



GARDEN THYME

December 1, 2016

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

Vol. 3, Issue 2



LYNDSAY'S VINE

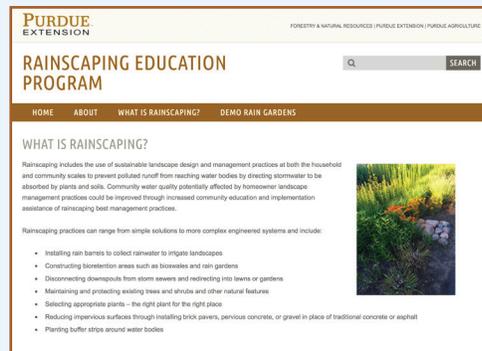
by Lyndsay Ploehn, Porter County Extension Educator



Believe it or not, spring is just around the corner! The past few months I have been diligently working on new program ideas for the spring. I am going to work with the Porter County Master Gardener Association's Education Committee to organize some fantastic programs to help our group of Master Gardeners become stronger and more united as an organization.

First, we are going to move the Master Gardener Training Program to the fall of 2017. We have had some issues finding space to hold the class, so we are going to adjust our schedule a bit to accommodate for the space issue. This frees up some time in the spring to plan programs directed towards Master Gardeners and the general public. We are also moving the class to next fall because our county has been chosen to pilot the NEW Purdue Master Gardener volunteer management system. That is basically a fancy way of saying we have a new website/database for recording volunteer and education hours. Lake, Marion, Porter, Tippecanoe, and Floyd counties have been selected to test the system. This will require training for myself and all of the Porter County Master Gardeners. We will hold a few training sessions this spring to familiarize ourselves with the new system and then share struggles and complements with State staff.

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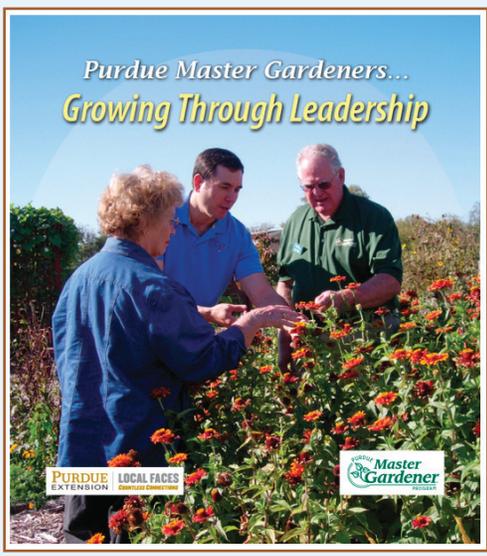
One of the programs available that is open to all is the Purdue Rainscaping Education Program. This is a full 2-day program that includes workshops, tours of local rain gardens, and ends with a rain garden installation. John Orick, Purdue Master Gardener State Coordinator, and Kara Salazar, the Purdue Sustainable Communities Extension Specialist, run the program

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◀ (Continued from Page 1 - **Lyndsay's Vine**)

and have found that “Landscapes with rainscaping capture stormwater, which reduces polluted runoff from homes and communities. When plants and soils of rainscaped landscape absorb water from storms, they keep pollution from reaching streams, rivers and lakes.”



The Purdue Master Gardener "Growing through Leadership Program" is a 5-week program designed to complement your horticulture knowledge with the skills and confidence that will take you to the next level of leadership to help your organization,

community, or county grow. For our group, this program will be for Porter County Master Gardener Association members that are interested in stepping into committee roles or executive board roles. In order to have a successful, growing organization, it is important to train and prepare upcoming leaders. This training program will focus on working with people and different personality types. It covers the nature of leadership, and how to communicate, manage conflict, and run an effective meeting.

Finally, I would like to celebrate with our Master Gardeners this spring with a Master Gardener retreat! We are still working on the details, but this event will have a team building focus. I mostly want this to be a time to enjoy each other's company, getting to know our fellow Master Gardeners in a relaxed setting.

If you would like to be a part of the planning team for any of these programs or events, please contact Kathy Ruble or Sharon Fitzsimmons to join the Education Committee. ♡

PCMG AWARDS BANQUET 2016

by Lyndsay Ploehn, Porter County Extension Educator

Speaking of celebrating, I would also like to express my gratitude. Thank you all for getting in your hours in a timely fashion. This year at our November awards banquet we awarded the most Master Gardeners since I started in 2010. I would like to acknowledge those that received awards.

Master Gardener

- Todd Ames
- Simone Byvoets
- *Barb Caruso
- *Bonnie Girton
- Jill Green
- Diane O'Connell
- Donna Smith
- Bob Stoner
- Suzy Vance

Bronze

- Sandy Applebee
- Mary Brown
- Dawn Cury
- John Fischer
- Shelli Henry
- Terry Luchene
- *Liz Nobles
- Gloria Notaro
- Gloria Potter
- Sue Ranus
- *Bev Ripley
- *Cynthia Roman

Advance Master Gardener

- Amy Carter
- Karen Curtis
- *John Grisolano
- Barbara Kunshek
- Rudy Kunshek
- Kathleen Fischer
- Paul Pivoris
- Roger Rhodes
- Tina Ryczek
- Bill Storey
- Joy Stratton
- Susan VonEhr

Silver

- Gary Sanders
- Suzanna Tudor

Gold 1,000

- Jim Beversdorf

Gold 2,000

- Mary Simon

If you were unable to attend the awards banquet, please stop by the Extension Office to pick up your certificate and badge. For those that only received a certificate *, your badges will arrive in December. ♡



THE TOOL SHED

To Bulb or Not to Bulb

by Beverly Thevenin

While thinking about what tool to feature in this edition, I thought about what you might have left to do in the garden. Obviously leaves are still an issue, but everyone knows to use a rake or blower. You may be cutting back perennials on warmer days, and it would be nice to edge the sidewalk for a neater look all winter.

But what about that bag of bulbs you bought in September that was stashed away and forgotten in the garage? Have you wondered whether you could still plant them? Yes you can. It is not the optimal time, but as long as the ground hasn't frozen, they can still be planted.

Years ago, I had enthusiastically purchased dozens of bulbs. However, I didn't want to dig up large areas, so I purchased an [auger](#) instead. The auger attaches to a drill, and I was able to drill one hole at a time and place the bulb exactly where I wanted it. The augers come in different lengths and diameters. It also works for positioning fertilizer sticks around trees. An auger is not recommended for heavy clay or rocky soil. As with all tools, quality matters, so do your research.



While looking for an auger link, I came across the [Bulb Bopper](#). I like the fact that the soil was removed as a plug that could be inserted after the bulb was planted. According to the reviews, it is also not recommended for clay and works best with a corded drill. 🌸

JUST NAME IT

Garden Thyme Plant Pest #2

by Suzanna Tudor



This "Most Unwanted Invasive Plant Pest" is "a fast-growing shrub or small tree reaching up to 20 feet tall. Its leaves are small and oval or elliptical, dark green on the upper surface and silvery below. This shrub has light yellow, aromatic flowers and produces large

quantities of small, round red fruits that are readily eaten and spread by birds. Often planted for wildlife food and cover in the past, it can quickly take over open areas, eliminating all other species. Such monocultures actually reduce the variety and amount of wildlife food available. It is now found throughout Indiana. **Note—do not buy, sell, or plant this pest,**" states the Indiana Cooperative Agricultural Pest Survey (CAPS) Program website. To discover its name and learn more, click this [link](#). 🌸





VOLUNTEER SPOT

Maureen Phillips, Gardening Show 2017

by Suzanna Tudor

Maureen Phillips has worn many hats for PCMG after she took the MG class in 2003, including president, vice-president, creator and chair of the publicity and promotion committee, plus other leadership roles. She has attained gold-level status, wrote winning grants, and created and maintained our original website.



A true MVP—we are grateful to have faithful, professional and dedicated members like her who make our organization run like a well-oiled machine. This is her last year to help head up the popular and successful Gardening Show, so I asked her a few questions about the Show and her involvement.

Q: How many years have you been involved in the Gardening Show and in what capacities?

A: “Since the beginning (2004) when I managed the speakers' area which I continued to do until I agreed to coordinate the 2014 Show. For several years, I wrote Indiana Dunes Tourism grant applications for marketing, and we received several which helped

us afford excellent speakers and get the word out about the Show. Since I also did all PCMG publicity and promotion in those years, I built our first two websites, so we could inform folks about our educational mission and events.”

Q: What is the most challenging aspect?

A: “The most challenging part is continuing to deliver a great 8-hour educational event at an affordable price.”

Q: What is the most rewarding?

A: “Show day, when people rush through the doors as we open. Their anticipation, their enjoyment and genuine pleasure at being there make it all worthwhile. Porter County Master Gardeners bring miles of smiles, helpful advice, encouragement and assistance. We are known for our good humor and our ability to work together to make good things happen in Porter County.”

Q: What do you want to stress to other Master Gardeners about the Show?

A: “I want to invite them to spend Saturday, January 28, 2017, kicking off their gardening year with us. They will have a great time anticipating spring, planning their gardens, getting great gardening advice and sharing the experience with other avid gardeners.”

Maureen concluded with stating “she merely steers the ship, and what makes that magic happen is all of us working together.”

Thank you, Maureen, for all you do and probably will continue to do for PCMG—and now, on with the Show! 🌸





SPECIAL FEATURE - Unusual House Plants

by Guest Writer, Jean Starr

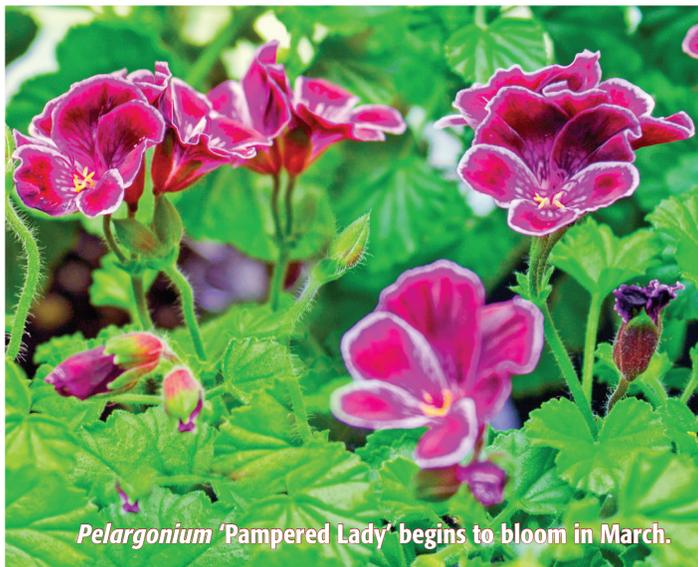
Freelance Writer/Blogger/Speaker

Houseplants are back, baby! Okay, to some of us, they never left the building. But the unusual varieties and ever-increasing sources have made gardening indoors too tempting to pass up. No longer do we have to limit ourselves to devil's ivy (*Pothos* or *Epipremnum*)—it's a brand new world.

Fancy-leaved *Pelargoniums* are easy to find in the spring along with the other annuals, and simple to start from cuttings to grow indoors. Those I've had the most success with in a sunny window include 'Lotusland' and 'Peppermint Star'. Keep up the pinching to keep them compact and watch them perk up when the days lengthen. They'll even bloom by the end of March.

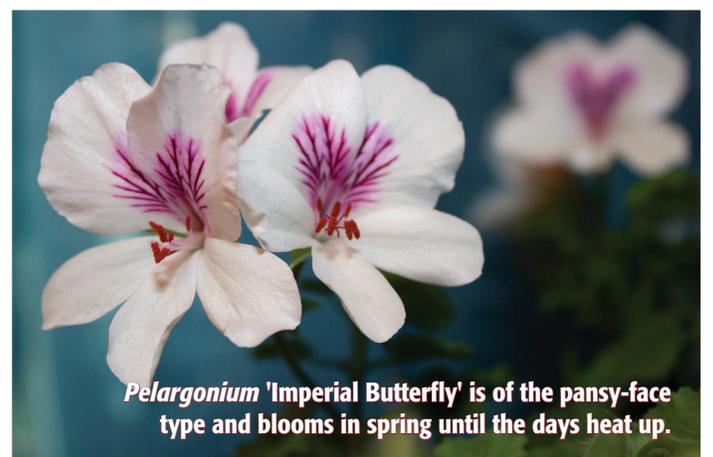


Although the leaves of *Pelargonium* 'Lotusland' are plenty colorful in their own right, the blooms add a special spring magic.



Pelargonium 'Pampered Lady' begins to bloom in March.

I got so excited by the success of *Pelargoniums* that I sought out some unusual varieties that blew me away. 'Imperial Butterfly' and 'Pampered Lady' bloomed their heads off from March through May. I found them through Geraniaceae.com, an online nursery in California.



Pelargonium 'Imperial Butterfly' is of the pansy-face type and blooms in spring until the days heat up.

(Continued on [Page 6](#)) 



← (Continued from Page 5 - **UNUSUAL HOUSEPLANTS**)

I've killed more than my share of *Begonias*. Those that have survived my special kind of torture include 'Dotsey', a cane type with angel wings, and 'Bower's Black', a rhizomatous variety that loves humidity. *Begonias* are the poster children for having lots of plants. My reasoning goes like this: you can easily lavish too much attention on plants if they happen to be the only one in the house.

Other plants that have thrived in my winter garden household include the incredibly easy-to-flower *Porphyrocoma pholiana* 'Maracas'. I stumbled upon this plant in spring of 2013 and was amazed at how well it bloomed indoors without lights. It's a great outdoor shade container plant and easy to start from cuttings, so I've been able to grow it through the winter as well.



Fuchsia 'Autumnale' has made a colorful come-back.



Porphyrocoma pholiana 'Maracas' blooms in winter.



Cane-type 'Dotsey' is one of the easiest *Begonias* to grow.

I fell in love this summer with *Fuchsia* 'Autumnale' for its colorful foliage. It's been easy to grow from cuttings and has kept its color with a bit of artificial light. This variety might seem new, but it's just been out of circulation. It was hybridized in France in 1880 but recently has been propagated and distributed by Proven Winners. 🌸



MR. MC GREGOR'S GARDEN

Hügelkultur: Let Nature Do Its Magic Naturally

by Beverly Thevenin

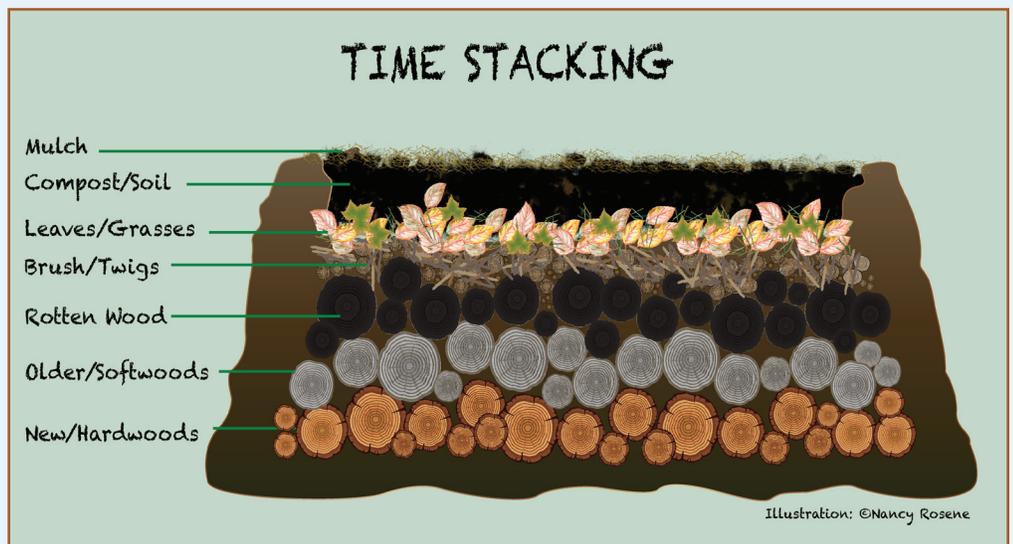
Looking at the process one way, hügelkultur (hoogleculture or hoo-gull-culture) is a composting method. Large logs, branches and twigs are buried to rot over time, slowly absorbing and releasing moisture while breaking down to release nutrients. But unlike a typical compost pile, the garden is planted on top of the mound, so it's also a raised bed method. However, you can also add grass clippings, manure, sod, compost, leaves, etc., so it's also a lasagna garden.

Although hügelkultur (meaning "mound culture") has been around in Germany and Eastern Europe for hundreds of years, it has been more recently embraced by the permaculture movement as a perfect permaculture design.

To create a hügelkultur bed, either dig a trench and place the logs and branches below ground level or pile the wood on top of the soil. Next cover the logs with whatever material you have available, building up to the desired height. The beds can be sunken (to hold moisture in dry climates), kept at ground level or mounded up to six feet high (considered the ideal). Cover with some type of mulch to keep the soil from washing away until planted.

Benefits

- Water retention—a six-foot high hügelkultur garden can hold enough water for an entire growing season.
- More surface area to plant, if mounded
- Warmer soil to stimulate root growth and extend the growing season
- No digging (once constructed)
- Decomposing branches and other material provide nutrients



- Composting yard waste at its source (a basic permaculture principle)
- Minimum maintenance
- Turns land not conducive to gardening into usable land

Wood Sources

Some wood works better than others. Alders, apple, birch, cottonwood, poplar and willow are ideal. Cedar, black walnut and black locust should be avoided. Some trees work in the bottom of the trench, such as various pine trees. Wood that has already begun to decay is the best choice but not always easy to get.

If newly harvested wood is used, it may suck up nitrogen for a year or two. Some people add fresh grass clippings or urine to the pile to compensate. Others avoid annual vegetables until some composting takes place.

There are many sources on the Web to explain the process more thoroughly. Here are a few to get you started:

[Helpful Hints](#)

[Permaculture News](#)

[Photos](#)



MEET A MASTER GARDENER

President Sharon Fitzsimmons and President-elect Ann Cierniak

by Bonnie Girton



At the November Porter County Master Gardeners Association meeting, the president's gavel passed from Sharon Fitzsimmons (L) to Ann Cierniak (R). The board expressed much gratitude for Sharon's service and asked the membership to please welcome Ann and stand at the ready to assist and support.

I asked each of them about their Master Gardener experience and their vision for the future of the organization.

Sharon: "In fall 2007, I successfully completed the Master Gardener course through Purdue Extension and started volunteering with the 2008 Gardening Show. I have been busy volunteering ever since."

"Recently I completed 1,000 hours and received the Gold Level Master Gardener badge. This was my goal! I have enjoyed working with so many talented and friendly individuals and love all of the projects from picking seeds, cleaning bulbs, weeding in the community garden, assisting in

our annual Garden Walk and Gardening Show, and working with the seniors and children in our community—all the while meeting and making amazing friends with so much talent and commitment to the Association."

"As the PCMGGA goes forward, I'd like more new members to take on leadership positions, bringing fresh ideas and energy to the organization so we can continue doing amazing things for the community."

Ann: "What I enjoy the most about being a part of the Master Gardener Association are the wonderful Association members. We have members that come from all walks of life with a variety of skills to contribute to the organization. That is what has made us such an active and successful group."

"I also enjoy the education opportunities we have, as well as the sharing of knowledge between the members and the friendships many of us have made."

"The question about going forward is a difficult one as I think we have done a good job working in the community and providing educational seminars at our Gardening Show and with our Garden Walk."

"However, one objective could be to have a strong community presence through projects like [Adopt-A-Highway](#) or use plaques placed by projects we have supported with funding and sweat equity to identify our involvement. This would include projects like gardens at various schools or contributing seedling trees to schools. I remember a club (I think it was Vale of Paradise Garden Club) used to give away tulip trees to the third graders when they were studying about the state of Indiana. I have the tulip tree my son received, which is now quite large in my front yard and even flowers. Outreach programs such as these could extend the impact of the organization and further utilize the many talents of the members." ❀

If you are interested in assuming a leadership role or would like to support Ann's initiatives, contact either one of these outstanding members. Contact information can be found on the latest Members Listing distributed via email by the PCMGGA Membership Committee.



FROM MY GARDEN

Callicarpa americana (American Beautyberry)

by Marcia Carson



Everywhere I wander I can't help but notice the plants around me, occasionally seeing something that I feel I must have in my garden. In early October, walking across the IUN campus, I spotted a medium-size bush with the most beautiful bright purple berries on long, gracefully arched stems. I knew I had to have one of my own!

Knowing what every gardener SHOULD do, rather than rush out and purchase one, I knew I had to do a little research. I checked out several legitimate websites from Purdue to the USDA and found the bush. It is American Beautyberry, *Callicarpa americana*. On to the next step: what does it look like during the other seasons, will it survive in Zone 5, and will it be able to flourish in my yard?

I learned that during the summer, there are small, inconspicuous flowers which will turn into the amazing berries. It works well in rain gardens, needs



sun, but late afternoon shade will do, and YES, it will grow in Zone 5!



Beautyberry can reach 8 feet high and 8 feet across but can be pruned to 6 inches in late winter or early spring. Flowers and berries appear on new growth, so the height can be controlled, and you will still see the fruit. Beautyberries produce the most fruit if they are near a pollinator. The best pollinators are the same

species but of a different variety or cultivar.

Beautyberry seeds and berries are foods for many species of birds, and the callicarpene and intermedeol produced when you crush the

leaves are proven to repel mosquitos and other biting bugs. According to an article I found in State-by-State magazine on line, Kunso Kim, head of collections and curator of the



Morton Arboretum in Lisle, Illinois, recommends *Callicarpa kichotoma* cultivar 'Issai'. It produces berries during the second year, which is a year or two ahead of most *Callicarpas*. He also recommends 'Early Amethyst' as a companion plant, both producing prolific berries.

Now that I've done my homework, I can search for Beautyberry bushes of my very own! 🌸



ReciBEEs
From Our
Gardeners

Blistered Green Beans

by Marcia Carson



Assemble:

In a large skillet cook bacon over medium heat until browned and crisp. Drain the bacon on paper towels, leaving a little of the fat in the skillet. Add the oil to the skillet and increase heat to high.

Add the beans, 1/2 tsp of salt, pepper. Cook, stirring occasionally, 8-10 minutes until beans are blistered and crisp tender. Stir in garlic and cook 1-2 minutes more.



Tired of those green bean casseroles? Need a tasty way of preparing those fresh green beans? This is the recipe for you. My family loves the flavor and the slightly crunchy texture, and I appreciate how easy it is to prepare.

Ingredients:

- 1/3 cup apple cider vinegar
- 1/4 cup water
- 2 shallots, sliced
- 2 teaspoons sugar
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 4 slices bacon, chopped
- 2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
- 2 pounds green beans, trimmed
- 1/2 teaspoon ground black pepper
- 4 cloves garlic, thinly sliced
- 1/2 cup cilantro leaves*
- 1 fresh jalapeño pepper, thinly sliced*



Transfer beans to a serving platter and top with cilantro, jalapeño, bacon, and drained pickled shallots.



Pickled shallots:

Combine the vinegar, water, shallots, sugar and salt in a small saucepan. Bring to a simmer, then remove from heat and let stand until ready to use.

**I've made this recipe many times, and often leave out the cilantro and jalapeño, sprinkling black and toasted sesame seeds or sliced toasted almonds over the beans before serving. 🌿*



OPPORTUNITIES

Volunteer / Educational

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

Volunteer

VALPARAISO GARDEN CLUB

What: Valparaiso Garden Club is looking for someone to do a 30 to 40-minute program on Vegetable Gardening
Where: Sunset Hill Farm, Valparaiso, Ind.
When: Thursday, April 6, 2017, 11 a.m.
Info: Tawnee Paliga, 219-465-3555



PCMGGA ANNUAL GARDENING SHOW

Seed Exchange Seed Cleaning

What: It's that time of year again...seed collection, seed cleaning and labeling for the PCMGGA Annual Gardening Show.
Where/When: New and old PCMGGA members are welcome any time during the scheduled periods.



- Thursday, Dec. 8, 2016, 9 a.m. to noon
Valparaiso Library, Room A
103 E. Jefferson, Valparaiso, Ind.
- Monday, Dec. 12, 2016, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.
Westchester Library Service Center
100 W. Indiana Ave., Chesterton, Ind.

CANCELED



Just learning to clean seeds? Get educational hours by working with an experienced PCMG!

Educational (and Volunteer)

14th ANNUAL PCMGGA GARDENING SHOW

What: Presentations by national, regional and local gardening speakers, demonstrations on "how-to" topics on basic gardening skills, a seed and bulb exchange, more than 100

exhibitors and vendors of products and services for and about gardens and gardening, and a photography contest are just some of the marvelous things you'll find to see and do.



Where: Porter County Expo Center, Valparaiso, Ind.
When: Saturday, Jan. 28, 2017, 8 a.m. to 4 p.m.
Info: See pcgarden.info for additional information

2017 PURDUE MASTER GARDENER STUDY ABROAD

What: England and its Gardens
Where: Porter County Expo Center, Valparaiso, Ind.
When: May 23 to June 5, 2017, open for enrollment on Nov. 16 at 1:30 p.m. EST
Info: See England and its Gardens 2017 for additional info.

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