



GARDEN THYME

April 1, 2015

<https://extension.purdue.edu/Porter>

Vol. 1, Issue 4



LYNDSAY'S VINE

By Lyndsay Ploehn, Agriculture & Natural Resource Extension Educator

Every year I am asked by Master Gardener Interns, "What volunteer or Education opportunities are available to us in Porter County?" Now I have a good answer. This May we are going to start a new tradition for our Master Gardeners. **We are hosting our first Volunteer Fair at the Expo!**

The purpose of the Master Gardener Training Program is to teach future Master Gardeners about the basics of horticulture, get them excited about learning more, and equip them to share their knowledge with their community. We are looking for current qualifying volunteer projects throughout Porter County to set up a booth display and recruit volunteers. We have 26 fresh interns ready to hit the ground running when they graduate from the course on May 11. Help us introduce them to the world of horticulture community involvement. No project is too small or too large to advertise. If you need volunteers, this is the place to be. Please contact the Extension Office at 219-465-3555 or lploehn@purdue.edu for details about the day, and if you are interested in setting up a booth or just want to attend. It is open to all Porter County Master Gardeners.

When: Saturday, May 30, 2015, from 9 a.m. to 11 a.m.

Where: Expo East, north entrance, upstairs room

Light refreshments will be served. Please wear your name badge and Master Gardener shirt and be ready to network!



LYNDSAY'S VINE	1
MR. MC GREGOR'S GARDEN	2
JUST NAME IT	3
VOLUNTEER SPOT	4
FROM MY GARDEN	5
ReciBEEs FROM OUR GARDENERS	6
THE TOOL SHED	7
MEET A MASTER GARDENER	8
GARDEN WANDERER	9
OPPORTUNITIES	10



MR. MC GREGOR'S GARDEN

Covered Raised Garden Beds

By Marcia Carson

April! Time to take action on those plans we've been thinking about all winter! Covenants prevent me from using most types of fencing to keep deer and rabbits away, but I helped build an unobtrusive covered raised bed in San Diego this winter that I'm going to build at home. I'm not going to use raised beds for everything, just those that Bambi and Peter Rabbit seem to prefer!



Detailed instructions for building raised beds can be found everywhere on the Internet, including plans for plantings. I'll focus on keeping out critters! Our bed was 4 feet wide, 8 feet long and 12 inches deep.

Once you have the bed built, you will need:

- Six feet of 1-inch PVC pipe (cut into 12-inch pieces)
- Three 10-foot-long, one-half inch PVC pipes
- Twelve 1-inch galvanized tube straps (semicircular brackets) to secure the 1-inch PVC which will anchor the arches
- 42 feet of 4-foot wide chicken wire
- Staples and zip ties

1. Build the box!
2. Attach a 12-inch piece of PVC inside each corner and in the center of the 8-foot sides with the tube straps.
3. Before filling the box with soil, lay hardware cloth or chicken wire on the bottom and staple it to the sides. This keeps any burrowing animals from entering the raised bed.
4. Attach chicken wire on the arched ends of the bed, stapling it to the wood on the bottom, wrapping it around the curved PVC, using zip ties every eight to 10 inches to attach it to the curved PVC.
5. Cut two 12-foot pieces of 4-foot wide chicken wire. Fold both ends back about 4 inches. Attach one piece with zip ties to the top (center) of each arch. Pull the folded ends down and hook over nails that have been placed about 4 inches down on the wooden sides. The chicken wire can be easily lifted from either side to work inside the bed.

Did you notice the bucket in the photos? A great idea for keeping tomatoes (and other veggies) watered!



- Use a 5-gallon bucket and drill three one-quarter-inch holes at 12:00, 4:00 and 8:00 just above the bottom of the bucket.
- Drill a second set of holes about 10 inches above the others.
- Bury the bottom of the bucket about 2 inches into the soil.

(Continued on Page 3) ➔



MR. MC GREGOR'S GARDEN

(Continued from Page 2)

- Plant a tomato seedling about 6 inches away from the bucket, in line with the holes.
- Place about 4 inches of compost in the bucket, and fill the bucket with water.
- The plants will be watered close to the ground, and water will seep out under the ground, feeding the roots.
- Fill the bucket 2 or 3 times per week for optimal watering!



I can't wait to get started preparing my covered beds! Hopefully this year I will be able to harvest beans, beets, and salad greens before the critters get to them!



JUST NAME IT

Can You Identify This Winter Annual?

By Beverly Thevenin

Sometimes it is a pleasant surprise when a plant suddenly appears in the garden, such as the lovely pink columbine a passing bird planted. Other times the interloper turns out to be an unwanted guest.

This innocuous looking plant has green leaves at the bottom that slowly turn to purple at the top, before sprouting purple flowers. Blooming in early spring, it's a treat for any bees that venture out too early, but a weed to be pulled before you plant your vegetables.



Native to Europe and Asia, the plant is considered invasive here. It may be a short-lived winter annual, but the seeds can germinate at almost any time of the year.

It has spread throughout my garden (above) by seeds and runners. While looking for a way to eradicate it, I discovered the leaves are edible in salads or stir-fries in the spring. As the saying goes, "If you can beat 'em, eat 'em." Can you name it? Click [here](#) for the answer.



VOLUNTEER SPOT

Purdue Extension (Porter County) Hotline

By Beverly Thevenin

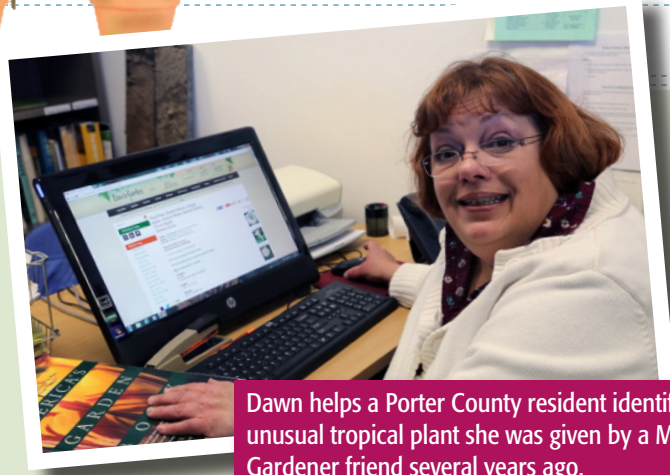
The Master Gardener class contains a wealth of information, but that is only the beginning of the journey. There is still so much to learn. One of the best ways to expand your knowledge base is to share the information already absorbed with someone else. The Porter County’s Purdue Extension Hotline provides ample opportunity to dig deeper into topics ranging from an Aphids infestation to a ZZ plant’s light requirements.

Master Gardeners John Nash (L) and Dawn Curry (R) research a question on peach tree varieties that Extension Program Manager, Angel Leuck (M), fielded for them.



While working the Hotline, you will not be alone. There are generally two Master Gardeners working together. John Nash is at the office on Tuesday and Thursday and is a great resource for new members. John has been working the Hotline since his class in 2012 and finds he learns something new regularly. “Every time you think you have it all, you’re in for an unpleasant surprise,” John said with a chuckle. He has received most of his Gold level hours from the Hotline and making house calls.

Master Gardener Dawn Curry started working the Hotline right after graduating last year as well. “Let’s jump right in,”



Dawn helps a Porter County resident identify the unusual tropical plant she was given by a Master Gardener friend several years ago.

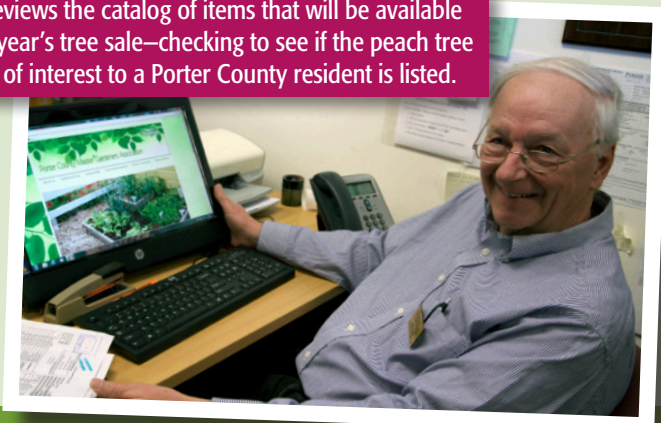
Dawn told herself and is very glad she did. Although it can seem intimidating at first, she said John and Lyndsay were there to run things by. “I like to talk things through with John. He’s good at explaining things.”

Dawn said usually the questions are seasonal issues. So once she got the answer for one client, she could share it with the rest. But you do get a nice variety of topics. “Some of the older people seem to just want to have someone to chat to, just to verify they are doing the right thing,” Dawn said.

Lots of great resources are available at the office, including your own computer cubicle, book resources, and access to Lyndsay right around the corner.

If you are interested in digging deeper, why not come to the extension office for Hotline training on April 9 from 10 a.m. – 11 a.m. or April 16 from 2 p.m. – 3 p.m. From April to Oct., the phones are open from 8:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday, ample time to earn some volunteer and education hours.

John reviews the catalog of items that will be available at this year’s tree sale—checking to see if the peach tree variety of interest to a Porter County resident is listed.





FROM MY GARDEN

You Never Know What You'll Find

By Suzanna Tudor

When you're out and about at the gardening centers, be on the lookout for a versatile little tree I picked up a couple of years ago at a nursery in Michigan, a Eustis Limequat. Some of you have seen it. I brought it to our last Master Gardener meeting for "show and share" or "show and flaunt" someone said.



As a young girl, I was always impressed with a large, potted lemon tree growing in our local bank's foyer. Especially amazing were the yellow lemons clinging to its branches—in the middle of our cold, harsh Michigan winters. I'm thrilled to say that I've been able to capture a bit of that magic, and you can too.

During a trip to Weesies Brothers Nursery in Manistee, Michigan, I spied a small tree labeled Eustis Limequat. "This is a hybrid between a West Indian (Key) lime *Citrus aurantiifolia* and Marumi kumquat *Fortunella*.

The fruit is juicy and a little acidic with a small amount of seeds. It can be substituted for either a lime or a lemon," the label stated. Intrigued, of course I had to have it.



Botanically known as *Citrus x floridana*, Limequats were developed by W. T. Swingle of the U.S. Dept. of Agriculture in Florida in 1909; it was named Eustis after the Florida town where it was developed. This plant likes full sunshine and protection from strong winds. My new plant was transplanted into a 10-inch diameter pot with potting soil. Osmocote was sprinkled on the soil, and rain water added when dry. It seemed to thrive on the porch, where it received full sun but was semi protected from the winds by porch railings. Many blossoms arrived followed by small green fruit. It's a self-pollinator. When temperatures go below 40 degrees Fahrenheit, then it needs to come inside for the winter. At present it's 27 x 30 inches and resides in an east window. The fruit turns yellow and holds tightly to branches until spring.

Not only does the Limequat add spectacular color and greenery in dreary winter as a decorative houseplant, but the edible fruit has multiple uses. Slices can jazz up any glass of water. And whenever you need lemon or lime juice for chicken, fish, salads, desserts, jellies, jams, or garnish, you have a fresh supply. This is a fun and hardy addition to your kitchen garden.

You just never know what little gems you'll find at the gardening centers this spring.



ReciBEEs From Our Gardeners

Rhubarb Streusel

Article by Shelli Henry / Recipe and Photo by Marcia Carson

Yee-ow, you pucker up just thinking about it! My neighbor loves it, and my brother hates it. People who move to Florida cry because they can't grow it, while gardeners in Washington can't give enough of it away.

Rhubarb might be a favorite pie plant, but it suffers from an identity crisis. Is it a fruit? or a vegetable? or an ornamental plant? The answer is yes. It's a very ornamental vegetable that is usually prepared and eaten much like a fruit.

No matter how experts categorize it, I think the rhubarb plant (*Rheum rhubarbarum*) is truly beautiful. A member of the buckwheat family, rhubarb has big, heart-shaped, crinkled leaves and red-tinted stalks. Rhubarb is showy enough to qualify for a top spot in a display garden and it's often listed in catalogs as a must-have landscape plant. For the gardener looking for an easy-to-grow food plant, rhubarb tops the list. For a tasty rhubarb treat, here is a recipe from Marcia Carson's sister-in-law, master baker Mary Lou Hardesty.

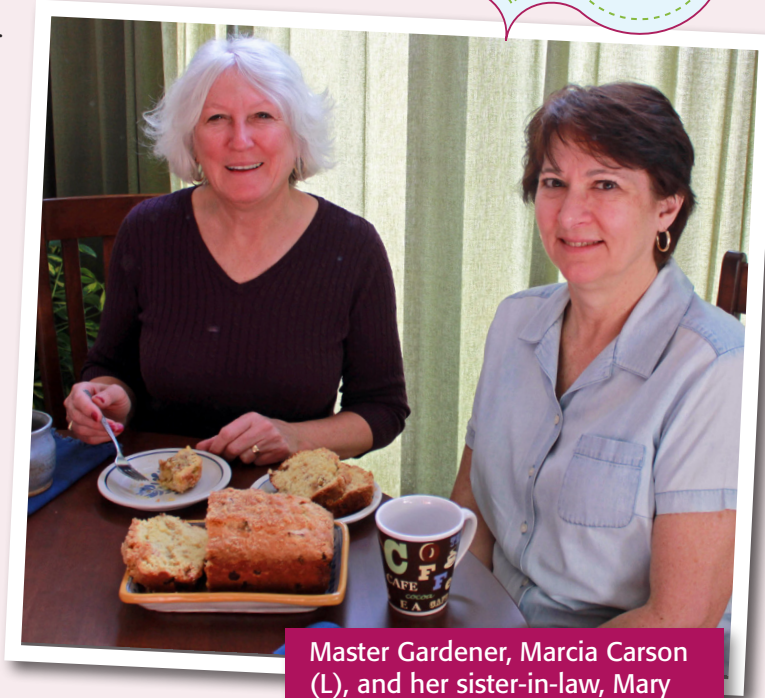
Preheat oven to 350°. Grease and flour an 8x4-inch loaf pan.

Bread

- 1 cup sugar
- 1/2 cup softened butter
- 1/3 cup orange juice
- 2 eggs
- 2 cups all-purpose flour
- 1 tsp baking powder
- 1/4 tsp baking soda
- 1/4 tsp salt
- 1-1/2 cups sliced fresh rhubarb (can use frozen, thaw and pat dry)



Combine sugar and butter in large bowl. Beat at medium speed, scraping bowl often, until creamy. Add orange juice and eggs, beat at low speed just until mixed. (Mixture will look slightly curdled.) Stir in flour, baking powder, baking soda and salt by hand just until moistened. Gently stir in rhubarb. Set aside.



Master Gardener, Marcia Carson (L), and her sister-in-law, Mary Lou Hardesty (R), relax and enjoy delicious Rhubarb Streusel!

Streusel

- 2 Tbs sugar
- 2 Tbs firmly packed brown sugar
- 1 Tbs all-purpose flour
- 1 Tbs melted butter
- 1-1/2 tsp ground cinnamon

Combine all streusel ingredients in small bowl; stir until mixture resembles coarse crumbs.

Spread half of the batter into prepared pan. Spoon half of the streusel mixture over the batter and gently press into the batter. Spread the remaining batter in the pan; top with remaining streusel. Press streusel into batter.

Bake 65-70 minutes or until toothpick inserted in center comes out clean. Cool 10 minutes; remove from pan.

*This is a great make-ahead bread, and can be refrigerated or frozen.



THE TOOL SHED

A Few of Our Favorite Things

By Suzanna Tudor

Thoughts began to swirl trying to think of a favorite gardening tool. And that's the trouble. We don't have just one. What do I use the most? What do others consider their go-to implement of choice?

My first thought was my trusty Mantis Tiller. Especially, as we enter the garden prep period. It's lightweight (20 lbs.), easily transportable, quick starting, and gives even the toughest Porter County clay a work over. As their advertisement boasts, "From busting tough sod, to weeding around delicate plants...even digging a planting hole...the Mantis Tiller does it all!" With a change of blades, it can also serve as an edger. I first heard about this turf star at Master Gardener meetings in 2002. Purchased in 2003, this treasure is still going strong. I now pass this tidbit on to new MGs. What's next on the go-to tool choice list?



I'd have to say my pointed, long-handled shovel is number one in my tool arsenal. Yes, plain Jane, but oh so needed. It has to be pointed to cut through stubborn soil, dig up plants or holes to place them in—and long-handled to make it easier on the back. A good shovel should have a lip on the top of the blade to hold your foot when bearing down while digging.

And whatever you do, don't skimp on quality when purchasing your tools. "Look for tried and true materials such as thick carbon or stainless steel tool bodies and Ash tool handles," according to Garden Tools Company. Constantly replacing cheap tools and having them fail right in the middle of a project is not the gardening experience you're after.

What are other tool picks? With protecting your hands in mind, garden writer and speaker, Jean Starr says she has Felco ergonomic pruners on her wish list. Jean also likes the ergonomic Fiskars bypass pruners or anything made by Silky Saw and the Radius series.

Some favorite tools come serendipitously. Master Gardener Beverly Ripley noticed an oscillating hoe languishing on her garage floor.



She decided to use it one day. Resembling its shape, it is also referred as a stirrup or hula hoe. This versatile workhorse's blade is sharpened on both sides and attached to the handle with a hinge. As you move the blade back and forth, it cuts as you push and pull, weeding and loosening the soil.

We gardeners continually war against weeds, so I'll close with two, fierce weed-eating favorites, the Japanese Hori-Hori knife and CobraHead.

Many of us purchased the CobraHead a few years ago and love how its sharp, steel fingernail gets at the most stubborn weeds with precision. Left or right-handed, it doesn't matter. The multi-task Japanese Hori-Hori knife weeds and also cuts, digs, and measures. Even your toughest hosta or daylily clump to separate is no match for its sharp, serrated blade.

So there you have a few of our favorite things. What are some of yours?





MEET A MASTER GARDENER

Linda Mapes Helps Valpo Grow

By Kristine Sandrick



Master Gardener Linda Mapes coordinates the PCMG plot in the Valpo community garden.

On a cold, snowy day in late February, Master Gardener Linda Mapes had warm thoughts about starting this year's community garden, located in Foundation Meadows in Valparaiso. Linda coordinates the Master Gardener plots and is a resource to the community gardeners who work the other 40-plus plots.

"We already have the seeds ... and I'm looking forward to seeing what we need to augment the soil and get started," she said about the PCMG plot.

Lots to Learn

After retiring as a media specialist from Duneland School Corp., Linda enrolled in the Master Gardener classes in 2007.

"I always wanted to be a Master Gardener but couldn't fit it into my schedule. The information was overwhelming with all we were exposed to...all we had to learn, and I'm still learning."

Plots to Turn

Retirement also afforded Linda the opportunity to get involved with Valparaiso's Fit City Connection—a diverse group that meets monthly to help make the city better.

"The community garden is part of that," she said. "They asked the Porter County Master Gardeners to partner with the Parks Department to raise vegetables and donate them to the food pantries."

The city rototills the land then brings mounds of topsoil and mulch. Linda said community gardeners, working 42 plots, have donated nearly 1,000 pounds of vegetables to food pantries in each of the last two years.

"I feel like I am helping people that need help in a healthy way," Linda said. "I enjoy organizing the volunteers, especially when our great group follows through and does the work when scheduled. It is personally rewarding to me."

Harlan and Jennifer Bjornstad grow flowers and vegetables in their community garden plot in Valparaiso. (Photo by Linda Mapes.)





GARDEN WANDERER

Monticello - Charlottesville, Virginia

By Lyndsay Ploehn,

Agriculture & Natural Resource Extension Educator



Photo Credit: ©Karl Gercens

“No occupation is so delightful to me as the culture of the earth, and no culture comparable to that of the garden...But though an old man, I am but a young gardener.” *Thomas Jefferson*

In this issue of Garden Thyme we are ringing in spring with vegetable gardening. Immediately, Thomas Jefferson’s garden, Monticello, came to mind. I have yet to actually visit this garden, but it is high on my list of gardens to see. Thomas Jefferson, our third President, was a plant scientist and experimenter in his spare time. At Monticello he carved out a 1,000-foot by 80-foot vegetable garden on the south terrace. He experimented with over 330 varieties of vegetables and 170 varieties of fruit. Many were considered exotic to America in the late 1700s. Today, the garden has been restored to resemble much of what it would have looked like from 1807 to 1814. As you can imagine, most of the garden practices have also been updated to include the use of mechanical equipment.

Peter Hatch is the Director of Gardens at Monticello, and has recently written a book about Jefferson’s garden and its history called *A Rich Spot of Earth*. Working on Jefferson’s estate is so special because Thomas was such an avid record keeper. He has notes about every variety he grew, his successes, and his many failures. In Hatch’s book he points out “The use of the word ‘failed’ is repeated throughout [Jefferson’s] garden book, and one wonders if any gardener has written about failure as much as Thomas Jefferson. He once also wrote that if he failed 99 times out of 100, that one success was worth the 99 failures.” (Smith, 2012) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hdUIevoomYk>

The vegetable garden is meticulously tended by full-time staff. It is planted in spring, summer, and fall with an array of unique varieties. When it is time to harvest, the produce is used for events, such as the Saturdays in the Garden series, or distributed to employees. Most of the plants are left to set seed, which is collected at the end of the growing season. The seeds are saved for the following year, and any remaining seeds are packaged and sold in the gift shop.

Plan your trip today! [Virginia’s Historic Garden Week](#) is April 18 through April 25, 2015. More than 250 of Virginia’s beautiful gardens, homes, and historic landmarks are open to the public. At Monticello you will be welcomed by spring blooming fruit trees, wildflowers and woodland native plants. Take this opportunity to explore one of our nation’s beloved historic landmark, and learn a few take home tricks from Jefferson’s outdoor laboratory.



Photo Credit: ©Karl Gercens

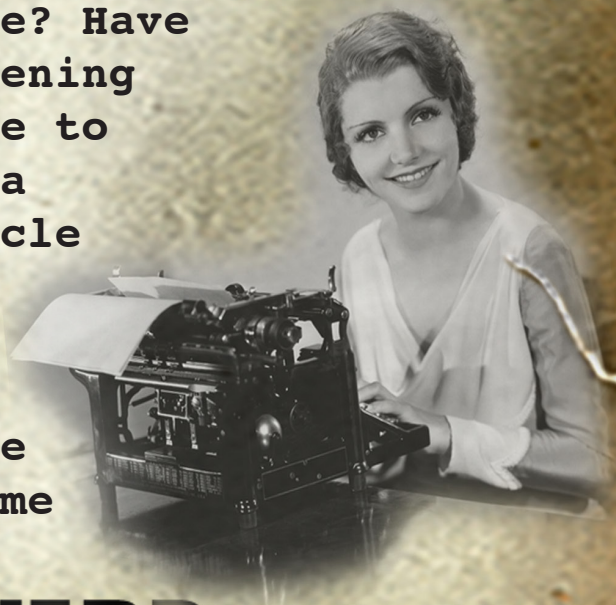


WANTED

Master Gardener Guest Columnists

Do you like to write? Have an interesting gardening topic you would like to share? Please send a summary of the article to Bev Thevenin, bat_52@yahoo.com.

Once the idea is approved, we'll give you a month lead time to complete it.



REWARD VOLUNTEER HOURS



OPPORTUNITIES

Volunteer / Educational

To publish volunteer or education opportunities in our newsletter, please contact nrosene@icloud.com.

PURDUE EXTENSION | **LOCAL FACES**
COUNTLESS CONNECTIONS

VALPARAISO UNIVERSITY LAW

Local Food PROGRAM

When: Friday, April 24, 9:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m. CST
Where: Valparaiso University Law School
656 S. Greenwich Street, Wesemann Hall, Valparaiso, IN 46383
Cost: \$10 (includes beverages and lunch)
RSVP by Apr. 17 to Purdue Extension-Porter County at 219-465-3555 or via email at amleuck@purdue.edu

PORTER COUNTY EXTENSION BOARD TREE SALE

Porter County Fairgrounds 4-H Building
April 4, Setup Crew: 5 a.m. - 7 a.m. / Sales: 7 a.m. - 11 a.m.
Contact: Kathy VanArsdel, vanjulo@aol.com

FIRST ANNUAL PCMG VOLUNTEER FAIR

Porter County Fairgrounds, Expo East, North Entrance
May 30, 9 a.m. - 11 a.m.
Contact Greg Rater, grater@arbormetricssolutions.com, if you have an event or activity you'd like to showcase at the fair

VALPARAISO PARKS DEPARTMENT TRANSPLANTING

Valparaiso Parks Department Greenhouses
1250 Harrison Boulevard
April 2 - 3 and April 6 - 7
8 a.m. for as long as you'd like to volunteer!
Contact: Horticulture office at (219) 531-4678

PCMG COMMUNITY GARDEN PLOT

Foundation Meadows Park
3210 N Campbell Street
Volunteers needed for Spring, Summer, Fall 2015
Sign-up begins Wednesday, April 8, at the PCMG Meeting
Contact: Linda Mapes, ljrmapes@comcast.net

EARLY REGISTRATION ENDS APRIL 1!!!

2015 PURDUE MASTER GARDENER STATE CONFERENCE

June 4 - 6
For information / mailing list,
email: mgconf2015@twc.com

CHESTERTON ART CENTER

Master Gardener needed to help design new landscaping at the Chesterton Art Center
Contact: Mark Montgomery (219) 728-6020 with a follow-up email to Master Gardener Janet Magnuson, njmag@hotmail.com

JACOB'S LADDER

MG Speaker/Project Leader needed for group with special needs, preschool to 1st grade level
June or July TBD
8:30 a.m. to 11:00 a.m.
Contact: Sandra Cruz at (219) 730-6777

HEBRON JUNIOR GIRL SCOUTS

MG Advisor needed to assist the scouts in working towards their gardening and flower badges
Hebron United Methodist Church
April 13 or April 27 (coaching) and May 11 (planting)
3:30 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. (coaching) / all day (planting)
Contact: Chris Schrey, christine.schrey@yahoo.com

PCMG SPRING EDUCATIONAL BUS ADVENTURE

Spring Garden Festival, Plant Sale and More!
Fernwood Botanical Garden, Niles, Michigan
Bus leaves on Saturday, May 2, 8:30 a.m., from the Jewel parking lot, Chesterton, returning at 5 p.m.
\$20 Members / \$25 Guests (includes transport and admission)
Contact: Kathy Ruble, kathyruble@yahoo.com

PURDUE EXTENSION | **LOCAL FACES**
COUNTLESS CONNECTIONS

Equal Opportunity Statement

It is the policy of the Purdue University Cooperative Extension Service that all persons have equal opportunity and access to its educational programs, services, activities, and facilities without regard to race, religion, color, sex, age, national origin or ancestry, marital status, parental status, sexual orientation, disability or status as a veteran. Purdue University is an Affirmative Action institution. This material may be available in alternative formats.



GARDEN WALK 2015

Saturday
June 27, 2015
9 A.M. to 4 P.M. CDT

ADMISSION
\$6.00 in Advance
\$8.00 Day of Walk
Children Under 12 Free

PORTER COUNTY MASTER GARDENERS ASSOCIATION

THE PORTER COUNTY MASTER GARDENERS NEWSLETTER COMMITTEE

Editors, Writers, Review, Proofreading, and Photos: Marcia Carson, Shelli Henry, Lyndsay Ploehn, Kristine Sandrick, Beverly Thevenin, Suzanna Tudor
Design, Photography, and Production: Angel Leuck, Nancy Rosene