered an invasive plant in Indiana, so you might consider replacing these with one or more of the following alternative shrubs with attractive fall color. Look for cultivars that are noted for good fall color at your garden center. You can take a "tour" of these plants and more at the Purdue Arboretum Explorer website, <http://mlp.arboretum.purdue.edu/>.

Common Name/Botanical Name

Bottlebrush Buckeye *Aesculus*  
 Chokeberry *Aronia*  
 Beautyberry *Callicarpa*  
 Redroot *Ceanothus*  
 Red-or yellow-twig dogwood *Cornus*  
 Leatherwood *Dirca*  
 Fothergilla *Fothergilla*  
 Witchhazel *Hamamelis*  
 Oakleaf Hydrangea *Hydrangea quercifolia*  
 Sweetspire *Itea*  
 Sumac *Rhus*  
 Viburnum *Viburnum*



*Fothergilla fall color*  
 Photo courtesy of Purdue

**Q.** I have a small garden with nothing but tomato plants and cucumbers. I put pine bark mulch on it to control the weeds. I was wondering if I should till the pine in or rake it out. R.W., Terre Haute, Indiana

**A.** Pine bark is relatively slow to decompose and may make tilling more difficult. So it may be best to rake the mulch off to the side before tilling. The bark mulch could then be reapplied after planting next season. Or you might consider using the pine bark in your landscape beds around trees, shrubs or perennial flowers or between beds, if you use raised beds. Finer-textured mulch, such as clean hay, straw, grass clippings, dry tree leaves (except black walnut) or pine needles, can be tilled under in the garden.

## Christmas cactus FAQs

By Rosie Lerner, Extension Consumer Horticulturist, Purdue

Christmas cacti are not only popular holiday gift plants, but they are also the subject of frequent debate among gardeners. There appears to be much confusion about these unique tropical cacti regarding care, maintenance and, especially, on how to get them to re-bloom. The following tips address the most frequently asked questions.

We typically think of cacti as being heat tolerant, but Christmas cacti will keep their blossoms longer in cooler temperatures. Keep the plant in a well-lit location away from drafts from heat vents, fireplaces or other sources of hot air. Drafts and temperature extremes can cause the flower buds to drop from the plant before they have a chance to open.

Christmas cactus is a tropical type plant, not quite as drought tolerant as its desert relatives and, in fact, may drop flower buds if the soil gets too dry. The plants will wilt when under drought stress. Water thoroughly when the top inch or so of soil feels dry to the touch. The length of time between waterings will vary with the air temperature, amount of light, rate of growth and relative humidity.

The plant does not particularly need to be fertilized while in bloom, but most gardeners enjoy the challenge of keeping the plant after the holidays for re-bloom the next year. While plants are actively growing, use a blooming houseplant-type fertilizer and follow the label directions for how much and how often to feed.

While the Christmas cactus can adapt to low light, more abundant blooms are produced on plants that have been exposed to more light intensity. Keep your plants in a sunny location indoors. Plants can be moved outdoors in summer, but keep them in a shady or semi-shady location. Leaves may start to turn a bit red if exposed to excessive light. Too much direct sunlight can actually burn the leaves or may cause them to become limp. When it's time to bring the plants back inside in the fall, slowly adjust the plants to life indoors by gradually increasing the number of hours they spend indoors each day.

If your plant tends to dry out and/or wilt frequently, it may be time to repot the plant into a slightly larger container. Well-drained soil is a must for Christmas cactus. Use a commercially packaged potting mix for succulent plants or mix your own by combining two parts plain potting soil with one part clean sand or vermiculite.

(continued on page 7)

## Landscape-worthy Indiana natives

Are you ready to add some native plants to your landscape? Here are two resources INPAWS members have developed especially for Indiana gardeners.

### Plant Lists

These lists present garden-worthy Indiana natives for your flower garden and for your woodland, woods edge, grassland or wetland. We've included plants that are readily available through retail nurseries and mail-order sources.

The lists are not exhaustive but aim to introduce you to reliable, well-behaved natives that can be used decoratively, to attract wildlife, or to restore the balance of nature to a landscape.

Download the lists (PDF format): *Landscaping with Plants Native to Indiana*, *Landscape Uses of Indiana Native Plants*, *Woodland Palette (shade)*, *Woods Edge Palette (part shade)*, *Prairie Grassland Palette (sun)*, *Water's Edge Palette (sun)*.

### Species Pages

For all the species in our plant lists, we have photos and additional information. You can search for a photo and species information in several ways: *Photo Thumbnails*, *Scientific Name Index*, or *Common Name Index*.

Each species page includes one or more photo and links to more information about the plant from such reliable sites as *USDA Plants Database*, *the Missouri Botanical Garden Kemper Center for Home Gardening*, *the Connecticut Botanical Society*, and *Kansas Wildflowers and Grasses*.

From <http://www.inpaws.org/landscaping/landscape-worthy-indiana-natives/>

### Christmas cactus FAQs (continued from page 6)

Pruning your Christmas cactus after blooming will encourage the plant to branch out. Remove a few sections of each stem by pinching them off with your fingers or cutting with a sharp knife. These sections can be rooted in moist vermiculite to propagate new plants.

Christmas cactus will bloom if given long uninterrupted dark periods, about 12 hours each night. Begin the dark treatments in about mid-October to have plants in full bloom by the holidays. You can place the plants in a dark closet from about 8:00 p.m.—8:00 a.m. each night for 6-8 weeks or until you see buds forming. Christmas cacti will also bloom if they are subjected to cool temperatures of about 50 to 55 F°, eliminating the need for the dark treatments. Plants should be blooming for the holidays if cool treatments are started by early November.

## Deicing salts helpful but not to landscape plants

By Rosie Lerner, Extension Consumer Horticulturist, Purdue

Deicing salts can save your neck this winter, but they can spell disaster for landscape plants. Whether the salt is sprayed on the plants from passing traffic near the road or is shoveled onto plants near the sidewalk, the salt can cause damage.

Salts can adversely affect plants in several ways. Salts deposited on the surface of twigs, branches and evergreen leaves can cause excessive drying of foliage and roots. They can be taken up by plants and accumulate to toxic levels. Sodium salts in particular can also cause a nutritional imbalance by changing the chemistry of the soil and harm soil structure.

The most apparent damage is death of buds and twig tips as a result of salt spray. As the tips of the plants die, the plant responds by growing an excessive number of side branches. However, accumulation damage is more slowly manifested and may not be noticeable for many months. Affected plants might show stunting, poor vigor, die back of growing tips, and leaf burn or leaf drop.

The best way to deal with salt damage is to prevent it in the first place. Sodium salts are the most common type used for deicing, since they're inexpensive and most readily available. Unfortunately, sodium salts are the most likely to cause plant damage. When possible, use alternatives to sodium products, such as calcium chloride or calcium magnesium acetate (CMA).

Protect roadside plants by constructing burlap or durable plastic screens to shield them from traffic splash. If screening from traffic is not practical, try to use salt-tolerant plants such as juniper, Siberian pea shrub, poplar, and honey locust.

Avoid throwing salted sidewalk residue on nearby plants, including shrubs and ground cover. Use alternatives, such as clean cat litter, sand or sawdust, to help improve traction on ice.

For more information on salt damage to landscape plants, see Purdue Extension bulletin ID-412-W <http://www.extension.purdue.edu/extmedia/ID/ID-412-W.pdf>

# Volunteer opportunities

compiled by Mary Cusack

Location	Time	Jobs	Contact
<b>Bloomington Community Orchards</b> , 2120 S. Highland Avenue	seasonal	maintenance all levels of expertise welcome	Stacey Decker getinvolved@bloomingtoncommunityorchard.org bloomingtoncommunityorchard.org
<b>Cheryl's Garden at Karst Farm Park</b> , 2450 S. Endwright Road	summer during growing season	help with design and maintenance	Linda Emerson 812-345-2913 (cell)
<b>Flatwoods Park Butterfly Garden</b> , 9499 W. Flatwoods Rd., Gosport, IN	seasonal	maintenance and rejuvenation	Cathy Meyer 812-349-2805
<b>Hilltop Gardens</b> 2367 E. 10th St.	year around	maintaining gardens	Charlotte Griffin 812-345-8128
<b>Hinkle-Garton Farmstead</b> 2920 E. 10th St.	year around	invasive species removal, soil reclama- tion and more	Danielle Bachant-Bell 812-360-6544 (text) hgfvolunteers@gmail.com facebook.com/HinkleGartonFarmstead
<b>Hoosier Hills Food Bank Garden</b> , 7480 N. Howard Road	year around	plant, harvest, and compost	Ryan Jochim, 812-334-8374 hhfoodbank.org/volunteer.php
<b>Middle Way House Roof Top Garden</b> , a domestic violence shelter	seasonal	scheduled work- days at the garden	Toby Strout, director 812-333-7404 garden@middlewayhouse.org
<b>Mother Hubbard's Cupboard</b> 1100 W. Allen St.	year around	various garden tasks	Kendra Brewer, coordinator garden@mhcfoodpantry.org
<b>T. C. Steele</b> , 4220 T. C. Steele Rd., Nashville	seasonal	maintenance, in- vasive species removal, restorations	Anthony Joslin, leave a message at 812-988-278 tcsteele.org
<b>WonderGarden</b> , 308 W. Fourth St.	twice a year	maintenance, planting, mulching	Nancy White, 812-824-4426 nwhite38@hotmail.com wonderlab.org/exhibits/wondergarden
<b>Wylie House</b> , 307 E. Second St.	year around	growing/saving seeds and maintenance	Sherry Wise, 812-855-6224 indiana.edu/~libwylie/garden.html
<b>MCMGA Demonstration Garden</b> , Fairgrounds	year around	select gardens and plan the event	Herman Young, 812-322-5700 Jeanie Cox, 812-360-3587
<b>MCMGA Garden Walk Committee</b>	year around	select gardens and plan the event	Mary Jane Hall, 812-345-3985 gardenz4ever@hotmail.com
<b>MCMGA Horticulture Hotline</b>	year around	answer inquiries and research	Amy Thompson, 812-349-2572 afthompson@purdue.edu
<b>MCMGA Program Committee</b>	year around	Help plan MG programs	Sandy Belth, 812-825-8353, belthbirds@aol.com Susan Lovell, 812-339-5914, smlovell@indiana.edu
<b>MCMGA Speakers Bureau</b>	year around	research and plan speakers	Amy Thompson, 812-349-2572 afthompson@purdue.edu
<b>MCMGA Website</b>	year around	various jobs asso- ciated with the website	Stephen Anderson, 812-360-1216 mcmga.net

**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**

## Shrubs to behead in late winter

By Rosie Lerner, Extension Consumer Horticulturist, Purdue

Many shrubs can benefit from occasional or even routine pruning to remove damaged stems, keep the plant in size, rejuvenate for greater flower production, or to maintain a formal shape. But there are a few species that should routinely be cut to the ground, at least in our Midwestern climate.

Some shrubs will actually dieback to the ground most winters and then send up new twigs the following spring, effectively performing as if they were herbaceous perennials. With other species, the stems may not actually dieback completely, but their wood becomes weak and spindly if it does survive.

The following plants are best cut back all the way to the ground by late winter, before spring growth begins. Fortunately, these plants bloom on new season's growth so they will still provide summer flowers, despite having to start from scratch each year.

<b>Common Name</b>	<b>Botanical Name</b>
Glossy Abelia	<i>Abelia x grandiflora</i>
Butterfly Bush	<i>Buddleia</i> sp
Beautyberry	<i>Callicarpa</i> sp.
Bluebeard	<i>Caryopteris x clandonensis</i>
Smooth Hydrangea	<i>Hydrangea arborescens</i> (such as 'Annabelle' and 'Grandiflora')
Bigleaf Hydrangea	<i>Hydrangea macrophylla</i> (those cultivars that bloom on new wood, such as 'Endless Summer' and 'All Summer Beauty')
Bushclover	<i>Lespedeza</i> sp
Russian sage	<i>Perovskia atriplicifolia</i>

### Garden Fair update (continued from page 4)

- ◆Vendor: contacts commercial vendors and non-profits, answers questions, and helps get the applications completed
- ◆Education: contacts speakers for four class sessions, arranges needed details, and works site on event day
- ◆Publicity: helps to prepare and distribute cards, posters and yard signs, contacts media and poster locales, places yard signs where needed
- ◆MG Sales: arranges sales items, staffs sales location on event day

## Snow is good for gardens

By Rosie Lerner, Extension Consumer Horticulturist, Purdue

Though your aching back may not agree, heavy snows actually will be good for your garden and landscape. Snow provides moisture as well as protection from cold and wind.

Snow is an excellent insulator against low temperatures and excessive winds. The extent of protection depends on the depth of snow. Generally, the temperature below the snow increases by about 2°F for each inch of accumulation. In addition, the soil gives off some heat so that the temperature at the soil surface can be much warmer than the air temperature. One study found that the soil surface temperature was 28° F with a 9-inch snow depth and an air temperature of -14° F!

Snow brings welcome moisture to many landscape plants, which will in turn help prevent desiccation injury. Even dormant plants continue to lose moisture from twigs (as water vapor) in the process known as transpiration. Evergreen plants, which keep their leaves through the winter, are at even greater risk of injury.

On the other hand, it is possible to have too much of a good thing. Some evergreens will suffer from too much snow load. The weight of snow and ice can bend or even break branches, particularly on multi-stemmed shrubs, such as arborvitae. Snow should be gently removed by brushing away with a broom. Do not try to remove ice, since it is more than likely that you will break the stems. Multi-stemmed shrubs that are known to be susceptible to breakage can be bound with twine to hold branches together to prevent them from splitting apart.

Of course, there's still more winter to come. In the meantime, rest assured that there really is a silver lining to this storm cloud, at least in the areas that received the snow.

### 2015 MCMGA board members

Evelyn Harrell, president; Sandy Belth, vice president-education; Susan Lovell, vice president-programs; David Dunatchik, secretary; Diana Young, treasurer; Helen Hollingsworth, journalist; Stephen Anderson, director-communications; Abe Morris, director-records; Mary Cusack, director at large; Diana Young, fair board representative; Nancy White, past president; and Amy Thompson, ex officio

**Monroe County  
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*Helping others grow!*



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## Reasons to prune

The object of pruning is to modify a plant's growth. Some reasons to prune include

- ◆ helping maintain a plant's health by removing dead, diseased, or injured portions
- ◆ bringing a plant's size into harmony with surroundings
- ◆ increasing the quality and/or quantity of yield of flowers or fruit
- ◆ improving a plant's structure