

*Kindness is not cancelled,  
Hope is not cancelled,  
Growth is not cancelled,  
Gardening is not cancelled.*

# Garden Thyme

May 2020

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

Volume 6, Issue 3



## Notes from Nikky

By Nicole "Nikky" Witkowski

Purdue Extension Educator, Agriculture & Natural Resources

With the Porter County Extension Office working more remotely, I have been working from home, answering the same questions as always and programming where I can. Some programming and the Master Gardener Class has shifted to remote instruction, using videos, handouts, and flash drives. We have always been able to work this way, but knew most audiences also preferred face-to-face sessions. Despite the abrupt switch in instructional mode, we will still likely welcome more than 20 new master gardeners. The offering of a Master Gardener course is anticipated for the fall.

Regarding volunteer hours, Purdue considers volunteering in community gardens as "essential work" if the garden provides food. Thus, the Indiana Stay-At-Home Order does not apply. Social distancing and other good practices do still apply.

The Porter County Extension Office, as part of the Government Center, is closed, but there is usually someone in the office to answer the phone and e-mails. The Hot-line is functioning, although there could be some delays in response. We are all looking forward to seeing each of you again. Hopefully this will be in July since we are to avoid in-person meetings through June!

### EDUCATION AND VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

**Gabis Arboretum and Gardens at Purdue Northwest**  
450 W 100 N, Valparaiso, IN 46385 Interested in learning more about our programs? Follow calendar listings on our website: <https://www.pnw.edu/gabis-arboretum/> Contact Deb Way at [wayd@pnw.edu](mailto:wayd@pnw.edu) or call (219)989-8492.

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## Nature Watch

### Hummingbirds Ignoring Stay-At-Home Order!

By Marcia Carson

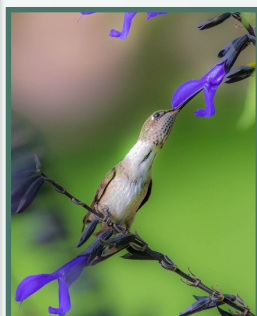
PCMG Class of 2012



Ruby-throated hummingbirds are not following the COVID-19 Stay-At-Home order. According to Hummingbirdcentral.com, Ruby-throated hummingbirds have been spotted around the Great Lakes after leaving Central America or Mexico. Migration started in early February. Other varieties migrate throughout the U.S., but only the Ruby-throated appear east of the Mississippi River. Most arrive in early May and stay until October, with peak sightings in August.

If you would like to provide a safe haven for these birds, they require three things:

- **Shelter:** Ruby-throated hummingbirds prefer dense foliage, building golf-ball sized nests on branches 10-40 feet above ground. Bushes nearby provide shelter and respite between meals.
- **Food:** Provide meals with plants and/or feeders. The birds love red color and tubular blooms. Flowers of butterfly bush, lantana, fuchsia, zinnias, impatiens, daylilies, geraniums and petunias are all on the menu. Place hummingbird feeders near the flowers. No need to purchase food, a glucose solution of 4 parts water to 1 part sugar provides energy to flap those wings 15-80 times per second. No need to boil, use warm water to dissolve sugar and **NEVER** add red food coloring that is harmful. The red on the feeder will draw the hummers. Clean the feeder with 2 parts water to 1 part vinegar twice per week in warm weather, daily if they are emptying the feeder.



- **Water:** Hummingbirds love water features! A shallow birdbath provides a drink and adding a solar-powered fountain keeps them home.

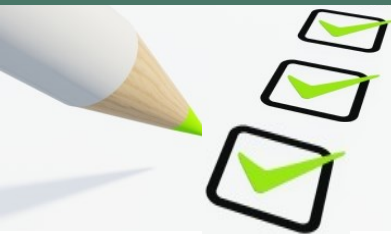
Follow the guidelines above, and hopefully you can give these birds a reason to stay at home!



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In this three-part series I'll share some trends, tips, and tasks for our new decade's landscape.

## Landscape Design: TRENDS FOR

By Wilma Willard, PCMG Class of 2011

In the last two issues of *Garden Thyme*, we asked, "What is trending for 2020?" We have discussed six trends so far and will finish the series with four more.

Know that simplicity and sustainability are the overarching trends for the new decade.

# 2020

*Featured Series*

### Landscape Trends for 2020

[Simplicity](#)

[Sustainability](#)

[Low-Maintenance](#)

[Xeriscaping](#)

[Indoor Garden Rooms](#)

[Companion Planting](#)

[Indigo Plants](#)

[Multi-use Features](#)

[Outdoor Living Spaces](#)

[Outdoor Lighting](#)

[Smart Technology](#)

[Vertical Gardening](#)

**Outdoor living spaces** help you enjoy your landscape and increase your home value at the same time! Patios and pergolas are some of the best outdoor living space additions you can make to your home. They make your home feel larger, provide personality, shade, opportunity for attractive landscaping, and a beautiful structure for hanging vines. It is not a big surprise that outdoor kitchens are a big trend. There is nothing like the smell of delicious food wafting through the air at an outdoor family celebration or neighborhood party!

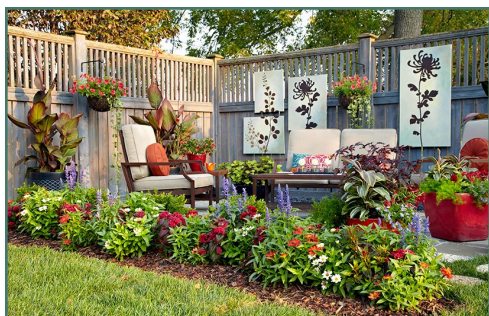
**Outdoor lighting** has been trendy for a while, but as people relax and entertain more in their yards, not only is lighting for safety and security and extending enjoyment into the evening, but can also be used to highlight key features in your landscape. Outdoor lighting adds elegance to your landscape and adds fun when using lights that change colors for holidays and events.

Have you considered **outdoor smart tech**? Choose from solar-powered tech and robotics to weather tracking irrigation systems. Using a smart irrigation controller can help save money on water and achieve a healthier-looking landscape. Outdoor smart tech is getting more affordable and makes caring for your yard easier.

As more and more people embrace small home living, apartment living, or just utilizing space more efficiently, the trend of **vertical gardening** is increasing. Whether planted indoors or outdoors using flowers or edible plants, it saves space and can even hide walls or fences that aren't visually appealing. Be sure to place your vertical garden in a location that is easy to water and receives sunlight.

Your landscape is supposed to be your little bit of heaven—so make the most of it with recycled trends from the past and new trends for the 2020s. Landscape the future!

Sources used for this series: bhg.com, metro.com, gardendesign.com, gilmour.com, greenhousegrower.com, timberlinelandscaping.com and kdlandscapeinc.com.



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## Easy Recipes for COVID-19 Times

By Marcia Carson, PCMG Class of 2012

*The spring of 2020 has brought us unusual circumstances, for sure! I know that for many, grocery shopping has become a major hassle. Nothing new for me to go every two weeks (well, maybe the mask wearing part is a little different). I've always been a long-term shopper and could probably live for a month on the food already in the freezer and pantry. Shopping for fresh fruits and vegetables has changed a little, as some items are harder to keep in the refrigerator for long. Looking for recipes to use what I have and need to get rid of before they spoil is like a treasure hunt for me, and this recipe looked perfect. My husband almost refuses to eat celery, but he now asks me to make "the apple salad." Serve it cold, it's really crunchy, and keeps well overnight, just in case there are leftovers. If we get back to picnics and potlucks this summer, I'll be taking this!*

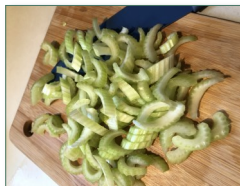
### Celery and Apple Salad with Walnuts

**Whisk together in a medium size bowl:**

- 3 Tbs. olive oil
- 2 Tbs. lemon juice
- 2 tsp. honey
- ½ tsp. thyme
- Salt and black pepper

**Add to the bowl, and toss to coat:**

- 3-4 celery stalks with leaves, thinly bias sliced
- 1 medium red apple, cored and thinly sliced
- ½ cup thinly sliced red onion
- ¼ cup coarsely chopped walnuts, toasted



*A great recipe for that cauliflower that hasn't been used – everyone loves it, even if you don't think you like cauliflower. No photos – we ate it before I thought about it, and I'm not scheduled to grocery shop for another week!*

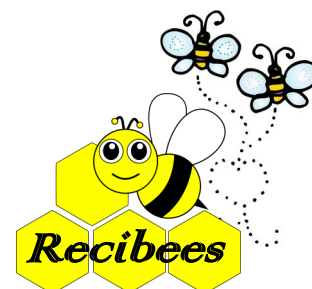
### Cheesy, Pull-Apart Cauliflower

1 medium head cauliflower – gently cut out the core a little, leaving the head intact. Steam in salted water for 7-10 minutes; be careful not to steam until too soft to pick up. Cool a little on paper towels, and blot dry. Place cauliflower in a baking dish, on foil or parchment paper for easy clean up.

**Mix together and rub on the cauliflower:**

- 1 Tb. soft or melted butter
- 2 Tbs. mayo
- ¼ cup grated parmesan cheese
- 2 cloves garlic – minced
- 1 tsp. hot sauce or buffalo sauce, to your liking.

**Bake at 400 degrees for about 15 minutes.**





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## Tomato Talk

By Suzanna Tudor  
PCMG Class of 2002

Garden Thyme staff wondered how Master Gardeners were doing with their seed starting pursuits, specifically tomatoes, some heirloom and some not, and most everyone's favorite garden fruit.

**Maureen Phillips, PCMG Class of 2003**, starts her tomato seeds indoors around St. Patrick's Day, March 17, "because my veggie beds are 'sun challenged,' so I prefer to have larger plants when I move them outside." However, "if you have full sun, they'll catch up if you plant them through Tax Day, April 15." Her tastes for tomatoes are "eclectic and international, and she likes yellows and purples/blacks for lower acidity." Maureen has had success with the following and grows these every year:

Cherries: Chocolate Cherry, Riesentraube

Salad: 4<sup>th</sup> of July for early and continuous fruit

Japanese Black Trifele

French Juane Flamme

Green Zebra

Sauce: Italian Costoluto Genovese



*Maureen Phillips' Favorites:*  
\* (clockwise)  
Chocolate Cherry,  
Green Zebra,  
French Juane  
Flamme

*Bill Storey's*

*Favorites:*

\*\* (clockwise)

Rutgers,

'Rapunzel' Cherry,

San Marzano



**Bill Storey, PCMG Class of 2014**, started his tomatoes the second week of April. To test seed viability, Bill floats seeds in water. Viable seeds sink. This method works for pepper seeds too. He didn't save seeds last year because of a poor crop. Checking his seed stash, he found some from 2014. Amazingly, they sprouted! Typically, Bill stores seeds in small 2x4 specialty plastic bags (doesn't seem to hurt them). He does have one grow light, but placement in a southern exposure barn window works nicely. Of course, rotating is necessary due to leaning tendency. He keeps his starts on a wagon, and on sunny days pulls the wagon out for more exposure. A couple new grow lights and heat pad will be ordered.

Favorites: Black Plum.

San Marzano for canning. It's similar to a Roma, and he's been growing for 6-7 years.

Rutgers, also for canning, smaller than a tennis ball, relatively disease free and doesn't crack.

'Rapunzel' Cherry – He learned about this plant while at the community garden. It has pretty leaves with long-flowing vines containing many clusters of tomatoes. Bill may grow on a trellis this year.

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## Pandemic Ponderings

Suzanna Tudor  
PCMG Class of 2002

Looking through my newsletter file, I came across an article placed in it several months ago as fodder for future topics. And how appropriate for the pandemic situation we find ourselves in than “Heal Me With Plants” by Ellie Shechet, *The New York Times*.

With our involvement in the VNA Hospice garden, we have witnessed what special healing properties plants and beautiful gardens can have--on both the well and ill alike, as we tend, care and gaze upon the awesomeness. And who knew there was such a career as a horticultural therapist who actually works in hospitals?! According to Shechet, horticulture therapy is also used in addiction recovery centers, prisons and wilderness therapy programs for teenagers, using nature (sometimes rabbits) and gardening-like activities to help patients feel better.

As Shechet notes, “there’s nothing more happily out of place in a hospital than something green and delicate and alive. And in a setting where patients routinely feel poked and prodded, isolated and immobile, the act of nurturing a plant can be a transportive part of the recovery process.”

There it is! Gardeners have the perfect remedy for the pandemic isolation and social distancing and can wholeheartedly relate to the healing aspects of gardening. As you participate in your gardening activities during this stressful COVID-19 season, may you experience that transportive power of relaxation and healing it brings as you commune with nature, plants, and soil.

In this issue, some Porter County Master Gardeners share what they are doing during quarantine time.

I’m reminded and encouraged by my mother’s old standby saying, “This too shall pass.” Hopefully, when this issue is published, we can be out and about again. In the meantime, stay safe and stay well while practicing your own backyard horticultural therapy. Link to “Heal Me With Plants:”

<https://www.nytimes.com/2019/03/25/style/plants-hospital-horticulture-therapy.html>



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## How Master Gardeners Battle Quarantine: Horticultural Therapy in Action



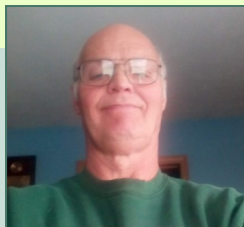
### **Ann Gwin, PCMG Class of 2019**

As I have completed my first year living in Valparaiso and Zone 5, I am getting an idea of what my soil is like and the climate. My home is new construction, and I have a mostly blank slate to work with.

The wildlife (specifically deer) are prolific and seem very hungry all the time. My time is being spent determining what I can plant that won't immediately be eaten and will benefit pollinators. Spring bulbs of crocus and snow drops did not all appear as planned. Plus, my sedum is being eaten as it leafs out. More hungry critters?

I have decided to grow various plants from seed such as butterfly weed, coneflower, zinnia and a few others. Until I purchased a grow light, nothing was growing past an inch high. I have high hopes that some of these plants will survive in the "wild" as I sure have talked to them a lot.

If we finally get some warmer weather (does that happen around here before the end of May?), I can't wait to socially distance at all the local garden centers gawking at the new shrubs, flowers, tools, etc. and purchasing way too much! Happy Gardening!



**Ron Hermance, PCMG Class of 2019** I have started pruning ten fruit trees in my backyard orchard on the Northwest side of the property: five apple trees, two peach trees and two pear trees. Five more fruit trees have been ordered to increase my orchard: two Honey Crisps, Golden Delicious, Early McIntosh, and Granny Smith. This will reduce my garden footprint. Bramble and hazelnut bushes have also been pruned.

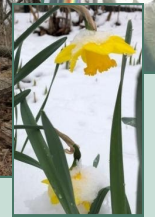
Another project will be removing invasive English Ivy between a fireplace and an about-flower Magnolia tree. Plans are to rebuild the fireplace, uncover pavers, plant flowers and rake leaves out of a bank of English Ivy.

### **Sandy Appleby, PCMG Class of 2009**

I have three goals: 1. Get a warm day. 2. Stretch out the muscles and tendons. 3. Walk somewhere six feet from someone else daily.

My friends and I have cleared the fallen trees and cut new paths around those that are too big with two Stihl saws and plain hard labor. My job is picking up sticks and dragging logs aside. The path was formerly the cow path on the farm where I've lived the past 30 years. We hacked out a mile and a half trail from the barn through the woods and along the field to the ridge overlooking the river, and then around the ridge looking down on the wetlands and circling back to the barn. That is why I appreciate everyone who lends a hand and want to thank all the gardening friends that help clean up in the spring.

I am also marking spring bulbs to divide and replant, so they continue to bloom. I enjoy some peaceful moments watching the Amaryllis inch up out of the pots in the window.



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...continued from page 7 **How Master Gardeners Battle Quarantine: Horticultural Therapy in Action**

## Beverly Thevenin

PCMG Class of 2006

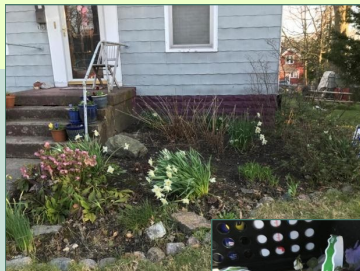
Beverly completed Horticultural Therapy instruction in October, 2018. However, she was unable to use her certification as a volunteer since shortly afterwards she began a new job. In 2019, total knee replacement curtailed activities. Now, Beverly cherishes putting the new knee through its paces while she spruces up a hilly portion of her garden during the quarantine. She could not handle the incline before surgery, but now tackles it with no problem—just in time to practice and reap the benefits of horticultural therapy.



## Lynne Sundwall, PCMG Class of 2016

To have a little garden therapy, I've been cleaning up flower beds, purchasing veggie seeds, and got some pansies for some color.

Nothing earth shattering, but at least outside having fun in the sun.



## Timburley Ecklund , PCMG Class of 2015

I started black pansies from seed and have some seedlings. I also started Portulaca from seed at the same time, but they are not doing as well. Oh well, you win some and lose some. I'll be sure to remember the win.

I've relocated some hostas to their new home around our black oak tree. A squirrel is not happy and keeps trying to dig them up. I just move the soil back around them.

As any gardener, I can't resist some color this time of year. So I planted a pot of pansies. I brought them inside last night in fear the snow and below-freezing temperatures may take them out. So far, our cat Bella hasn't found them, another win.

I've cleaned up hellebores. I'm enjoying the blue squill, yellow and purple crocus, and anticipating the bloom of tulip bulbs.

My shopping list for plants keeps growing.

Can you blame me?



## Susan Silverstein, PCMG Class of 2019

I have been busy planning the garden on the back of my house. In March, I picked up a garden book, *Month by Month Gardening Illinois, Indiana, & Ohio*, on what to do each month for your garden. I was obviously three months behind, so I am busy catching up on yard clean up and trimming my shrubs.

I also picked up some garden magazines



Susan feeds a kangaroo during her recent vacation to Australia prior to quarantine.

when I was on vacation in Feb. The best thing I got was a mini green house from Aldi and started some flower seeds. They are already starting to bud!

It's been a great time to see the results of the bulbs I had planted in the spring. The daffodils are blooming, and the tulips are coming up! It's been a busy and productive time for me as I plan for summer and enjoy my spring flowers.

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# Garden Thyme

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...continued from page 8 **How Master Gardeners Battle Quarantine: Horticultural Therapy in Action**



## Art Cobbs, PCMG Class of 2017

The COVID-19 restrictions stopped all of my activities: part-time work, church volunteering, babysitting our grandchildren,

bowling, and working out at the health club.

I watched some videos from the garden show and planned yard and garden projects while waiting for spring to arrive.

As the weather warmed I cleaned up flower beds, spread fertilizer with crab grass preventer on the lawn and most recently planted some snow peas.

I also have weeded the strawberry patch. My patch and string lattice, seen in the photo behind me, is supposed to discourage the deer from grazing on my strawberry plants. I've had mixed success. I do get good stretching exercise as I maneuver under and over the strings!

Photo credit @ Art Cobbs

## John (Jack) Steffen, PCMG Class of 2017

Although the weather hasn't been warm enough to be too aggressive on planting, due to COVID-19 Stay-At-Home Order, I'm weeks ahead of any year in the past - especially with garden maintenance!

Pruning: 1) Pruned water shoots off of our apple tree with the hopeful expectation that this activity will direct more available nutrition to this year's apple crop. 2) Judiciously (I hope) pruned a Japanese Maple tree to keep it in scale with its location in front of our house.



Plants: 1) Split and transplanted a grouping of Black-eyed Susan from a too shady location to a full-sun location in line with an MG principal tenet — "The right plant in the right place." 2) Planted 5 pots of Canna bulbs that I picked up at the January PCMG Garden Show. They will be moved to the patio in warmer weather. 3) Planted one row of peas, but uncertain of viability so crossing fingers for success. 4) To keep down weeds, ordered 4 yards of mulch (while on sale) for delivery later this season.

## Garden Thyme

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contact the Extension Office for more information.  
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## **EARN EDUCATION CREDIT!**

### Education Opportunities around Indiana

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

**Monthly PCMG meetings** typically held on the 2nd Wednesday of the month, 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](http://pcgarden.info) on the Member Pages.

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