

Garden Thyme

Ephemerals
come alive!

May 2021

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

Volume 7, Issue 3



PCMGA GARDEN WALK 2021

SATURDAY, JUNE 26
9am to 3pm CDT (CHICAGO TIME)



GARDEN WALK 2021

By Ellen Standafer and Kaye Lynn Beeler
PCMGA Class of 2017

We are so pleased to announce that Garden Walk 2021 will proceed as scheduled on Saturday, June 26. The team has been working through some important changes to ensure a safe outdoor experience for both our volunteers and guests.

Here's a preview of what's in store:

- ◆ Get tips on "going organic" for produce
- ◆ Tour a rose garden with over 90 varieties
- ◆ Learn about the "3 Sisters" Native American planting scheme
- ◆ See succulents flourish in a zone 5 garden
- ◆ Integrating a fairy garden in the landscape
- ◆ Using ornamental trees for full season color

One thing that won't change is that we will need plenty of volunteers as in years past. Look for the announcement, coming soon, to sign up online. Tickets will be sold online for \$8.00 and are scheduled to go on sale May 15. Only a limited number of tickets will be sold, so be sure to let your friends and neighbors know!

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VOLUNTEER
PLUG

Rain or shine, the garden tours bring a smile and a thumbs up!



Writing Garden Descriptions Helps Us All Grow

By Kristine Sandrick, PCMG Class of 2014

Our task as Master Gardeners is “helping others grow.” But the greatest reward in writing five-years’ worth of garden descriptions for the Garden Walk booklet, has been *helping me grow*. From homeowners across Porter County, I’ve learned more about color combinations, garden layout, watering options, or attracting swallow-tail butterflies (*Zizia aurea* – Golden Alexander) and deterring deer (Irish Spring).

The chosen list of gardens becomes my road map. Nine months ahead, I schedule tours with homeowners. I follow them as we view the gardens, asking questions and taking notes and pictures while the garden owner proudly shows off years of work. If I’m lucky, they know what and why they bought certain plants.

Back at my desk, I squint at my notes, flip through digital photos, research plants for correct names (Missouri Botanical is a gem). I try to get at least three botanical names to help others grow specific plants. My task is to “walk” the reader through the garden ... “past the gazebo, you’ll begin to glimpse the garden nestled into a stand of conifers ...”.

Eventually, I fit the essence of each garden into 350 words or less. Gratefully, I send my work to Maureen Phillips for editing, then to garden chairs and homeowners for review. With planning, and many PCMGGA volunteers, we’ve helped our Garden Walk guests learn how to manage garden problems and opportunities. My joy has been in meeting some wonderful homeowners, guiding guests along all these Porter County garden paths, and often adding a newly discovered plant to my garden.

Editor’s Note: We would like to take this opportunity to thank Kristine Sandrick for her many volunteer hours composing the multi-faceted aspects of our Walk’s gardens. Awesome job, Kristine! As she passes the “writing baton” to new volunteers, perhaps you would like to try your hand at writing garden descriptions. If so, contact Ellen Standafer or Kaye Beeler.



Above: Headstone of an ancestor.
Below: With permission, my dog, Aw’gy (short for Awesome Doggy) enjoys the garden tours with me!



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Bloodroot, *Sanguinaria Canadensis*
Photo from Homeopathy Plus



Virginia Bluebells, *Mertensia virginica*
Photo from N. Carolina Extension Gardener



Trillium, *Trillium grandiflorum*
Photo from DeGroot.com

Early Blooming Native Wild Flowers: Ephemerals

By John Nash



One fascinating group of plants overlooked by gardeners are the ephemerals. These perennials are among the first plants to emerge in the spring. Amazingly ephemerals complete their growth and flowering cycles all within a few weeks. Why should you consider growing ephemerals?

- ⇒ They are native plants and highly resistant to diseases and pests.
- ⇒ The plants can be grown in shady places because they complete growing before being shaded by overhead trees.
- ⇒ Ephemerals naturalize easily to new areas.
- ⇒ Ephemerals fill in the early spring gardening gap where growing and blooming plants are sorely missed and desired in the landscape.
- ⇒ Most importantly these plants are incredibly beautiful and require very little care.

As with many plants, ephemerals thrive in rich, moist, and well-drained soils. However, once planted they should be left undisturbed. This is because the plants may need several years to re-adjust or settle into a new location before reaching flowering size.

Pictured are some ephemerals which I have grown. They have consistently flowered for me and would be a welcomed addition to your garden, too.

Further Information:

Homoya, Michael. 2012. *Wildflowers and Ferns of Indiana Forests*. Indiana University Press.
Yatskievych, Kay. 2000. *Field Guide to Indiana Wildflowers*. Indiana University Press.

Eastern
Spring
Beauty,
*Claytonia
virginica*
Photo
from
Lake
Forest
College

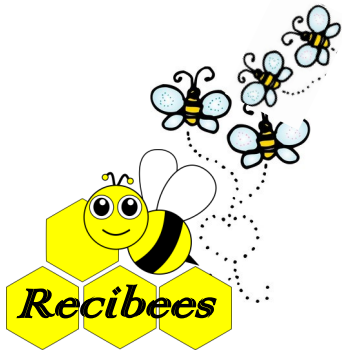


Editor's Note: Never remove or collect ephemerals from the wild.

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By Suzanna Tudor
PCMG Class of 2002

Coming soon in June will be strawberry season. Yum! Thoughts of that delectable fruit always bring memories of my mother, Elizabeth (Betty) Wolfe. Her favorite dessert was strawberry shortcake. May and Mother's Day are synonymous, the two just seem to go together like "peas and carrots," as Forest Gump would say. Mom has been gone for three years now, and I miss her dearly. Her birthday in early June also coincides with strawberry season here in the Midwest. Yes, those California berries are huge and always in the stores, but there's just something special about that local, homegrown sweet strawberry. Nothing compares. And nothing compares to old-fashioned shortcake to go with those scrumptious berries. Here's my mother's easy, go-to recipe. Happy Mother's Day!

Strawberry Shortcake

Ingredients:

- 3 cups flour
- 4 tsp. baking powder
- 2/3 cup sugar
- 1 tsp. salt
- 2/3 cup shortening
- 1 cup milk
- 2 eggs

Topping:

Berries, sugar, whipped cream.

Directions:

1. Blend flour, baking powder, sugar, salt and shortening with pastry blender until well mixed.
2. Beat together 1 cup milk and 2 eggs and add to flour mixture. Mix well.
3. Put mixture in greased 9 x 13 dish or pan and bake at 350 degrees until lightly browned, typically 30-40 minutes, depending on oven.

To serve: Cut shortcake into squares. Cut each square in half. We always crush our berries and add plenty of sugar, to taste. Place one cake half in a bowl and top with crushed berries. Repeat. Finish with whipped cream and a whole berry on top. Enjoy!

Submitted by Suzanna Tudor

*Recipe by her mother,
Elizabeth (Betty) Wolfe*

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Elizabeth (Betty) Wolfe's
Birthday Strawberry Shortcake



redit: © Marcia Carson

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Meet a Master Gardener

**Marlene Vanderlin,
PCMG Class
of 2018**



I've lived in NW Indiana since 1970, but grew up in Evansville. I always had an interest in plants. As a child, I took care of all of my mom's houseplants and had a small space where I grew pansies. My grandmothers' vegetable gardens and flowers were fascinating to me.

Born in the "Show-Me" state, I have been curious about all plants. That led to wanting to take a Master Gardener class. So after retiring from the United States Postal Service (I also taught 4th and 6th grade math for five years), I was finally able to take the class. I learned a lot, but I wish I could remember more. I have enjoyed the continuous educational opportunities and find networking with other Master Gardeners very

helpful also. It is such a great group!

I think of gardening as a "work in progress." There is always something new to learn. I enjoy sharing my flowers and seeds. My husband Rich and I also like to share veggies with family and neighbors. We have three grown children that all live in the area with their spouses and five grandchildren. Our middle child puts out a huge garden every year, and he even cans tomatoes and pickles.

Besides gardening, I also enjoy reading and crafts. I have been involved in various service organizations such as Girl Scouts, Knights of Columbus Wives, Lions Club, and my church. I enjoy those activities to serve, as well as, my service in Master Gardeners—like helping at VNA Hospice



"As a child, I took care of all my mom's houseplants and had a small space where I grew pansies."



Growing Cactus in Indiana

By Zann Wilson
PCMG Class of 2002

We all want to be known as great gardeners--green thumbs and all that, but a sure way to gain that distinction is to grow cactus. What! Cactus in Indiana? I'm sure many of you already grow a variety of succulent plants, so cactus, being a subset of all succulents, should fit right in.

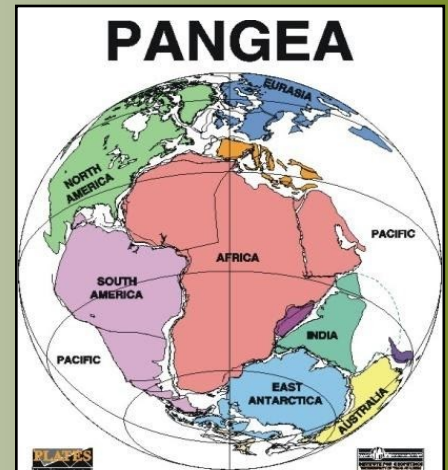
Knowing a bit about the approximate 2000 species of cactus and how they grow will help your green thumb flourish. First, and I love this part, ALL CACTI ARE AMERICAN. Yes, cacti all originated on the continents we know as America--North, Central, South. And scientists have determined about how old they are because of the continental shift which occurred 120 million years ago. You probably remember learning about Pangaea, the once great single land mass on planet Earth, which broke into the continents we know today about that time. Since there are no significant species of cactus on the other continents, the guess is that they evolved after this separation, thus containing cacti evolution to the Americas.

Cacti aren't just desert plants, contrary to common thought. That beloved Christmas Cactus of yours is actually a tropical cactus, as are Epiphytes, which may grow in trees or cascading over rocks. If you've ever seen or eaten Dragon Fruit, this is the ripe fruit of a cactus.

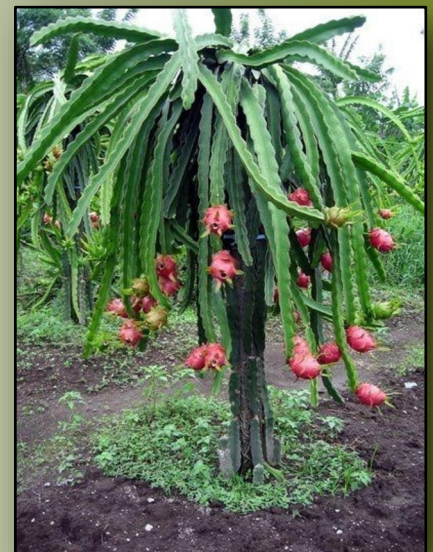
Most dry land cacti are armored. They wield sharp dagger-like spines. This feature of evolution serves the cactus as a weapon from herbivory, but also shades the body of the plant from harsh sunshine and directs any rainfall downward directly to the roots of the plant. Commonly cacti have a rubbery skin coating which reduces water loss as well as reflecting sunshine and heat away.

They have evolved a unique system of gas exchange.

—continued on page 7—



Epiphytes—A plant that grows on another plant but is not parasitic, such as the numerous ferns, bromeliads, air plants, and orchids growing on tree trunks in tropical rainforests.



Dragon Fruit Cactus
(*Selenicereus undatus*)

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Nature Watch

—continued from page 6—

Rather than the familiar transpiration in herbaceous plants through stomata during daylight hours, cacti do this during the night, when humidity is higher and winds lessened, thus reducing water loss. Photosynthesis, which requires the presence of sunshine, occurs during daytime using the gases which the cactus has held in suspension from the previous nighttime gas exchange, in with the CO₂, out with O₂. What an amazing trick of evolution.

Caring for a cactus in Indiana is easy enough if you keep the needs of the cactus in mind—well-draining soil, as much light as possible, and water only when bone dry. A cactus is happy to be pot bound, so no rush to repot. Give them a summer vacation in part sun and fertilize with a diluted solution monthly.

As far as that green thumb goes, ignore your cactus and it will delight you for years.



'Teddy Bear Cholla' (Cylindropuntia bigelovii)



'Old Man of the Andes'
(Oreocereus hendricksiana)



Senita (Pachycereus schottii)

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EDUCATION and VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES



Interested in weather? The Community Collaborative Rain, Hail and Snow Network is a non-profit, community based, network of volunteers who measure and report rain, hail and snow in their backyards. Check out this video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JkpVadNRAyQ> Contact bethhall@purdue.edu

Indiana Master Naturalist at Gabis Arboretum

This 9-week program is an excellent opportunity for anyone with a love for the outdoors who is wishing to expand their knowledge of plants, wildlife and other natural resources in Indiana. After the course, students can become a certified Indiana Master Naturalist by volunteering 30 hours through the Indiana Department of Naturalist Resources or at Gabis Arboretum. Registration is required by Monday, May 10th.



[More information about Indiana Master Naturalist.](#)

Wednesdays from 6:00 pm to 9:00 pm CST
May 12th, 2021 to July 7th, 2021
Location: Railway Depot

≈ Lake County Master Gardeners Association ≈

20th Annual Plant Sale

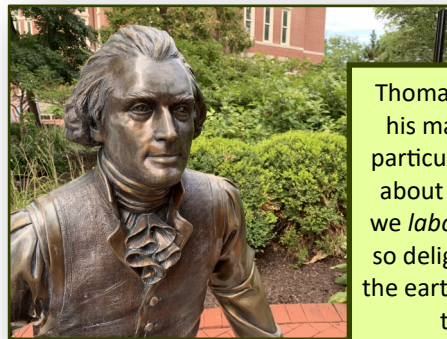
Date: Saturday, May 8, 2021
Time: 9:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.
Place: Fine Arts Building,
Lake County Fairgrounds
Crown Point, IN

In their commitment to “Helping Others Grow” the proceeds of the Plant Sale help fund the Lake County Master Gardener Scholarship and Grant programs. Info: Rebecca Koetz 219-755-3240

Education Rewind—Play it again, Sam

Learn how to start seeds indoors or outdoors with Purdue Advanced Master Gardener, Jill Kilhefner. Click [here](#) to start.

Is Raised Bed Gardening right for you? Find out with Purdue Advanced Master Gardener, Maureen Phillips. Click [here](#) to start.



Thomas Jefferson is well known for his many wise sayings, but one in particular may sum up our thoughts about our hobby gardens in which we *labor*. He said, “No occupation is so delightful to me as the culture of the earth, and no culture comparable to that of the garden.”

See educational videos of former **PCMGA Garden Show** seminars found at pccgarden.info on the Member Pages.

The **Purdue** website has added a link to numerous on-line education opportunities:

<https://www.purdue.edu/hla/sites/master-gardener/education-hours-opportunities/>

<https://www.purdue.edu/hla/sites/master-gardener/events/>

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Suzanna Tudor, Editor
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