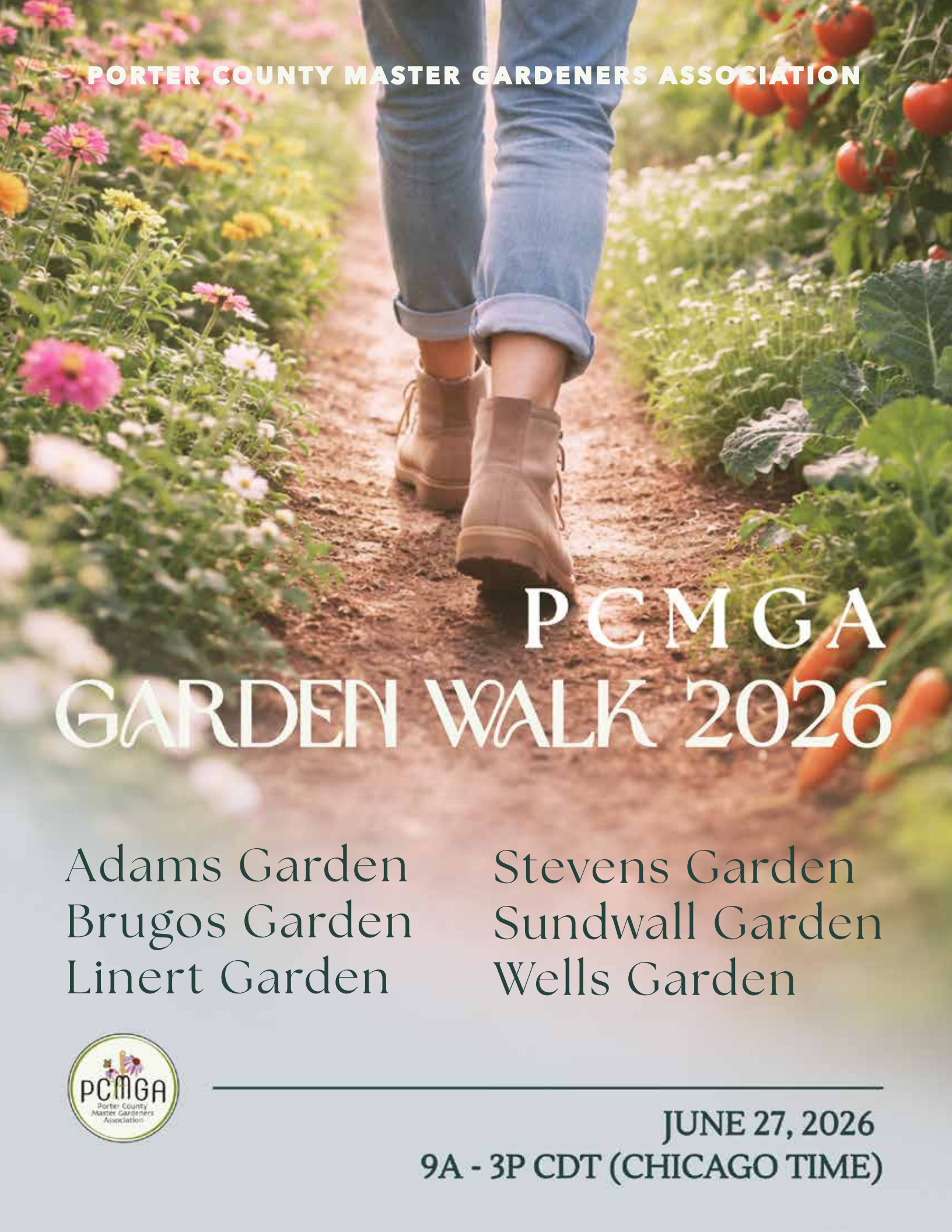

PORTER COUNTY MASTER GARDENERS ASSOCIATION

PCMGA
GARDEN WALK 2026

Adams Garden
Brugos Garden
Linert Garden
Stevens Garden
Sundwall Garden
Wells Garden

PCMGA
Porter County Master Gardeners Association

JUNE 27, 2026
9A - 3P CDT (CHICAGO TIME)

Adams Garden (Cheryl and Randy) 903 Institute St

This frugal gardener transplants, propagates, and shares her excess plants—of which there are many. Enjoy the journey as you head to your left around the house.

Begin with a view of spruce, mature Crimson King maples, and smoke tree (*Cotinus coggygria*). Perennial beds line every vista. Notice the *Aralia racemosa* (spikenard) beside the western foundation. This native plant was once used as a flavoring for root beer.

1) As you continue, be mindful of the maple tree roots extending into the path. Maples are known for their shallow root systems. Generally speaking, when it is tree versus plant, the tree wins! This makes planting beneath a mature maple quite a challenge, though sedum is managing nicely here.

2) Many decorative treasures adorn this backyard. Smile at the gnome house, which originated from a tree stump covered with fungus and is now surrounded by transplanted wonders. Admire the woodland collection of hosta, brunnera, Solomon's seal, columbine, pachysandra, and other shade-loving greenery. Be sure to notice the old, old birch tree lining the back fence. It has stories to tell.

As you move to the east, stop and turn to look back toward the west. The woodland view is sure to make you smile. Marvel at the construction of the couple's swing. Doesn't it make you want to take a nap?

3) Continue around the east side for a look at vegetable gardening in limited sunshine. Light rules the garden, so make hay where you may!

Brugos Garden (Jo and John) 188 Appaloosa Ln

This windswept landscape faces many challenges, including drying plants, delayed spring growth, leaning trees, and frosty spring mornings.

1) In a wide-open neighborhood, the challenges are different from those found in town, where established trees create shade and shelter for the garden. The front street bed is filled with a variety of perennials, including Baptisia, coneflower, catmint (*Nepeta*), and Shasta daisies, many of which are repeated throughout the landscape.

2) Begin your journey around the front porch to your left. The front beds include phlox, penstemon, geum, asters, and more. Variety is the key to creating color and texture in the garden, and you will see plenty of both as you make your way around the generator.

Notice today's quiz plant. What do you think the mystery plant is—an azalea or a rhododendron? Without blooms, it is hard to tell. All azaleas are rhododendrons, but not all rhododendrons are azaleas.

3) Shrubs in this garden provide an important food source for birds. In the far back garden bed, notice the winterberry holly (*Ilex verticillata*), pruned to a moderate size. This plant is dioecious, meaning individual plants are either male or female, and both are needed for pollination in order for the female plants to produce berries. The serviceberry is another valuable source of fruit for birds. On the west side of the house is Korean spice viburnum, also a berry producer. Be sure to notice the beautyberry (*Callicarpa americana*), with its striking purple berries encircling the

Continued P3



stems. Caring for the birds is a big part of this garden and a true joy for the gardeners.

Linert Garden (Patsy and Dan) 652 Northview Dr

This gardener, a mulching expert, will teach you about covering some ground. **1)** There is a technique to spreading mulch on steep slopes and tough terrain. He uses 5-gallon buckets to carry mulch up sloped beds, giving the plants a cover to conserve moisture and lessen weed germination.

Begin your tour in front with the boxwood hedge and Crimson King maple, which provide a calming view. Proceed to the right around the terraced edge of the property. **2)** Note the several sprinkler heads you might see peeking above the mulch. These are part of a 13-zone irrigation system, with heads that either spray or drip, depending on the needs of the plants. Some plants, like sedum, do well without supplemental water, so there is no irrigation there. The driveway edging bed contains coreopsis, daisies, *Nepeta* (catmint), clematis, and other perennials.

Move around to the back and marvel at the woodland plantings: Snowdrift crabapple, hemlock trees, Old Globe blue spruce, ninebark, 'Bloodgood' Japanese maple, and so many more. The understory features hosta, ostrich ferns, violets, and lady's mantle (*Alchemilla mollis*).

3) As you move to the western edge, note the yew hedge, originally used to mask the neighbor's fence—until it became too large for the space. Rejuvenation pruning of yews (*Taxus*) results in fresh growth from dormant buds. Just a bit of sunlight stimulates new, soft stems. This is best done in late winter or early spring.

Stevens Garden (Diane) 53 E Engel Dr

Most gardeners struggle to keep plants hydrated during the summer or weed-free in the spring, but this gardener has mastered the art of using groundcovers to help solve both of those problems. Waves of groundcover define this landscape. **1)** Pachysandra (*P. procumbens*), sweet woodruff (*Galium odoratum*), and lily of the valley (*Convallaria majalis*) compete for space as you travel around the left side of the house. This lush bed is a sea of green, with the plants mingling with their neighbors and covering every inch of available real estate.

From bed to bed, groupings of vinca, lamium, ostrich ferns, and lamb's ear carpet the ground. **2)** At the rear, notice the large mass of Snow on the Mountain, or Bishop's Weed (*Aegopodium podagraria*). In this area, it has reverted from its variegated form to a solid green. Smart as they are, plants are often more successful when they are green as Kermit the Frog famously sang, "It's not easy bein' green." By reverting to solid green, the plant can manufacture more food through photosynthesis. A variegated form contains less chlorophyll and therefore has less capacity to produce the sugars it needs for growth.

Sadly, a year ago a large tree fell onto the house, causing major damage. The repair work resulted in even more disruption to the landscape. The challenge now is to replant the new patio bed, a summer-long project for this diligent gardener.

3) As you make your way to the front, notice the brightly variegated stalks emerging from the front corner of the yard. This is a variegated

Continued P4

form of Japanese knotweed (*Reynoutria japonica*). Unaware of this plant's reputation as an aggressive spreader, the gardener fell under its spell, and now it is steadily expanding its footprint. It remains here for visitors to observe—before it is ultimately removed.

Sundwall Garden (Lynne) 404 Jefferson St

A true wildlife habitat, this mostly native alcove is friendly to all sorts of critters. **1)** Pollinators love the variety of phlox, lobelia, Canadian ginger (*Asarum canadense*), blackhaw viburnum, boneset, bloodroot, and so many more native perennials and woody plants.

Follow the progress of several of these pollinator favorites as they spread from place to place. The lesson here is that the plants choose where they want to live. We start them, and they will seed, spread by rhizomes, or otherwise advance or retreat as they find suitable light, moisture, and available ground.

2) Allowing volunteer plants (those that show up unaided by human activity) to settle into your site takes a certain gardener's mindset. The unplanned is part of the adventure. Take the red cedar at the northwest corner, for example—a volunteer. In another location is a volunteer serviceberry (*Amelanchier arborea*). Asparagus, once planted, has moved around the perennial beds and becomes part of the layout. This process occurs throughout the garden, with plants allowed to grow in their own way.

3) Back at the front, note the progression of the plantings as light and time have guided them. Originally planted as mirror images on both sides of the front walkway, these plants use light to feed themselves, and where light is abundant, they become more vigorous. In other locations, less so. Nature finds its level if we only allow it.

Wells Garden (Ann and David) 201 Elmhurst St

Urban gardening at its BEST. This gardener uses every available space to plunk in a vegetable or fruit. Move to your right around the front porch.

1) Notice the geode collection, gathered from years of southern Indiana visits. Geodes are basically round rocks formed by volcanic activity eons ago, and most contain beautiful crystals inside. Take a peek at a few that have been opened. As you move around the house, spot Brussels sprouts, blackberries, horseradish, garlic, tomatoes, peppers, beans, and ginseng.

2) This gardener is fond of ginseng (*Panax quinquefolius—five-leaved*). It has long been considered a useful herb and, over the years, has been harvested extensively from the open woodlands of the area. Our gardener, however, buys seed from a reputable source and grows his own. See if you can find ginseng here and there. Be sure to pause at the old, old oak tree on the alley corner. It is ancient and a treasure to behold. This garden is filled with an array of vegetables and fruits planted in unlikely spots. Find what grows under the tepee supports, beneath the hoop arches, and inside the hollowed sections of old tree trunks.

3) To his credit, this gardener shares whatever he grows with his neighbors and anyone who walks by. The true spirit of gardening lives here.

Nominate a Beautiful Garden for Next Year's Walk

To nominate a garden for next year's Garden Walk, please contact us at pcmastergardener@gmail.com or call us at 219-465-3555. We love to get leads from our friends.