

# The Latest Dirt

La Porte County Master Gardener Newsletter



APRIL 2024

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### 2024 MEETING SCHEDULE

Meetings will be held at 6:00 p.m. (DST) on  
Thursday at Bethany Lutheran Church  
102 G Street, La Porte, IN

April 4	Annual Awards Dinner Butterfly Gardening Red Mill Park
May 2	Business Meeting
June 6	Workshop
July 11	Business Meeting
August 1	Annual Picnic
September 5	Business Meeting
October 3	Workshop
November 7	Business Meeting Elections
December 5	Holiday Party

### NEXT BOARD MEETING

April 16th - 6:30 p.m.  
Classroom at the Library Exchange

"THE LATEST DIRT" is published monthly.  
The next deadline is February 20, 2024

[www.lpmastergardener.org](http://www.lpmastergardener.org)



PURDUE EXTENSION  
MASTER GARDENER PROGRAM

## Mild weather brings up the bulbs.

By: Rosie Lerner

It's not unusual for Indiana weather to have trouble deciding what season it is. Recent warm spells have had many gardeners wondering what to do about bulbs, and perhaps a few plants that are poking their foliage through the soil.

Just what should

gardeners do about daffodils, dianthus and daylilies poking out of the ground?

The good news is that no action is required. We're used to seeing this happen in late winter during a February warm spell. The plants will survive just fine.



Daffodils come up during mild weather



Freeze injury to daylily foliage

The longer the mild weather stays around, the more potential there is for damage when below-freezing temperatures return. Foliage that has popped up may be killed back, but the bulbs and storage roots should remain undamaged

underground. As the plants completely push out in spring, damaged foliage will appear brown, giving plants a raggedy appearance. But the plants themselves will survive. Flower buds on spring-flowering trees and shrubs are also starting to plump up, but should be fine so far. As buds progress in their development, they become more susceptible to freeze damage. And, spring is still over a month away, leaving plenty of opportunity for fluctuating temperatures. There isn't much we can do about the weather except to sit back and wait to see what Mother Nature has in store for us!

# ASSOCIATION NEWS

## BITS AND PIECES FROM THE PRESIDENT

- All RSVPs for April 4, 2024, awards banquet should be in now. If you have not yet replied, with the dish you are bringing, please do so immediately. Replying whether you will or will not be present is the right thing to do, especially if you want to eat. If you fail to let us know, we may not have enough food to feed everyone.
- Hot Line opens April 8, 2024, and runs through September 27, 2024. If you plan to answer the phone, please get on the calendar quickly. I will be there most Mondays, so interns, if you want a hands-on lesson, sign up for Mondays. For those needing training and/or a refresher, Nikki Witkowski will provide that training on April 12, 2024, beginning at 10:00 a.m. and ending at approximately 11:30 a.m.
- Kitty Knoll will be taking the reins of the Michigan City Farmers Market this year. Market begins May 4, 2024, and ends on October 6, 2024. Kitty has agreed to keep the schedule from last year. That means we will have the information desk at the market on the third Saturday of each month. Dates will be May 18, June 13, July 20, Aug 17, Sept. 14, Oct. I have received the application and will have that to them by the end of this week. Again, the Market is kind enough to allow us to have our space at no charge.
- The 2024 Garden Show was a remarkable success thanks to our volunteers. Without you, the show would not have been as good as it was. The raffle baskets were amazing this year! Thanks to all who helped in any capacity. What a wonderful team!



*Don't  
forget!*

*The Annual  
Awards  
Dinner*

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## May Business Meeting

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The next business meeting will be May 2, 2024, in Meeting Room B of the main library. I will not be there, but Kathleen Fox will do a marvelous job of conducting the meeting in my absence.

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### Master Gardener Association Business Meeting Minutes March 7, 2024

**La Porte Public Library - Room B**  
By: Ann Klosinski, Corresponding Secretary

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In Attendance: 20 Members  
Refreshments provided by Eunice Conway and Kathleen Fox  
Meeting called to order at 6:30 p.m.

**Treasurers report:** Susan Kieffer  
January report: copies of 2023 year-end report and the 2024 budget were distributed.

**Secretary's report:** Ann Klosinski  
Recording Secretary position needs to be filled, copy of January minutes will be sent to the membership by e-mail.

#### **Old Business:**

**Golden Trowel Award-**Karen Sarver.  
After a vote by ballot at this meeting, the Golden Trowel will be awarded at the April Awards Banquet to one of the nominees submitted by the membership, they are Mary Davis, Ann Klosinski, Carol Nolan, Estelle Pawloski, Donna Pouzar, Connie Shei and Kathy Staninger.

**April Banquet** – 5 members need to sign up for desserts and 12 members need to bring side dishes. The main dishes will be Italian beef and a vegetarian pasta from SWEET LOU, That's WHO. The Speaker's Bureau is working on securing a speaker.

**Garden show update-**Ann Klosinski talked about Basket Raffle themes and requested donations of items for the baskets. Due to the boy's semi-state basketball tournament also being held at the high school on the same day,

and in anticipation of possible parking issues, large signs were ordered from Reprographic Arts to direct attendees to available parking.

#### **New Business:**

- A speaker request from the La Porte Library was passed on to the Speaker's Bureau.
- Arts in the Park offered an opportunity to work concessions from 5:30-9:00 plus allowing us to have a Q & A table at a summer event. Pros and Cons were discussed, including what is eligible for volunteer hours.
- An interview with a candidate for the A&R position may result in hiring.
- The 2024 Grant paperwork has been reviewed and is ready to put on the website and to send press releases. April 30<sup>th</sup> is the application deadline and grants will be awarded Awards on May 31st.
- Mary Davis said tomato seeds of unknown type were donated. Some will be given to community gardens, and some will be packaged for the Garden Show.
- The first Pax Center MG presentation, milk jug planting, by Carol Nolan was attended by 2 interns and one Pax Center person. The next session will be on March 18<sup>th</sup>, 6 pm-planning your garden, square foot gardening. Sessions are offered to people in the community too.
- Board meetings will now be held the second Monday of the month.

The meeting was dismissed at 7:40 p.m.  
Respectfully Submitted,  
Ann Klosinski, Corresponding Secretary

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## Presentations At Brighton Street Green Space

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### WINTER SOWING

February 26, 2024, was the first presentation presented by Master Gardeners at Brighton Street Community Gardens Education Center. Visitors included Don Dotson, Garden Director as well as gardeners from the community garden and Master Gardener Interns.

Carol Nolan gave the demonstration for Winter Sowing and showed all how to cut the jug, put in the holes on the bottom of the jug, line the bottom of the jug with coffee filters, fill with dirt, and plant the seeds.

I was often asked if I was sure planting like this was going to work.

Those present at this presentation were: Don Dotson, Shelly Chopak, Jodi Gray, Vicki Znavor and Carol Nolan.

It was a fun evening, and everyone present took home at least one milk jug planted and ready to grow.

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### PLANNING YOUR GARDEN

On March 18, 2024, Karren Coplen gave the presentation on square foot gardening.

Those in attendance were Dan Bigg, Charles Tima, Dwayne Hurt, David Ashly, Clara Ashly, and Sue Kieffer and Carol Nolan

Karren demonstrated how to grid the garden space in square foot sections, how to plant, and what to expect as the season progressed.

When Karren asked what they would like to grow in their gardens the list ranged from beans to potatoes to collards. There were many questions, including: how to prep the garden space, how often should I water, what soil should I plant in, how much sun do I need, and many others. We found ourselves just sitting around a table and answering the questions as they came to us. These gardeners are novices and may have never had the opportunity to grow their own produce, so it is all new and amazing to them. The excitement of spring and warm weather was contagious as we got to know each other.

The fun thing about these presentations is our interns are attending and getting some exposure on how to do presentations and our experiences master gardeners are also coming to learn some things as well.

We have room for everyone. Master Gardeners will be present at the center for April planting and May planting. Please check the calendar on the EMG website and sign up. If you need something to get you interested in vegetable gardening, or to just enhance your love of it, this is a wonderful way to do that. What an excellent group of people.

**Time to Plan for the 2024 Great Tomato Contest!**

By: Karren Coplen

Last September, we held a member-only tomato contest. The competition was tough, but several members brought in samples of their home-grown tomatoes to find the best tomato at the September first meeting, and Greg Kellpsh’s Brandywine was the winner.

Each contender brought in two tomatoes, one to admire and the other to taste and compare. The table showed an array of the incredible variety of tomatoes, from the pale gold Lemon Boy, to the dark and eerie Black Krim, with green shoulders and deep, dark purple flesh. Each tomato was cut up into many pieces and displayed on a plate with an uncut version to admire and toothpicks to pick up tasting samples. Mary Davis, organizer of the contest, brought in more samples to round out the display, including the heart shaped Bull’s Head, and the multicolored cherry tomatoes, from pale gold to deep dark red, each with their own unique flavor characteristics.

Each member was allowed to taste them all, then vote for their three favorites. Once the votes were tallied, the results were clear. Greg’s Brandywine was the clear winner. Linda Hough won second place with her bright gold, Yellow Valencia. Karen Sarver won third with her cluster of slightly smaller Sweet Clusters, still on the vine. So, who will be the winner this year-and what wild and wonderful tomato will be the winner?

It was a fun event, and showed the talents and variety of our growing skills. So, as you plan your growing goodies this year, give a thought to what you can surprise and impress us with your growing skills, this coming September.



**2024 EXECUTIVE BOARD**

PRESIDENT	CAROL NOLAN
VICE PRESIDENT	KATHLEEN FOX
CORRESPONDING SECRETARY	ANN KLOSINSKI
RECORDING SECRETARY	THERESA DEZOBO-BORG
TREASURER	SUSAN KIEFFER
EDUCATION COMMITTEE	JOAN KINTZELE
	GEORGETTE BEHENNA
	KAREN SARVER

**2024 PROJECT COORDINATORS**

**Farmers’ Market – La Porte**

Carol Nolan \_\_\_\_\_ 331-903-0091  
 \_\_\_\_\_ **cnolan41@yahoo.com**

**Friendship Botanic Gardens**

Rima Binder \_\_\_\_\_ 219-878-8128  
 \_\_\_\_\_ **rimabinder@comcast.net**

**Garden Hotline**

Extension Office \_\_\_\_\_ 219-324-9407

**Garden Show**

Ann Klosinski \_\_\_\_\_ 219-872-8367  
 \_\_\_\_\_ **annak47@comcast.net**

**Habitat for Humanity**

**OPEN** \_\_\_\_\_

**Pax Center**

Carol Nolan \_\_\_\_\_ 331-903-0091  
 \_\_\_\_\_ **cnolan41@yahoo.com**

**Pioneer Land School Tours**

Linda Hough \_\_\_\_\_ 219-324-0424  
 \_\_\_\_\_ **ljhough614@gmail.com**

**Pioneer Heritage Garden**

Connie Shei \_\_\_\_\_ 219-362-4866  
 \_\_\_\_\_ **jshei@comcast.net**

**Seed Savers**

Mary Davis \_\_\_\_\_ 219-877-5339  
 \_\_\_\_\_ **mdavis9757@gmail.com**

**Sunflower Fair**

Linda Hough \_\_\_\_\_ 219-324-0424  
 \_\_\_\_\_ **ljhough614@gmail.com**

## APRIL GARDEN CALENDAR

### HOME (Indoor plants and activities)

- Start seeds of warm-season plants (including tomatoes, peppers, eggplant, marigolds, zinnias, and petunias) indoors for transplanting later to the garden.
- Harden off transplants started earlier in spring before planting outdoors. Gradually expose the young plants to outdoor conditions of wind, brighter sunlight, and lower moisture.
- Apply fertilizer to houseplants according to label directions as days grow brighter and longer and new growth begins. Foliage plants require relatively high-nitrogen fertilizer, while blooming plants thrive on formulations that are higher in phosphorus.
- Keep Easter lily in a bright, cool location, out of direct sunlight. Water as soil begins to dry. You can remove the yellow, pollen-bearing anthers inside the flower by pinching to prevent staining the petals.

### GARDEN (Flowers, vegetables, and small fruits)

- Plant seeds of cool season crops directly in the garden as soon as the soil dries enough to be worked. When squeezed, soil should crumble instead of forming a ball. Cool-season crops that can be direct-seeded include peas, lettuce, spinach, carrots, beets, turnips, parsnips and Swiss chard.
- Plant transplants of cool-season crops, such as broccoli, cauliflower, cabbage, Brussels sprouts, kohlrabi and onions.
- Plant or transplant asparagus and rhubarb crowns. For best plant establishment, do not harvest until the third year after planting.
- Plant sections of certified, disease-free potato "seed" tubers.
- Allow the foliage of spring-flowering bulbs to remain in place after blooms fade. Leaves manufacture the food reserves, which are then stored in the bulb for a repeat showing next year.
- Plant hardy perennials, such as daylilies and delphiniums.
- Start tuberous begonias and caladiums indoors for transplanting to garden later.
- Remove winter mulch from strawberries, but keep mulch handy in case late frosts are predicted and to help keep weeds under control.
- Plant or transplant strawberries, raspberries, and other small fruit.
- Prune grape vines to remove dead or weakened limbs and too thin as needed.
- Repair support trellises as needed.

#### STANDING COMMITTEE

##### COORDINATORS

History Book \_\_\_\_\_ Donna Pouzar  
 Hospitality \_\_\_\_\_ Eunice Conway  
 Librarian \_\_\_\_\_ Linda Hough  
 Newsletter \_\_\_\_\_ Donna Pouzar  
 Speakers Bureau \_See Executive Board  
 Sunshine \_\_\_\_\_ Julie Goetz

**Purdue Extension Office** \_\_\_ 324-9407

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 Secretary, ANR & HHS

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*The Latest Dirt* is published monthly. The deadline for submission is the 20<sup>th</sup> of each month. Our mission is to publish articles and events of interest to other Master Gardeners and the community. Articles about personal experiences, suggestions on gardening books, catalogs, helpful websites, tips and tricks, book reviews, seminars you've attended are welcomed.

Submission requirements: Articles should be no longer than a page and can include photos. References must be included. Latin names of plants should be italicized. We do not accept articles pertaining to medicinal information. Master Gardeners will get volunteer hours for time spent working on an article.

**Have a garden item for sale or trade?  
 Buy, Sell, Trade at the  
 Trading Shed**

**Place your free ad in The Latest Dirt.**

Tools, tillers, mowers, plants - anything garden related. Keep ads brief and provide your phone number and/or e-mail address.

Ads will be limited to space available.

Send ads, photos, events or articles by the 20<sup>th</sup> of the month to:

**[pouzdlp@icloud.com](mailto:pouzdlp@icloud.com)**

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**YARD (Lawns, woody ornamentals, and fruits)**

- Plant a tree in celebration of Arbor Day, April 24. You should plant bare-root stock before new top growth begins. You can plant balled and burlapped and containerized stock later in spring.
  - Complete pruning chores. Remove dead and injured branches first.
  - Apply a prebloom, multipurpose orchard spray to fruit trees.
  - Remove winter coverings from roses, but keep mulch nearby to protect them from late freezes. Prune and fertilize as needed.
  - Apply pre-emergent herbicide to control crabgrass in lawns. Approximate application dates are late March to mid-April in southern Indiana and mid-April to early May in northern Indiana. Exact timing varies each year with weather conditions. For more precise application timing based on Growing Degree Days (GDD), visit Michigan State University's [GDD Tracker](#). Enter your ZIP code and select "Crabgrass Pre." The target GDD window for crabgrass prevention is 250-500.
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“Daffodil Do-Si-Do”©

By Marcy Dailey  
2/21/06

The graceful golden daffodils  
Dance a two-step up the hill.  
Their blossoms form a chorus line  
With Mother Nature keeping time.  
She leads the choreography  
For all adoring eyes to see.  
Don't miss this dance, I warn you, dear,  
For it's performed but once a year!

