

ROOTS AND SHOOTS



February 2009, Volume 25, Issue 2

Plan to Attend MCMGA General Meeting on February 17

By Nancy White Mick Renneisen, Bloomington Parks and Recreation Director, has graciously agreed to reschedule his presentation to us on the B-Line Trail, which had to be cancelled because of the weather. His program, *B-Line Trail: Transforming a Brown Field into a Green Way*, will detail the current status of the Bloomington B-Line Trail and its impact on the trees and green space located in downtown. We have arranged to hold our meeting in the same space, the Allison Jukebox Community Center, 349 S. Washington Street, on Tuesday, February 17. We will begin at 6:30 p.m. and will hear a report on the 2009 intern class and discuss programming for the coming year, before we hear a program for which members may claim one hour of education credit. Be sure to attend, and we will try to order a better weather day for this meeting. Since this is a general meeting, family members and guests are welcome.

New at the Extension Office

By Amy Thompson, Extension Educator

The next time you call or stop by the Extension Office you will likely encounter a new voice and face. Michelle Hammons joined our staff at the end of January in the role of Education Assistant/Secretary.

Michelle is new to Bloomington, having only moved here with her family from the Toledo area in December of 2008.

Please make Michelle feel welcome to the community. Michelle joins our Business Manager, Jackie Claffey, at the front of the office, where they both often answer questions when I am unavailable or provide you with resources or forms related to Master Gardener activities. Jackie can be contacted at jclaffey@purdue.edu and Michelle can be contacted via email mhammons@purdue.edu. As you are probably well aware, the number to reach any of the Extension Office Staff is 349-2575.

MG Calendar

- Tuesday, February 17**, 6:30 p.m., MCMGA General Meeting
- Saturday, February 21**, 8:00-3:30 p.m., MG seminar in Alexandria, IN
- Tuesday, March 7**, 8:30-3:00 p.m., Hoosier Hillsides MG garden workshop in Paoli, IN
- Tuesday, March 24**, 6:30 p.m., MCMGA General Meeting
- Tuesday, May 26**, 6:30 p.m., MCMGA General Meeting
- June 30-July 11**, Purdue's Summer Abroad trip
- Tuesday, July 15**, time TBA (work session in Demo Garden)
- September 10-12**, MG State Conference in Bristol, IN
- Tuesday, September 22**, 6:30 p.m., MCMGA General Meeting
- Tuesday, November 24 or December 1**, time TBA, MCMGA Holiday Meeting

Member News



Those who planned to attend the *Horticulture Magazine* seminar in February were disappointed to find all spring seminars by that group were cancelled, most likely due to the economy. There is a possibility that another similar seminar will be held next fall. Stay tuned.

By **Opportunity to Earn Education Hours**

Nancy White A new opportunity has come to us for an education session on March 7, given by the Hoosier Hillside Master Gardeners. It will be held from 8:30 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. in Paoli at the Orange County Fairgrounds with continental breakfast and lunch included in the \$35 registration fee. More details are on page 5 in this issue, on the Purdue MG website or contact (812) 723-2782. Program topics include techniques for small gardens, tree care, bonsai, and underused landscape plants. Five hours of education credit will be available.

Carpool to Education Workshop in Alexandria

Some of us have already registered for the education workshop in Alexandria on Saturday, February 21, from 8:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m., presented by the Madison County Master Gardeners. Registration cost is \$35, and continental breakfast and lunch are provided. Education topics include gardening to save money, annuals, perennials and humor, water and plant nutrition, and attracting wildlife to the garden. See last month's *Roots and Shoots* for details. Registration information is also available on the Purdue MG website or at (765) 641-9514 (John Orick). We will plan car pools if enough are interested in going. Contact Nancy White if you would like to carpool.

Purdue's Summer Abroad Trip Has Openings

The Master Gardener Summer Abroad trip, sponsored by Purdue, is scheduled for June 30 through July 11, 2009. This trip includes a tour of gardens of France. See article on page 7 for details. Contact Rosie Lerner at Purdue for registration information.

MG State Conference Is Scheduled for September 10-12, 2009

Save this date, September 10-12, 2009, for the MG State Conference to be held in Bristol, IN. Contact www.MichianaMasterGardeners.com for details. See article on page 8 in this issue.

CD Handbook Companion Available

Master Gardeners will find this publication from Purdue a helpful addition to our large green Master Gardener handbook. The CD Handbook Companion is available for \$15 which includes publications on topics ranging from plant care to pests in garden tomatoes. This is available on-line at www.hort.purdue.edu/mg/pubs.

Try Lisianthus in Your Garden

On a personal note: The new *Burpee Spring Catalogue* has loads of seed choices for those of us who were motivated last year with Joanna Howe's presentation on seed starting. Call 1-800-333-5808 if you need a catalogue. Also in this issue are some new varieties of my new favorite annual, lisianthus. If you haven't tried these, you will find they are great for cutting, spread well in beds, are heat resistant and like our clay soil. Give them a try. They are hard to find locally but look around or order from a catalogue.

(continued on page 3)

Member News (continued from page 2)

Great Source for Daylilies

You may want to check out the new *Oakes Daylily* catalogue if you got the daylily bug at the Eaton farm last July. This publication has great full-color photos and over 1500 varieties. If you already have more than you need of these hardy plants, save some for the plant exchange in May. They will quickly find a new home.

Mark These Dates on Your Calendar Today

Vicky St. Meyers and Carol Cobine, our Vice Presidents for Programs and Education, ask us to put these General Meeting dates on our calendars for 2009. Program details will be available later on all these dates:

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|---|--|
| Tuesday, February 17, 6:30 p.m. | Demo Garden) |
| Tuesday, March 24, 6:30 p.m. | Tuesday, September 22, 6:30 p.m. |
| Tuesday, May 26, 6:30 p.m. | Tuesday, November 24 or December 1, time TBA |
| Tuesday, July 15, time TBA (work session in | TBA |

Get involved! Carol Cobine and Vicky St. Myers are planning the MCMGA general meetings and field trips for 2009. If you would like to participate in planning these activities, please contact Vicky St. Myers at vstmyers@hotmail.com. This is a good opportunity to earn volunteer hours!

Attend a MCMGA Board Meeting—Earn an Education Hour



Although MCMGA board meetings are always open to our members, members aren't exactly beating a path to the meeting room door! To encourage a better understanding of the board and what the board officers do, beginning in 2009, Master Gardeners are eligible to earn an hour of educational credit for attending a MCMGA board meeting.

By
Amy
Thompson,
Extension
Educator

Board meetings are typically held the first Monday of every month in the meeting room adjacent to the Extension Office at 119 W. 7th St in Bloomington. Meetings normally begin at 6:30 p.m. and last from 60 to 90 minutes. Board members receive a copy of the agenda and minutes in advance which helps the time to be used efficiently.

If you plan to attend, it is always best to call the Extension Office at 349-2575 or email Amy at afthompson@purdue.edu, to ensure that there hasn't been a change in time or location. Board meeting information also will be posted on the Extension Office Web Calendar which can be found at this link <http://www.extension.purdue.edu/calendar/default.aspx?county=Monroe>.

If you have an agenda item that you wish to be discussed by the board, you should contact the MCMGA President Nancy White at nwhite38@hotmail.com well in advance of that month's meeting. We want to encourage members to come and observe the board at work, and we want board meetings to continue to be run efficiently. The yearly requirement of six educational hours should cover a wide variety of topics, and a board meeting may be a source in any given year.

Bringing Houseplants Down to Size

We sometimes receive calls from gardeners who wish to donate houseplants that have outgrown their location. In most cases, we don't have room to accept plants and suggest that people bring them down to size by air-layering.

Air-layering is a process where a branch or the main stem is encouraged to form roots while still attached to the parent plant. After rooting, the original plant is discarded, and the newly rooted one is potted as a replacement. Though this propagation technique cannot be used on all houseplants, it does work well on many that tend to outgrow their boundaries including croton, dracaena, dieffenbachia, Norfolk Island pine, rubber plant and schefflera. It is best to choose wood that is about a year old. Older or more immature wood often roots poorly, if at all. Any place on the stem that is of the proper maturity can be used, but a convenient location is often about 12 inches from the tip.

Following are the steps required for air-layering:

1. Leaves should be removed around the area to be air-layered.
2. Wound the stem. This can be done by making a slanting cut upward, an inch or more in length and halfway through the stem. Place a portion of a toothpick in the cut so it cannot close and heal. If the stem is seriously weakened, use a stick "splint" to prevent breakage. Another method that works well is to strip the bark completely around the stem in a band one-half to one inch wide.
3. Apply rooting hormone to the wounded surface of the cut or the stripped portion of the branch.
4. Pack a baseball-sized wad of moist, unmilled sphagnum peat moss around the wounded area so it forms a ball. This is where new roots will form. It is important to use the long, stringy unmilled peat moss rather than the more common milled material so peat moss does not fall away from the stem when released. Even unmilled peat moss may need to be secured with string to keep it in place.
5. Wrap the ball of sphagnum peat moss with clear plastic wrap. Be sure to use enough wrap so that the plastic overlaps and prevents the ball from drying out. Secure the top and bottom edges of the wrap closed with electrical tape, string or other convenient fasteners. Roots may appear in as little as a month though it may take much longer for the plant to be ready for transplanting. Check periodically to be sure peat moss remains moist. Water if needed.

When roots have filled the peat moss, the plant is ready to be severed from the parent and transplanted.

Contributor:

Ward Upham, Extension Associate

From <https://exchange.purdue.edu/exchweb/bin/redirect.asp?URL=http://www.hfrr.ksu.edu/DesktopDefault.aspx?tabid=764>

Hoosier Hillsides MGs Present 2009 *Spring Tonic*

Hoosier Hillsides Master Gardeners of Orange, Lawrence, and Crawford Counties present *Spring Tonic*, an advanced MG seminar, on March 7, 2009 from 8:30 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. at the Orange County Community Center, 1075 Sandy Hook Road, Orange County Fairgrounds, Paoli, Indiana.

Registration fee is \$35 if paid by February 15 and \$40 after that date. Master Gardeners will receive five hours of education credit. Fee includes continental breakfast and lunch. Door prizes will be awarded, and a wonderful assortment of local craftsmen will be selling their wares.

Program highlights include

Underused Beauties by Bill Abel, Grant Line Nursery, will discuss underused landscape plants and how to fit them into our gardens.

Gardening in Small Spaces by Barry Fisher, will discuss how to get the most out of small gardens, and share tips and tricks on soil management.

Gourds and More by Tonie Kedzierski, always a favorite at local craft fairs, has been featured in the newspapers for her ability to turn gourds into art.

Tree Care by Tim Day, an ISA certified arborist and owner of The Tree Man Tree Service in French Lick, will focus on what is often the most neglected of our landscape plants and how to choose them, grow them and keep them looking good!

Bonsai by Tim Morrison, will show us how to plant a bonsai, how to give it an initial pruning, and how to keep our new plants healthy and happy.

Driving Directions

Orange County Community Center is located at the Orange County Fairgrounds at the north end of Paoli, IN, which is located on IN Highway 37, south of Bedford. In Paoli, proceed on Highway 37 until reaching the Wal-Mart store from the south, or the Hoosier Hills Credit Union from the north. Turn west on Hospital Road (PDQ Rental is on the corner) and proceed to next stop sign. The Community Center will be ahead on the right. One word of caution. If coming from the south, Highway 37 has been renumbered at the junction with I-64, to Highway 237.

To register, send contact information and check made payable to Hoosier Hillsides Master Gardeners to HHMG, c/o Nancy Kimmel, Treasurer, 723 N. County Road 500 E, Paoli, IN 47454. For more information, please call 812 723-2782.

Purdue Offers Online Resource for Plant ID

By
Rosie
Lerner,
Extension Specialist,
Purdue University

Master Gardeners have access to a unique online photo resource for plant ID at <http://www.hort.purdue.edu/ext/senior/senior.htm>. Purdue University originally developed this resource to help youth prepare for 4-H/FFA plant ID contests, but it is equally useful for Master Gardeners and others. Master Gardeners might especially enjoy the "Quiz" feature and can earn "Advanced" Training Hours by submitting their score pages.

Guidelines and additional info can be found at <http://www.hort.purdue.edu/ext/senior/suggest.htm>.

A Better Tasting Tomato

Tomato tests often show heirloom tomato varieties to be better tasting than our modern, disease resistant, semi-determinate types. However, a discovery made in 1999 by a USDA scientist may be changing that. Tomato taste is related to a balance of 10 major volatile compounds within the fruit.

Up to 1999, a compound known as furaneol (fur ANN ee ul) was known to be present but was considered a minor player due to smaller concentrations with little variation among varieties. A change in extraction technique revealed that furaneol was actually present in larger concentrations than previously thought and was higher in tomatoes that were considered better tasting.

The gene that controlled the level of furaneol was identified and incorporated into breeding programs. We are now seeing the fruit of that research (pun intended) with the release of a number of named varieties that not only contain the flavor-enhancing gene but also have high disease resistance, compact growth and high production. The varieties released thus far include Red Defender, Scarlet Red, SecuriTY 28, and Mountain Glory. There may be others that I am not familiar with.

Seed for these varieties is available for commercial growers, but I haven't seen any trickle down to home gardeners yet. A variety that was not a part of this breeding program that naturally has higher levels of furaneol is sold under the name of '*Fabulous*'. Though this is a modern variety, it has been around long enough that seed may be available to home gardeners. For the other varieties listed, check with your local garden centers and greenhouses for transplants. (**Editor Note:** For more varieties with higher levels of furaneol, read the article below, which is a follow up to this article.)

Sources for Tomatoes with Higher Levels of Furaneol

Tomatoes have enhanced flavor due to higher levels of furaneol.. Furaneol is one of 10 major volatile compounds within the fruit that contribute to flavor. Up to 1999, furaneol was known to be present in tomatoes but was considered a minor player due to smaller concentrations with little variation among varieties. A change in extraction technique revealed that furaneol was actually present in larger concentrations than previously thought and was higher in tomatoes that were considered better tasting. I stated in the above article that I had not been able to find a "home gardener" source of seed for those tomatoes other than '*Fabulous*'. Thanks to Keith Mueller, we now have sources to share. Harris Seeds (www.harriseseeds.com) has *Mountain Glory*, *Red Defender*, *SecuriTY 28* and *Scarlet Red*.

However, even home gardener packaging may have far more seeds than you want or need. Only '*Scarlet Red*' is sold in a packet that is less than \$5. Stokes Seed (www.stokeseeds.com) carries *Scarlet Red* and *Mountain Glory* but only *Mountain Glory* has a packet for less than \$5. Note that the prices from both these establishments are more than fair, it is just that the smallest packet size may be 100 or even 500 seeds for some varieties. Park Seed (www.parkseed.com) has '*Fabulous*', a tomato with modern characteristics that naturally has enhanced flavor. It also is less than \$5 for a single packet.

Articles above from <https://exchange.purdue.edu/exchweb/bin/redirect.asp?URL=http://www.hfrr.ksu.edu/DesktopDefault.aspx?tabid=764>

Have a Heart for Your Valentine

By Rosie Lerner, Extension Horticulturist

Looking ahead to Valentine's Day, here are some ideas for plants that will delight your plant lover.

Heartleaf philodendron, also known as sweetheart plant, is easy to find, easy to grow and an excellent choice for a beginning gardener. The philodendron takes its name from Latin for love and tree, "philo" - love and "dendron" - tree. The heart-shaped leaves arise from sturdy stems that can twine around an upright support or trail from a hanging basket. These plants thrive best in moderate indirect light, moist soil and high humidity, but can adapt to low light and are reasonably tolerant of wide fluctuations in moisture and humidity.

String of hearts, or Ceropegia, is a trailing vine that, as you might guess from its name, has heart-shaped leaves borne on long, thread-like stems. The thick, succulent leaves are dark green with contrasting whitish veins. Although the plants do bear interesting pink or purplish tube-shaped flowers, they are quite small and don't provide much of a show. A sunny window is best for Ceropegia, but it will tolerate lower light intensity.

Cyclamen is a traditional valentine favorite with its heart-shaped leaves, adorned by lovely flowers in white and many shades of pink, red and lavender. The flowers have a striking form, likened to butterflies, birds in flight and even falling stars, depending on who is doing the looking. And, as an extra bonus, the leaves are finely detailed with silvery or light-green markings. Cyclamen are available as large, showy plants or as mini-plants. For the longest lasting show of blooms, look under the leaves to select those with the largest number of flower buds. Cyclamen thrive best with bright light, cool temperatures and moist, well-drained soil.

Anthurium is beautiful in bloom as well as just a foliage plant, with its large, shiny leaves (often heart-shaped) and exotic bright flowers, also called the "Heart of Hawaii." The blooms have two distinct parts: a large, heart-shaped leaf-like structure called the spathe and a long spike of densely packed tiny flowers called the spadix. The spathe is shiny, heart-shaped and ranges in color from scarlet to various shades of pink, white, lilac, and coral. The spadix is usually a contrasting color, generally white, yellow or sometimes purple. The blooms last for weeks and also make excellent cut flowers. Anthurium thrives in coarse, well-drained soil (peat moss-bark mix) and bright, but indirect light.

Gardens of France

By Rosie Lerner

Openings are available for the Purdue sponsored Gardens of France Study Abroad. Mike Dana and Rosie Lerner have planned an advanced training/study abroad opportunity on the Gardens of France for June 30 through July 11, 2009. A preview of the course is available online at <http://www.hort.purdue.edu/France>.

. Enrollment is limited to 25 total participants. Advanced training hours will be credited to those Purdue Master Gardeners who complete the course.

If you wish to enroll, call toll free to 888-398-4636 and ask to be transferred to Tammy Goodale in the Department of Horticulture & Landscape Architecture or call direct (charges apply) 765-494-1296.

Putnum County MGs Offer Advanced Training Seminar

Master Gardeners of Putnum County are sponsoring an advanced training seminar, *The 5 R's of Gardening*, on Saturday, February 28, from 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. at the Putnam County Fairgrounds. Attendance counts as six hours of continuing education for Master Gardeners.

Program Highlights include:

Rejuvenate—Heidi Wilker, A.T.C & M.S.P.T., discusses and demonstrates the mechanics of preparing your body for the gardening season.

Rain Gardens—Todd Stevenson, Monroe County Highway Department, discusses the environmental impact of rain water and ways to establish a garden in an area that is plagued by too much water.

Roses, Roses, Roses—John Hefner, Indiana State Rose Society, offers information on varieties of roses and the growing and caring for roses in your gardens.

Reaping & Preserving—Linda Reynolds, Vermillion County CFS, shares information on the many methods of preserving your garden harvest.

Readin', Ritin' & Rithmetic—Ann Delchambre, Putnam County ANR, will provide tips for planning, planting and caring for your gardens.

The cost of the seminar is \$35 or \$60 for registrant and spouse. Pre-registration is due no later than February 14, 2009. Registration fees increase to \$40 per registrant and \$70 per registrant and spouse after February 14, 2009. Make checks payable to Putnam County Master Gardeners Association and mail to Linda Blocher, 3161 E. Co. Rd. 800 N., Bainbridge, IN 46105. For additional information, contact Linda Blocher at (765) 522-3451 or (317) 525-2676 or email lblocher@tds.net.

Michiana Master Gardeners to Host 2009 State MG Conference

By Elkhart County will be the host of Indiana's 2009 State Master Gardener
Jeff Conference on September 10-12, 2009. Michiana Master Gardeners Asso-
Burbrink, ciation has been working closely with Purdue Extension and the local
Extension Convention and Visitor's Bureau to make this a special event.
Educator, The week of January 19, the group expects to send out an information
Elkhart packet to over 400 Master Gardeners who have attended previous state
County conferences. The packet will contain information about the conference
and the Elkhart County area. Similar information, including registration
information, conference agendas, and accommodations is posted on the
website for the Michiana Master Gardener's Associa-
tion: www.michianamastergardeners.com.

Elkhart County has a unique tourism draw of interest to Master Gardeners, a Quilt Garden Tour, which is now listed as a Top 100 site to visit in North America by the American Bus Association <http://www.buses.org/files/aba2009top100.pdf>. Michiana Master Gardeners Association has been involved in many aspects of this project. More information about the Quilt Garden Tour can be found at www.amishcountry.org/QuiltGardens.

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 | Bethany Murray, 339-8876, bethany.murray@gmail.com |
| T. C. Steele SHS | seasonal | various | Davie Kean, 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 | Barbara 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 |
| Mother Hubbard's Cupboard | year around | education, resource | Libby Yarnell, 355-6843 |
| WonderLab Garden | 2 times monthly | various | Nancy White, 824-4426 |

PLEASE WEAR YOUR NAME BADGE WHEN VOLUNTEERING.

Preventing Potatoes from Sprouting in Storage

Home gardeners have had to rely on proper storage conditions (cool and moist) to prevent potatoes from sprouting. However, sprouting will eventually occur even if the gardener does everything right.

Research by Mary Jo Frazier, Nora Olsen and Gale Klein Kopf from the University of Idaho have found products that should help home gardeners. These researchers were looking for an organic method to control potato sprouts. They found essential oils from some herbs and spices to be effective sprout inhibitors. Specifically, they found that spearmint oil, peppermint oil and clove oil suppressed sprouting by physically damaging rapidly dividing cells in the sprout. Each of these products is so safe that the FDA has approved them for addition to food.

Several application methods were considered, though most were only suitable for commercial storage facilities. The only practical method for homeowners was one the researchers labeled a “low-tech” wick method. This was accomplished by placing a small piece of blotter paper saturated with spearmint or peppermint oil in a box with the potatoes. This method was not recommended for the clove oil.

Though it was found that peppermint and spearmint oils were equally effective in suppressing sprouts, the peppermint oil was less likely to affect flavor of the potatoes. Reapplication at two-to three-week intervals will be needed for continued sprout suppression. Little to no residue was found on the potatoes from these products due to their high volatility. The first application should be done before sprouting occurs. Blotting paper is much more difficult to find than it was in the past, so you may want to substitute blank newsprint. However, if blotting paper is desired, try herbarium supply houses. Blotting paper is used to press plant specimens. (WU)

From <https://exchange.purdue.edu/exchweb/bin/redirect.asp?URL=http://www.hfrr.ksu.edu/DesktopDefault.aspx?tabid=764>

Starting Asparagus Plants from Seed

Asparagus plants are usually started from crowns but can be started from seed. If you wish to try the second method, order seed now. We recommend transplanting asparagus in mid to late April after danger of a freeze is past. It normally takes about 10 to 12 weeks for asparagus seedlings to grow large enough to transplant, so they need to be started soon.

Asparagus seed is somewhat erratic in germination though soaking seed in warm water for 48 hours helps. Keep the seeding medium between 75 and 80 degrees and plant at a depth equal to four times the diameter of the seed. Germination normally takes two to three weeks. Asparagus seems to grow in spurts where growth will be rapid, and then slow. Don't become concerned with this pattern, as it is quite common with asparagus. Plants should be transplanted to a trench about 6 inches deep. Gradually add soil to the trench as plants grows. The trench should be full by the end of the growing season. (WU)

From <https://exchange.purdue.edu/exchweb/bin/redirect.asp?URL=http://www.hfrr.ksu.edu/DesktopDefault.aspx?tabid=764>

Start Trees Off Right

Research from K-State's John C. Pair Horticultural Center has quantified the effect of controlling grasses around newly planted trees. Jason Griffin, William Reid and Dale Bremer conducted a study to investigate the inhibition of growth of transplanted, seedling trees when lawn grasses were allowed to grow up to the trunk. There were five treatments including three with different species of grass. Those treatments were:

1. Bare soil maintained with herbicides
2. Area under tree mulched three inches deep
3. Tall fescue allowed to grow under tree
4. Bermuda grass allowed to grow under tree
5. Kentucky bluegrass allowed to grow under tree

All treatments were applied to Eastern redbud seedlings as well as to pecan seedlings. All trees were fertilized according to recommendations and watered during the growing season with up to one inch of water if rainfall was deficient.

At the end of two years, trees were measured and harvested. Data was taken on caliper (diameter) six inches above the ground, weight of above ground portions of the tree, leaf area and leaf weight. There were no differences in any measure between the mulched treatment and the bare soil treatment for either tree species. However, all measures showed very significant growth increases if lawn grasses were controlled around the tree. Specific results were:

1. Caliper: Caliper measures six inches above the soil surface were twice as large for plots without grass than those with either fescue or bluegrass but was only 50% larger when compared to the Bermuda grass plots.
2. Top growth weight: Redbuds showed a 300% weight advantage for plots with grasses controlled than those without. Pecans showed a still very significant 200% increase.
3. Leaf area and leaf weight: Leaf areas was 200% larger in plots without grass competition and leaf weight showed a 300% increase.

The obvious conclusion one should draw from this study is that grasses must be controlled under a newly transplanted tree if you wish to get the best possible growth. How far from the trunk should the grasses be controlled? Try a minimum of three feet.

Contributor:

Ward Upham, Extension Associate

From <https://exchange.purdue.edu/exchweb/bin/redirect.asp?URL=http://www.hfrr.ksu.edu/DesktopDefault.aspx?tabid=764>

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Cooperative Extension Service
Health Building
119 West Seventh Street
Bloomington, IN 47404

FIRST CLASS MAIL
RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED



**Master Gardener General Meeting
February 17, 6:30 p.m.
at Allison Jukebox Community Center,
349 South Washington Street**

2009 MCMGA Board

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