

The Latest Dirt

La Porte County Master Gardener Newsletter



OCTOBER 2023

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

ASSOCIATION NEWS	2
OCTOBER WORKSHOP	2
GARDEN SHOW UPDATE	2
HOTLINE UPDATE	4
SUNFLOWER FEST UPDATE	5
VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES	6
OCTOBER GARDEN CALENDAR	6

2023 MEETING SCHEDULE

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

October 5	Workshop Grant Recipients
November 2	Business Meeting Elections
December	Holiday Party

NEXT BOARD MEETING

October 17th - 6:30 p.m.
Classroom at the Library Exchange

"THE LATEST DIRT" is published monthly.
The next deadline is October 20, 2023



www.facebook.com/MasterGardenersOfLaPorteCountyIndiana
www.lpmastergardener.org



PURDUE EXTENSION
MASTER GARDENER PROGRAM

Bringing Houseplants Back Indoors

By: Rosie Lerner

Many houseplants thrive during the long, bright summer days, especially when properly moved outdoors. But these plants may have some trouble adjusting back to indoor conditions when colder weather strikes.



Rex Begonia , Photo credit:
Rosie Lerner

Many of our common indoor plants are native to the tropical or subtropical climates and cannot tolerate cold temperatures. Houseplants should be brought back inside before the outdoor temperature drops to 55 F. If days are warm but night temperatures are cold, you might consider bringing the plants indoors for the night and putting them back out in the morning.

Many plants will drop leaves in response to the lower light conditions inside most homes. Gradually exposing the plants to lower light intensity before permanently moving them indoors should help lessen the shock. However, some leaf drop is unavoidable.

Plants will likely slow down their growth considerably, so less water and fertilizer will be needed. The best moisture meter is your finger. For most plants, you should allow the soil to dry slightly between waterings. Reduce your fertilizer applications or discontinue them if plants seem to be in a resting period.

Be sure to inspect your plants closely for signs or symptoms of insect attack. Insect pests such as white flies and aphids can be prolific outdoors and may further increase their population once they are brought indoors. And these pests may spread to other plants very quickly.

Often a sharp spray from the garden hose will remove insect pests from houseplant foliage. Insecticidal soaps also work well, particularly on soft-bodied insects such as aphids. Several treatments may be necessary to be sure that the pests are gone. Start checking your plants now, so that control measures will have time to work before you bring the plants indoors.

ASSOCIATION NEWS

OCTOBER 5, 2023, Workshop

By: Carol Nolan

All members will want to attend the October 5th Workshop which will be held at Bethany Lutheran Church, located at 102 G Street, La Porte IN. Social hour starts at 6:00 p.m. and the meeting will start promptly at 6:30 p.m.

Our program will highlight the three 2023 Grant Recipients:

- Michigan City Salvation Army for teaching people how to container garden.
- Friendship Botanic Gardens for their project to protect the tasting garden which teaches children about the five (5) senses in gardening.
- La Porte County Soil and Water Conservation for the Power Pollinator Garden they will be creating at the extension office.

Representatives from each organization will explain what the grant was for and how their projects incorporated our motto of “Helping others grow,” as well as how successful they were.

If there is time at the end of the meeting, the floor will be open to any gardening questions or concerns you may have.

Thank you!

SEED CATALOGS

By: Mary Davis

The garden show will be here before you know it. With that in mind if you would, please save your seed catalogs which we will make available at the seed table.

GARDEN SHOW

By: Carol Nolan

The Spring Garden Show committee is working hard on plans for the 2024 show. It's not until March 16th, but time flies so reserve the date to help make the event an overwhelming success. We will be needing everyone to volunteer their time and talents.

There will be sign-up sheets at the meetings and Kathleen Fox, volunteer coordinator, will be keeping in touch with you to determine what area of the show you would like to volunteer in and where you will be most needed. Remember, admission is at no charge to everyone who volunteers a minimum of 4 hours.

On Page 3 is a schedule of all upcoming Garden Show Committee meetings. **We need volunteers, so if you are interested in joining the Committee, please contact me.**



Garden Show Planning Committee Meeting Schedule

Below is the revised meeting schedule for the 2024 Garden Show Planning Committee. Meetings will be held in Meeting Room A at the main La Porte Library. Door opens at 6:00 p.m. and the meeting begins promptly at 6:30 p.m. It is important that all members of this committee attend all meetings going forward.

We are not as far along as I believe we should be and as the chair of the committee, I am feeling somewhat unsure of how we are going to pull this off. The meetings will be monthly through the end of 2023 then move to every two weeks in January, then weekly in February and March.

The success of this show is not in my hands alone, but in the hands of you, our membership. Again, if any member wishes to join the Planning Committee, we would love to have you aboard.

October 25, 2023

November 16, 2023

December 28, 2023

January 11, 2024

January 25, 2024

February 8, 2024

February 15, 2024

February 22, 2024

February 29, 2024

March 8, 2024

March 14, 2024

Also, please mark your volunteer calendars for Friday evening, March 15, for set up, Saturday March 16, for the show and later that day after 4:00 p.m. for tear down and clean up.

Thank you!

July-August Hotline Update

By: Stephen Zolvinski



Master Gardener hotline phone and e-mail inquiries have eased up since early July as eight volunteers fielded only 13 calls compared to 34 calls in the prior 2-1/2 months. But that doesn't mean it will heat up again as we reach the waning days of the gardening season.


Since July 10, calls ranged over a variety of topics, from inquiries about Master Gardener training and programs, plant identifications, and tree and shrub problems involving oak, arborvitae, ornamental crabapple and bottle brush buckeye. A significant informational inquiry came from far southwestern Illinois. A community leader wanted guidance from our Pioneer Garden for starting a similar project based on an 1861 cabin. Amazingly, the reputation of the Pioneer Garden has spread some 300-plus miles far and wide to this community located across the river from St. Louis.

Interestingly, there were no calls about vegetable problems. The only fruit problem involved blossom end rot on tomato, and a berry problem involved possible black rot on grapes.

Carol Nolan led the mid-summer charge, answering eight calls, followed by Estelle Pawloski, four calls, Anne Klosinski, Donna Pouzar, and Steve Zolvinski, three calls each, Jackie Carroll, two, and Stacy McGinnis and Sharon Strujenske, one each.

Carol Nolan is signed up for Mondays to shepherd any newcomers through the process. The hotline is scheduled for 9 a.m. to noon Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays. The 2023 hotline season will continue until September 29, so there is still time to rack up some volunteer hours answering an inquiring public's questions.

Here is a summary of hotline calls from July 10 through September 1:

 Category	Frequency	Percentage
other	5	27
tree	3	15
plants	2	11
animals	2	11
flower	1	6
fruit	1	6
insects	1	6
Fungus	1	6
Shrub	1	6
berry	1	6

NEED A RIDE?

By: Carol Nolan

While reviewing the survey, we found a consistent concern regarding lower participation in our meetings. We are hoping to increase member participation by offering rides to those who are not able to get to the meetings on their own. We are happy to provide the following contact information to our members. If anyone else would like to get on the list of drivers, please let aboard member know.

- Sue Kieffer – 219-362-4498 - Please leave a message. (La Porte area)
- Joan Kintzele – 901-853-5818 - Please note Joan will not be available during the months of January/February - Please leave message (Fish Lake area)
- Ann Klosinski – 219-872-8367 - Please leave a message (Michigan City/La Porte)
- Carol Nolan – 331-903-0091 – Please leave a message (La Porte and surrounding areas)

Please note: If a call to any of these drivers is not picked up, please leave a message. The driver will reach out to you.
Thank you.



Sunflower Fest 2023

By: Linda Hough

It was a great day to be outside; it started out chilly, but warmed up nicely later. There were more entrants than last

year. We have to thank Critchfield elementary for this. Some of the teachers gave their students sunflower seeds to plant at end of school last semester. I believe that half of the entries were from Critchfield school.



2023 EXECUTIVE BOARD

PRESIDENT	CAROL NOLAN
VICE PRESIDENT	KATHLEEN FOX
CO-SECRETARIES	ANN KLOSINSKI
	STEVE ZOLVINSKI
TREASURER	SUSAN KIEFFER
ED. COMMITTEE/	EUNICE CONWAY
SPEAKERS BUREAU	JOAN KINTZELE
	DEB SARVER
PAST PRESIDENT	RANDA MAGILL

2023 PROJECT COORDINATORS

Brown Bag Gardening Series

OPEN _____

Farmers' Market – La Porte

Carol Nolan _____ 331-903-0091
 _____ cnolan41@yahoo.com

Garden Hotline

Extension Office _____ 219-324-9407

Habitat for Humanity

OPEN _____

Friendship Botanic Gardens

Rima Binder _____ 219-878-8128
 _____ rimabinder@comcast.net

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

Garden Show

Carol Nolan _____ (331) 903-0091
 _____ cnolan41@yahoo.com

There were 3 entries for most blooms, 14 for tallest, and 13 for largest head. The 1st place winning categories were: 44 blooms, 19 feet for tallest and 15 1/2 for largest head.

We gave out lots of information to people. A thank you Georgette, Julie and Deb S, for helping.



VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

Farmers' Market – Michigan City – October 21st

By: Carol Nolan

The last date for the Michigan City **Farmers Market** is October 21st. There is one slot open so if you wish to volunteer, please go on the MG Manager calendar and sign. up. I have already signed up for the other 7:30 to 10 slot to set up.

OCTOBER GARDEN CALENDAR

HOME (Indoor plants and activities)

- Keep poinsettia in complete darkness for 15 hours each day — for example, between 5 p.m. and 8 a.m. — for eight to 10 weeks until red bracts begin to show.
- Pot spring-flowering bulbs to force into bloom indoors. Moisten soil and refrigerate 10 to 13 weeks. Transfer to a cool, sunny location, and allow an additional three to four weeks for blooming.
- Houseplants, especially those grown outdoors during the summer, commonly drop some or many of their leaves in response to the lower natural light intensity in the autumn and reduced light intensity indoors.
- Water indoor plants less frequently, and discontinue fertilizer as plants slow down or stop growing for the winter season.

GARDEN (Flowers, vegetables, and small fruits)

- Harvest root crops and store in a cold (32 F), humid location. Storing produce in perforated plastic bags is a convenient, easy way to increase humidity.
- Harvest brussels sprouts as they develop in the axils of the leaves from the bottom of the stem. Brussels sprouts will continue to develop up the stem.
- Harvest pumpkins and winter squash before frost, but when rind is hard and fully colored. Store in a cool location until ready to use.
- Harvest gourds when stems begin to brown and dry. Cure at 70-80 F for two to four weeks.
- Harvest mature, green tomatoes before frost and ripen indoors in the dark. Warmer temperatures lead to faster ripening.

- Asparagus top growth should not be removed until foliage yellows. Let foliage stand over winter to collect snow for insulation and moisture.
- Remove plant debris from the garden to protect next year's plantings from insect and disease buildup. Compost plant refuse by alternating layers of soil, plant material, and manure or commercial fertilizer.
- Have garden soil tested for fertilizer needs every three to five years.
- Incorporate organic matter in fall to avoid the rush of garden activities and waterlogged soil in spring. Soils prepared in the fall tend to warm faster and allow earlier planting in spring.
- Dig tender garden flower bulbs for winter storage. Gladiolus corms should be dug when leaves begin turning yellow. Caladiums, geraniums and tuberous begonias should be lifted before killing frost. Dig canna and dahlia roots after a heavy frost. Allow to air dry, then pack in dry peat moss or vermiculite, and store in a cool location.
- Complete planting of spring-flowering bulbs.

YARD (Lawns, woody ornamentals, and fruits)

- Keep plants, especially newly planted stock, well-watered until ground freezes.
- Have soil ready to mound roses for winter protection. Do not mound or cover roses until after leaves drop and soil is near freezing, usually late November or early December.
- Strawberry plants need protection from winter's extremes, but applying winter mulch too early may cause crowns to rot. Apply winter protection when plants are dormant but before temperatures drop below 20F, usually late November or early December.
- Rake or shred large, fallen tree leaves, such as maple, to prevent them from matting down and smothering grass. Raking smaller leaves, such as honey locust, is optional.
- Continue mowing lawn 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

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

Interim ANR-Porter County
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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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