

PURDUE

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PURDUE UNIVERSITY COOPERATIVE EXTENSION SERVICE

Elkhart County

Elkhart County 4-H Fairgrounds

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Goshen, IN 46528-6898

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Broadcaster

“Helping Each Other Grow!”

Michiana Master Gardeners Association

February 2012

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LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT’S DESK

Dear Master Gardener Friends,

I am sitting here looking out the window at the snow from yesterday. Everything looks so clean and fresh. Living in the woods is like living in a wonderland after a fresh snow. It is beautiful as the snow is falling as it seems to close you in. Then, after the snow has stopped, you see the trees with the snow clinging to the branches. The large spruce trees across the street are heavy with the fresh snow. It looks like a picture. When the sun does come out, the snow sparkles like diamonds on the trees. We frequently have deer walking through our woods, and when

it is snowing hard, they are covered with the white stuff making their coats appear even heavier. Frequently, when we get up in the morning, after a fresh snow, our front yard looks like a school yard with all the deer tracks.

I am certain you have been receiving seed catalogs and plant books in the mail. It seems like I get one or two every week. Now is the time to begin planning your gardens for spring, if you have not already started. Many of us do pretty much the same thing every year, however it is fun to look through the catalogs and see what is available. There are always new plants that have been developed. The nice thing about gardening is you can do whatever you want, and if you try something new and it doesn't turn out as planned, you know not to try it again.

For those of you who were able to attend the "Real Colors" presentation by Mary Ann Leinhart-Cross on a recent Saturday, you know what a good time we had! It was very interesting to see how different people react to situations and just how they might be thought of by others. I got a much better understanding of how I myself can work with people more effectively. Needless to say, we did laugh a lot during the morning and found out some interesting things about each other. If you ever have an occasion to participate in the "Real Colors" workshop, I recommend it.

Now I want to pass on some information for all of you to remember. If you remember last November, the evening of the Thanks-for-Giving Carry-In Dinner, we had a very heavy snow storm that started as rain in the afternoon, and by the time of the meeting, we had a lot of snow on the ground. It caught everyone by surprise. Many of you were not able to get to the meeting, and we even got some calls asking if we were still having the meeting. As a result of that evening, the Board has been discussing the possibility of developing a Cancellation Procedure. What we came up with is a very good plan so everyone can be made aware of any cancellations of MMGA events. We will be posting this plan in each issue of the Broadcaster just as a reminder so that if we have severe weather or anything else that would warrant cancellation, you will always be reminded of the procedure. Here goes:

If the President and/or the Vice President feel that it would be in the best interest of the membership to cancel an event, we will confer with Jeff Burbrink at the Extension office. If we do indeed cancel an event, it will be done by 5 PM the day of. An email will be sent out to all Master Gardeners notifying you of this. For those people who do not have email access, please give your name and phone number to Membership Committee members Helen Martin or Marilyn Miles. We will develop a system to contact you via phone. If we make any changes in this procedure, we will keep everyone informed. If you have questions regarding this please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,

Barbara Heeter





*Day Minder . . .
Watch Us Grow*



13	Mon.	Garden Tour Committee Meeting- Extension Office Conference Room	6:30 PM
20	Mon..	Board Meeting—Extension Office Con- ference Room (Lunch at noon)	12:30 PM
20	Mon.	Spring Celebration Committee Meet- ing—Panera Bread (Dinner 6:00)	6:30 PM
28	Tues.	Member Meeting—Topiaries, Betty Foltz	7:00 PM



- March 2nd** Tree Sale Orders Due to SWCD
- March 12th** Garden Tour Committee Meeting
- March 19th** Board Meeting
- March 10th** SPRING CELEBRATION and ANNUAL DINNER
TRACY DI-SABATO-AUST (Greencroft) 5 PM
- March 27th** Member Meeting, Cancelled due to Spring Celebration

- April 9th** Garden Tour Committee Meeting
- April 14th** Tree Sale Pick Up
- April 16th** Board Meeting
- April 24th** Member Meeting, 4-H Fair Horticulture Committee, Kate Rink

Upcoming Meeting Dates 2012

Page 4

May 14th Garden Tour Committee Meeting

May 21st Board Meeting

May 29th Member Meeting, Our Weather, Cindi Clawson, Meteorologist

June 11, 2012 Garden Tour Committee Meeting

June 18th Board Meeting

June 26th Member Meeting, The Chimney Swifts, Rhonda De Carlo

July 9th Garden Tour Committee Meeting

July 14th GARDEN TOUR 2012 (10 am to 4 pm)

July 16th Board Meeting 4:00 PM in Ag Hall prior to set up for fair

July 16th (Monday) Fair Set Up, Pizza/drinks provided by MMGA, 6 PM

July 19th Garden Tour Wrap Meeting

July 20th to July 28th Elkhart County 4-H Fair, Theme for this Year is
“PROVIDING THE CORNERSTONE TO BUILD UPON”

August 20th Board Meeting

August 28th GARDEN TOUR APPRECIATION DINNER

provided by MMGA, 6:30 PM

September 17th Board meeting

September 25th Member Meeting, Wellfield Botanical Garden, Eric Amt

October 15th Board Meeting

October 30th Member Meeting, Butterflies, Ruth Reese

November 19th Board Meeting

November 27th Thanks-For-Giving Dinner (Carry-In) Board Elections
6:30 PM

December 3th Board Meeting Officer Elections/ Liaison Assignments

NO Member Meetings in December

Master Gardeners offer Vegetable Seminars

The 2011 Elkhart County Master Gardener class is offering you a chance to learn about growing vegetables. The Plan Now, Plant Later seminar will be presented four times this winter at various locations in Elkhart County. *All seminars will begin at 1:00 p.m. should last about 2 hours.*

Dates and locations for the seminars are:

January 28 – Middlebury Public Library, 101 E Winslow St. Middlebury

March 10 – Elkhart Environmental Center, 1717 East Lusher, Elkhart

March 17 – Kruse Farm Supply, 19904 CR 6, Bristol

March 24 – McIntosh Greenhouse, 65856 US 33, Goshen

Topics for the seminar will include planning your garden, soil preparation, planting, plant care, harvest and cleanup. Just about everyone will be able to walk away with at least one new idea to improve your vegetable garden.

Purdue University, Indiana Counties, and the US Department of Agriculture Cooperating.

Purdue University is an equal access/equal opportunity institution.

Purdue Extension

Knowledge to Go

1-888-EXT-INFO

MICHIANA MASTER GARDENERS' ASSOCIATION'S
13th ANNUAL

SPRING CELEBRATION

featuring



TRACY DISABATO-AUST

PUBLIC SEMINAR

The Well Designed Perennial Garden

March 10th, 2012 at Greencroft Community Center, Goshen
Seminar 2:00 P.M.; Doors Open at 1:00 P.M.

Goodie Bags to the first 120 Attendees

Tickets \$10 Pre-Sale/\$12 Day of Seminar

Available at February Membership Meeting, Extension Office,
Varns & Hoover (Middlebury), Martin's Pet & Garden (Elkhart),
McIntosh's (Goshen), Greencroft Community Center

DINNER, AWARDS & PROGRAM

High Impact, Low Care Plants

March 10th, 2012 at Greencroft Community Center, Goshen
Social Time 5:00 P.M.

Reservations Required; \$17 for Guests, No Charge for members

Tickets available at the February Membership Meeting

Or via e-mail to [lindaharkleroad @.gmail.com](mailto:lindaharkleroad@gmail.com)





President Barb Heeter called the January 16th meeting to order with all members present.

Treasurer Jim Bare reported a year-end balance of \$33,739.37. Expenses for mid-November thru December 31st, 2011, totaled \$430.16, and income totaled \$2,380.88 (mostly dues and annual dinner). Jim stated that the surplus balance is being used a little at a time every year. In 2011, we spent \$4,328.00 more than we earned. In addition, the 2012 budget reflects a \$4200.00+ increase over the 2011 budget. The surplus also allows for special requests and unique circumstances that occur throughout the year that are not included in the budget.

The \$2,000.00 scholarship money will be sent to Purdue in January.

It was proposed that we would invite spouses/guests to the August Appreciation dinner, with reservations required. MMGA members would have their meals provided, but guests would need to pay the full cost of the meal. The Board voted unanimously to invite spouses/guests to the August Appreciation dinner meeting.

Respectfully Submitted,

Linda Harkleroad, Secretary

2012 MMGA Membership Dues

This is just a reminder to those who have not paid MMGA membership dues for 2012. If you wish to maintain your membership, please forward your \$20.00 dues and a completed membership renewal form to MMGA, c/o Purdue Extension-Elkhart County, 17746-E CR 34, Goshen, Indiana 46528. Also, be sure to include your 2011 volunteer hours if you have not already submitted them. If you need a copy of the renewal form it may be obtained on the MMGA web page <http://michianamastergardeners.com/>

If your payment is received in the near future, there will still be time to get your information listed in our new 2012 Membership Directory. We hope you decide to join us.

Sincerely,
The MMGA Membership Committee

Helen Martin – gardeningduo@maplenet.net
Marilyn Miles – mamiles2@hotmail.com

Master Gardeners: Mark your Calendars!

39th Annual Fort Wayne Home and Garden Show

Show dates are **March 1st-4th, 2012**. Hours are: Thursday and Friday 11-9, Saturday 10-9, and Sunday 11-5. The show takes place at the Allen County Memorial Coliseum, 4000 Parnell Ave, Fort Wayne, IN 46825. **Admission Prices are as follows: Adults \$10.00, Children 15 & under**

FREE, Seniors (65 & older) \$6.00. Parking is \$4.00 at the Allen County Memorial Coliseum. They will be offering \$2.00 off coupons in various places. Details will be posted on the web when they are available at:

<http://www.home-gardenshow.com/#!>



54th Annual Indiana Flower and Patio Show

Following close behind the Ft. Wayne show is the Indianapolis show. Show dates are: **March 10th - 18th, 2012**. Hours are: Monday-Friday: 10-9, Saturdays: 10-9, and Sundays: 10-5. The show takes place at the Indiana State Fairgrounds located on the corner of East 38th Street and Fall Creek Parkway, Indianapolis IN. Admission **Pric-es: General Admission: \$12.00, Children 12 & under: FREE, Senior Day is Monday, March 12th - \$8 - Seniors 65 + with proper ID.** Parking at the Indiana State Fairgrounds is \$5.00. The Shuttle from parking lots to Flower Show is Free. Additional show information may be found on the web at:

<http://www.indianflowerandpatioshow.com/>

Submitted by Jerry Martin

Note: There was no Membership meeting in December, 2011. The January Membership meeting will be held on January 31st, 2012, and minutes will be published in March 2012.

Information For Members



Garden Tour Merchandise Crafts Session

Come help assemble kits and create craft as we add a few volunteer hours and build up our merchandise for Garden Tour 2012. Come on Friday, January 20th, from 2 pm to 8 pm to Len and Lonne Harms' home. We will be indoors so it will be warm, and, as always, there will be beverages and snacks available. There will be plenty to do and options available for all skill levels. Do come and have fun with fellow members.

Another month and another chance to help us add to our store of crafts to offer for sale at the Garden Tour this summer. Thursday, February 23rd from 2 pm to 8 pm at Lonne Harms'. We want to work on these while we can't be out in our gardens, so time's running out. Come paint, sew, glue, and have fun with the group. I'm excited about all we've accomplished so far, and look forward to sharing in the process with more of you.

It would be helpful as you work on crafts on your own if you could let me know what you're planning. (Just send me an e-mail.) As I plan future projects, on-site display, and pricing guidelines, knowing what might be coming in will help. AND if you finish a project before July, I'd be glad to store it for you and include it in my rapidly growing accumulation of merchandise in my basement. (That way, it will be available right away, can be pre-priced, and will get optimal presentation.

Thanks for all the participation so far, and I look forward to seeing some of you this month as we work on crafts together.

Loanne Harms

Dear MMGA Members,

Articles for the March Broadcaster will be due February 28th, 2012. Please email them to me (sherrie.zou at gmail.com) or to Linda Kimpel in the Extension office (lkimpel@purdue.edu.)

Sherrie Zou

PROGRAM & REFRESHMENT COMMITTEE

I would like to announce that the program for the February 28th MMGA membership meeting is going to be presented by one of our own members. Betty Foltz, member of the Class of 2003, will be presenting a program on Topiaries. It is my understanding that this has been an interest of hers for some time, and I am certain you will all enjoy her presentation. I hope to see many of you at this meeting. If you need help with transportation please notify Helen Martin or Marilyn Miles of the Membership Committee. See you February 28th.

Barbara Heeter

Program/Refreshment Committee - Co chair

TREE SALE INFORMATION

Please remember that the last day to pre-order trees is fast approaching. You may pre-order trees until March 2nd, 2012. If you do not pre-order trees, you can still purchase them on the day of the sale on April 14th, 2012. If you need an order form, I will have some at the January 31st MMGA meeting. The order form is shown on the following two pages for your information.



I will also have sign-up sheets at the January 31st MMGA membership meeting for those members who wish to help with the bundling of the trees in preparation for the sale and also for those members who would like to help the day of the sale. Remember, this is a GREAT way to get those needed volunteer hours. It is also a good way to get to know fellow members and have some fun at the same time. Barbara Heeter, Tree Sale Co-Chair

A "Sliver" from the Board

Information Re: Membership Meeting Attendance



Are you a reluctant night-time or winter driver? We would like to help you attend! The answer is an area Car-Pool or at least an area driver willing to fill his or her car! If you could let a Board member or one of the Membership team know, we'll try our hardest to find a match-up driver in your area. I know it is difficult to ask for a ride, but do it once so that we can get you listed! For those of you who do drive: Do you know of someone who may be shy about asking for a ride? Why not call them and volunteer. Heaven knows, we Master Gardeners are good at volunteering!

Call Membership Team: Helen Martin, 574-862-2019

Marilyn Miles, 574-295-1475

Call Board Member:

Marilyn Horvath, 574-522-6889

TREE SALE ORDER FORM

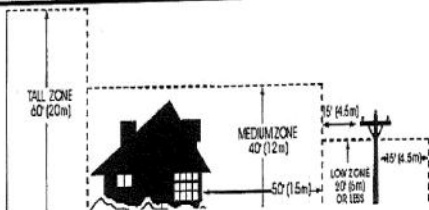
Species Information

Species	Mature Height	Growth Rate	Soil Drainage	Plant Products	Light	Salt Tolerant	Benefits
EVERGREENS							
American Arborvitae (<i>Thuja occidentalis</i>)	30-60'	SL-MD	Most Soils	C, SD	PS-FS	No	B, EC, WB, WL
Blue Spruce (<i>Picea pungens</i> 'Glauca')	80-100'	SL-MD	M, D	C, SD	PS-FS	Yes	EC, WB, WL
Douglas-Fir (<i>Pseudotsuga menziesii</i>)	40-200'	MD	Most Soils	C, SD	FS	Low	C, T, WB, WL
Eastern White Pine (<i>Pinus strobus</i>)	75-100'	F	M, D	C, SD	PS-FS	No	B, EC, T, WB, WL
DECIDUOUS TREES							
Allegheny Serviceberry (<i>Amelanchier laevis</i>)	30-35'	MD	M, D	FR, SD	PS-FS	Limited	EC, O, WB, WL
American Plum (<i>Prunus Americana</i>)	15-20'	MD	M, D	FL, FR	FS	Low	EC, WB, WL
Black Walnut (<i>Juglans nigra</i>)	70-90'	F	M	FL, SD	FS	No	FL, WL
Bur Oak (<i>Quercus macrocarpa</i>)	25-100'	SL	M, D	SD	FS	Low	S, T, WL
Eastern Redbud (<i>Cercis canadensis</i>)	25-35'	MD-F	D	FL, FR, SD	PS-FS	No	S, WL
Flowering Dogwood (<i>Cornus florida</i>)	20-30'	SL	M	S, FL	FS	No	O, WL
Ohio Buckeye (<i>Aesculus glabra</i>)	25-65'	F	M	FL	FS	No	O, S
River Birch (<i>Betula nigra</i>)	40-70'	MD-F	M, W	SD	PS-FS	Intermediate	
Tulip Poplar (<i>Liriodendron tulipifera</i>)	70-100'	F	M, D	FL, SD	PS-FS	Intermediate	EC, S, T, WL
SHRUBS							
Ninebark (<i>Physocarpus sylvatica</i>)	6-10'	MD-F	D	FL, FR, SD	FS, PS	Intermediate	S, WL

Key

B-Border
 C-Cone
 D-Dry
 EC-Erosion Control
 F-Fast
 FL-Flower
 FR-Fruit
 FS-Full Sun
 M-Moist
 MD-Medium
 O-Ornamental
 PS-Partial Sun
 S-Shade
 SD-Seed
 SL-Slow
 T-Timber
 W-Wet
 WB-Windbreak
 WL-Wildlife

Call Before You Dig



Call the Indiana Underground Plant Protection Service (IUPPS) before you dig. Please call at least 2 days before you begin your project and follow these steps:

- (1) Outline your project with white paint
- (2) Call IUPPS at 1-800-382-5544
- (3) Know your county and township where you are digging
- (4) Provide the name and phone number of the person digging (if not you)
- (5) Give the utility companies time to respond
- (6) Give the utility companies time to respond
- (7) Dig with care!

Name
Address
City State Zip
() - Telephone

Terms and Conditions

1. Payment must accompany the order.
2. Orders of 500 - 999 trees per species receive a 20% discount. Orders of 1000 trees per species receive a 30% discount. (Call for pricing information.)
3. Orders received on or before **January 6, 2012**, will receive a 10% discount.
4. Orders must be postmarked no later than: **March 2, 2012**.
5. Trees are available to anyone and may be planted without restriction. We reserve the right to make alterations if necessary.
6. We **DO NOT** furnish replacements.
7. Sizes may vary due to weather conditions beyond our control.

Where did you get this form?

ENTER QUANTITY OF PACKS AND TOTAL DOLLAR AMOUNT DUE BELOW

****All Prices Include Sales Tax****

Species	Seedling Height	Pack of 5	Pack of 10	Pack of 25	Total \$\$
Allegheny Serviceberry *	18-24"	___ X \$6.00	___ X \$11.00	___ X \$24.00	
American Arborvitae *	10-18"	___ X \$8.00	___ X \$14.00	___ X \$30.00	
American Plum *	18-24"	___ X \$7.00	___ X \$13.00	___ X \$28.00	
Black Walnut *	18-24"	___ X \$6.00	___ X \$11.00	___ X \$24.00	
Blue Spruce	16-24"	___ X \$11.00	___ X \$20.00	___ X \$43.00	
Bur Oak *	18-24"	___ X \$7.00	___ X \$13.00	___ X \$28.00	
Douglas Fir	14-20"	___ X \$8.00	___ X \$14.00	___ X \$30.00	
Eastern Redbud *	18-24"	___ X \$7.00	___ X \$13.00	___ X \$28.00	
Eastern White Pine *	12-20"	___ X \$9.00	___ X \$16.00	___ X \$35.00	
Ninebark	18-24"	___ X \$6.00	___ X \$11.00	___ X \$24.00	
Ohio Buckeye *	12-18"	___ X \$11.00	___ X \$20.00	___ X \$43.00	
River Birch *	12-24"	___ X \$6.00	___ X \$11.00	___ X \$24.00	
Tulip Poplar *	18-24"	___ X \$6.00	___ X \$11.00	___ X \$24.00	
White Flowering Dogwood *	18-24"	___ X \$6.00	___ X \$11.00	___ X \$24.00	
Variety Pack: (Two of each): Allegheny Serviceberry, Flowering Dogwood, Ninebark				Qty of Packs ___ X \$8.00	
Total Before Discount					\$.
Early Bird 10% Discount ***For Orders Received On or Before January 6, 2012***					- \$.
Total Due					\$.

Make all checks payable to:
 Elkhart County Soil and Water Conservation District
 17746-B County Road 34, Goshen, IN 46528 Phone: 574-533-3630 ext. 3

Purdue Master Gardener Training Opportunities

February 11, 2012, **Landscaping Your Winter Blues Away for the Garden & Home**, 12:30 - 4:00 p.m. Kosciusko County Master Gardeners, Purdue Extension Kosciusko County, 202 W. Main Street, Warsaw, Other sessions: February 16, 23 and March 1, 8, 15, 6:30 p.m. - 9:00 p.m.

February 21, 2012, **Growing Great Gardens In 2012**, 6:30 p.m., Kosciusko County Master Gardeners, Purdue Extension Kosciusko County, 202 W. Main Street, Warsaw, Other sessions: February 21, March 6, 20 and April 3, 17, 2012, 6:30 p.m. (An additional session on February 21 & 20 will be offered at 1:00 p.m.)

February 25, 2012, **Once Upon A Garden**, Gibson County Master Gardeners, 10th Annual Garden Training Seminar, Princeton High School, Old Hwy 41 N., Princeton, Registration and breakfast: 7:30 AM CST, Seminar: 8:30 AM to 2:30 PM, CST.

March 1 - 4, 2012, **Ft. Wayne Flower and Garden Show**, Allen County Memorial Coliseum, Ft. Wayne.

March 3, 2012, **Spring Tonic**, presented by Hoosier Hillside Master Gardeners (HHMG), Registration from 8:00 a.m. - 8:30 a.m. EST, Orange County Community Center, 1075 Sandy Hook Rd, Orange County 4-H Fairgrounds, Paoli.

March 10 - 18, 2012, **Indiana Flower and Patio Show**, Indiana State Fair Grounds, Indianapolis.

March 10, 2012, **The Gardener's Gathering**, 8:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m. EST, Providence Center, on the campus of the St. Mary-of-the Woods College and the Sisters of Providence, St. Mary of the Woods.

April 28, 2012, **Garden Expo 2012**, presented by the Master Gardener Association of Tippecanoe County, Tippecanoe County Fairgrounds, Lafayette, 10 am to 3 pm.

June 7-18, 2012, **Renaissance Gardens of Italy**, Purdue Master Gardeners Study Abroad, More information coming soon.

October 20, 2012, **Ohio Valley Garden Conference**, Sponsored by The Southwestern Indiana Master Gardener Association, Casino Aztar Conference Center, Evansville, IN. Keynote Speaker, Paul James "The Gardening Guy", For more info see swimga.org.

October 4-6, 2012, **2012 Purdue Master Gardener State Conference**, Noblesville.

September 7-11, 2013, **2013 International Master Gardener Conference, IMGC Alaskan Cruise**. We plan to go live with cruise booking starting May 7th, 2012, and have registration for the speakers, workshops, and tours Sept. 1st, 2012. You can also go to our website: <http://www.uaex.edu/imgc2013/> and sign up via Constant Contact to get monthly updates. Please share that information with your Master Gardeners as well. We are doing a FAQ section and posting all newsletters on the site as well.

Linton's Saturday Seminars for 2012

All seminars start at 10:00 a.m. and are free of charge.

Call 293-2699 for reservations or go online to www.lintons.com.

2/4 Creating season long color in the garden

2/18 Having fun with colors inside your home:

Learn about this season's hot new colors

2/25 Creating relaxing sights and sounds of falling water:

Waterfall and pond construction for the do-it-yourselfer

3/3 Spectacular florals for your wedding day

3/10 Going green in the garden with organic gardening

3/17 Easy to grow heavenly hydrangeas

3/24 Without a personal gardener:

Learning lawn and landscape maintenance

4/14 Ask the experts: Q&A panel will answer questions about

Gardening and outdoor living. Bring your questions!

4/21 Grow your own salad bar: Planning and planting a veggie garden

4/28 Add spice to your life: Easy herb gardening for decks, patios, or windowsills

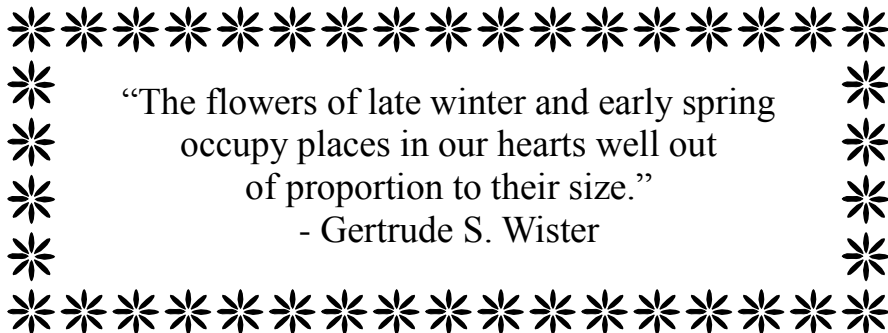
11/17 Welcoming winter porch and door décor

11/24 Creating themed Christmas trees for your home

12/1 Outdoor winter florals and unique vessels to contain them

12/8 Festive Christmas tablescapes: Deck your halls

12/15 A Martha Stewart Christmas: Revisited



Experiences in Raised Bed Gardening, Part 1

Submitted By Jim Carpenter

An area of gardening in which I have just recently become involved is raised bed gardening. Two things that piqued my interest in raised beds were the classes and subsequent seminar on raised beds as a member of the Class of 2010 and my involvement with Uncle Paul's Tomatoes on Olive Street in Goshen. Uncle Paul grows over 100 different heirloom tomatoes, with some of them reaching a height of 15' on the special supports he has for them. He raises all his vegetables in raised beds.

While there are many different materials that can be used in constructing a raised bed, I liked the stability and endurance of cement blocks. Most of the cement block beds I have observed were only two blocks high, but I wanted something a little different. I decided I wanted a raised bed high enough so I could merely bend over at the waist and be level with the bed for planting, weeding, mulching, and harvesting. I decided to go four blocks high. This was a pretty massive effort. My 14' X 4' (interior measurement) cement block bed required about 120 blocks, with each block weighing around 40-45 pounds. I also paid \$160.00 to have ten tons of shredded topsoil delivered, with 6 or 7 tons put into my bed courtesy of a neighbors' skid loader.

Before I completed my bed in the spring of 2011, I asked many people their opinion on my 4 high block walls holding all that topsoil with no additional support. My plan was to fill each block with soil and offset them as I added the next row. Most every one thought that should not be a problem. Wrong! The day after the top soil was dumped into the bed I realized the walls of cement blocks were starting to bow out! This necessitated a quick trip to Menard's for some plastic coated cable along with some turnbuckles to tighten up the cable.

I drove metal 'T' posts on either side of the block walls and connected them with the wire cable. With the cable ends fastened to the turnbuckle, I tightened the cable as best I could. While the block walls remained bowed, they were at least held in check from collapsing. Whew! Crisis averted. While this raised bed served its purpose very well and grew some very easily cared for vegetables, my visiting daughter did declare it was about the ugliest raised bed she had ever seen. Once again, I must admit, I do not plant my gardens out by the road.

Experiences in Raised Bed Gardening, Part 1 (con't.)

The second raised bed I constructed last year came about as a response to my failure to find bush type sweet potatoes to plant. I really didn't have room for all those vines in my garden which was already pretty much full with all my other vegetables. For this bed, I picked a spot on the sunny side of my barn that was not a part of my regular garden. I only went two blocks high on this raised bed, and it measured 13' X 3'. I carried the topsoil in via wheel-barrow for this bed, as it didn't require near as much soil. I planted eight vining sweet potatoes plants and some tomatoes in this bed.

For the third and final raised bed constructed last year, I was motivated to build a bed as a response to my wife Carolyn when she pointed out a rocky area near our chicken house that looked to be a natural site for another raised bed. That was all the encouragement I needed! This bed is three blocks high and measures 12' X 3'. I also found some decorative cement blocks that actually make it look somewhat attractive. For this bed, I made about six trips to Elkhart County Sand and Gravel to get my topsoil. They would load the topsoil on my truck, and it cost only about \$12.00 a ton. If you do this, be careful with the weight. I actually brought home a load of 2,300 pounds of topsoil on an S-10 truck load rated for 1,200 pounds. (Believe me, that was one anxious drive home!) It was some work to shovel it all off, but it was much cheaper than having soil delivered. I also added a four inch layer of composed duck mulch, then I finished off the top of my bed with topsoil.

All three of my raised beds are set up (or are ready to be set up) with rain barrels to help counter the problem of raised beds needs for additional moisture. Also, I planted winter ryegrass in each bed as a cover crop to continue to provide additional organic matter to the soil. I am pretty excited about this coming growing season, and I am trying to figure out the best uses for my beds.

Next month, I hope to finish telling what specific vegetables I planted and how that all worked out. I will also share some new ideas and challenges I will have for using my beds.

Jim





If you haven't entered your recipes online or given them to us for the MMGA cookbook, there's still time. We are hoping to finish entries by March 2nd. Please refer to the directions below and to the January Broadcaster for complete directions for entering recipes online. Also, we are taking orders for the cookbook (priced at \$10.00), so let Loanne Harms know how many you'd like. They should arrive by our May Membership meeting.

At the November membership meeting, we affirmed proceeding with a Michiana Master Gardeners' Association Cookbook. These spiral-bound books will be available for sale in May. (Orders will be taken beginning this month.) The books will sell for \$10.00. We will also have some to sell during this year's Garden Tour in July.

Each member is eligible to submit up to **four** recipes, and this can be done online to save the club time and money. (Those who are unable to or wish not to submit their recipes online can bring them to the January or February membership meeting, and they will be entered for you.) The website is ready for your submissions.

The process is fairly simple: Please go to <http://www.cookbookpublishers.com/utypeit/> to log in to the system. Click on LOGIN, and then enter

Username: **MMGA**

Password: **PurdueExt** and ENTER

You will be directed to the page for our recipes. On the left click on ADD RECIPE. Now you're ready to type in your recipes. Each recipe will need to be added and submitted individually but can be done easily while at the site. Just submit one, and then click on ADD RECIPE again for the next recipe. You will have a chance to edit as needed. There are four of us that will make final edits and verify that the recipes and the book are ready for publication. Our deadline for your submissions is March 2nd, 2012.

I look forward to creating this book and having a collection of recipes that are delicious, nutritious, and reflect our sense of gardening and nature's produce.

The deadline for orders and submitting recipes is March 2nd, 2012. Anyone with questions should contact Loanne at lharms2@frontier.com.

MICHIANA MASTER GARDENERS ASSOCIATION
ELKHART COUNTY
Mission Statement



The Michiana Master Gardeners Association is a not-for-profit educational organization dedicated to the improvement of the community. Members of the Association have completed the requirements of the Master Gardener Volunteer Training Program, working in affiliation with the Purdue Extension Service of Elkhart County. Its specific aim is to improve the quality of life in the community by providing information and technical assistance in the area of home horticulture through the use of trained and certified volunteers.

(574) 533-0554
FEBRUARY 2012

*“Away in a meadow all covered with snow
The little old groundhog looks for his shadow
The clouds in the sky determine our fate
If winter will leave us all early or late.”*

~Don Halley