

Garden Thyme



July 2021

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

Volume 7, Issue 4

As the summer is going strong, we are closer to getting back to the “old normal”. I am glad we can start to see each other again and enjoy the social aspect of gardening. We will still need to protect others, like staying home when you do not feel well, but we are on the downhill slide of the pandemic according to statistics from the Porter County Health Department.

Keep watching for more education and volunteer opportunities, if you are ready to rejoin in-person gatherings. For example, the Porter County Fair is back this year from July 22 to 31. There are great volunteer opportunities to sign-up to help at the *Ask a Master Gardener* booth. Also, this fall, there will be an in-person Master Gardener class (with limited participants) Watch for upcoming details!

Just a reminder that in the fall I send letters to Master Gardeners providing their current status with the Purdue Extension Master Gardener Program. For 2020, at least report your education hours and for 2021, try to at least report 6 hours each of education hours and volunteer hours. Granted, I will still be accepting that it’s difficult for some. That is why it’s only after 4 years of not reporting hours that it can become a problem. If you think you will struggle with hours, I encourage you to talk to me or to members of the association to hear of additional options that are day or night and in-person or virtual!

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\*For written instructions on reporting volunteer and education hours, go to [pcgarden.info](http://pcgarden.info) member pages.

\*Make sure to stop by the Porter County Fair Open Class Exhibits. Better yet, compete and win prestige and prizes! Click here for info: <https://www.portercountyfair.com/flowers-and-horticulture>

## Notes from Nikky

By Nicole “Nikky” Witkowski  
Purdue Extension Educator,  
Agriculture &  
Natural Resources



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## PCMGA GARDEN WALK 2021

**SATURDAY, JUNE 26**

Thank you to our garden hosts and to Ellen Standafer and Kaye Lynn Beeler for chairing this wonderful event for our community! 450 guests bought tickets to view six local gardens—all outstanding in their own way. Volunteer docents greeted guests and answered questions at each garden. Kaye Lynn reports that guests “enjoyed the diversity of the gardens very much.” Thanks to everyone!



*Banner and top left: PASSION FOR SUCCULENTS - Beeson Garden (Julie & Bob) These gardeners understand clay soils and amend them so native woodland plants, succulents and cacti thrive. The architectural accents add charm.*

*Center and Lower left: ROSES & FAIRIES - Hord Garden (Susie) This homeowner is a rose aficionado who has developed her collection over many years. Fairy Gardens, perennials and a small pond too!*

*Lower center and right: BLOOMS & BUTTERFLIES - Davidson Garden (Meg & Bob) In this garden a white picket fence surrounds unusual fir trees, huge butterfly bushes, roses, hydrangeas and lilacs that are magnets for butterflies.*



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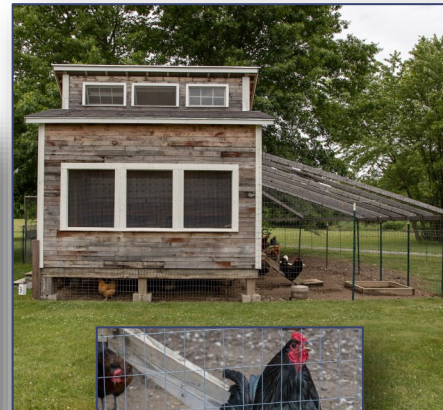
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*Upper and lower left: FOUNTAINS & CLEMATIS - Cierniak Garden (Ann & Gene) Unusual shade trees and Japanese maples, shrubs and vines, twelve clematis, roses and many perennials are punctuated by three fountains!*



*Top center and right: EDGE OF LIBERTY GARDEN - Calafati & Coleman Garden (Nancy & James) This organic market farm and community garden includes an apple and crabapple orchard, row crops, a pollinator garden, and pond for irrigation.*

*Lower center and right: RAISED-BED VEGETABLES - Varney Garden (Lisa & Jessica) Their country setting includes chickens and raised beds where crops are on yearly rotation plus composting station and rainwater irrigation.*



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Even these "littles" could find the first three rows in our backyard... with a little help. We'll try to find all five rows when we go camping this summer.



## GARDEN GAMES

By Wilma Willard

PCMGA Class of 2011

Who doesn't love a scavenger hunt? Whether you are camping, on an outing, or hosting a backyard party, this game can add some fun. Try these variations of rules.

**To win:** Find everything, or find everything in one row up, down, or diagonally, or be the first one to find 10 items.

**Backyard game:** Beforehand, cross out items not in your yard.

**Math skills:** Write in each square how many points it is worth. Make the players add the points to win.

**Reading skills:** The youngest player must read each item for the team, or just spell the words, or guess the item using the picture clue.

**Environmental awareness:** Teach the importance of the first three rows and the detriment of the last two rows.

**Timing:** This can be an ongoing game during your camping trip, or just a short party activity that is timed.

**Prizes:** A little gift is always a great incentive for everyone to energize and enjoy your game!

**Prep:** For each team, print the grid, then glue it to a paper lunch bag or gift bag. See photo.

## Happy Camper Scavenger Hunt

|                                                                                                    |                                                                                                   |                                                                                                    |                                                                                                  |                                                                                                |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| tree bark<br>    | brown leaf<br>  | green leaf<br>   | seed<br>       | acorn<br>    |
| pine needle<br> | sharp rock<br> | smooth rock<br> | pine cone<br> | insect<br> |
| berry<br>       | feather<br>    | twig<br>        | grass<br>     | flower<br> |
| plastic<br>     | paper<br>      | pop top<br>     | foil<br>      | bottle<br>  |
| wrapper<br>     | metal<br>      | coin<br>        | glass<br>     | string<br> |

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## Meet a Master Gardener—Mary Baird, PCMG Class of 2019

Greetings. My name is Mary Baird. I took the Master Gardener course to increase my knowledge about gardening. I enjoyed learning about plant diseases and identification. The most memorable lesson from the class is that master gardeners are friendly, sharing individuals. The most impressive lesson was there is a lot to learn yet.

My career background is I have been a nurse for forty years. My current role is that of PACU Educator, Post Anesthesia Care Unit. I am responsible for the orientation, competencies, and education of preadmission, preoperative, and postoperative, interven-

tional radiology, pre and post endoscopy nursing staff.

My husband, Jim, and I have been married for thirty-five years. Our children are grown and married. Our son and his wife live in Indianapolis. Our daughter and son-in-law live in Hebron.

We are extremely excited to find out on Easter that we will be grandparents for the first time in November.

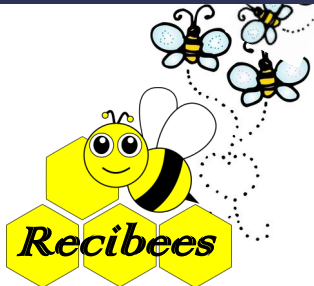
I have traveled a lot—some for work and some for pleasure. However, I also enjoy coming home to the wide-open country. I enjoy planting, flowers, hiking, canning, and making soups. I currently volunteer on the children's ministry and hospitality team at church.



*To plant a garden is to believe in tomorrow.*

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By Mary Baird  
PCMG Class of 2019

This recipe makes a big, hearty meal. The soup freezes well for later use.

For a finishing touch, my husband likes to sprinkle parmesan cheese over the top of the soup.



## Italian Vegetable Soup, Modified

### Ingredients:

- 2 lbs. Hot Bob Evans Sausage
- 2 large onions, diced
- 1 heaping tablespoon of minced garlic
- 1 banana pepper, sliced
- 2 14.5-ounce cans diced tomatoes
- 1 15 ounce can of garbanzo beans, undrained
- 1 15 ounce can of kidney beans, undrained

Submitted by Mary Baird  
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- 2 cans of beef broth
- 3 cups of water
- 3 medium zucchinis, sliced
- 3 medium yellow squash, sliced
- 16 oz. can of sliced mushrooms
- 1 teaspoon of basil
- Parmesan cheese is optional

### Directions:

1. Spray inside of a large pot with "Pam" type of spray.
2. Cook and stir sausage with onions, garlic, banana pepper.
3. Drain grease.
4. Stir in tomatoes and beans with liquid, broth, zucchinis, yellow squash, mushrooms and basil.
5. Cook until squash is tender.
6. Garnish with parmesan cheese, if desired.

Note: This soup freezes well.



credit: © Marcia Carson

## Foxgloves – The Easy and Forgiving Bi-Annual

By John Nash



One plant I have grown for many years is the foxglove (*Digitalis purpurea*). The foxglove is a biennial, herbaceous plant originally from Europe. It is a very undemanding plant and once established in a garden will provide years of bloom. Foxgloves are also a magnet for attracting hummingbirds and pollinators to the garden.

Plants can be started readily from seed or purchased plants. When planted from seed, foxgloves will remain a low rosette shaped plant the first year. During the second year a flower stalk will appear in June bearing pink, yellow, purple or white tubular flowers.



If you decide to grow these wonderful plants, listed below are some tips:

- Plant in well-drained, organically rich soil.
- Locate plants in full sun/semi shade; afternoon shade allows blooms to remain on the plant longer.
- Place composed mulch 2" deep around the plant to keep roots and soil cooler and moist.
- Stake flower stalks before the flowers open; stalks are sturdy, but sudden storms and water-soaked blossoms can bend stalks.
- After blooming, remove the flower stalk; smaller flower stalks will be produced with a second flush of blooms.
- Allow one flower stalk with seed pods to remain. Upon ripening, seeds will fall to the ground and germinate, thereby providing plants for next year.
- All parts of the foxglove are toxic. I do not recommend planting foxgloves if you have small children or pets who might accidentally ingest any part of the plant.

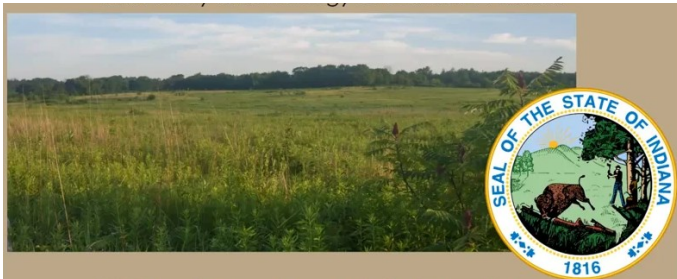
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## EDUCATION and VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

Did you miss the presentation “Where the Buffalo Roamed, The History and Ecology of Indiana’s Prairies?” Steve Sass and Amanda Smith of <https://www.indiananature.net/index.php> provided this educational program on June 16 for Porter County Master Gardeners and friends. Those who attended earned 1.5 hours of Master Gardener education and you can too by clicking on the link below. It will be well worth your time!

<https://www.pcgarden.info/watch-this-video-where-the-buffalo-roamed-the-plants-and-ecology-of-indianas-prairies/>



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](mailto:bethhall@purdue.edu)

### **Garden Thyme**

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#### **Newsletter Team**

Suzanna Tudor, Editor  
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Earn volunteer credit for contributing to the newsletter;  
contact the Extension Office for more information.  
219-465-3555

### **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.

See educational videos of former **PCMGA Garden Show** seminars found at [pcgarden.info](http://pcgarden.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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