

The Latest Dirt

La Porte County Master Gardener Newsletter



FEBRUARY 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

February 1	Workshop
March 7	Business Meeting
April 4	Annual Awards Dinner
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

February 20th - 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



PURDUE EXTENSION
MASTER GARDENER PROGRAM

Snow Is Good for Gardens

By: Rosie Lerner

Though your aching back may not agree, recent heavy snows actually will be good for your garden and landscape. Snow provides moisture as well as protection from cold and wind.

Snow is an excellent insulator against low temperatures and excessive winds. The extent of protection depends on the depth of snow. Generally, the temperature below the snow increases by about 2 degrees F for each inch of accumulation. In addition, the soil gives off some heat so that the temperature at the soil surface can be much warmer than the air temperature. One study found that the soil surface temperature was 28 F with a 9-inch snow depth and an air temperature of -14 F!

Snow brings welcome moisture to many landscape plants, which will in turn help prevent desiccation injury. Even dormant plants continue to lose moisture from twigs (as water vapor) in the process known as transpiration. Evergreen plants, which keep their leaves through the winter, are at even greater risk of injury.

On the other hand, it is possible to have too much of a good thing. Some evergreens will suffer from too much snow load. The weight of snow and ice can bend or even break branches, particularly on multi-stemmed shrubs, such as arborvitae. Snow should be gently removed by brushing away with a broom. Do not try to remove ice, since it is more than likely that you will break the stems. Multi-stemmed shrubs that are known to be susceptible to breakage can be bound with twine to hold branches together to prevent them from splitting apart.

Of course, there's still more winter to come before we'll know how well our plants fare. In the meantime, rest assured that there really is a silver lining to this storm cloud, at least in the areas that received the snow.

ASSOCIATION NEWS

Master Gardener Association

Business Meeting Minutes

January 4, 2024

Bethany Lutheran Church Library

By: Ann Klosinski, Acting Recording Secretary

Social Hour at 6:00 p.m.

Refreshments were provided by the MG Board Members

Presentation by The Pax Center at 6:30 p.m. by Jamie Buchanan & Don Dotson

The goal of the Pax Center is to keep the county well fed. They are open 3 days a week. They maintain a food pantry, serve 2 meals a week, and have community gardens as well as a “share table” where not only produce from the gardens is offered, but they also accept produce from other gardeners. Produce from the Farmers’ market vendors is also given to the center. They grew corn yielding 8,000 ears last year. Plants are purchased through Perennials Galore. Mary Davis offered seeds to them if any are left from the Garden Show.

The children’s gardens at Brighton Street are for 8–12-year-olds, and there were 44 kids there last year. Jackson Street has 81 concrete planters. After the growing season, cover crops are used and then tilled in the spring. There is some vandalism. A combination lock is used to let people in. The gardens have been on Jackson Street for 12 years and at Brighton Street for 4 years. Picnic tables provide a place for socializing in the evening. They need a director for Brighton Street.

Master Gardeners are invited to be involved: to give classes, be available for Q&A, and educate people on basic gardening practices. The need

for education is great. They mentioned that the Association is welcome to have association meetings there.

Meeting was called to order 7:05 p.m.

In Attendance: 22 Members & 1 Guest

Treasurer’s report – Treasurer Susan Kieffer presented the October & November reports.

Secretary’s report - Secretary Ann Klosinski said the minutes of the November business meeting were sent to the Association members and the interns by email on January 4th.

Old Business – Association membership applications are due by January 31, 2024. Members can turn them in at this meeting or mail/drop off at extension office before that date.

New Business

The board discussed reducing the number of meetings this year. We are required to have only six meetings a year (one every two months). The membership discussed their feelings. There is an active core group making up about 50% of the membership. Sue Cook, Debbie Moore & Eunice Conway want to keep all meetings so as not to deprive active members of opportunities for education. Speakers are for providing educational hours at workshop meetings but are sometimes a challenge to find. Intern Vickie Znavor is willing to do a presentation at a meeting. Meeting places that can be used at no charge suggested were the La Porte main library, the Pax Center and the La Porte Healthcare Center.

Understanding that it is sometimes difficult to find a speaker for a workshop meeting, changing the structure for 3 months to be social meetings was discussed. Susan Kieffer

moved that three months will be social meetings, February-dreams, June-successes and failures, October-end of season and harvest. After a second by Debbie Moore, the membership approved.

Input on The Pax Center Opportunity for Master Gardeners: This is a fantastic opportunity to get back to our roots of educating and helping our community. Education must be an aspect in all volunteer activities at the Pax Center. They have a list of suggestions for January to October, pollinators being one for January. (Not sure if it's possible to have one ready for January) Carol Nolan will coordinate the Pax Center Project if someone else does the Farmers Market.

Ann will send an email out for the February meeting to project coordinators.

Information: the board will be reviewing the by-laws. More information regarding the by-laws committee will be forthcoming. A link will be sent to the membership on by-laws.

Ballots for The Golden Trowel Nominee were available on the table with sign-in sheet.

Open discussion – Sue Cook asked for an update on the Garden Show. Ann Klosinski gave a recap on the progress for most aspects of the show and Eunice Conway talked about advertising.

Meeting was adjourned.

Musings from Carol

By: Carol Nolan, President

The new year is certainly coming in with snow, snow, and more snow which makes us all yearn for sunshine and gardening time. With that in mind, the following will be coming soon:

Hot Line opens for business in April. The dates I have now, but they could change, are April 8 through September 27, 2024. We run three days a week, Monday, Wednesday, and Friday from 9:00 a.m. until noon.

Interns are invited to sit in on Mondays for training and any other day of the week. We prefer to have two people sitting at the desk, especially if one is an intern until they are comfortable staffing the desk.

The Pax Center. Talks continue around this new project. This is a wonderful opportunity for interns as well as our experienced master gardeners. We will be educating new gardeners in the varied techniques of gardening, as well as answering questions on the fly. We will also give educational talks and how-to demonstrations as the season progresses. Please stay tuned for further updates.

2024 Spring Garden Show is happening March 16, 2024, at Michigan City High School. If you have not already volunteered, please reach out to Kathleen Fox for information regarding volunteer opportunities.

This year, instead of workshops, we will have three social meetings. These meetings will be open to discussion of issues we have in our gardens, things we need help understanding, and in general getting to know each other better. Again interns, this is a fantastic way for you to meet your fellow master gardeners. February will be a discussion about project coordinators. This will involve what they do, how they lead a group project, and they will answer any questions you may have. At this time, we have openings for two project coordinators, and we will discuss them at this meeting as well.

NOTE: The February meeting will take place at Bethany Church. After that all meetings will be at the La Porte Main Library – Meeting Room B

While attending meetings is not mandatory, it is the best place to stay on top of what is happening within our association. The meetings are where issues related to our association can be discussed in detail. We will be reviewing Bylaws this year, and any suggested changes will be voted on during one of the general business meetings.

Thanks to all our members.

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

La Porte Builders' Home Expo

By: Donna Pouzar

Once again, we are participating in the Builders' Association of La Porte County Home and Lifestyle Expo on Saturday, March 2nd and Sunday, March 3rd at the Blue Chip Casino in the Hotel Event Center. The show is open on Saturday from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. and on Sunday from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

There will be three 2-hour shifts each day with 3 Master Gardeners per shift answering questions from attendees and promoting our 2024 Garden Show. Sign-up sheets will be available at the February meeting. This is a great time to start getting your volunteer hours early.

Bylaws Committee

By: Carol Nolan

A review of the La Porte County Master Gardener Association Bylaws will take place in 2024. We need a five (5) member committee to review and suggest changes. Currently, we have three (3) members; Karren Coplen, Karen Sarver, and Carol Nolan. We are looking for two (2) more members to join us. This invitation is open to all association members including new interns.

This is an opportunity to understand our bylaws and be a part of making any necessary changes. The last revision was in 2019. It is recommended bylaws be reviewed every three (3) to five (5) years, so we are right on schedule.

Please reach out to me via email if you would like to be a part of the committee. Contact me by email at cnolan41@yahoo.com or by cell at 331-903-0091.

Thank you!

2024 EXECUTIVE BOARD

PRESIDENT	CAROL NOLAN
VICE PRESIDENT	KATHLEEN FOX
CORRESPONDING SECRETARY	ANN KLOSINSKI
RECORDING SECRETARY	SUE COOK
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



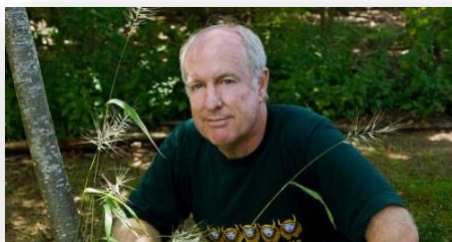
You're invited to join PCMGA for
"A Guide to Restoring the Little Things that Run the World,"
with Dr. Doug Tallamy, Educator, Researcher & Author
via Zoom on Monday, February 5, 2024
6:30 PM CST (Chicago time).

Why should we care?

A recent UN report predicts that as many as 1 million species will disappear from planet earth because of human activities. Many of these are insects and nearly all species at risk rely on insects. Insects have already declined 45% since 1974. The most alarming part of this statistic is that we don't seem to care, despite the fact that a world without insects is a world without humans!

What can we do?

So how do we create beautiful landscapes brimming with life; landscapes that support the pollinators, herbivores, detritivores, predators and parasitoids that run the ecosystems we depend on? Tallamy will remind us of the many essential roles insects play, and describe the simple changes we must make in our landscapes and our attitudes to keep insects on the ground, in the air and yes, on our plants.



Dr. Doug Tallamy is an entomologist, ecologist and conservationist. A professor in the Department of Entomology and Wildlife Ecology at the University of Delaware, he has written and co-authored several books, as well as many papers, including a recent book, *Nature's Best Hope: A New Approach to Conservation that Starts in Your Yard*.

PCMGA is pleased to offer free public educational programming like this from the proceeds of events such as the recent 18th Annual Gardening Show.

Registration is required by midnight, February 3rd. This seminar will be recorded. To reserve your spot, please click [here](#) to register.

Join us on Monday, February 5, 2024
at 6:30 p.m. CST (Chicago time) to attend Doug Tallamy's virtual seminar,
"A Guide to Restoring the Little Things that Run the World."

We look forward to welcoming you to this exclusive event!

FEBRUARY GARDEN

HOME (Indoor plants and activities)

- Check water levels in cut flowers daily.
- Check stored produce and flower bulbs for rot, shriveling, or excess moisture. Discard any damaged items.
- Most houseplants require less water in the winter because growth is slow or stopped. Check the soil for dryness before watering.
- Move houseplants to brighter windows, but don't place plants in drafty places or against cold windowpanes.
- Potted spring-flowering bulbs forced into early blooming can make good gifts for a sweetheart. Keep these plants in a bright, cool location for longer-lasting blooms. Forced bulbs make poor garden flowers, and you should discard them as blooms fade.

GARDEN (Flowers, vegetables, and small fruits)

- Order seeds before it's too late for this year's planting.
- Sketch your garden plans. Remember to include plants to replace or replant crops that you will harvest in spring or early summer.
- Prepare or repair lawn and garden tools for the upcoming season.
- Start seeds indoors for cool-season vegetables so they will be ready to transplant to the garden early in the season. You should start broccoli, cauliflower, and cabbage seeds five to seven weeks prior to transplanting.
- Test leftover garden seed for germination. Place 10 seeds between moist paper toweling or cover with a thin layer of soil. Keep seeds warm and moist. If fewer than six seeds germinate, then purchase fresh seed.

YARD (Lawns, woody ornamentals, and fruits)

- Cut branches of forsythia, pussy willow, crabapple, quince, honeysuckle, and other early spring-flowering plants to force them into bloom indoors. Place the branches in warm water, and set them in a cool location.
- Check mulches, rodent shields, salt/wind screens, and other winter plant protections to make sure they are still in place.
- Prune landscape plants (except early spring bloomers that should be pruned after flowers fade). Birches, maples, dogwoods, and other heavy sap bleeders can be pruned in early summer to avoid the sap flow, although bleeding is not harmful to the tree.
- Delay pruning fruit plants until you can assess winter injury.

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

Sue Salisbury __ salisbk@purdue.edu
 Secretary, ANR & HHS

Interim ANR-Porter County
 Nikky Witkowski ____ 219-465-3555
nikky@purdue.edu

Interim ANR-La Porte County
 Mary Komenas ____ 219-324-9407
mfoell@purdue.edu

The Latest Dirt is published monthly. The deadline for submission is the 20th 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 20th of the month to:

pouzdlp@icloud.com

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