



The Michiana

Broadcaster

Master Gardeners Association

January



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Winter Garden Calendar

By B. Rosie Lerner, Consumer Horticulture

January

HOME (Indoor plants and activities)

- Keep holiday poinsettias and other plants near a bright window. Water as top of soil becomes dry.
- Increase humidity around houseplants by grouping plants together, placing them on a pebble-water tray or running a humidifier.
- Check stored produce and tender flower bulbs and roots for rot, shriveling or excess moisture. Remove and discard damaged material.
- Repot houseplants as they outgrow current pots.

YARD (Lawns, woody ornamentals and fruits)

- Check young trees for rodent injury on lower trunks. Prevent injury with hardware cloth or protective collars.
- Keep road and sidewalk salt away from plants. Construct a screen of burlap, if necessary, to keep salt spray off plants.
- "Leaf" through nursery catalogs and make plans for landscape and home orchard additions. Order plants early for best selection.
- Early spring-flowering trees and shrubs, such as forsythia, crabapple, flowering quince, flowering dogwood and honeysuckle, can be forced for early indoor blooms by placing cut branches in water in a warm location.

GARDEN (Flowers, vegetables and small fruits)

- Send for seed catalogs for the garden.
- Sketch your garden plans on paper, including what to grow, spacing, arrangement and number of plants needed.
- Order your seeds and plants as early as possible for best selection.
- Wood ashes from the fireplace can be spread in the garden, but don't overdo it. Wood ashes increase soil pH, and excess application can make some nutrients unavailable for plant uptake. Have soil tested to be certain of the pH before adding wood ash.





Day Minder . . . Watch Us Grow!



January 2006

16	Mon	MMGA Board Meeting - Extension Office	Noon
21	Tues	MMGA Monthly Membership Meeting – Ag Hall White Elephant Exchange (Bring as many items as you like) Loretta Ortiz-Ribbing speaking on some highly enlightening pest related topic, which is a surprise! So please come and find out. Also, there will be a special door prize at this meeting and YOU could be the lucky winner!	7:00 PM

February 2006

20	Mon	MMGA Board Meeting - Extension Office	Noon
28	Tues	MMGA Monthly Membership Meeting- Ag Hall	7:00 PM

I would like to thank everyone for a great year. Being your president was an honor and an experience I will always treasure. I remember the day about 4 years ago, we had just moved to Indiana, and my husband surprised me with tickets to the Garden Tour. I had always had an interest in gardening, and he thought I would enjoy it. Little did we know how much that tour would change our lives.

I was talking to Gwen Ferland at the hospitality center and expressed an interest in Master Gardeners. She said I needed to talk to Jeff and walked me over to introduce me. As luck would have it, there was one open spot in the upcoming class.

The class was an amazing experience. I realized quickly that I was making friendships that would last a lifetime. I had never done any public speaking, but I decided to push my comfort level and volunteer to do a seminar. It surprised me to find that I was very comfortable and actually enjoyed the experience.

One of my proudest days was when I was elected by my class to sit on the board. I had never sat on a board and found the whole process intriguing. When the opportunity came to run for Vice President, I decided to take the plunge and really get involved. Being president of a wonderful organization like Michiana Master Gardeners was an experience of a lifetime. I would urge each and every one of you to get involved as much as possible. Thank you for a great year!

Dara Revelli

The foolish man seeks
happiness in the distance;
the wise grows it under his
feet

-James Oppenheim

Wish List Items for Garden Tour 2006

Silk and dried flowers, ribbon, scrap material, garden stencils, canning jars and lids, small garden tools, old metal buckets, watering cans, Fieldstones, rocks (app. size of cantaloupe), bikes, trikes, wagons, old chairs, benches, old window frames, scrap wood (for signs, etc.), steppingstone molds, dried herbs (lavender, chamomile, rose petals, lemon verbena, lemon balm, scented geraniums), grapevine, clay pots, vases, baskets, wire, wooden spoons, old mailboxes, corn husks, wheat sheaves, picture frames, empty seed packets, white polymer clay.

2005 Purdue Master Gardener State Conference (June 23-25 2005)

Submitted by Sue Stuckman
Class of 1998

The Lake and Porter County Master Gardener Associations hosted the 2005 State Conference. Mary Davis, Edie and Paul Troyer and I attended from Elkhart County. Maxine Troyer traveled from LaPorte County. A busload of master gardeners set off for Taltree Arboretum, early Thursday afternoon from Pierce Middle School. A walking tour of the natural area took us to arbors, picnic areas, an open-air rotunda, pools and running streams. The hope is to preserve representative native landscapes; the next phase will be putting the plants in place. An Oak Forest is being planted which contains many different kinds of hardy oak. For the second event on our Thursday tour the bus took us back in time to Buckley Homestead, part of the Dunes National Lakeshore park system. Master Gardeners as tour guides had dressed in period costumes for this occasion. I particularly enjoyed the vegetable gardens. Plants were varieties from the 1850's – near a pioneer cabin, and from the turn of the century – the homestead garden, and at an encampment - a traditional native American garden. Porter Master Gardeners tend the beautiful vegetable, herb and flower gardens throughout the season. Supper that night had been prepared outside in a huge cooking pot – beef stew with a side of cornbread, lettuce salad from the gardens, mint tea (we had helped gather mint from the herb gardens) and rhubarb water, dessert cookies fried on a skillet and make-your-own vanilla ice cream.

Next day everyone arrived at Pierce Middle School to register for the sessions and enjoy a continental breakfast. We were asked to pick out our own master gardener bag. They had been made in different shapes, colors, patterns and fabrics. In each bag were conference information, lots of great free stuff, and a number for a door prize to retrieve during breakfast time.

Eric Biddinger, Porter County Extension Educator, presented the first morning's general session. His PowerPoint slideshow included pictures of past

agricultural technology, such as hand plows, and horse drawn cultivators. He took us through the chemical revolution - products that were going to solve the pest problems, but actually harmed people and wildlife, and polluted water sources. Today we have power tools and IPM. Integrated Pest Management uses knowledge of the plant, and insect or disease lifecycles, soil type and condition, and weather (in other words tries to integrate all factors) to come up with the best plan for growing success. *Old Things Are New Again* was a fitting title for his talk.

Peggy Sellers in her awards general session, (after a nice box lunch) traced the Master Gardener Program in Indiana from 1979 to the present. Demographic statistics have changed over the years - in 1979 there were four counties with Master Gardener Programs: Lake, Allen, Vanderburgh, and Marion. Today 70 counties in Indiana train Master Gardeners. The first Master Gardeners spent 50% of their volunteer hours on the phone at the extension office. Now we have many different outreach programs to earn volunteer hours. Three new Gold Award Master Gardeners were presented with daylilies. Ricky Kemery, Allen County Educator, was honored as coordinator of the year.

Wayne Gruber, President of NW IN Nursery and Landscape Assoc., presented the afternoon general session. He described his experiences from Purdue landscape design student through an internship and work in his field to ownership of Gardens on the Prairie in Lowell IN. In past years, annuals were used to landscape - perennials were left in the backyard. When landscapers began to recognize perennials, only 4-5 standard perennials were used in almost all designs. The Perennial Plant Assoc. (PPA) was formed in 1983. Today, with a great interest in perennials developed, 30-50 new cultivars are being introduced each year. There is a wonderful selection available. This being so, our speaker suggested we splurge once in a while on a plant we really love. It could bring us years of pleasure. A slide show of selections from his gardens highlighted the talk and a handout gave us the names of the plants.

There was a good selection of breakout sessions for the day. First, I chose *Native Plants* presented by Mark O'Brien of JF New Native Plant Nursery in Walkerton. (Having been to Walkerton to visit their outdoor nurseries, I know they are a wonder, and the people are very hospitable when you visit.) The plants are raised from Great Lakes genotype seed stock from Indiana, Ohio, Wisconsin, and Michigan. Seed is also sold. (Local genotypes have adapted over many years to local soil, weather patterns etc.) He explained how grasses dominated the prairies. Forbs settled in an area after grasses, and depend on deep-rooted grasses for support. He showed some of the most beautiful plants at their Walkerton site. Plants included those in dry areas (sand phlox, very rare) to wetland areas such as cardinal flowers and pond plants, white and yellow water lilies. A free sample prairie seed packet was available.

Dr. Liz Maynard presented *Vegetable Gardening*, very interestingly in an A-Z slideshow - from asparagus to zucchini. White asparagus can grow under covers. It greens up when the covers are removed. Chiogga beets (an 1840's heirloom) are striped white and red. Swiss chard and beets are closely related plants. For beet cultivars, the roots have been developed, for chard, the leaves. In multicolored chards the petioles grow in shades of yellow and red. Disease management for tomatoes was discussed. Tomato diseases experienced by many gardeners last season were Septoria leaf spot and early blight. To prevent disease, rotate mulch, keep the leaves dry, and use resistant varieties. Edamame is an edible soybean... and so on through the alphabet. For the letter 'W', a weather website was given. The weather database (Iclimate.org) is located at <http://www.agry.purdue.edu/climate/>.

Supper was served at 6:00, and then Stephanie Cohen took the podium to present *Flowers for the Front of the Border*. Prof. Cohen is Acting Director of Landscape Design at Temple University Arboretum, and contributing editor for *Country Living Gardener*. She is featured on QVC as the "Perennial Diva." She was humorous and short – short? She cleverly interspersed short jokes throughout her topic with the subtopic, Shorter is Better. She had chosen plants 2 feet or under with good floral bloom. The list included irises and daylilies whose drying foliage would be easy to

camouflage, also some grasses. The slideshow featured many lovely cultivars, with a plant list handout for us.

On Saturday morning, Gregg Pierceall, Prof. of Landscape Architecture at Purdue gave us some principles of *Residential Landscaping* in a general session. There are several ways to approach a landscape design, for example, visually or verbally. Creativity, inspiration, and basic knowledge are needed. Landscape design "looks to form and function" in the area, garden design incorporates the floral/plant elements. His slideshow showed landscapes created for Chicago residents. The designs included parterre gardens, walled gardens, fountains, courtyards, a dining terrace, a ring garden (actually several rings that mirrored circles in the building architecture) and a pergola. He mentioned that repeating shapes from the building(s) in the surrounding gardens bring the home and landscape together in a pleasing way.

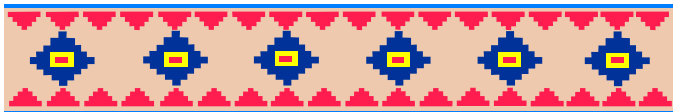
Dr. Tom Turpin was to present *Insects, Bees and Butterflies*. He showed up at the High School and waited – and that left the group at Pierce Middle School thinking he was lost. Plans were put in place for Olga Petryszyn to present a general session on *Hostas* when he was located. Each then presented an abbreviated general session, rather than the attending group having to choose one or the other for a breakout session.

Ms. Petryszyn is a renowned breeder of hostas. Her topic was not so much hostas as techniques of hybridizing. She donned antennae and wings, reached back for two large artificial flowers that she called "Molly" and "George" and comically acted out the process of human interference in pollination. Desirable traits in Molly and George can be chosen (for example leaf size in one and leaf color in the other). Hand pollination may be able to produce at least one offspring with the desired combination. The slideshow featured her hostas, seed collection and growing laboratories. The speaker passed out postcards of the different hostas she has bred. At the end of the session the lucky holder of "Blue Hawaii" received that plant.

Dr. Turpin, Purdue Professor of Entomology, first asked for a volunteer without describing the task. Then he gave her a giant cockroach in a halter - he claimed this cockroach was a trained pet. The master gardener accepted this reluctantly, but bravely. Dr. Turpin stated the cockroach is harmless, like many insects it rids us of decaying matter. In the meantime, the movements of the Master Gardener and the cockroach were upstaging the speaker. Dr. Turpin is also a very humorous speaker. He reminded us that only the female mosquito bites for blood, and this only to produce her offspring. (Did this make anyone feel better about mosquito bites?)

The last breakout session for me was *Birds*. Beverly Overmyer's slideshow featured many of our backyard birds and young in nests. Being an avid birder, she knew many facts about these birds: their nesting, feeding habits, and their idiosyncratic traits. Did you know brown creepers search for bugs crawling up tree trunks and nuthatches search down the tree? We received several handouts with excellent suggestions for designing landscapes for food, cover and nesting sites.

Next year's conference will be hosted by the Hamilton County Master Gardeners at the Noblesville Extension grounds. There are demonstration gardens on the grounds. A tour is planned for either White River Park gardens or Museum of Arts grounds. Non-gardening spouses who enjoy golf can choose from 22 courses in the area. The conference date in 2006 is September 22-23. This will avoid the hottest days of summer as well as graduation and wedding weekend plans. We hope to see many more Elkhart County Master Gardeners in Noblesville next year. It will be a wonderful time!



Visit our website at:
www.michianamastergardeners.com

Membership Updates:

Add to last month's update on Jean Rombke: Rombke@juno.com

**Alys Kidder has a new email:
AlysKidder@gmail.com**

Judy Baker has new information. You can reach her at:

**Judy Baker
21045 Rebecca Lane
Bristol, IN 46507
(574) 848-5235
bakerds@aol.com**

Rhonda Loucks: rhonway@fourway.net



EVERYBODY LOVED THE PUMPKIN CAKE BROUGHT TO OUR NOVEMBER CARRY-IN DINNER BY MAYREA RUESSER. HERE IS HER RECIPE FOR ALL TO ENJOY:

PUMPKIN PIE CAKE

INGREDIENTS:

**32 OZ. CAN PUMPKIN
4 EGGS, BEATEN
12 OZ. CAN EVAPORATED MILK
1 1/2 CUPS SUGAR
2 TSP. CINNAMON
1 TSP. NUTMEG
1/2 TSP. GINGER
18 1/2 OZ PKG. YELLOW CAKE MIX
3/4 CUP MELTED BUTTER
CHOPPED PECANS**

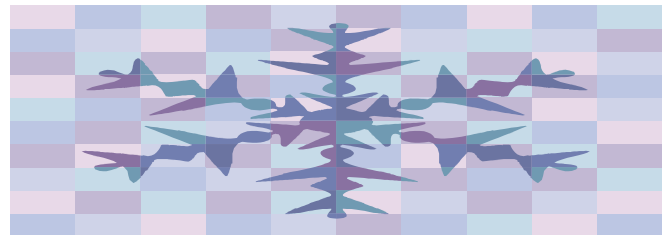
MIX TOGETHER PUMPKIN, EGGS, MILK, SUGAR, CINNAMON, NUTMEG, &

GINGER. POUR INTO GREASED 9 X 13" PAN. SPRINKLE DRY CAKE MIX ON TOP. DRIZZLE MELTED BUTTER OVER CAKE MIX. SPRINKLE NUTS OVER TOP. BAKE A 325 DEGREES FOR 1 1/4 TO 1 1/2 HOURS OR UNTIL KNIFE INSERTED IN CENTER COMES OUT CLEAN. YUM!!

PER MAYREA: "DEAR FELLOW MASTER GARDENERS, THIS RECIPE WAS SHARED WITH OUR CLASS OF 2001 BY A FELLOW MEMBER, PAT KINDLE. SHE BROUGHT IT TO A MEETING THAT FALL. MANY THANKS TO PAT. I HAVE TAKEN THIS CAKE TO MANY FUNCTIONS SINCE THEN AND IT ALWAYS BRINGS RAVE REVIEWS. IT IS MY PLEASURE TO PASS IT ALONG TO ALL OF YOU WHO WANT IT."



Alys Kidder and Judy Baker



Spring Seminars

We have an exciting slate of seminars set for this spring. This year's seminars are being given by the general membership, as we do not have a new class this year. A big thank you goes out to all that have volunteered to help in this effort. They will receive volunteer hours for their time in preparing and presenting these seminars. You can receive education hours by attending the seminars. Mariann Hollopeter (Class of '01 and chairperson of the Speaker's Bureau) has organized this year's seminars, and they promise to be very interesting. The schedule this year is as follows:

Edible Flowers and Native Plants

Pam Geers and Gwen Ferland

Palmers True Value, 2/25/06, 10:00 am

"A Good Gardener Always Starts as a Good Weeder"

- Amos Pettingill

Our November meeting was short and to the point so that we could get to all of the good food. The main point of business was the election of two new board members. They are Alys Kidder ('01) and Judy Baker ('00). Judy and Alys are filling positions that were vacated due to expiring terms. If you are interested in serving on the board, please contact Heidi Zavatsky and give her your name for future elections.

Heidi Zavatsky, 295-5956 or
hkz1430@aol.com

What Bugs You?

Dr. Loretta Ortiz-Ribbing
McIntosh Greenhouse, 3/4/06, 10:00 am

Propagation: Getting More

Dara Revelli
Middlebury Library, 3/11/06, 10:00 am

Landscaping Made Easy

Kathleen Cripe
Prairie Trail Farms, 3/18/06, 10:00 am

Butterflies

Sherry Guyberson
Elkhart Library, 3/25/06 **1:00 PM**

It's Spring, Now What?

Pati Goss
Nappanee Library, 4/1/06, 10:00 am

Why is the Grass Greener on the Other Side?

Brad Hooley
Kruse Farm Supply, 4/8/06, 10:00 am

Worm Composting

Sue Stevens
The Garden Shop, 4/22/05, **1:00 PM**



Volunteer Hotline

Excerpted from email dated 1/3/06

Hi all:

I just want to wish all the Master Gardeners a Happy and Fragrant New Year.

While it may seem a little early, I wanted to ask you to think about volunteering for this year's hotline at the Extension Office. I would like to have MG volunteers operate the hotline from April 1 (no fooling) until November 3, 2006. The hours of operation would be from 9 a.m. until 1:00 p.m. I have heard great things about the MG volunteers and their hotline help. I will truly appreciate your volunteering to help the community and me.

If you are interested in volunteering for the hotline this year, please mark your calendar for a mandatory Hotline Volunteer Training meeting which will take place on Wednesday, March 22, 2006 from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the Extension office Conference Room. We will discuss all procedures, new references, the new microscope and how to record images, plus lots of other pertinent information.

I have asked Pati Goss to coordinate the volunteer calendar. If you have an idea what days/hours you want to volunteer, please contact Pati at patigoss@juno.com or 862-4270. Thanks for all your help and support.

Loretta



Upclose and Personal

Monthly Member Biography

Pam Geers ('01)



Born and raised in Cincinnati Ohio, Pam Geers is a Hoosier transplant. She moved here in 1990 with hubby Bill when he took a job with NIBCO. Bill and Pam are high school sweethearts and have been married for thirty-one years. They have four children, Billy, Andy, Matt and Sandy, (all live in the area) and six grandchildren, McKenzey, Zacharey, Alexis, Cali, Emma and Carlie (and one on the way). Pam and Bill also share their home with Cleo, a black lab mix and Smokey and Gidget, their 2 cats. Pam has an associate's degree in Ornamental Horticulture and worked in the field for several years before moving to Elkhart. Her experience included wholesale sales of Horticultural supplies and plants and Landscape design.

After moving to Elkhart, she worked at Sautter's Garden Center (where she met and became friends with Gwen Ferland). She later took a job at

NIBCO (where her husband is also employed) and brought Gwen along with her several months later. Although both the money and the hours were better at NIBCO, Pam missed gardening. Gwen enrolled in the Master Gardening training with the class of 2000 and loved it, so in 2001, with Gwen's encouragement, Pam followed suit. Pam found the training excellent and a great refresher to her horticulture degree. She said that taking the old essay test was challenging, even with her background. Since becoming a Master Gardener, Pam has presented several seminars, had an article published in the Elkhart Truth, worked on the Garden Tour for 3 years, including chairing the Volunteer Committee in 2004, served on the committee for the annual dinner in 2005, and is now the editor of the Broadcaster. Pam loves gardening, both flowers and vegetables, enjoys perennials and wants to learn more about prairie gardens. In addition to gardening, Pam enjoys quilting, stamping, reading, and those grandchildren. Pam said she enjoys Master Gardeners now because of "all the people. There is nowhere else that I can go and talk plants for a couple of hours and not bore the heck out of somebody."

When is the best time to fertilize my lawn?

Dr. Loretta Ortiz-Ribbing



Most people cannot wait for spring weather so they can get out and fertilize their lawns. The idea being that everyone wants to fertilize with nitrogen (N) in the spring to get their lawns looking nice and green as soon as possible. However, late fall applications of nitrogen fertilizer are better for the over all health of your lawn. This is true because N as a nutrient stimulates increased photosynthesis in the grass plant and the extra energy derived from it can be utilized by the grass plant in three ways. The energy can go directly into leaf growth, it can be used to maintain the plant, or it can be stored in the roots. In early November, the temperature is still adequate for photosynthesis, but the cooler temperatures prevent the plant from using much added N for plant growth. Therefore, most of the extra energy derived from a November application of nitrogen is stored by the plant in the root system. Next spring, the stored nitrogen products are used in green-up of the grass plant, but more importantly, they are used for root growth.

Research by Zac Reicher, Purdue University Professor and Turfgrass Extension Specialist, shows that fall applications of nitrogen should be in a quick release form (listed as urea or ammonical nitrogen on the bag) in lawn care products that either are all N or have little or no phosphorous (P), or potassium (K). In the fall, it is important for the plant to take up the N quickly and store the energy for maximum root growth next spring with a minimum of fall leaf growth. The last application of fertilizer in the fall should be done near the final mowing, and be applied at 1.0-1.25 lbs N/1000 square feet. Keep in mind that an early spring application of nitrogen is not equivalent to a November application.

An early spring application of nitrogen dramatically stimulates leaf growth at the expense of root growth, and will never compensate for a missed application in November.

Another important concept to realize about lawn fertilization concerns liming. Most lawns in Indiana do not need annual applications of lime. The only way to determine if a lime application is justified is by conducting a soil test to determine the soil's pH. Never recommend applying lime without first having the soil tested. If a soil test shows that the pH is less than 6.0, a lime application may be warranted. Most lime materials are about the same. Ground agricultural limestone or ground Dolomitic limestone are the preferred forms of lime for use on all turfgrass areas. Forms of lime that are pelletized are not as efficient as or any better than the traditional, smaller, granular limes, but pelletized lime will still get the job done. When considering lawn care, do not pay for or apply lime unless it is needed and justified by a soil test, and do not believe that pelletized lime products will be any better than traditional lime.

For all sorts of turf information, tips, and great publications, visit Purdue's turf website. This site is located online at:

<http://www.agry.purdue.edu/turf/index.html>.

