



GARDEN THYME

February 1, 2016

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

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LYNDSAY'S VINE

by Lyndsay Ploehn, Agriculture & Natural Resource Extension Educator

WOW! What a great way to ring in the New Year! This year's Gardening Show was truly a legacy. Over the years I have seen this Show grow and improve, and I couldn't be more proud of our Master Gardeners. I still remember my first Show experience...

In December 2009, I began searching for new employment. I was a horticulturist at the Morton Arboretum, and while I love working with plants, I had a desire to work more with people. I interviewed for an Extension position in Carroll County, which is close to my family. Instead of hiring me in Carroll County, the Purdue State staff thought I might be a better fit in Porter County. I agreed before I even knew where Porter County was located! I thought it might be a good idea to at least visit Porter County before I interviewed to see, if in fact, it would be a good fit. After a little research, I discovered that the Porter County Master Gardeners had a Gardening Show coming up in January. I called my parents to see if they would like to meet me there to check it out. Ironically, the keynote speaker and one other speaker on the program were from the Morton Arboretum. I rode over to the Show with the speakers...little did they know that I was scoping out the county to switch jobs. When we arrived at the Show, we were warmly welcomed. I specifically remember Charlotte Friedlund telling us all about the Master Gardener program. We went to all of the seminars, ate a fantastic lunch from Suzie's Café, picked out vegetable seeds, and bought a few gardening items from vendors. I was blown away by the professionalism and quality for only \$10! You can't find anything that good for \$10. After the Show, I couldn't stop talking about it. The people I met that day I can now call friends. Your Show sold me on calling Porter County my new home. The Master Gardeners touched my heart in a special way that day, and I know I'm not the only one you've welcomed with open arms and a smile on a cold January day.

This year a new record attendance was achieved—1,720 paid attendees! We had well over 2,000 total attendees including vendors, volunteers and special guests. Over 1,850 people were educated during seminars and demonstrations. Seasoned vendors reported sales being up, and first time vendors are already reserving their spots for next year.

John Orick, Purdue State Master Gardener Coordinator, and Rosie Lerner, Purdue Consumer Horticulturist, also attended the Show this year and were quoted saying, "It is a pretty amazing undertaking—you all do a fabulous job of planning and implementing. Kudos to all of the Master Gardeners! You make Purdue very proud!" 🌸

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13th ANNUAL GARDENING SHOW

Thank You!

by Maureen Phillips

Who says 13 is an unlucky number? The ideal weather conditions and fantastic turnout for our 13th Annual Gardening Show proved 13 to be a very lucky number for us.

From the beginning, when the Show received the Indiana Bicentennial Legacy designation, we knew this year was going to be a very special one. We all felt it, and as the anticipation and enthusiasm grew, we began to get excited about welcoming old friends and making new ones on Show day.

We all wore vests that identified us as hosts for the day. One guest said it made her feel



like everything was under control and things were being taken care of. Our photographer, Nancy Rosene, was really enthusiastic. "I particularly loved my vest. It gave me 'access' to people without having to state



my case. People get suspicious when you point a camera in their faces, and I could just walk up and start snapping without a lot of explaining. It was wonderful. And people felt free to ask me questions, which I thought was wonderful too!"

Many people are saying the 13th Show was our best show yet and that all three buildings looked absolutely great. Thanks to each and every volunteer who jumped in, filled in and did whatever it took to deliver a fantastic

experience for guests and vendors alike. It's exhilarating, it's fun and it takes a small army to pull it off! You came in, pitched in and made the magic happen! People love our show not only because it's a celebration of gardening in winter, but also because we give them such a warm and enthusiastic welcome.

Congratulations to each of you who made it happen. Pat yourselves on the back. Bust your buttons. You deserve it! Until next year . . . thank you! 🌸





VOLUNTEER SPOT

Extension Tree Sale - April 2, 2016

by Beverly Thevenin

For the last three years, the Purdue Extension Board has hosted the annual Tree Sale to benefit the educational endeavors of the Extension. The event is popular among Extension supporters as well as the general public due to the variety of quality, hardy fruit trees and small fruit plants offered for a great price.

The fruit trees offered include: apple, pear, peach, apricot, plum, cherry, and nectarine. Small fruit and vegetable plants include: asparagus, blackberry, blueberries, gooseberry, horseradish, raspberry, rhubarb, and strawberries.

It's one thing to buy a plant, but another to get it planted correctly and nurtured. That's where the Master Gardeners step in to offer assistance to customers and to provide plant advice at the Ask a Master Gardener Booth.

No need to worry if you don't know all the answers to the buyers' questions. Purdue publications are available on each type of plant with handout sheets for the customers. In addition, all 15 Extension Board members and the three Extension Educators are at the event to help with setup, sorting, selling, and clean-up.



In mid-February, a list of the plants will be posted on the Extension website, and pre-sales are encouraged. Maybe this is the year to start a backyard orchard. Purdue Extension has a number of publications online



to help grow fruit, including <https://www.extension.purdue.edu/gardentips/fruits.html>.

This year's event will take place on April 2 from 8 a.m. to 11 a.m. CDT at the 4-H Building at the Porter County Fairgrounds and Expo Center. Twenty volunteers are

needed. If you are interested in volunteering, an online volunteering event form has been created. Please follow this link to [VolunteerSpot](#) to register your e-mail and select a volunteer position. If you have suggestions on plant varieties or how the event is organized, please contact Lyndsay Ploehn at lploehn@purdue.edu or 219-465-3555. 🌱





MR. MCGREGOR'S AND MRS. ROSENBAUM'S GARDEN

by Beverly Thevenin

Move over Mr. McGregor. Your biggest claim to fame is a hungry bunny nibbling at your vegetables. We sympathize with your plight, but we never learned much about gardening from you, Peter or Benjamin Bunny.



Ken and Debbie Rosenbaum, however, have a lot to teach us about vegetable and fruit gardening and how to avoid losing tender, new sprouts to all kinds of hungry critters.

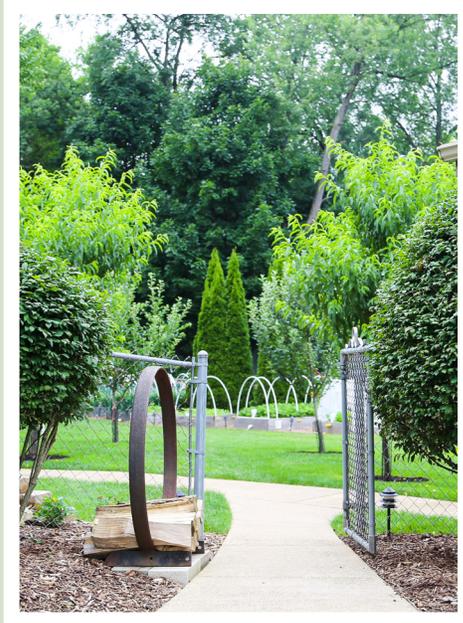
While Ken came from a farming family, Debby had no gardening experience. After the wedding, she hopped on board and took the Master Gardening class in 1981. (She was even able to pull her membership card out of her wallet last week.) Caring for two young children did not leave time for volunteer hours each year. Now that their “kits” have left the nest, Debby and Ken will take the class next spring.

To increase their gardening knowledge about growing from seed, planting multi-seasonally, rotating crops, and the myriad of techniques necessary to garden, the Rosenbaums seek out online sites, mostly from universities. But Debby said, “It was my mother-in-law who taught me how to can. She was a former 4-H leader and knew so much.”

Their garden was featured on the Master Gardener 2015 Garden Walk and the January edition of Chicagoland Gardening Magazine for good reasons. In 2015 they grew 805 pounds of food in 20 planting areas on their less-than-a-quarter-acre corner lot. (Aren't we thankful everything does not ripen at the

same time?) The four-season garden currently has garlic in the ground, and up until January's freeze, Debby was still harvesting parsley, fennel, oregano and thyme.

While this article may not become as popular as *The Tale of Peter Rabbit*, the goal is to provide



timely information that can be replicated in your garden. It would take a book to thoroughly explain how to grow each fruit and vegetable in their garden, but some hyperlinks will hopefully help. A calendar of activities for each month will provide a heads up for preparation

purposes, with more detail each month.

Afraid to grow too much? Don't know what to do with so many vegetables and fruits? Ken and Debby have solutions ranging from storing (basement and garage) to freezing and canning.

So grab your seed catalogs, paper and pen and get planning!

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 (Continued from Page 4)

Calendar

December through freezing weather: Pump out water reservoir under raised wicking beds as needed to prevent PVC pipes from freezing and cracking.

January

- Build frame to mount 65-gallon water tank to tractor. Ken found the trailer/tank combination did not prove stable when making tight turns. (Glad he's OK.)
- Revisit how 2015 went. An impressive, large binder of their garden details is just the ticket for a cold January day.
- Order all vegetable seeds, including Covington sweet potato slips and Yukon Gold seed potatoes. Ken orders pelletized carrot and onion seeds, for better germination and no thinning.
- Set up grow lights and heat mats in basement.
- Wintersow – Debby's first year, milkweed planted. See [Garden Thyme Newsletter](#) for a quick description or <http://wintersown.org/> for complete details of Wintersowing. = 1Ed Hour

February



- Get seed trays out of attic.
- Start mixing soil in batches of 1½ gallons peat moss, 1½ gallons vermiculite and 2 cups earthworm casting.
- Keep grinding egg shells and mix in potting soil for peppers and tomatoes.
- Make red cedar post signs to identify different gardening areas.



- On a mild day, assemble greenhouse for patio.
- Build more PVC tomato cages.

March

- Prune fruit trees (depending on the weather). They buy their fruit trees and bushes from Stark Bro's. "We get timely emails throughout the year with suggested care for the particular fruit we purchased," Ken said.
- Start tomatoes, flowers, herbs, and peppers in basement.
- End of the month, direct sow carrots, onions, peas, and spinach under row covers to deter animals. "The squirrels are watching and come for lunch once you are done sowing," Debby said.
- Open rain barrels (from winterizing).
- Start collecting rain water. Rain is collected at each downspout and transferred to the 600-gallon tank for future use.

April

- Second week – plant Yukon Gold potatoes in grow bags. They buy this type: [Grow Bags](#). The growing medium is city compost, leaves and [Espoma Garden Tone](#) fertilizer. To plant, place 4" compost and leaves in bag with 1 cup fertilizer. Plant 5 eyes per bag, eyes up, and add another layer of compost and leaves. As the potato grows, add another layer of compost. When you get to the top and last layer, add another cup of fertilizer.

That is the basic calendar to get you started. Storing methods and more planting information will be shared in the April edition of Garden Thyme. 



MEET A MASTER GARDENER

Sharon Fitzsimmons Wants You! New President Encourages Inactive MGs to Get Involved

by Kristine Sandrick

The Porter County Master Gardener Association welcomes Sharon Fitzsimmons as President for 2016! While Sharon will be busy overseeing an industrious volunteer group and its many community education events, she has added another goal for herself this year: encouraging other Master Gardeners to return to community service.



Photo credit: Nancy Rosene

“I want those who might be at risk of losing their Master Gardeners status to get involved again,” Sharon said. “The Master Gardener program can always use fresh ideas. There are so many community programs to expand on—from teaching kids about working with nature to helping people

grow their own food. We need our trained gardeners to get more involved in the community.”

She added it takes just a minimum number of hours each year to maintain “active” status as a Master Gardener (12 volunteer hours and six education hours), and that there are many opportunities for members throughout the year.

Several events happen on weekends, she said, such as the January Gardening Show, the booth at Earth Day in April,

the July 9 Garden Walk and the Ask a Master Gardener booth at the Porter County Fair.

“Master Gardeners aren’t just retired people. We need young, fresh faces,” she said.

A Silver Level Master Gardener, Sharon knows the value of volunteering time. She’s been a Master Gardener since 2007, initially going through training to learn more about caring for flowers and trees. Since then, she has taken the lead on the Master Gardener’s children’s booth at Earth Day, headed the Seed and Bulb Exchange for several years and has helped with every Gardening Show and Garden Walk.



Photo credit: Nancy Rosene

Sharon also is actively involved with the Independent Cat Society, specifically as a cat feeder, medicator and fundraiser. Once a full-time secretary, she still works part-time and yet manages to find time to volunteer.

“Our program offers so many opportunities to earn hours. I hope our trained Master Gardeners who are not currently active or are at risk of losing their active status will get involved. It’s a great way to get to know wonderful people and to support your community.” 🌸

The rest of the board will be featured in the April 2016 issue of Garden Thyme.



THE TOOL SHED

Getting the Itch? Check These Out!

by Shelli Henry

Seed catalogs are arriving almost daily now. It stays lighter just a bit longer each day. This is the time when gardeners start getting the itch to plan and plant. One way you can appease these desires is to start seeds indoors. Here are a couple of tools that can make a significant difference in your success.

Seed Mat

Heated mats for seeds can both increase germination rates and help you achieve more uniform germination by giving you control over temperature—one of the environmental factors most closely linked with germination. Using the mat will speed germination, produce healthier seedlings and prevent damping off. The mat pictured is from [Hydrofarm](#). It is the size of a flat and has instructions printed on it regarding germination temperatures needed for a variety of plants.



Grow Light



cuttings, flowers and house plants. The adjustable lighting means no more leggy seedlings. The light is easily moved

Having the right light can make all the difference when germinating seeds indoors. The adjustable [Jump Start Grow Light System](#) fixture, pictured here, allows for the light to be just inches above the seedlings. This system is ideal for seedlings,

up as the seedlings and plants grow. This system includes the stand, fixture, and tubes. It is easy to assemble and easy to store away.

Used in combination, the seed mat and a good grow light can help you successfully conquer the gardener's itch this winter with the beautiful, healthy plants you will grow. Bring on Spring! ✨

JUST NAME IT

Wanted: Dead

by Suzanna Tudor



Photo credit: jmvMaren via Foter.com

Often, plants can look very appealing but be very toxic to animals and humans. Such is the case here. Beware of its beguiling white flowers that might beckon you to bring the pretty little thing home. Don't. This pesky, and a bit hairy, critter grows to about four feet tall. Its leaves measure

between 2-7 inches long and 1-5 inches wide. Description rap sheet lists leaves as "opposite, simple, and coarsely toothed along the margins." Some native plants you want in your yard or fields, not this one. All plant structures are toxic. There is a story that Abraham Lincoln's mother died of "milk sickness" from drinking the milk of an animal that consumed this plant. What is it? Select this [link](#) to find out. ✨

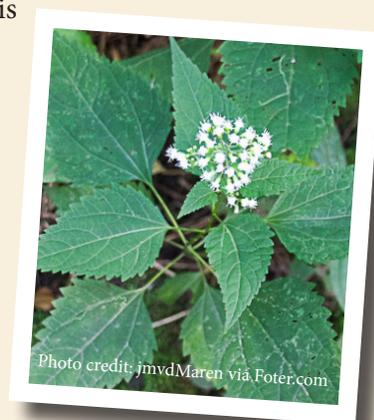


Photo credit: jmvMaren via Foter.com

 = .5 Ed Hours



*ReCiBEEs
From Our
Gardeners*

SPINACH PESTO

How to Eat Mediterranean Style

by Jill Kilhefner, RD, CD

Registered Dietitian and Advanced Master Gardener

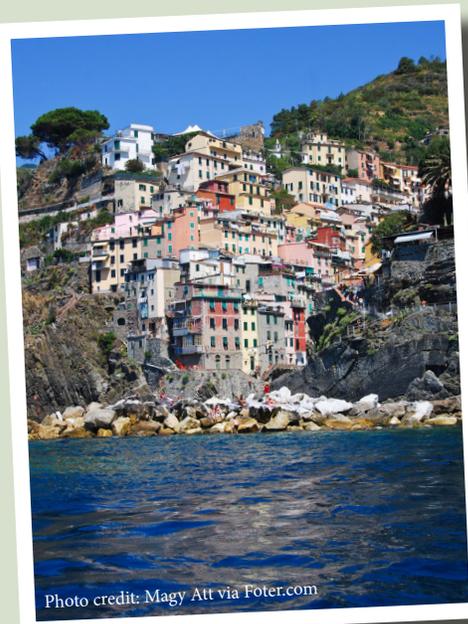


Photo credit: Magy Att via Foter.com

The Mediterranean Diet has been ranked as one of the best “overall diets” for years. Research supports the diet’s role in heart and brain health, cancer prevention and diabetes prevention and control. This diet may be especially near and dear to the gardener’s heart as it is a plant-based diet.

The Mediterranean region includes Greece, Italy and the coastal areas of France, Spain, Northern Africa and the Middle East. This delicious cuisine is centered on seasonal produce, hearty grains, legumes and nuts, olive oil and fish, making it low in saturated fat and cholesterol and high in monounsaturated fat. You’ll be eating more complex carbohydrates, fiber, antioxidants, vitamins and minerals; all of the dietary ingredients that promote good health!

To eat “Mediterranean-style”:

- Grow your own vegetables, fruit and herbs or frequent your local farmers’ markets to buy seasonal produce.
- Freeze produce at its peak for winter use.
- Go meatless two to four meals each week.
- Find new recipes online or at the library. There are many Mediterranean-style cookbooks.

Ingredients

- 2 cups lightly packed spinach leaves
- 1/4 cup pine nuts or walnuts, toasted
- 2 tablespoons fresh lemon juice
- 1-2 teaspoons grated lemon peel
- 1/3 cup extra-virgin olive oil
- Salt & pepper
- 1/3 cup freshly grated Parmesan cheese



Directions

Pulse first four ingredients in a processor. Season with salt and pepper. With machine running, gradually add the oil, blending until creamy. Stir in the Parmesan. 🌿



Photo credit: Miriam Wilcox via Foter.com



GARDEN WANDERER

Exotic India – Where are the Marigolds?

by Marcia Carson

I selected my topic for this issue while preparing for a trip to India. Knowing the itinerary included the Exquisite Lodi Gardens, Gardens at the Amber Fort and Palace, and the Moon Garden, I thought “how fun; I can feature an Indian garden.” Beautiful flowers, shrubs and trees complimenting ancient architecture. Right? Sort of!

First stop: the 90-acre Lodi Garden in Delhi, which is one of the top 10 gardens in India. The grounds and gardens are over 500 years old and were re-landscaped in 1968. The ancient architecture was beautiful. The grounds were quiet and peaceful, laced with asphalt paths for walkers and joggers with space for yoga classes, but the landscaping was definitely aged! Well-worn grass interspersed with bushes and trees were probably

planted in 1968 and left to fend for themselves. Saffron-orange marigolds were planted along many of the paths. In Hinduism, the flower symbolizes auspiciousness and is sold in markets on the street for decorative and religious purposes. We did see parakeets, kites, owls and kingfishers, as well as many families enjoying the quiet space in the amazingly noisy city.

Next stop: Amber Fort and Palace, Jaipur. Built in the 16th century by Rajput rulers, an amalgamation of Mughal and Rajput styles was evident in the two gardens. The Kesar Kyari (saffron garden) lies in the center of the lake, inspired by Persian carpets. The garden was originally planted with crocus for the fragrance to waft into the palace above. The interior, Charbagh garden, also known as Paradise garden, is laid out

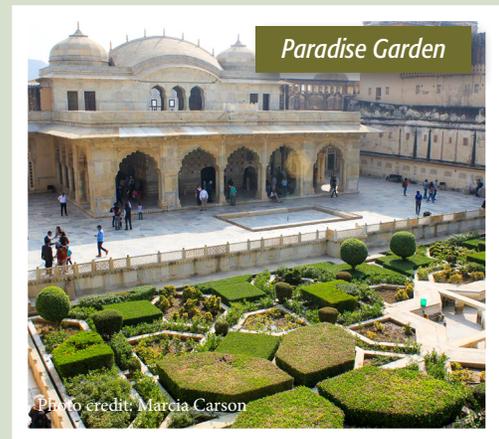
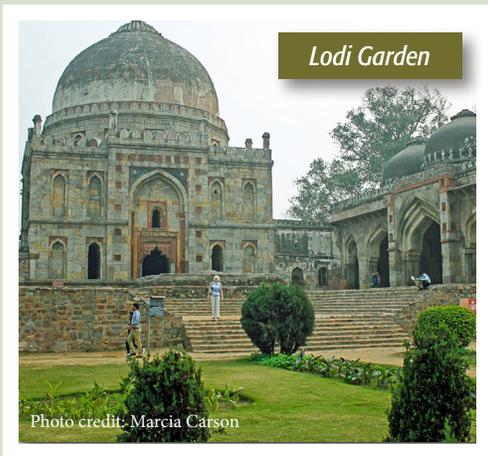
as a square, subdivided into four equal parts. In Paradise, four rivers emerge at a central spring or mountain and separate the garden by flowing towards the cardinal points, representing the promised rivers of water, milk, wine and honey. The four waterways were being restored, so there was no water flowing.



The vegetation included a variety of foliage, textures, and shades of green, with small hints of purple. This would have been a serene, symbolic garden for enjoyment and reflection by the Mughal rulers and their guests.

Lastly: the Moon Garden, across the Yamuna River from the Taj Mahal, would also be beautiful, right? After all, it was featured this season on television’s “The Amazing Race.” The garden was definitely lackluster. Several acres of grass, small trees, a variety of bushes in rows, some dead, some alive, all struggling for survival. Forget the gardens—go for the view of the Taj!

India’s gardens were not all I had anticipated, but they serve an important purpose. After being bombarded with unbelievable crowds, brilliant colors, raucous sounds, and the pungent smells of India, the space, order and serenity were a welcome respite. 🌸





OPPORTUNITIES Volunteer / Educational

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

Volunteer

TREE SALE

What: Porter County Extension
2016 Tree Sale

Where: 4-H Building, Porter County
Fair Grounds and Expo Center, Valparaiso, Ind.

When: April 2, 8 a.m. - 11 a.m. CDT

Info: 219-465-3555

Volunteer: [VolunteerSpot](#)



Photo credit: Nancy Rosene



Photo credit: Nancy Rosene

Educational

PORTER COUNTY MASTER GARDENER TRAINING CLASS

What: Master Gardeners, if you are interested in updating or refreshing your horticulture knowledge, you may attend one or all of the Spring 2016 MG Training Classes at no cost, and you will gain education hours for attending. 15 slots available.

Where: Porter County Administration Building, Room 102A,
155 Indiana Ave., Valparaiso, Ind.

When: Thursdays, Feb. 4 to May 12, 11 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Info and syllabus: Lyndsay @ lploehn@purdue.edu

Available for purchase, but not required: Hard copy Manual (\$75.00) or Electronic USB Manual (\$50.00)



17th ANNUAL PUBLIC SEMINAR

What: Presented by Michiana Master Gardeners Association

Where: Greencroft Community Center,
1820 Greencroft Blvd, Goshen, Ind.

When: March 5, 2016, 2 p.m. - 5 p.m. ET

Info: <http://www.michianamastergardeners.com/>

SPRING MASTER NATURALIST PROGRAM

What: 10-week course (Cost is \$100)

Where: Taltree Arboretum & Gardens

When: Thursdays, March 10 to May 12, 9 a.m. to noon

Info: <http://www.taltree.org/programs/classes/indiana-master-naturalist-program/>

SPRING FORWARD 2016

What: A symposium sponsored by the St. John Garden Club

Where: Teibel's Family Restaurant,
1775 Hwy 41, Schererville, Ind.

When: March 12, 10:30 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Info: 708-712-0785 or stjohngardenclub.com

THINK, EAT, LIVE GREEN

What: La Porte County Master Gardeners Association Event

Where: Michigan City High School,
8466 W. Pals Rd., Michigan City, Ind.

When: March 19, 8 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Info: [Purdue Extension LaPorte County](#)

2016 PURDUE MASTER GARDENER STATE CONFERENCE

What: "Cultivating our Legacy" - Co-Hosted by Purdue Master Gardener State Office and Master Gardener Association of Tippecanoe County

Where: Four Points by Sheraton, West Lafayette, Ind.

When: June 16-18, 2016

Info: <https://hort.purdue.edu/mg/2016StateConf.html>

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