

Member News

We apologize for missing Dorothea Kinzer's name in the July *Roots and Shoots* list of regular workers as the Monroe County Fair Demo Garden this year. We thank Dorothea for her good work at the garden.



By
Nancy
White

Monroe County Fair Competition Winner will be named on September 27

The Master Gardener who gained the most award points for entries to Open Class horticulture competitions at this year's Monroe County Fair will receive a cash gift from our group at the September 27 general meeting. Are you the winner? Come to the meeting and see.

Is overwintering plants your specialty?

A speaker has been requested for an informal group of gardeners who reside in the Ellettsville area. They meet at the Endwright Center and would like someone who could discuss and answer questions on how to successfully overwinter plants of all types. The meeting is planned for Wednesday, October 5, 10:00 a.m. Hours spent in planning and giving this presentation qualify for volunteer hours. Contact Nancy White if you are interested in this opportunity.

Board election comes up in November

Election for officers for our Master Gardener board will be held at our November meeting. Offices to be filled are vice president for programs, director of records, journalist, and treasurer. If you are interested in being nominated for any of these offices, contact Amy Thompson or Nancy White. A nominating committee will present the slate in the November issue of *Roots and Shoots*.

Adventures in Gardening in Hendricks County

Hendricks County Master Gardeners will present *Adventures in Gardening*, an all-day continuing education session on Saturday, October 15, 8:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. at the Hendricks County 4H Fairgrounds, 1900 E. Main St., Danville, Indiana. Registration is \$35 and includes breakfast and lunch. Themes of the presentations are success with bulbs and living with insects. A special presenter is Brent Heath from *Brent and Becky's Bulbs* in Virginia. Registration forms are available from hendricksgardeners.com or call 317-745-9260.

Email address updates

Please include the following e-mail changes into your membership booklet:
Harriet Fulton hfulton@comcast.net

Nancy Miller nncmiller8@gmail.com

Renew your Master Gardener membership now

A form for renewing your membership for 2012 is now available online at our website and in mailed editions of September *Roots and Shoots*. Please take time to renew today. Dues are only \$10 per person and \$15 for a household. On the form is a listing of many of our yearly activities. You have an opportunity to experience a new volunteer possibility or return to your favorite sites. Be sure to help the committee chairs by marking your choices.

By
Nancy
White

To meet the timelines for our yearbook, *Folia and Flora*, we ask that membership renewals be returned by November 1, 2011. Contact information for renewals received after December 31 will not be listed in our membership book. Renew today!

Travel and learn in June 2012

Mike Dana and Rosie Lerner are planning a Purdue Master Gardener advanced training/study abroad opportunity on the Renaissance Gardens of Italy, June 7—18, 2012. Our adventure will focus primarily on gardens of historical significance from the Renaissance and Baroque periods in the regions of Lazio (Rome) and Tuscany (Florence), and will include lectures, study booklet, pre-test/post-test and course evaluation. Participants will be expected to share what they learn with others in their community upon their return.

By
Rosie
Lerner,
Purdue
Master
Gardener
State
Coordinator

The objective of the trip is to expand Master Gardeners' knowledge in fruit, vegetable, ornamental horticulture, landscape and garden design history.

This exciting course will include site visits to such notable gardens as Villa Medici at Castello; Villa Medici at Fiesole; Villa Gamberaia at Settignano; Boboli Garden at the Pitti Palace; Villa Garzoni; Sacro Bosco of the Villa Orsini; Villa Lante; Villa D'Este; Villa Gregoriana; Ninfa Garden; Vatican Garden; and Fattoria Lavacchio (organic farm and restaurant).

We are still working out hotel and restaurant details and thus costs, but we hope to have that info and registration materials available by sometime in September. We will post additional details as they become available.

If you have questions about the program, please contact us directly at rosie@purdue.edu [765-494-1311] or Mike Dana, Professor, Horticulture and Landscape Architecture at dana@purdue.edu [765-494-5923].

Tips for gardening if you suffer from allergies

For those of us with fall allergies, the coming maturity of ragweed and other bothersome weeds takes the fun out of being in the garden or even taking daily walks. What can we do? The Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America has some suggestions.

By
Nancy
White

1. Limit the size of your lawn. Plants with lightweight, wind-borne pollen such as turf grasses increase symptoms of allergies.
2. Know what plants are irritants to you and avoid them while they are in flower. If they are weeds, remove them early in the growing season where possible.
3. Close windows while cutting lawn grasses to keep pollen from coming inside the house.
4. Avoid touching eyes while gardening.
5. Wear long pants and long sleeved shirts when gardening. Remove them and launder as soon as possible after gardening. Store soiled garden clothes in a hamper or bag to contain pollen.
6. Wear a face mask when cutting grass or gardening.
7. When possible, garden on cloudy, damp days when pollens are less prevalent in the air.

Watch the local “allergy index” or “pollen count” and try to avoid outdoor activities on high pollen days.

Earn volunteer hours at the Farmers’ Market

As the weather begins to cool for the start of fall, we would like to reinvigorate our Farmers’ Market booth. This is a good opportunity for interns and others who need volunteer hours to conveniently gain them. The Farmers’ Market is open from 8:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. on Saturdays in downtown Bloomington adjacent to the Showers Building on Morton Street. We have all the necessary materials for set up and display stored at the Extension Office for easy pick-up.

By
Nancy
White

Most questions asked by the public involve knowledge we have gained in our Master Gardener training or continuing education sessions at meetings. Besides, it is a nice way to experience the Farmers’ Market and pass on the good news of Master Gardeners. If you would like to staff the booth during September or October, pick your date and contact Nancy White to get on the list. You will enjoy it.

Bringing houseplants back indoors

Many houseplants thrive during the long, bright summer days, especially when properly moved outdoors. But these plants may have some trouble adjusting to indoor conditions when colder weather strikes.

Many of our common indoor plants are native to the tropical or subtropical climates and cannot tolerate cold temperatures. Houseplants should be brought back inside before the outdoor temperature drops to 55 F. If days are warm but night temperatures are cold, you might consider bringing the plants indoors for the night and putting them back out in the morning.

Many plants will drop leaves in response to the lower light conditions inside most homes. Gradually exposing the plants to lower light intensity before permanently moving indoors should help lessen the shock. However, some leaf drop is unavoidable.

Plants will likely slow down their growth considerably, so less water and fertilizer will be needed. The best moisture meter is your finger. For most plants, you should allow the soil to dry slightly between waterings. Reduce your fertilizer applications or discontinue if plants seem to be in a resting period.

Be sure to inspect your plants closely for signs or symptoms of insect attack. Insects such as spider mites and aphids are very prolific outdoors and may increase their population rapidly once they are brought indoors. And, these pests may spread to other plants very quickly.

Often a sharp spray from the garden hose will remove insect pests from houseplant foliage. Insecticidal soaps also work well, particularly on soft-bodied insects such as aphids. Several treatments may be necessary to be sure that the pests are gone. Start checking your plants now, so that control measures will have time to work before you bring the plants indoors.

Compost your leaves this fall

Fall leaves also make great composting ingredients, especially when mixed with green trimmings and grass clippings. The smaller the pieces, the faster they'll break down, so shred or chop dry leaves before adding them to the compost pile. If you don't have green trimmings or grass clippings, add a source of nitrogen to the leaves, such as commercial fertilizer or dry cow, horse, sheep, or poultry manure. The nitrogen is needed by the microorganisms that break down the carbon in plant materials. Add a sprinkling of soil or finished compost to introduce a source of the microorganisms, and water just enough to moisten. The compost will heat up in the center as it breaks down. Stir the contents occasionally to add air and allow for uniform heating. Generally, the more often you turn the pile, the faster you'll get a finished product. Compost is ready to add back into the garden when it looks uniformly dark and crumbly.

By Rosie
Lerner,
Extension
Consumer
Horticulture
Specialist

By
Rosie
Lerner,
Extension
Consumer
Horticulturist

Miniature plants, beautiful blooms

Clematis for Small Spaces by Raymond J. Evison, Timber Press, 2007, 257 pp.



By
M
Susan
Osborne

British author, Raymond J Evison, renowned clematis breeder clearly states “Life for me is clematis.” He began a very early interest in gardening as a three-year-old and by age 24 he was the managing director of Treasures of Tenbury LTD. His current breeding and grafting operation of clematis is on the Isle of Guernsey where he raises over four million clematis a year. I had the most fortunate opportunity to hear him speak at an American Horticultural Society Symposium and was awed by his love and dedication to the clematis plant.

The purpose of *Clematis for Small Spaces* is to provide practical advice, guidance when gardening with clematis, and assistance in selection of species that meet individual needs. As you read through the book, however, you soon learn that this book offers so much more.

Clematis for Small Spaces consists of fifteen chapters from an Introduction to propagation with a zoning map, sales names and clematis collections, two glossaries (plant classification and horticultural terms), a bibliography, and plant index. Chapter titles include topics such as history, habitat, combining clematis with other plants, clematis for containers, borders, small gardens, indoors, sun, and shade. The author provides a select chapter on early-season, mid-season, and late-season flowering as well as cultivation, pruning, and propagation. Whew! That’s a lot of information.

Evison divided the plant descriptions into three chapters according to their flowering season. How clematis grow and produce flowers, their host plant, and how they can be grown are all related to the pruning requirement, which in turn determines their flowering period. For example, early-season-flowering clematis blooms on old wood, while midseason-flowering clematis blooms on both old and new wood, and then late-season blooms appears on new wood only. He comments in the introduction that many newcomers to gardening avoid growing clematis because of the pruning schemes can be confusing. To assist gardeners he began a breeding program aimed to create smaller-growing, longer-flowering clematis plants.

Clematis for Small Spaces demonstrates how clematis can work well in a variety of limited areas found both in suburban and city dweller gardens. He explains how smaller shorter-growing clematis can complement other plants in simple, hands-on terminology.

If you’ve ever read other clematis books by Raymond Evison (*Gardeners Guide to Growing Clematis*, *Clematis for Everyone*, and *Making Most of Clematis*) you will see that *Clematis for Small Spaces* is quite different. He aims to “enthuse gardeners, encourage keen enthusiasts, and to introduce new-comers” to growing clematis. I believe you will find he has done exactly that!

Web Castings

Some 'pre-digested' web offerings provided by local Master Gardeners and their friends.

In June, we discussed the ageing gardener (and the ageing garden, too) and that leads me to revisit the tasks of prioritizing our garden chores. Not that I've felt older, tired, busy, lazy, or anything myself, ahem!



By
Karen
Sparks

This first site takes a preventive approach, suggesting we observantly look for specific small things that, if they are caught early, will prevent loads of work later:

<http://www.suite101.com/content/landscape-garden-chores-a63938>

This month we have that long Labor Day weekend, maybe already passed for you if you are a couple days behind on your reading. Anyway, this gardener suggests priorities, and I especially like his last one: save time to put up a hammock and enjoy that, too!

[http://www.gardening-guy.com/stories/storyReader\\$67](http://www.gardening-guy.com/stories/storyReader$67)

This final site does list articles with chores for each season, but if you scroll down just a bit, you will get to where we are now:

<http://www.helpfulgardener.com/tips/>

We will take a look at putting the garden to bed later this fall, of course. For now I hope you are enjoying the fruits (and views) of all your labors so far and save some time for whatever your version of resting in a hammock is. Also, don't forget that I truly welcome your suggestions for topics, whether you have a fave website to go along with it, or not.

Reflowering poinsettias

If you saved last year's poinsettia plant, and you want it to flower in time for the holidays, now is the time for planning. To have your plant flowering in time for the holidays, you'll need to begin the dark treatments around the beginning of October. The treatments can be discontinued when the plants begin showing good color, usually by early December.

Poinsettias are sensitive to photoperiod—the length of the day. Actually, it's the number of hours of darkness that is most important. Poinsettias flower during short days, with long periods of darkness each night. In the home environment, even a dim lamp is enough to delay the initiation of flower buds.

To get your poinsettia to re-flower, place the plant in complete darkness for 15 hours each day, for instance, between 5 p.m. and 8 a.m. the next morning. A dark closet that is not frequently used is ideal. Any interruption of the dark period, including merely opening the closet door, can result in delayed flowering.

During the day, the plant should be given a sunny location. Water as needed to allow a slight drying of the soil between applications. A fertilizer that is formulated for blooming houseplants is also helpful; follow the label recommendations for rates and frequency.

By Rosie
Lerner,
Extension
Consumer
Horticulturist

Force bulbs for indoor color

Now's the time to stock up on the spring-flowering bulbs that will provide a burst of color just when we need a lift from the winter doldrums. But you don't have to wait until spring to enjoy these blooms if you prepare a few for forcing indoors. In fact, you can have a bouquet in time to decorate for the holidays.

By
Rosie
Lerner,
Extension
Consumer
Horticulture
Specialist

Hardy bulbs such as tulips, daffodils, hyacinths and crocus require a cold period of 10 to 13 weeks to cause the bulbs to initiate flowers and establish roots. Pot the bulbs in a container that has drainage holes at the bottom. You can place that pot inside a more decorative pot at forcing time if desired, but it is critical that excess water have a way to drain. Specific planting directions vary with the type of bulb, as follows:

Tulips: Place three bulbs in a 5-inch pot, with the flattened side of the bulb toward the wall of the pot (so the large, floppy leaf will grow towards the outside of the plant). Allow the tips of the bulbs to show above the soil.

Hyacinths: Place three to four bulbs in a 7-inch pot or one bulb in a 4-inch pot. Allow the bulb tips to show above the soil.

Daffodils: Place three or four bulbs in a 7-inch pot, allowing half of the bulb to show above the soil.

Crocus, Snowdrops and Grape Hyacinth: Place five to seven bulbs in a 7-inch pot, 1 inch below the soil surface.

Moisten the soil and place the potted bulbs in cold storage (40-50 degrees Fahrenheit) for 10 to 13 weeks (The length of chilling depends on the type of bulb. Thirteen weeks is adequate for just about all types.) If you don't have enough space in the refrigerator to accommodate your bulbs, you could chill them in an outdoor trench. Dig a pit about 15 inches deep and line the bottom and sides with chopped leaves, straw or other loose mulching material to allow for easier digging when the soil is frozen. Place the pots in the trench and then cover with additional mulch. Keep in mind that outdoor temperatures may not yet be cool enough to get them ready in time for the holidays. If timing is critical, check your garden center or mail-order supplier for pre-cooled bulbs.

After the chilling period, bring the pots indoors, moisten if needed and place at room temperature in a bright location. The bulbs will likely have produced yellowish sprouts, which will turn green upon exposure to light. Blooms should appear within two to three weeks. Keep the plants in a cool location, away from heat vents and direct sunshine, to prolong their beauty.

It's usually best to discard hardy bulbs after forcing since their food reserves are used up. But, if you just can't make yourself throw them away, plant them outdoors after the blooms fade. Remove the pots, and plant where the foliage will receive maximum sunshine to help rebuild the bulb's food reserves. It may take a couple of years or more for the bulbs to rebuild enough energy to put on a good show.

Tender perennials need indoor protection

Most gardeners think about planting bulbs this time of year rather than digging them up. But some flowering perennials are not hardy enough for our climate and must be lifted from the soil and their bulbs, roots or other underground structures stored indoors over winter. The most common garden plants in this category include gladiolus, caladium, tuberous begonias, canna and dahlia. Although these plants are all considered tender, each is best handled a bit differently for winter storage.

By
Rosie
Lerner,
Extension
Consumer
Horticulture
Specialist

Caladiums, often called elephant ears, are quite sensitive to cold temperatures, so their tubers, (like small potatoes) should be dug just before frost. Place the tubers in a warm location for 7-10 days to remove surface moisture. To prevent excessive drying in storage, pack the tubers between layers of dry vermiculite, peat moss, sawdust or similar material in a strong box. The optimum storage temperature for caladiums is 60° F.

Tuberous begonias should also be dug just before frost. Cut the tops back to two inches and air dry the roots for two to three weeks in a warm location. Then, store in boxes, as you would caladiums, but decrease the temperature to about 45-50° F.

Dahlias should be cut back to about 3-4 inches after the first light frost. Then, carefully lift the plants, leaving as much soil attached as possible to prevent breaking the fleshy roots. Because they are so susceptible to drying, dahlia roots should be air-dried for only a few hours or so. Then, pack in boxes, as you would caladiums, and store at 35-40° F.

Gladiolus produces underground, compressed-stem structures called corms, which should be dug when the foliage just begins to fade, usually after a frost. Use a spading fork to carefully lift the plants and save any of the little miniature corms (called cormels). These cormels will grow larger, if planted next year, and eventually reach a size that will support flowers as well as foliage.

The corms should be cured before storing to help prevent disease from developing. Cure the corms for two to four weeks in a warm (about 75-80° F) room where air can circulate around the corms. Once cured, the corms should be stored dry in a cold, but non-freezing, location, about 35-40° F. Old nylon stockings or onion bags hung from the wall allow good air circulation throughout storage.

Canna need not be dug until after a hard frost. Cut the tops back to four inches, lift with a spading fork and air dry in a warm spot for one to two weeks. Canna roots do not require covering; they can simply be placed in shallow boxes. The roots are best stored at 45-50° F.

Glimpses of the 2011 Monroe County Fair



Sherry Wise, Wylie House Museum, speaks to John Behringer following her seed saving garden chat.



Di Dingman makes a last minute check on her flowers before entering her arrangement.



Our booth at the Fair



Diann Lock's Grand Champion potted plant



Open Class Registration table, left to right, Amy Thompson, Lloyd Minnick, Nancy Fee, Kay Cunningham, and Dot Owen with Mary Ackerman standing behind the table



An entry in Most Unusual potted plant—note the plant creates the figure's hair

Photographs by Nancy White

Volunteer opportunities compiled by Nancy White

Location	Time	Jobs	Contact
Hilltop Garden and Nature Center	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
T. C. Steele SHS	seasonal	various	Davie Kean, 988-2785
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 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
Cheryl's Garden at Karst Farm Park	summer 2010	design and maintain	Nancy Fee, 332-1940

Please wear your name badge when volunteering.

Remember to report 2010/2011 hours only at <http://www.four-h.purdue.edu/mg/>.

September 2011

Cooperative Extension Service
3400 South Walnut Street
Bloomington, IN 47401

FIRST CLASS MAIL
RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED



Our September 27 general meeting at the extension office at 6:30 p.m. is one you won't want to miss! See page 1.

2011 MCMGA Board

President: Nancy White
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Vice President—Programs: Evelyn Harrell
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Fair Board Representative: Preston Gwinn
812-876-2999 pgwinn@bluemarble.net

Extension Educator: Amy Thompson
812-349-2575 afthompson@purdue.edu

Hours Report: <http://www.four-h.purdue.edu/mg/>

Overwintering herbs

There are several approaches to overwintering herbs. One easy method is to dig up a plant, or a portion of one, and pot it up. Many herbs can be propagated by cuttings for rooting indoors. Herbs can be grown indoors, but will need a well-lit location, especially when they are first brought inside. Indoors, a sunny southern exposure would be ideal. Most herbs thrive in infertile soil and do not require extra fertilizer in the garden. However, if planted in one of the soil-less potting mixtures commonly used today, some fertilizer may be necessary. A balanced, low-analysis fertilizer such as 5-10-5 or 6-10-4 should be sufficient. Read the product label for application specifics.

By Rosie Lerner,
Consumer Horticulture Extension Specialist