



GARDEN THYME

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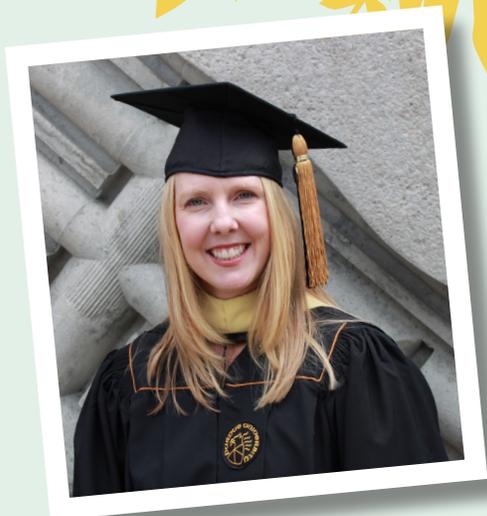
LYNDSAY'S VINE

By Lyndsay Ploehn, Agriculture & Natural Resource Extension Educator

On August 8th, I received my diploma at the summer commencement ceremony, completing my graduate studies at Purdue University! Graduation was an emotional time for me because I could finally take a breath and reflect on where I have come these past six years.

My career began with Purdue Extension in February of 2010 as an Associate Extension Educator. My first year involved getting acquainted with a new town, new community, and learning the ropes of a new job. In year two, I enrolled in fall classes at Purdue. My plan was to take one class at a time via distance learning or at Purdue North Central with only a few classes at the main Purdue campus. Children were planned upon completion of my Master's degree. Well, plans change. I had my first baby, Kenyon, at the end of my first semester of graduate school--one week after finals. For the second semester studies, I juggled a newborn while taking two online classes. I quickly realized the joys and challenges of parenting while working and attending school.

In my second year of school, third year of work, it became more difficult to find available classes to suit my work schedule. From year three to five, I had to drive to Purdue's main campus for most of my classes each week. Skype technology enabled me to complete a few requirements with the live class, but mostly I felt like I was living in my car. During 2013, I became pregnant with baby number two. Major health issues put me on home health care for three months during my second trimester, forcing me to withdraw from fall classes. However, in the spring of 2014 I was able to return to classes and in February gave birth to a healthy baby boy, Skylar. The remaining two years of graduate



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studies included two classes a semester and my graduate project. For my project I worked with the State Master Gardener Coordinator, Rosie Lerner, Dr. Allen Talbert, and Dr. Kathryn Orvis to create a pool of test questions for the

Master Gardener Training Program final exam. The questions in the pool were tested for validity and test construction for an open-book exam. I went to Grant, Monroe, and Porter



Counties in the spring of 2015 to administer the final exams I had created in order to test the question validity. The question pool consisted of 120 questions, broken down into two, separate exams of 60 questions. In July of this year, I presented my findings. A full report of my findings will be available soon.

With graduate course work completed, I have moved up to a full Extension Educator. Programming needs and making an impact in my community will receive renewed focus. I also plan to spend more quality time with my family and enjoy these “little” years. My babies are growing up too quickly! Kenyon is now 3 ½, and Skylar is 1 ½. They both love playing outside, digging in the dirt, helping with the garden, and attending meetings and work with mommy when they can. Whenever we see someone I know at the store or just out and about, Kenyon asks if they are one of my Master Gardeners!

I want to say thank you to all of the Master Gardeners who have seen me through this journey. Everyone has been so kind and welcoming, and I am happy to be a part of your

community. Purdue Extension is a family of its own and Master Gardeners are a piece of that family. It is such a wonderful feeling to be able to wake up each day thankful for my faith, my family, my career, and the community in which I live. 🌻

JUST NAME IT

Friend or Foe?

By Suzanna Tudor

Yes, you’ve probably seen them before. With its beguiling true blue flower, you wonder is it friend or foe? I inherited them. My garden would have hundreds if I let them go, so I tend to call it foe. It comes up everywhere.



This wily, summer annual can sprawl along the ground or stand several feet upright, using other plants as props, like it’s doing in the picture below peeking out atop my peonies. According to Purdue Extension Weed Science

publication, this mystery plant is a member of the spiderwort family, having alternative lanceolate leaves that are two to four inches long, and the base of the leaves clasp each stem. “The flowers consist of three petals and three sepals, two larger petals above and one smaller below. The above two petals are blue and the one petal below appears faded blue or white.”

One interesting aspect, it’s edible. After pulling it up, you could toss it in with your salad. Click [here](#) for the answer! 🌻





BLOOMIN' WINNERS

at Open Class Flower Show

By Maureen Phillips



The Open Class Flower Show is a highlight of the Porter County Fair. Ribbons and prize money are awarded for first (\$5), second (\$4), third (\$3), and honorable mention entries. This year \$1,902 in prize money was awarded, of which 20 percent went to PCMGA members. Colleen Blasko won \$141 while Diane Popa

took home \$111. Rules for the Show are posted at <http://www.pcgarden.info/wp-content/uploads/2015/07/2015-FAIR-BOOK.pdf>. To link to Master Gardener James Pavelka's tips for displaying winning entries, select this [link](#).

Judging is serious business. Terry Marsch and Marty Seroczynski examine an entry. Additional PCMGA judges included Judi Rodimel, Kathleen VanArsdel, Suzanna Tudor, and Janet Magnuson. All judges were trained by MG and National Garden Clubs Life Flower Show Judge, James Pavelka.



In addition to judges, thanks go to volunteers Diane Popa, Sharon Fitzsimmons, Dan Ruggaber, Gloria Potter, Mitch Watson, Tina Ryczek, Gerry Lehmann, Deb Silvert, Karen Curtis, Jill Green, Amy Carmody, and Jerry Waszkowski.



Pictured here, Master Gardener Suzanna Tudor (L) took Best of Section for Hibiscus moscheutos 'Lord Baltimore' and Best of Show for Hydrangea macrophylla 'Paraplu'. Debbie Grusszka (R) took Best of Section for Perennial Seed Pod.

The Fair Board asked PCMGA to take leadership of the Show in 2006. Janet Magnuson volunteered to be its Superintendent and continues to serve in that capacity. In 2006, there were 457 entries. Under Janet's leadership, the number and quality of entries has steadily increased. This year, we had 885 entries—a new record!

ASK A MASTER GARDENER

at Porter County Fair

By Donna Brown

Thank you to the Master Gardeners who volunteered to host the Ask Booth at the Fair. Here are the numbers:

- 89 - Questions that were asked.
- 33 - People who showed interest in the next MG Class.
- 87 - Guys who stopped to visit us at the booth.
- 122 - Gals who stopped to visit us at the booth.
- 23 - Youths who visited.
- 60 - Soil sample kits passed out.
- 250 - 2016 Garden Show brochures nabbed.





MR. MC GREGOR'S GARDEN

Pick Early, Pick Often

By Nancy Rosene

Like Mr. McGregor, you couldn't wait to get your hands dirty! You cleaned and oiled your gardening tools, you studied the seed catalogs and determined the very best cultivars. You planned, you fertilized—and then finally, you couldn't stand it anymore. Mid-March, in went the leaf lettuce. Mid-April, in went the beets, followed by the cabbage, carrots, broccoli, cucumber, eggplant, tomatoes, corn, and the list goes on and on and on.

Then June came. What a glorious time of year. You eager gardeners were starting to see the results of your efforts. Your fertile garden was erupting with healthy vegetable sprouts and a successful early harvest of spring plantings. Your ambition knew no bounds. You continued planting carrots, beans and sweet corn for successive harvests.



Bush beans blossom in Ken and Debby Rosenbaum's garden during Garden Walk, June 27, 2015.

Watch out! Now it's August, you might be starting to panic as those vegetables systematically ripen. Most gardeners do a lot of research and planning around getting the garden in, but we spend very little time planning getting the garden out. Don't worry though, that's the purpose of this newsletter. So we can remind you that those 25 tomato plants you put in May 25 will start producing about 100 total pounds of tomatoes July 25—give or take 10 days depending on variety and weather. And how do we know



this? We have studied [Purdue Extension Publication HO-32-W](#). It has excellent information to help plan for the harvest, including Table 1,

which lists days until harvest, among other really useful information.

According to Burpee Seeds, it is crucial to keep track of what you are planting and to keep the seed packet so you know what to expect. This is especially true these days with so many cultivars being produced for different characteristics such as color and size. It would be a shame to have those Aunt Gertie's Gold Heirloom tomatoes rot on the vine while you are waiting for them to turn red.

While knowing the average days to maturity for crops is useful, there are many factors that influence a harvest date—including soil fertility, precipitation, and temperature. Clemson Cooperative Extension offers a list of subtle clues that indicate a vegetable is ripe for picking in their [Extension Publication HGIC 1262](#).

In the meantime remember these simple tips:

1. Vegetables are like voting in Chicago. Pick early, pick often. Almost all vegetables are best when harvested early in the morning, and frequent picking is essential for prolonging the harvest.
2. Vegetable quality is highest at the moment of harvest.
3. Be gentle with garden plants while harvesting—use a knife, scissors or hand pruners.

Keep an eye on the calendar! Clean out the freezer, dig out the canning jars, read these short but informative publications, and be ready. Take advantage of harvesting your vegetables at the peak of their quality! 🌸



VOLUNTEER SPOT

Education Committee Chair Kathy Ruble

By Suzanna Tudor

You've seen her—introducing speakers at Master Gardener meetings and the Gardening Show or providing instructions at the front of the bus on educational trips. That would be Kathy Ruble, now serving her third year as Education Committee Chair.



Kathy Ruble holds a 2012 Garden Walk commemorative stone honoring her host participation.

Kathy has been a Master Gardener since 2007.

The reason she took the course was to learn some tips on redoing her landscape—and in 2012 the Ruble home welcomed 2012 Garden Walk participants. She did not always have an interest in gardening.

“My mother was raised on a farm, and when she moved to the city, she wanted nothing more to do with growing things. However, my grandmother was an avid gardener. I adopted her attitude, so I guess it skipped a generation,” she shared.

Kathy's attraction to gardening did not skip a generation in her case. Her son, Jon, is a landscape architect, and daughter, Mary, volunteers at her local community garden.

Recently, Kathy conducted a “Watch Me Grow” project with Jacob's Ladder special needs children. Basic parts of the plants were identified and then planted in pots painted by the children. This project was funded with a philanthropic grant from the PCMGA.

When asked what the biggest challenge is in finding speakers for the Gardening Show, Kathy replied, not surprisingly, “Getting people to come to Indiana in January.” She added that when readers are out and about and have heard an exceptional speaker, to please let her know. She would appreciate hearing from you.

“It's always preferable to have a firsthand report on a presenter rather than selecting one from a website.”

You can also assist Kathy with planning educational trips by providing topics on which you wish to increase your knowledge.

“There is such a variety of interests in our group. I try to keep as many people happy as I can.” 🌸

Seed cleaning and sorting for the Gardening Show is just one of the many ways Kathy supports the PCMGs.



Kathy shares her love of gardening with the children at Jacob's Ladder. The agency offers occupational, physical and speech therapies for children.



MEET A MASTER GARDENER

Nature's Smile

By Shelli Henry



What do you get when you combine love of nature, love of learning, love of laughing, and love for each other? This energetic, intelligent, and witty couple, Barb and Rudy Kunshek comes to mind. Barb and Rudy are recent graduates of the 2015 Master Gardener class.

A Love Story

The couple met while attending Western Illinois University. Both were majoring in biology, but the seeds of romance never bloomed until Barb asked Rudy for a match to light her Bunsen burner. It was love at first light. As Rudy struggled to complete his research in the cold, windy, rain soaked Mississippi River mud, Barb finished hers in the comfort of a laboratory nurturing fungi in petri dishes. Rudy says that it was from these humble beginnings that they acquired a love for nature and for each other.

Love of Learning and Nature

After strengthening their relationship in the bonds of holy matrimony, the couple began their quest to eke out a living in the shadows of Chicago's skyscrapers. Barb



worked at Michael Reese in a comfortable research lab (as Rudy pointed out) and Rudy sampled the environment for ComEd (now he was covered with Illinois River mud). All this mud forced Rudy to return to school. Rudy said he sought "frame and fortune" first as a CPA, then as a lawyer, and finally, following in Barb's footsteps, as a university teacher. The couple related that throughout their time together, Barb would plant her beautiful flowers, and Rudy would throw seeds on the ground and call it a vegetable garden.

Return to Love of Nature

Now with their family raised and their money securely nestled in investments pitched as sure things, they once again can turn to their love of nature. Hence, they took the Master Gardening Course. "We learned our past horticultural experiences were all for naught," they said. Now their growing acumen of all things botanical has dramatically increased. Rudy indicated, "Barb has more "green" fingers, and I'm just lucky I have any fingers at all."

With a Sense of Humor

Finally, they wish to warn all their new-found gardening friends that they will always be few plants short of a full flat. If by chance you happen to wander by and wish to gather in their garden, it is right behind the sign that reads, "Deer Crossing." Rudy says that he and Barb are truly the brightest

examples that nature does have a sense of humor. Nevertheless, Nature smiles on them, for the true art of gardening is to believe as they do in "The Seed Fairy." 🌸





FROM MY GARDEN

Fall Beauty is Just a Weed Away!

By Nancy Rosene

When your neighbors are pitching dead petunias into the compost heap and hauling pots into the Garden shed, aim to be different. Be a Pinterest Star! Trick those pots out with anything autumn. A mix of fall-colored plants can dress your home for the new season. Think plants like miscanthus grasses, *Pennisetum glaucum* ‘Purple Majesty’, heucherella, heuchera, native grasses, sedums, *Ajuga reptans* ‘Black Scallop’, *Rudbeckia*, pansies, marigolds, ivies, coleus, and the official fall flower, hardy mums—just to name a few!



A pumpkin turned container makes a novel planter for this sedum.



Small evergreens are a natural for cold weather container plantings. Fall veggies can add brilliantly textured focal points and are great fillers. Plant now or keep an eye out for kale, Osaka cabbage, Swiss chard, and ornamental peppers.

If frost is already on the pumpkin, pick it and use it as a centerpiece with contorted bush and tree branches, dried grasses, showy headed dried flowers and weeds,



Pumpkins, assorted gourds and Indiana corn from the garden, as well as some colorful berries, dried grasses and leaves from the pond out back, turned our window boxes into a feast for the eye inside and out.

fall berries, gourds, Indian corn, and leaves for pizzazz and eye popping interest. Make a whimsical statement by adding your favorite fall craft/decorative pieces.

Finally, nothing says autumn like rich earth tones. Try these fantastic container color combinations:

- An analogous mix of pumpkin, rust, and maple red
- Harmonious neutrals in dark chocolate brown and cream with bright orange accents
- Monochromatic color schemes including shades of black, deep red, peachy pumpkin or violet
- Complimentary colors of spicy orange and a muted chartreuse



Line baskets with sphagnum moss, place them in containers, and plant for a multilevel display. Here ‘Dolce Crème Brûlée’ heucherellas were used.

Now show off those beautiful arrangements! Send us your photos (nrosene@icloud.com). We’ll proudly publish them in our October newsletter. 🍂



ReciBEEs From Our Gardeners

Ratatouille

Recipe submitted by Beverly Thevenin

(From all Recipes – submitted by
Juli Warfel Bitler, with some modifications)

Ingredients

- 1-cup can tomato sauce
- 1/2 onion, chopped
- 3 to 4 cloves minced garlic
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 1/2 cup water
- Salt and ground black pepper to taste
- 1 small eggplant, trimmed and very thinly sliced
- 1 zucchini, trimmed and very thinly sliced
- 1 yellow squash, trimmed and very thinly sliced
- 1 red bell pepper, cored and very thinly sliced
- 1 yellow bell pepper, cored and very thinly sliced
- 3 tablespoons olive oil, or to taste
- 1 teaspoon fresh thyme leaves, or to taste
- 3 tablespoons mascarpone or Parmesan cheese



Directions

1. Preheat the oven to 375 degrees F (190 degrees C).
2. Spread tomato paste into the bottom of a 10x10-inch baking dish. Sprinkle with onion and garlic and stir in 1 tablespoon olive oil and water until thoroughly combined. Season with salt and black pepper.
3. Arrange alternating slices of eggplant, zucchini, yellow squash, red bell pepper, and yellow bell pepper, starting at the outer edge of the dish and working concentrically toward the center. Overlap the slices a little to display the colors. Drizzle the vegetables with 3 tablespoons olive oil and season with salt and black pepper. Sprinkle with thyme leaves. Cover vegetables with a piece of parchment paper cut to fit inside.
4. Bake in the preheated oven until vegetables are roasted and tender, about 45 minutes. Serve with dollops of mascarpone or Parmesan cheese.

To make into a main meal, add browned Italian sausage to the tomato sauce mixture. 🍴





THE TOOL SHED

Meet the Maddock

By Kristine Sandrick

This season I wanted to create a moon garden* in the back of our house where pokeweed (*Phytolacca americana*) has reigned. I've dealt with this tenacious thug before and thought the taproots went clear down to China! After using a spade with meager results, I remembered the old maddock that came with the house.

Long-time gardeners are no doubt familiar with the maddock. But if, like me, you have not used this garden workhorse, a maddock has a fairly long handle and a metal head. Our tool has a wooden handle that's 3 feet long, but they can range up to 7 feet—with a solid piece of metal combining two heads. The cutter maddock has an axe-adze head and the pick has a pick-adze head.



maddock cannot be beat ... useful under a wider range of conditions than any other hand planting tool ... practical and efficient in heavy clay ... and in rocky soils." (Robert D. Wray, 2009, *Christmas Trees for Pleasure and Profit.*)

Yup, I needed to find our maddock. But when I went to look for it, I saw my husband using it to rip up asphalt. "Oh, boy. That's a serious cutter."

I imagined swinging a pick at the pokeweed and suddenly pictured the old oak tree shading this would-be garden. "I can't use THAT! I'll tear up oak roots, too." (sigh)

I ended up using a spade—springly—and then got on my hands and knees with a trowel. No, I didn't get every single root, and yes, there will be pokeweed shoots here and there for years to come. But now I know we have a maddock and what it can do.

If you have a better idea for controlling pokeweed without killing an old oak, please let me know! 🌻



Maddocks are ancient tools dating back to the Bronze Age. Early maddocks were made from antlers. And did you know ancient Egyptians invented the adze? In further research, I learned: "For all around versatility, the



Early maddocks were made of antlers. Today maddocks typically have a shaft made of wood with a forged, high quality steel head.



GARDEN WANDERER

Frederik Meijer Gardens & Sculpture Park, Michigan

By Lyndsay Ploehn,
Agriculture & Natural Resource Extension Educator



A must-see garden this summer! If you are an art lover, plant enthusiast or are looking for a fun family destination, then the [Frederik Meijer Gardens & Sculpture Park](#) is your destination. With over 150 acres of natural wetlands, woodlands, meadows, and display gardens you could spend the entire day getting lost in nature. The gardens opened in April 1995 after 13 years of planning and fundraising by the West Michigan Horticultural Society. Meijer Gardens is now recognized internationally as a top horticultural destination for the quality of the art and the gardens.

For the art lovers there is a permanent collection of nearly 300 featured works. The indoor gallery space is approximately 4,000 square feet, while the greatest concentration of art is in the 30-acre outdoor sculpture park. In addition to the permanent collection, Meijer Gardens hosts three temporary exhibitions every year.

The Richard and Helen DeVos Japanese Garden (8 acres) is a recent addition to the gardens that opened this year. Frederik Meijer has a deep appreciation for the art and tranquility of Japanese gardens and was excited to showcase and blend this magical art of landscaping into the Meijer Gardens.

Plant enthusiasts can also delight in a year round experience exploring four-season plantings in the English style perennial gardens, shade and woodland gardens, the children's garden, and the Michigan farm garden. After perusing the outdoor trails, visitors can make their way indoors to view the 15,000 square-foot conservatory featuring tropical, arid, carnivorous, Victorian, and seasonal display gardens.

If you are seeking entertainment, catch their summer concert series running through Sept. 7. Vince Gill, John Hyatt, and Tony Bennett are on tap for August and September.

Meijer Gardens is located in Grand Rapids, Mich., and can easily be visited in a day, or for an evening concert, or many times throughout the year. 🌸





OPPORTUNITIES

Volunteer / Educational

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

Volunteer

FRESH, LOCALLY GROWN PRODUCE

What: Family and Consumer Sciences teacher is looking for locally grown, fresh produce to build a food lab
Where: Morgan Township School District
When: Immediately
For Details: 219-465-3555



2015 PINNEY PURDUE VEGETABLE FIELD DAY

What: Three to five volunteers to shuck sweet corn for 2015 Pinney Purdue Vegetable Field Day & Sweet Corn Sampler
Where: Pinney Purdue Agriculture Center, 11402 County Line Road, Wanatah, Ind.
When: Aug. 13, Noon – 3 p.m.
For Details: 219-465-3555

SPEAKER - WINTERIZING PLANTS

What: Nativity of Our Savior Church is looking for a speaker for a group of ladies who would like information on what to do with plants in the fall
Where: Nativity of Our Savior Church Hall, Portage, Ind.
When: Oct. 6, 6:30 p.m.
For Details: 219-465-3555

MASTER RECYCLING PROGRAM

What: Someone with experience in backyard composting to teach a class for the Master Recycling Program
Where: Portage, Ind.
When: Oct. 8, 6 p.m. – 7 p.m.
For Details: 219-465-3555

VENDOR SHOPPING

What: Vendor prospecting for 2016 PCMGA Garden Show (business card with e-mail and website needed)
Where: Any festival or craft fair
To Forward Details: 219-465-3555

Educational

2015 PINNEY PURDUE VEGETABLE FIELD DAY

What: 2015 Pinney Purdue Vegetable Field Day & Sweet Corn Sampler ([FLYER](#))
Where: Pinney Purdue Agriculture Center, 11402 County Line Road, Wanatah, Ind.
When: Aug. 13, 4 p.m.
For Details: Register at [FIELD DAY](#)

12th MASTER GARDENER SYMPOSIUM

What: Kosciusko County 12th Master Gardener Symposium
Where: Warsaw Community Church, 1855 S. County Farm Road, Warsaw, Ind.
When: Sept. 12, 9 a.m. – 3 p.m. EST
For Details: Find the brochure at [2015 MG Symposium](#)

GARDEN FIELD TRIP

What: PCMGA sponsored bus trip. \$10/Members, \$15/Non-members, lunch not included
Where: Dahlia Trial Gardens, Bristol; Wellfield Botanical Garden, Elkhart; Lunch at McCarthy's Irish Pub on the Riverwalk in Elkhart; Quilt Gardens; Rusty Ritchie's (Award Winning Dahlia Gardener) Personal Garden
When: Sept. 16, 8 a.m. – 5 p.m. (Bus leaves toll road parking area at IN 49 in Chesterton at 8 a.m.)
For Details: 219-465-3555

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