



Garden Thyme

March 2019

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

Volume 5, Issue 2

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Recording Master Gardener Volunteer and Education Hours

By Nikky Witkowski, Extension Educator

It has been awesome meeting many of you, learning how your organization has run, and what changes you desire. If you have thoughts or questions, I am always open to hearing from you. Just call 219-465-3555 or email me at nikky@purdue.edu.

Clarification on recording volunteer and education hours will be coming. The biggest change in reporting volunteer hours is that travel time can be counted. Total travel and volunteer time can be submitted, specifying travel time in the explanation box. Please be selective for opportunities and not travel an hour to only do a few minutes of volunteering. You may claim a lump sum of driving time for 2018 by choosing a specific date and recording the estimated amount.

Also, I love how the Porter and LaPorte MGs are working together so much! Keep in mind if you are a Porter MG working in LaPorte, you must report your hours to your primary county of Porter (the county that determines your active status and awards your badges). There is an option to choose a secondary county. These are individuals basically saying, "I REALLY want to be HIGHLY involved in both counties and associations." If you question that this is you, please check with me, and we can determine if a secondary county status is necessary. 🦋



Editor's note: The poem on this old needlepoint appeared in "The Century" magazine in August, 1907 by James Terry White under the title, "Not By Bread Alone."

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Be Ready for Spring with a Soil Test

By John Nash, PCMGA Class of 2010

Before another growing season begins, a wise gardener will have the soil in their garden or lawn tested. This should be done every 3 to 5 years. The reason soil should be tested periodically is because soil nutrients and conditions can change over time.

The soil test will measure the key elements in your soil for healthy and vigorous plant growth. Furthermore, if soil is deficient in any of these elements, the soil test laboratory will provide guidance in how to correct any deficiencies.

Typically, a basic soil test will measure the following soil conditions and key elements:

- Soil pH (soil acidity or alkalinity) & Buffer pH
- Phosphorus (P)
- Potassium (K)
- Magnesium, calcium,
- Cation Exchange Capacity (CEC) - Soil's ability to hold on to nutrients for plant consumption
- Organic matter content



Nitrogen levels are not reported due to unpredictable or available nitrogen in the soil.

Soil test kits with instructions are available at the Purdue Porter County Extension Office, 155 Indiana Avenue, Suite 301 in Valparaiso at no charge. The analysis is conducted by a certified laboratory; fees for a basic soil analysis are \$20 while a complete test cost \$30. Upon completion, you will receive a written report of the findings and remedial recommendations.

So why wait? Save yourself time, frustration, and money. Be proactive and ensure that you are providing your plants with the best possible growing environment. Test your soil. 🦋

Editor's note: For more information go to www.extension.purdue.edu/extmedia/HO/HO-71-W.pdf

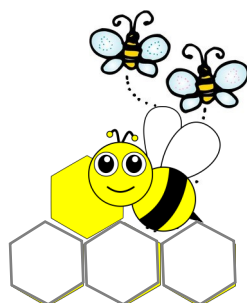


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Recibees

By Laura Hrusovsky

This carrot recipe has been a family favorite for many years, and a go-to for special dinners. Hope your family enjoys it too!

I took the Master Gardener Class in the fall of 2017 thinking it would be fun to learn more about plants and flowers, but I learned so much more! As an intern, I'm looking forward to completing my volunteer hours this year. So far, I have enjoyed meeting people who share like interests and help each other out with their gardening challenges.

Fancy Company Carrots

INGREDIENTS

Serves 6

2 lbs. carrots
¼ cup cooking liquid from carrots (or chicken broth)
½ cup mayonnaise
1 tsp. salt
1/8 tsp. black pepper
1 Tbsp. dried minced onion
1 Tbsp. horseradish (or 1 Tbsp. horseradish sauce if you prefer creamier)
2-4 Tbsp. butter
¼ cup cracker crumbs (oyster crackers work best)
Paprika and parsley to sprinkle

By Laura Hrusovsky
PCMGGA Class of 2017
Featured in
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INSTRUCTIONS

1. Preheat oven to 375 degrees. Peel carrots, keeping them whole. Cook carrots in simmering water until tender. Reserve ¼ cup of cooking liquid. Drain and cool carrots, then cut them lengthwise into strips. Place in a shallow 9" square baking dish.
2. Combine cooking liquid, mayonnaise, minced onion, horseradish, salt and pepper. Pour over the carrots. Top with cracker crumbs. Dot with thin slices of butter. Sprinkle with paprika and parsley.
3. Bake, uncovered, for 20-25 minutes.

Notes: This is a drier version of the recipe. If you prefer a creamier dish, you can double the sauce ingredients only. This can be made a day ahead. Just bring it to room temperature before putting in the oven.



Pour mayo mixture over the cooked carrots.



Top with crumbs, butter, paprika and parsley.



Bake and enjoy!

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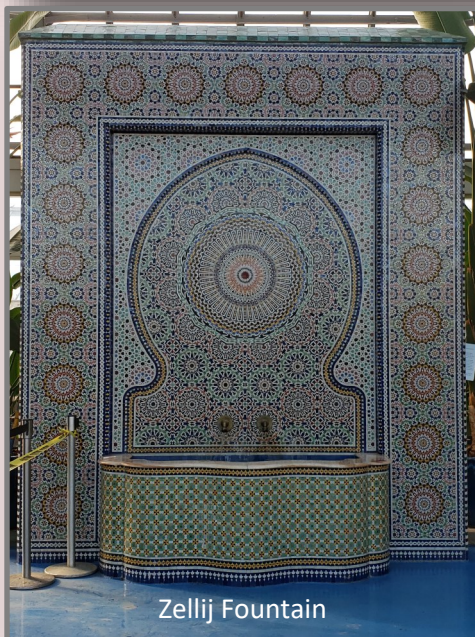
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Garfield Park



Pictured are Bromeliad Neoreglia 'Purple Rain' from South America, an example of pink throughout.



Zellij Fountain

"...there were delightful touches of the color pink throughout the lush collections."



Fern Room

GARDEN WANDERER

Garfield Park Conservatory

By Bonnie Girton, PCMGA Class of 2016

I was along for the Chesterton Garden Club's December excursion to Chicago's Garfield Park Conservatory. The theme for the holiday season was "Tickled Pink," so there were delightful touches of the color pink throughout the lush collections.

On this chilly day, we stayed indoors and strolled the Palm House, the Fern Room, the Desert House, and a collection titled, "Sugar from the Sun." The latter consists of four botanical environments focused on water, air, sunlight and sugar, i.e., how these are used by plants to produce energy that sustains life on earth. The Palm House is a specialized tropical landscape housing more than 70 spectacular palm specimens. The Fern Room is designed to portray a prehistoric landscape, complete with a forest of ferns on rocky outcroppings, surrounding a swampy lagoon. At the lagoon, one encounters a variety of fish, turtles and other aquatic life. The Desert House displays a variety of unique cacti and succulents. It was fascinating to learn how these species survive their harsh environments.

Be sure to see the most prominent architectural feature, the Zellij Fountain, a Moroccan mosaic, gifted to Chicago by the city of Casablanca.

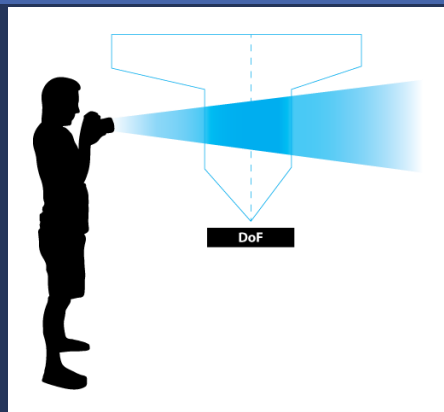
Each season emphasizes a new theme throughout the Conservatory, and there are scores of community education events.

It was such an uplifting experience to be immersed in brilliant tropics and other greenery, as winter is setting in outdoors. This conservatory is among my favorites. 🦋

Click on

www.garfieldconservatory.org

to plan your visit.



Photography Tips - III

Depth of Field

By Nancy Rosene, PCMG Class of 2012

What is depth of field (DOF)? Quite simply, it is the area in your photograph that is in focus. If the DOF is shallow, only a narrow depth of objects in the photograph are in focus. Objects in front and behind that area are out of focus. Long DOF is the opposite, with a deep area of objects in the photograph in focus.

Knowledge of this photography principle will definitely improve the impact and interest of your photographs. For example, a shallow DOF will focus in on a beautiful flower and blur a distracting foreground and background. A landscape, on the other hand, could be enhanced with areas of interest in foreground, middle ground and background being in focus.

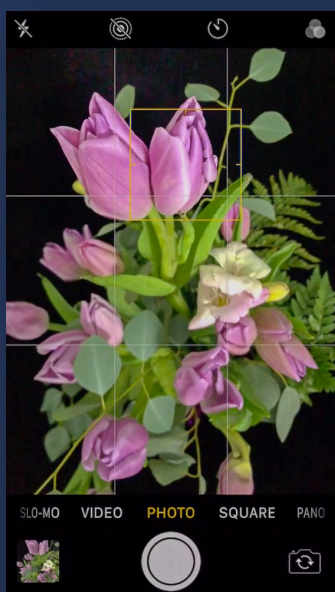
There are several factors that affect DOF—like the circle of confusion, aperture of the lens, lens focal length and focus distance, **but please don't be scared away!** If you've never experimented with DOF before, but would really like to give it a try, I'm going to give you some simple tricks to get you started.

Use Positioning for Shallow DOF

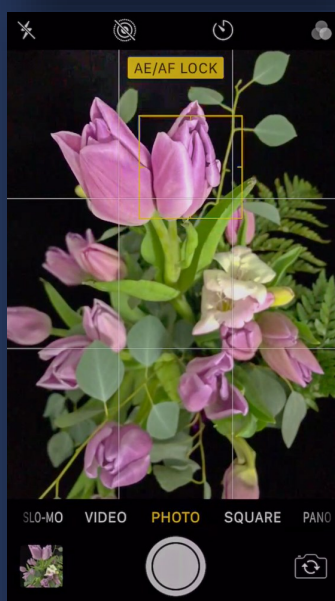
1. Position - Place the subject as far away as possible from the objects behind it. If you are in a natural setting, select the flower that is out in front of the pack. Or for portraits, position the person several yards in front of the garden wall. **Photo 2** illustrates how moving the flower further away from the background objects mimics shallow DOF and draws the eye to the subject in this iPhone 8 image.
2. Focus on the Subject - On your DSLR, spot the subject and hold the shutter half-way down to lock the focus. On your iPhone, tap the screen to select the subject, then hold your finger down on the yellow square until the focus is locked. Now take the shot!

These steps are a modest beginning, and depending on lens, light and distance, you probably will only get modest results.

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Focus iPhone 1:
Tap the iPhone's screen to block your subject.



Focus iPhone 2:
Hold your finger down on the yellow square until AE/AF Lock displays at the top of the screen.

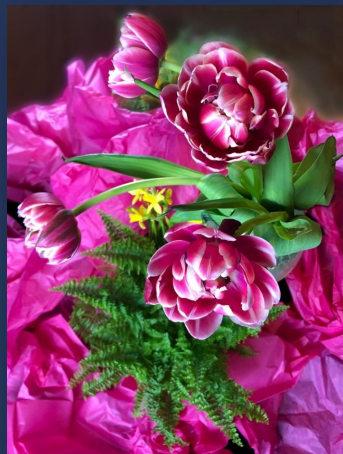
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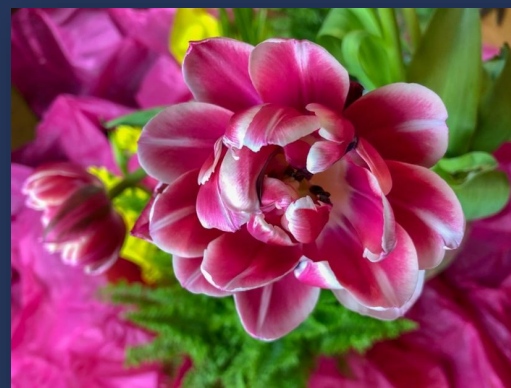
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DOF Photo 1
taken with an iPhone 8. Bottom tulip approximately six inches from the fern. Because of the law of physics, the small sensor in the iPhone naturally creates a long DOF, with most objects in this image in relatively good focus.

DOF Photo 2
taken with an iPhone 8. The central tulip is approximately 12 inches from the fern and closer to the camera lens. Note how distance can mimic a shallow DOF, zeroing focus onto the main subject.



Using Scene Modes

If you are ready for greater challenge, there are scene modes. Most hobby enthusiast DSLRs and point-and-shoot cameras have the ability to set a “scene mode.” The best mode for producing a shallow DOF is portrait mode. For a long DOF, use landscape mode.

The iPhones, because of their small sensors, naturally have a massively large DOF. For shallow DOF, iPhone’s models 7 Plus, 8 Plus and up have a portrait mode to blur (aka bokeh) backgrounds.

Using Software

The newest iPhone XS has software to adjust DOF on your photos after the photo is taken. There are also smartphone apps available that can produce a specific DOF for android and iPhone photographers. And if you are a Photoshop Elements or Photoshop Creative Suite user, there are several techniques and filters available to produce blur to an after-image.

Advanced Training

For techie geeks, or for those of us that love photography and are willing to test our patience—get out the manual and **learn your equipment**, then study the excellent online resources and training courses available. You won’t ever regret making an effort to learn this valuable technique!

iPhone Background Blurring Apps: <https://iphonephotographyschool.com/blur-background-app/>

How to Add DOF to Your iPhone Photos: <https://www.mobiography.net/tutorials/add-depth-field-iphone-photos/>

DOF Online Training:

<https://www.bhphotovideo.com/explora/photography/tips-and-solutions/depth-field-part-1>

<https://www.bhphotovideo.com/explora/photography/tips-and-solutions/depth-field-part-2>

<https://www.bhphotovideo.com/explora/photography/tips-and-solutions/depth-field-part-3>

*Editor’s note:
To read Photography Tips
I and II, see Volume 4
Issue 5 page 2 and Vol-
ume 5 Issue 1 page 5.*



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Introducing New MG Members

By Suzanna Tudor,
PCMGGA Class of 2002

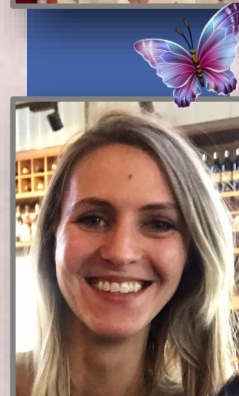
Kaye Beeler, 2017, enjoys being outside and gardening but was frustrated with why her plants were not thriving. Was she making mistakes? Does the soil need something or wrong plants in the wrong place? The MG course helped answer her questions. Kaye worked some retail but was mainly a stay-at-home mom of four, now grown, and has 13 grandchildren. She and her husband, Mike, of 47 years, live in Porter County. She grew up in Idaho; Mike in Crown Point. Interests include arts, piano instruction, cake decorating, and photography.

Deborah Sarver, 2018, stated she has a big garden and wanted to know more about beating the weeds, growing things the right way, and dealing with non-performing fruit trees. Regarding the fruit trees--she cut them down and planted new varieties. A retiree from nursing, Deborah stays busy working as a Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) and substitute teacher, along with hobbies of gardening, crafts, crocheting and woodwork. She has seven children, many living locally, others in Iowa and Texas, 26 grandchildren, and happily shared that on Feb. 4 a two-year-old, adopted foster child will be added to the family. She and her husband were married in Illinois and now reside in Wanatah. And no, she wasn't blessed with the great Wanatah soil--more sandy loam with a 5.5 Ph. However, she's ready for spring after loading up on soil and amenities at the recent Lowe's closeout sale.

Karolina Zielinski, 2018, desired learning about local gardening, plant species and collaborating with other people interested in gardening. She saw a MG Garden Walk occurring in her neighborhood with people discussing and admiring the garden and wanted to be a part of the camaraderie. She researched becoming a MG and made it a goal to take the class. A child psychologist, Karolina works with autistic children. Her family originally came from Poland, and she was born in Detroit. She gradually moved westward, attending Western Michigan University and then finally settling in Valparaiso in 2009 with her husband, Zachary. Karolina enjoys the dunes, reading, visiting friends, movies, and animals. She has two dogs, a Shiba inu (think miniature Husky) and a Black Lab mix. She is interested in house plants and would like to become more versed in plant diseases and identification.

Susanne "Suse" Hogan, 2018, wanted to learn more about gardening to improve and develop their four acres. Their property, previously owned by a head librarian for the Supreme Court, provided a variety of non-typical plantings, i.e., prickly pear cactus, in need of some TLC. Currently, Crocosmia 'Lucifer' are flourishing in the micro-climate environment, along with dinner-plate Hibiscus. Suse and her husband, Steve Churchill (yes, she kept her maiden name) moved here from a suburb of Chicago. A construction project manager, but not yet fully retired, Suse still does consulting. Along with maintaining and sprucing up their acreage, Suse and her husband train Irish Water Spaniels for competitions. They have one at present. For those unfamiliar with the breed, they are a Labrador retriever type with a poodle coat.

Welcome these and other new Porter County Master Gardener Association members!



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Porter County Master Gardeners

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OPPORTUNITIES

EARN VOLUNTEER CREDIT!

Porter County Extension Board Tree Sale:

Sat., April 6 from 8 a.m.—11 a.m. at the Porter County Fairgrounds 4-H Building. Twenty to twenty five volunteers will be needed for set up, assisting patrons, and tear down. Contact LuAnn Troxel for details by email at luann@pcgarden.info



Ask a Master Gardener booths at these events:

Extension Tree Sale, April 6, 2018

Earth Day, on or about April 22, 2019,

Porter County Fair, July 19-28, 2019.

Contact Jim Albers at jim.albers@valpo.edu

PCMGA Garden Walk June 29 needs many volunteers.

Contact Ellen Standafer at estandafer@comcast.net

Porter County Fair is July 19-28, 2019.

Volunteers needed for Extension booth. Contact John Nash at johnjnash@comcast.net

Judges needed for the Open Class flower competition. Contact Janet Magnuson at njmag@hotmail.com



Native Garden Helper: Shirley Heinze Land Trust is in search for volunteers to help maintain the native garden outside their offices at Meadowbrook Nature Preserve in Valparaiso. Tools can be provided, but volunteers are welcome to bring their own. There are no set dates or times for this project. Volunteers are welcome to come as it fits in their schedule; we just ask you to let us know when you are coming by contacting the office at 219-242-8558 or email volunteer@heinzetrust.org



EARN EDUCATION CREDIT!



La Porte County Spring Garden Show:

Sat., March 23 from 8 a.m.—4 p.m. at Michigan City High School, 8466 W Pahl Rd, Michigan City, IN 46360. Choose sessions such as Gardening the Natural Way, Plant This Not That, and more.

<http://www.lpmastergardener.com/2019-garden-show.html>

Education Opportunities around Indiana

<https://www.purdue.edu/hla/sites/master-gardener/events/categories/advanced-mg-training-opportunities/>

Monthly PCMGA meetings often include an educational topic after the business meeting. These can be logged as educational hours, as well as, educational videos of former Garden Show seminars found at pcgarden.info on the Member Pages.

2019 Purdue Master Gardener State Tour

Date: Friday June 21, 2019. Theme is: "Building Botanical Bridges: Yesterday, Today & Tomorrow". Host: Sunnyside MBA in New Albany, IN. See info at <https://tinyurl.com/purduemgtour>

Purdue Master Gardener Study Abroad 2019

Dates: July 16-27, 2019. Location is "Gardens of Ireland". Learn garden and landscape history in Ireland and Northern Ireland

<https://www.purdue.edu/hla/sites/MGStudyAbroad/>



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