

The Latest Dirt

La Porte County Master Gardener Newsletter



SEPTEMBER 2023

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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

September 7	Business Meeting
October 5	Workshop
November 2	Business Meeting Elections
December	Holiday Party

NEXT BOARD MEETING

September 19th - 6:30 p.m.
Location to be determined.
Members are welcome to attend.

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



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

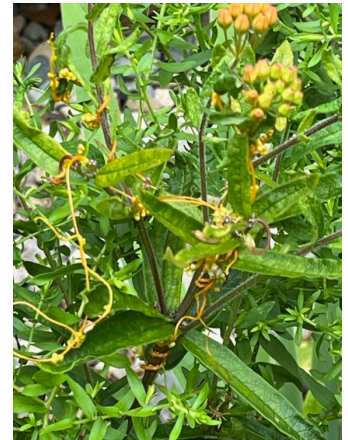


PURDUE EXTENSION
MASTER GARDENER PROGRAM

DODDER

By: Kitty Knoll

What is this strange, vining orange thread twisting around my Monarda and Butterfly Weed? After an internet search and finding an article from the University of Wisconsin/Madison I am most positive it is called Cuscuta or more commonly, dodder. A parasitic plant that lacks roots, leaves and chlorophyll has invaded a small portion of the flower bed. It created an orange spaghetti mess holding onto host plants that it had been feeding on. My beautiful Bee Balm grew and flowered but now lacks robust, green leaves.



There are several species of dodder in North America and Europe. Some other common folk names include beggarweed, devil's gut, devil's hair, strangleweed, witch's hair, and angel hair. The orange threads become noticeable in late spring. From June through July, it grows tiny white or pink flowers that go on to produce a large number of seeds that can survive in dormancy for many years. This makes it difficult to eradicate.

Treatments to rid an area of this parasite should be swift, such as picking and burning the invaded plants to kill the flowers before seeds form. Herbicides such as 2-4-D can be used, but that will also kill the host (desirable) plants. To prevent further infestation planting nonhost plants such as grasses and other monocot species for several years should clear the soil.

Lucky for me that I have seen the dodder only on a small area of my flower bed. I have since cut back and removed the visible orange strands, seeing only a few flowers blooming. Because this is the second year that it's been invading, I plan on tilling and replanting with some grasses. I tend to stay away from the chemical treatments in favor of more organic methods.

Most likely the dodder seeds were in the soil with a new plant that I purchased which is how it's commonly spread. In hindsight I wish I would have done some research when it showed up last year. Knowledge is powerful; I felt the need to share!

ASSOCIATION NEWS

THINGS TO KNOW

A good time was had by all at the August picnic. The auction raised \$273.00. Good job everyone. Thanks to those who came early and stayed later at the picnic in August to help set up and tear down.

Nominating Committee

We are looking for volunteers for the nominating committee. As of now, we are looking to replace two (2) board members during the November election period. Those willing to serve on the committee (we need 3 members in good standing to form the committee) should contact Carol Nolan via email at cnolan41@yahoo.com

Some things to look forward to

We will be adding time at the end of each business meeting for questions and answers or for a member to share a gardening success or failure.

An old custom will be revived in January of 2024. Come to the next business meeting, September 7, 2023 and find out what it is.

State conference

The State Conference at Purdue, Lafayette, IN on October 6 and 7 is being attended by at least five (5) La Porte County Master Gardeners. Want to join us?

Dates to Remember

The next board meeting will be September 19, 2024 at 6:30 p.m. We will meet in the classroom on the top floor of the Library Exchange.

Monthly meetings have begun to plan the 2024 Garden Show. Next meeting will be September 28, 2023 at the Library, meeting Room A.

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.

Answering a Call for Gardening Help

By: Donna Pouzar

On August 1st, Kitty Knoll, Linda Hough, Nancy Fournier and I volunteered to help a gentleman's request for some gardening help. His wife had some health issues and could not take care of her garden as she once had been able to. She was a former Master Gardener from another county and was thrilled to learn her garden would be taken care of.



We spent a little over an hour cleaning up her garden and then weeded around the perimeter of their home. They were so grateful, and we were glad we could help them out.



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

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

HOT LINE

By: Carol Nolan

I will be manning the **Hot Line** on Mondays beginning June 12. If any member needs extra training and feels more comfortable volunteering with an experienced MG, please sign up for the following available Mondays. You can do so by logging into MG Manager or by calling the Extension Office and asking Sue Salisbury to reserve the day/days you prefer.

September 11, 18, and 25

Farmers' Market – Michigan City

By: Carol Nolan

Also, the Michigan City **Farmers Market** is now on the MG Manager calendar. I have signed up for each week for the 7:30 to 10 slot to set up. I will be back around noon each session to assist with tear down as well. If you want to sign up, below are the dates we are scheduled to be there:

September 16

October 21

Each volunteer can sign up for a minimum of 2 hours or the full 4 hours, your choice. Starting time is 8 a.m. and closing is 12 p.m. I will bring the canopy, weights, table, and chairs. Those who sign up for 8:00 a.m. slots should be there around 7:30 to help set up. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me.

SEPTEMBER GARDEN CALENDAR

HOME (Indoor plants and activities)

- Prepare storage areas for overwintering tender flower bulbs and garden produce.
- Thanksgiving (or Christmas) cactus can be forced into bloom for the Thanksgiving holidays. Provide 15 hours of complete darkness each day, for instance, from 5 p.m. to 8 a.m., for approximately eight weeks. Keep temperature at about 60-65 degrees F. Temperatures of 55°F will cause flower buds to set without dark treatment.

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

PURDUE UNIVERSITY IS AN EQUAL
 OPPORTUNITY/EQUAL ACCESS/AFFIRMATIVE

- Dig and repot herbs, or take cuttings, for growing indoors over winter.
- Store leftover garden seed in a cool, dry place. A sealable jar with a layer of silica gel or powdered milk in the bottom works well.
- Bring houseplants moved outside for summer indoors before night temperatures fall below 55°F. Gradually decrease light to acclimate the plants and help reduce leaf drop. Check and control insects and diseases before putting these plants near other houseplants.
- Poinsettias saved from last year can be re-flowered for this year's holiday by providing complete darkness for 15 hours daily from about Oct. 1 until about Dec. 10.

GARDEN (Flowers, vegetables, and small fruits)

- Dig onions and garlic after tops fall over naturally and necks begin to dry.
- Plant radishes, green onion sets, lettuce and spinach for fall harvest.
- Thin fall crops, such as lettuce and carrots, that were planted earlier.
- Harvest crops such as tomatoes, peppers, eggplants, melons and sweet potatoes before frost, or cover plants with blankets, newspaper, etc., (but not plastic) to protect them from light frost.
- Mature green tomatoes can be ripened indoors. Individually wrap fruits in newspaper, or leave them on the vine, pulling the entire plant out of the garden. Store in a cool location – about 55-60°F.
- Harvest winter squash when mature (skin is tough) with deep, solid color, but before hard frost. Some cultivars will show an orange blush when mature.
- Plant, transplant or divide peonies, daylilies, iris and phlox only if you can apply irrigation during dry spells.
- Save plants such as coleus, wax begonias, impatiens or fuchsia for indoor growing over winter. Dig plants and cut them back about halfway, or take cuttings of shoot tips, and root them in moist vermiculite, soil mix or perlite.
- Watch for garden chrysanthemums to bloom as days grow shorter. Some may have bloomed earlier this summer, which will decrease the number of fall blooms.
- Plant spring-flowering bulbs beginning in late September. Planting too early can cause bulbs to sprout top growth before winter. However, allow at least four to six weeks before the ground freezes for good root formation.
- Dig tender bulbs, such as cannas, caladiums, tuberous begonias and gladiolus, before frost. Allow to air dry, and store in dry peat moss or vermiculite.

YARD (Lawns, woody ornamentals, and fruits)

- Fall is a good time to plant many container-grown or balled-and-burlapped nursery stock. Prepare a good-size planting hole wider than the ball, but plant at the same depth it grew in the nursery and water thoroughly. Mulching will help protect against large fluctuations in soil temperature and moisture.
- Do not be alarmed if your evergreens, particularly white pine and arborvitae, drop some older needles. All evergreens shed needles at some time, but not all at once as deciduous plants do.
- Harvest apples, pears, grapes, and everbearing strawberries and raspberries. For most fruits, flavor is the best indicator of ripeness, although color change also can be a good indicator. However, pears are best ripened off the tree, and grapes change color long before they are fully flavored, so sample the fruit to be sure.

- Remove raspberry canes after they bear fruit.
- Clean up fallen fruits, twigs and leaves around apple (including crabapple) and other fruit trees to reduce disease and insect carryover.
- To promote the lawn’s recovery from summer stress, apply high-nitrogen fertilizer at the rate of 0.5 to 1 pound actual nitrogen per 1,000 square feet. More information on lawn fertilization is available at https://mdc.itap.purdue.edu/item.asp?item_number=AY-22-W
- Reseed bare spots or new lawns using a good-quality seed mixture. Seeding in late summer allows the turf to maximize its establishment and rooting prior to the next summer’s heat and drought. For more information, see <http://purdueturftips.blogspot.com/2014/08/start-seeding-cool-season-turf-now.html>.
- September and October are appropriate months to apply broadleaf weed killers to the lawn. Be sure to follow all label directions, and choose a calm day to prevent spray drift.

MONARCH WATCH UPDATE

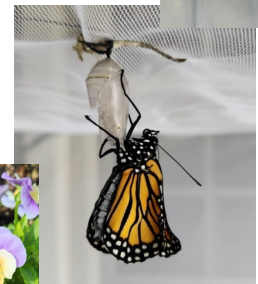
By: Donna Pouzar/Marcy Dailey



Marcy and I are in the thick of raising Monarch caterpillars this summer once again. While it was a slow-go in the beginning of the summer, August has come on like gang busters.

I volunteer at Friendship Botanic Gardens and between August 25th and 28th I found 33 Monarch caterpillars on the same *Asclepias tuberosa* (Butterfly Weed) plants. Thank goodness Marcy was willing to split the group with me! Both of our “Monarch B&Bs” are filled to capacity right now.

But it’s worth it. I have released 35 to date; have 10 chrysalises and 20 caterpillars in various stages. Marcy has released 16 so far; has 7 chrysalis (one ready to eclose), and 17 cats, 4 of which are at the top ready to J!



Top right: chrysalis
Middle: Eclosing
Left: Releasing
Courtesy: Marcy Dailey

SPICEBUSH SWALLOWTAIL

In addition to raising Monarchs, I accidently found two eggs of the Spicebush swallowtail butterfly on a small branch of one of my Sassafras trees that I clipped because it was interfering with one of my garden paths. They both hatched so now I’m learning what to do with them as they are very different from the Monarchs. I now have 6 caterpillars! YIKES!

