

Roots and Shoots



Volume 28, Issue 3

March 2012

Speaker, field trip sign up, and refreshments at March 27 meeting

By Evelyn Harrell



Special points of interest:

- Calibrochons are small flowers that pack a powerful punch in the garden (see page 1)
- Save plastic newspaper bags and bring these to the March 27 meeting (page 2)
- Look for your name on the Garden Fair committee list on page 3
- Four members earn new badges
- Learn why a soil thermometer is an essential gardening tool
- Rosie Lerner says that tree topping is hazardous to your tree
- Karen Sparks sends an invitation to lunch in April

Come to the general meeting of the Monroe County Master Gardener Association at 6:30 p.m. on Tuesday, March 27 at the extension office. Our guest speaker will be Gordon Elsberry, former nurseryman and current manager of the Herb and Flower Barn in Nashville. Mr. Elsberry's talk is titled *Nutrition, Calibrochoas, and Small Space Gardening*. If you have questions about nurturing your favorite plant, or if you want advice on cramming lots of gardening into a small space, and if you are not familiar with calibrochoas, Mr. Elsberry will inform you. Hint: one site describes calibrochoas as tiny petunias on steroids. Two hours of education credit will be available.

At the meeting you will learn more details about our April 11 field trip to the Indiana Daffodil Society Show at Holiday Park in Indianapolis. Master Gardener Kay Cunningham will be our tour guide. The sign-up sheet will be available all evening.

Refreshments will be provided by Diann Lock, chair, and committee members Robin Nordstrom, Donna Terry, Linda Heath, Jackie Gilkey, Chris Johnson, and Nancy Page. The treats will be available shortly after 6:00 p.m., so come early to enjoy before the program begins.

Inside this issue:

Member News	2
Garden Fair musings and committees	3
Pruning overgrown apple trees	4
Shine the spotlight	5
Members earn new badges	5
Book review: gardening and growing older	6
Web castings	7
Soil temperatures and vegetables	8

State Conference on October 4-6

October 4-6 is the date for the 2012 State Master Gardener Conference. Hamilton County Master Gardeners are hosting the conference. Registration will be available in June. Speakers includes Tracy DiSabato-Aust, Dr Larry Yoder, Greg Monzel, Cynthia Miller, Linda Chalker-Scott, Reni Winter, Steve Wicker, Steve Nikkila, Paul James, Janet Macunovich, Susan Wainwright-Evans, Bill Fielding, Angie Manual, Amanda Smith, Dan McCord, Jeanette Daniels, and Chris Hansen. A tentative schedule and topics can be checked out at HCMGA.org.

Member news

By Nancy White



You won't want to miss our March general meeting on Tuesday, March 27, at 6:30 p.m. at the extension office. Besides a wonderful educational program with two hours of education credit available, we will get updates on our April 21 Garden Fair and activities at Hilltop. We especially invite our new intern class to join us as we get ready for a productive growing season.

Save newspaper plastic bags and bring them to March meeting

If you have been saving plastic newspaper bags for the giveaway shrubs at our Garden Fair, David Dunatchik and his committee remind you to bring those to the March meeting.

Hilltop is busy with new activities

As you may already know, Hilltop Gardens on the IU campus, bordering the East 46 bypass is under new leadership. Many new activities are being planned, and Master Gardeners have been invited to be involved. Hilltop's interim coordinator is Master Gardener Lea Woodard. She will join us at our March 27 meeting to share information on Hilltop activities.

Planning for the annual Monroe County Fair is under way

The dates of the Monroe County Fair have been announced. They are July 28-Aug. 4. Fair booklets with information and schedules for each day will be available soon at the extension office. Master Gardeners spend many volunteer hours in a variety of fair activities. Plan to be there this year.

Volunteer at the Master Gardener booth at the Farmers' Market

Master Gardeners have had a booth at the outdoor Farmers' Market at the Showers complex on Morton Street in downtown Bloomington for several years. Helping with this booth is a good way to gain some volunteer hours on spring and summer Saturday mornings. Contact a MCMGA board member or Amy Thompson if you are available to volunteer at our booth.

Master Gardeners sponsor community grants again this year

Again this year, we are offering funds for small grants for gardening education projects planned and implemented by non-profit groups. Last year we funded six projects that ranged from a garden for pre-school children to supporting the removal of invasive plants on the Courthouse Square. Funds for these grants come from the proceeds of our Garden Fair. 2012 grant winners will be announced by April 1.

Garden Fair musings—eight weeks and counting

By Nancy White

- Native Indiana shrubs have been ordered to be given away at the Master Gardener booth at the Garden Fair. Grown at the Indiana State Plant Nursery at Vallonia, they are popular with our fair visitors and are very hardy.
- All the hard work of the committees for the Garden Fair makes sense when we see the creative and worthwhile projects that are being accomplished with the grants awarded each year.
- Be sure to get your Garden Fair posters and postcards at our March 27 general meeting. The publicity committee is providing postcards to all members so you can invite your friends and neighbors. These small, colorful cards can be used as mini-posters on bulletin boards or can be sent by surface mail. Large posters will be available that can be posted at schools, businesses, offices, churches, and similar locations. Where could you put a poster?
- Some of the most popular Garden Fair activities are the educational sessions planned by Jeff Schafer and his committee. There will be four sessions, one hour each, with different speakers and topics. They are free to Garden Fair visitors and to Master Gardeners. Each session qualifies for one hour of education credit for Master Gardeners. Session topics and speakers will be announced soon.
- Following is a list the Garden Fair committees. Chairs are noted. Contact the chair of your committee for more details on committee activities. The success of the Garden Fair depends on us all.

Physical arrangements (plans facility set up and tear down)

David Dunatchik, chair
 Jeff Schafer
 Herman Young
 Penny Austin
 Keith Barnhardt

Café (plan menu and assist with staffing café during event)

Evelyn Harrell, chair
 Cindy Benson
 Chris Johnson
 Donna Terry
 Trish Gustaitis
 Mary Hawkins
 Dian Lock

Education (help plan education sessions)

Jeff Schafer, chair
 Mary Hoffman
 Susan Lovell

Master Gardeners information booth (help set up and work booth at event)

Susan Eastman, chair
 Helen Hollingsworth
 Ann McEndarfer
 Mary Jane Hall
 Dan Nichols
 Penny Austin

Vendors (contact vendors and arrange for ads)

Peggy Rees-Krebs, chair
 Patty Crites
 Lynn Rogers
 Karen King
 Diana Fellure
 Ed Fellure
 Sandy Belth
 Susan Lovell
 Melissa Britton
 (continued on page 5)

Pruning overgrown apple trees

Submitted by Amy Thompson



Apple trees that are not pruned for several years will often produce so many branches that little energy is left for fruit production. Overgrown apple trees are also difficult to harvest and spray. Gardeners who have such a tree are often at a loss as to how to get it back in shape.

Often the best recommendation for such a tree is to make one pruning cut at ground level and start over with a new tree. Trees may have sentimental value that will make revitalization worth the time and effort. Realize that this will be a multi-year process because no more than 30 percent of the tree should be removed in one year. Here are some steps to follow:

1. Remove all dead wood. This does not count toward the 30 percent.
2. Remove suckers from the base of the tree.
3. Choose approximately six of the best branches to keep as scaffold branches.

Remove all others. Branches should be cut flush to the branch collar.

The collar is the natural swelling that occurs where a branch connects to the trunk or to a larger branch. Removing the collar would leave a larger wound that would take additional time to heal. Do not paint wounds. Wounds heal more quickly if left open.

Candidates for removal include branches with narrow crotch angles, which are more likely to break in wind and ice storms, and those that cross branches you will save. This may be all that is possible the first year if the 30 percent threshold has been reached.

4. Thin the branches on each scaffold branch. Remove crowded branches to open up the tree to light and allow humidity to escape. Shorten each scaffold branch by cutting back to a side branch. When you are through, the tree should have enough wood removed so that a softball can be thrown through the tree.

Severe pruning often will cause an apple tree to produce vigorous side shoots from the trunk called water sprouts. Main branches will also produce suckers that grow straight up. The suckers and water sprouts should be removed throughout the growing season so the center of the tree stays open.

From <http://www.hfrr.ksu.edu/doc3329.ashx>

Shine the spotlight

By Nancy White

For the next few months we will shine the spotlight on several of our long-standing volunteer sites. This month we celebrate Cheryl's Garden at Karst Farm Park on the west side of Bloomington, close to the county fairgrounds. The garden is named for Master Gardener Cheryl Coverdale, who was a well-known gardener in Monroe County and passed away in 2001. Nancy Fee is the team leader for this small but impressive garden. Originally planned to show off native perennials, it now has taken on a new mission and includes some perennials, rose bushes, and shrubs. Since its location is near the Parks and Recreation soccer fields and is a raised bed with stone walls, visitors easily can enjoy the changing colors and textures of the plantings. It also is a nice example of raised bed possibilities, especially for gardeners with limited mobility. Be sure to take a look at this gem the next time you visit Karst Farm Park. And thanks go to the Master Gardeners who maintain Cheryl's Garden.

2012 Garden Fair committees (continued from page 3)

Financial (staff entry point on day of event)

Diane Young, chair
Marilyn Brinley
Esther Minnick
Melissa Britton
Robin Nordstrom
Ann McEndarfer

Door Prizes (gather prizes and work booth at event)

Dian Lock, chair
Judy Hawkins

Publicity (distribute posters, write articles, contact media)

Nancy White, chair

Bob Baird
Jeannie Cox
Sandy Belth
Charlotte Griffin
Patty Crites
Karen Sparks

Master Gardener Sales (arrange for sales items and staff booth at event)

Barb Cappy, chair
Martha Tarbah
Susan Sachjen
Carol Reynolds
Donald Sachjen
Dale Wilkens



Hats off!

Members earn new badges:

Gary Anderson	Certified Master Gardener
Patricia Gustaitis	Advanced Master Gardener
Evelyn Harrell	Bronze Master Gardener
Vicky St. Myers	Bronze Master Gardener

Congratulations!

Gardening and growing older

By M. Susan Osborne



Gardening for a Lifetime: How to Garden Wiser as You Grow Older by Sydney Eddison, illustrations by Kimberly Day Proctor, Timber Press, 2010.

I chose to read *Gardening for a Lifetime* upon the suggestion of a fellow Master Gardener, Helen Hollingsworth. I had asked her if anybody had mentioned any particular garden book topics they would like reviewed; she had just read the book and suggested I consider it. So let me say first and foremost, thank you Helen—I found the book delightful and inspiring.

None of us want to really think about growing older (do we?). However, Ms. Eddison (a gardening perfectionist, nationally recognized and awarded gardener, speaker, writer, her own gardens featured in magazines and television) places a wonderful spin on how to deal with gardens that were enjoyable to work in for many years, but challenging as we age (a gardener's worst nightmare!). Eddison offers practical advice that comes from her own personal experiences of transforming the overwhelming list of gardening chores to an easy, enjoyable activity in line with the realities of life.

The sixteen chapter, 208 page narrative is an encouragement to the aging as well as the busy younger gardener. Chapter one, *A Look Backward: Tracing the Garden's History* assists and prepares gardeners for the decisions they have to make if downsizing is the issue—the what, when, and how to simplifying. Chapter six, *Sanity Saver, Learning to Make Lists* offers organizational advice that keeps us on track when we are in the gardens—prioritizing tasks with a daily list and a master list. Chapter fourteen, *Container Gardening: Arranging Potted Plants with a Purpose* offers innovative choices to yard gardening—all plants do not need to be in the ground. Other chapter topics include *rethinking perennial borders, substituting shrubs for perennials, the shady border and woodland gardens, searching for help, accepting imperfection, from lawn to meadow, managing mature plants, stay put or move on, keeping new gardens small and simple, borrowed landscapes, and miniature gardens*. She sums up the book by pointing out to make the most of what you have left.

Each chapter was filled with Eddison's personal experiences, appreciative comments of those who assisted in her gardens and that she learned from, and the choices she constantly had to make to get her gardens at a manageable level. These make an enchanting reading adventure. At the end of each chapter she recapped everything in a section she called *Gleanings* that included a few concise paragraphs highlighting her main chapter topics. In most chapters she suggests perennials, shrubs or trees, bulbs, and even annuals that are low maintenance and sustainable. She repeatedly encourages the use of mulch to eliminate weeding as she promotes less work in the garden and at the same time persuades one to continue gardening.

The first line in Eddison's *Preface* states, "Gardens and gardeners age and change." (continued on page 8)

Web castings

Gardeners and their friends.

Some 'pre-digested' web offerings provided by local Master

By Karen Sparks



This winter, I was looking over past columns and was still pleased to consider a few of the links as good finds. (Might do a column on that, 'best of the best' or something; not this month.) But looking out over my yard/garden, I am not so pleased. While not a total mess, I mean folks aren't pointing and staring (or laughing), there are huge gaps, omissions and lots of scruffy dead things that can't be classified as 'providing winter interest.'

Which brings me to this month's topic: *The Ignored Garden*. This past year brought health challenges, extra travel, arthritis, drought, a bit of memory loss, and did I mention arthritis? Trying a Google search for 'ignored gardens' led to 'abandoned gardens' which somehow led to 'survivalist foraging for food in abandoned gardens.' What? (No one said this column would write itself.) So I eventually tried 'lazy gardens' which provided a more proactive, advanced planning take on it, i.e., if we plan ahead, our ignored gardens might survive. That also elicited 'gardening as we age,' where I finally landed. Bingo! (No, not searching 'old people and bingo.')

So here is one from a Michigan Lazy MG (plan so you 'never have to weed where you walk'): http://www.mlive.com/living/muskegon/index.ssf/2010/04/lazy_gardening_grow_yummy_vegg.html. And along the way, I also found this forum on lazy gardening, with opinions on easy reseeding annuals and perennials, mulch, and color ('If I wanted to look at a lot of yellow and scarlet side by side, I'd hang out at McDonald's.' Love it!) So, Canadian homestead garden, lazy style: <http://www.homesteadgarden.com/forums/showthread.php?t=735>.

If there is only time for you to hit one link from this column, or even from the last several columns, and you are over the age of 50 (65? 75?) you have to read this article about Sydney Eddison, whose book I referred to back in June, titled *Gardening for a Lifetime*. (Editor's note: See Susan Osborne's review on page 6.) The last chapter in that book is 'Summing Up: Making the Most of What You Have Left.' She is talking about the garden's odd bits at season's end, but also, making the most of what YOU have left. The link chronicles a couple of other aging gardeners. Meaningful, poignant, and wise: http://blog.oregonlive.com/kympokorny/2011/03/aging_doesnt_mean_you_have_to.html.

If you don't have time for even one link, well, you are probably not retired yet, or you are out working in your gardens and so they are beautifully kept, or both!

The article also refers to their MG sub-group of older gardeners who meet informally to share tips on how to still garden as we age, but also to just gab. How great is that? I am also noticing that in pictures of aging gardeners, their hands often clearly have arthritis (me too). Maybe that should be another criteria for joining a 'Golden Age' gardeners group. Anybody interested? You must be 'of a certain age,' want to keep on keeping on in the garden, and enjoy those special gardener's aches and pains if not actual arthritis. I'm serious! Let's do lunch in April. You know my email: Karen.k.sparks@mac.com. Let's compare notes and not feel at all guilty about times we have ignored our gardens, lazy or not. See you then?

Soil temperature and vegetables

Submitted by Amy Thompson

One of the most neglected tools for vegetable gardeners is a soil thermometer. Soil temperature is a much better measure of when to plant than air temperature or the calendar. Planting when soil is too cool can cause seeds to rot and transplants to sit there.

A number of vegetables can germinate and grow at cool temperatures. For example, peas will germinate and grow well at a soil temperature of 40 F. Though lettuce, parsnips, and spinach can sprout at a soil temperature of 35 F, they prefer at least 45° F for best germination and growth. Radishes also do well at a soil temperature of 45° F.

Warm-season crops such as tomatoes, sweet corn and beans prefer at least 55° F for germination (or transplanting), but others such as peppers, cucumbers, melons and sweet potatoes need it even warmer, about 60° F.

Taking soil temperature accurately is a bit of a science. First, use a metal soil thermometer, which is sold in many garden and hardware stores. Take temperature 2.5 inches deep at about 10 to 11 a.m. Diurnal variations affect soil temperature, with lowest readings after dawn and warmest around mid-afternoon. The late-morning reading gives a good average temperature. Also be sure to get a consistent reading for four to five days in a row before planting, and make sure a cold snap is not predicted.

An excellent guide sheet on this subject is published by the Alabama Cooperative Extension System and is titled "Soil Temperature Conditions for Vegetable Seed Germination." It can be found at <http://www.aces.edu/pubs/docs/A/ANR-1061/ANR-1061.pdf> .

From <http://www.hfrr.ksu.edu/doc3329.ashx>

Gardening and growing older (continued from page 6)

And she continues with, "...yet old age always takes us by surprise." She summarizes yet boldly points out that the garden offers a plethora of memories. Some are happy and some are sad, but for some mysterious reason, despite the ups and downs, the allure navigates a gardener to constantly replenish despite the Emerald Ash Borers, the droughts, and the disappointments felt from a late cold snap in spring. Since most gardeners are driven individuals who cannot let go of the dirt under the fingernails, Eddison offers some very wise advice to maintaining gardens for as long as possible.

Gardening for a Lifetime is her story, one she dedicated to her husband, and she writes with grace and aplomb. However, if we look closely at the book's contents, it can also be our story. Her writings offer each of us an opportunity to accept, realize, and grasp that even as we grow older we can still garden. Gardening may not be at the magnitude we exhibited in our youth or when we first began gardening, but her many suggestions are wonderful ideas that can be incorporated to continue and enjoy gardening experiences as appropriate to personal needs.

Volunteer opportunities

Compiled by Nancy White

Location	Time	Jobs	Contact
Hilltop Gardens	year around	various	Charlotte Griffin, 345-8128
MG Demonstration Garden	seasonal	various	Bethany Murray, 339-8876 bethany.murray@gmail.com
Bloomington Community Orchard	seasonal	various	Stacey Decker, getinvolved@bloomingtoncommunityorchard.org
Cheryl's Garden at Karst Farm Park	summer	design and maintain	Nancy Fee, 332-1940
T. C. Steele SHS	seasonal	various	Davie Kean, 988-2785
Flatwoods Park Butterfly Gardens	seasonal	various	Cathy Meyer, 349-2575
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	write articles	Helen Hollingsworth, 332-7313
MCMGA Web Site	year around	various	Barbara Hays, 332-4032
MG Program Committee Member	year around	plan MG programs	Evelyn Harrell, 339-0572 Jeff Schafer, 325-3130
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	Stephanie Solomon, 334-8374
WonderLab Garden	2 times monthly	various	Nancy White, 824-4426
Hoosier Hills Foodbank	year around	various	Jessica Williams, 334-8374

New Stakeholder Registry is “Live”

Submitted by Amy Thompson

Earlier this month APHIS’ Plant Protection and Quarantine (PPQ) program launched a new stakeholder registry to provide timely and tailored plant-health information to interested stakeholders. Subscribing is easy and takes less than 5 minutes.

The new registry will allow PPQ to establish regular channels of communication and enhance relationships with its many stakeholders. To join the registry, click on the following link: [.https://public.govdelivery.com/accounts/USDAAPHIS/subscriber/new/](https://public.govdelivery.com/accounts/USDAAPHIS/subscriber/new/).

As part of the subscription process, you’ll have the opportunity to select whether you want to receive messages via email or text and identify topics, such as “plant pest program information” and “user fees”, that are of interest to you. Once you’ve successfully registered, you’ll receive an email confirmation identifying all of the topics you selected. When PPQ sends out stakeholder announcements, you’ll only receive information related to the topics you’ve chosen.

This new registry is intended to replace PPQ’s previous stakeholder registry. If you are a subscriber to the old registry, you must subscribe to the new service before the old registry is disabled on July 8, in order to continue receiving messages on topics of interest.

The new stakeholder registry is hosted by GovDelivery, a digital communications platform that is already in use by a number of Federal Departments, including the Food and Drug Administration, the Department of Homeland Security and USDA. PPQ is currently working to network its subscriber services so registrants can also link to topics from our Federal partners.

Coming in May

Master Gardener General Meeting

Community Building at the Fairgrounds

***Giant Pumpkins* presented by David Ray**

New publication available

Submitted by Amy Thompson

Title: Stress-related Conifer Dieback

Number: ID-477-W

Status: New

URL: https://mdc.itap.purdue.edu/item.asp?item_number=ID-477-W



GardenFest

2012

Friday, March 16th, 4 pm – 8 pm
 Saturday, March 17th, 9 am – 3 pm



Featuring our annual Pansy Sale
 6” potted pansies \$4.00 each

30+ vendors of lawn and garden products and services including:

Honey Products	Planters	Candles	Photo Cards	Gourd Birdhouses
Homemade Breads	Pottery	Orchids	Perennials	Bulbs & Combs
Herbal Soaps	Mulch	Herbs	Stained Glass	Metal Yard Art

Educational programs on Saturday:

- 10:00 am “Adding Herbs to Your Garden”
Joyce Miller, Huckleberry Hutch
- 11:00 am “Who Can Keep Honey Bees?”
Roger Graham, Graham’s Bee Works Inc.
- 12:00 pm “The Products of the Hive”
Roger Graham, Graham’s Bee Works Inc.
- 1:00 pm “Using Herbs in Skin and Body Care”
Carla Wright, Advanced Morgan County Master Gardener

**Question & Answer booth sponsored by the Morgan County Master Gardeners.
 Bring a soil sample for a free basic soil analysis while you wait.**

**Also free DNR tree seedlings and America the Beautiful wildflower seed packets
 while they last.**

Held at the National Guard Armory, 1900 Hospital Drive, Martinsville, IN 46151

*Sponsored by the Purdue Extension-
 Morgan County Master Gardeners Association*

Free Admission

**Food Service by
 Blustone Catering
 (Jean Adkisson)**



March 2012

FIRST CLASS MAIL

MONROE COUNTY MASTER GARDENER ASSOCIATION

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Cooperative Extension Service
3400 South Walnut Street
Bloomington, IN 47401



Helping others grow!

General Meeting on Tuesday, March 27 at 6:30 p.m.

Speaker: Gordon Elsberry, Herb and Flower Barn in Nashville

2012 MCMGA Board

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Volunteer possibilities

By Nancy White

One of our favorite volunteer sites is looking for new and returning helpers for the 2012 season. Master Gardeners have given many hours to this living history museum and its gardens. Wylie House, the historic home of the first President of IU, was featured in an article on seed saving recently in the local newspaper. Their annual heirloom seed sale will be March 3 at the House on East Second Street and is open to the public. Contact Wylie House outdoor interpreter, Sherry Wise, if you are interested in volunteering this season.