

# The Latest Dirt

La Porte County Master Gardener Newsletter



MAY 2025

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## 2025 MEETING SCHEDULE

Meetings will be held at 6:00 p.m. on Thursday at the La Porte Main Library Meeting Room B, unless otherwise noted

May 1	Business Meeting
June 5	Social Meeting
July 3	Business Meeting
August 7	Annual Picnic
September 4	Business Meeting
October 2	Social Meeting
	Business Meeting
November 6	Elections
December 4	Holiday Dinner Party

## NEXT BOARD MEETING

May 12th - 6:00 p.m.  
Room A at the Main La Porte Library

"THE LATEST DIRT" is published monthly.  
The next deadline is April 20, 2025

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

<https://www.facebook.com/MasterGardenersLaPorteCounty>



PURDUE EXTENSION  
MASTER GARDENER PROGRAM

## Hotline Warning: Don't Hallucinate with ChatGPT

By Steve Zolvinski

Used incorrectly, new technologies can snare you and squeeze away its positive possibilities. Master Gardeners stumped on a hotline inquiry may find the ChatGPT digital assistant powered by Open AI useful in finding Purdue University and other land-grant university Extension publications for answers. We say "useful" cautiously because a chatbot is prone to make up information it is unable to find. This is called "hallucinating." So, it is important to check out every ChatGPT reference to make sure it is reliable Extension researched-based information.



Will artificial intelligence replace Master Gardeners? As the concept implies, "artificial" is like an overstuffed brain bereft of heart. In truth, Master Gardeners are the "gatekeepers" to provide science-based answers among the array of information (and disinformation) scouring the internet. It's just another tool in our kit to educate the public if properly used.

### Example:

Our first hotline call of the 2025 season was an individual who wanted to know how to remove moss from his yard.

### Using ChatGPT:

Here is a message sent to the digital assistant:

"I'm a Purdue Master Gardener in La Porte County, Ind. A caller wants to know how to remove moss from his lawn. I need Purdue or official Extension Service sources to correct this. What are they?"

A few pointers:

- Identify yourself as a Master Gardener.
- State the problem as succinctly and accurately as possible to avoid miscommunication.
- Request PURDUE or Land Grant University Extension sources, because we do not want non-research-based information outside the Extension network.

## Results

Below is how ChatGPT answered the inquiry. Apparently, Purdue had not done a lot of work in this area, but top sources and links were provided for Iowa State, Penn State, University of Maryland, Rutgers, in addition to Purdue.

The digital assistant did hallucinate on its last recommendation by providing a non-Extension source, which it attributes to Purdue(!). The link is to the Eugene, Ore.-based “Pesticide.org.” which belongs to the Northwest Center for Alternatives to Pesticides. The organization may have research-based information to pursue a noble aim, but it is not Extension-based, which is what our inquiry asks for.

## Keep in Mind!

Again, don’t just tick off the chatbot’s answer to a client. Go to the suggested publications and verify the information from an authorized Purdue or Extension source. We represent Purdue University, which shares its research goal with the broader Extension network of U.S. Land-Grant Universities. So, it’s Purdue and Extension that we must honor in our mission to “Help Others Grow.”

## ChatGPT Answer, 9:08 a.m. April 14, 2025

“Moss in lawns typically indicates conditions that hinder healthy grass growth, such as excessive shade, poor soil fertility, soil compaction, or inadequate drainage. Addressing these underlying issues is crucial for effective moss control. [Iowa State University Extension](#)

### **Cultural Practices to Reduce Moss Growth:**

**Improve Soil Fertility:** Conduct a soil test to determine nutrient levels and pH. Lawns generally thrive with a soil pH between 6.0 and 7.0. If the pH is low, applying lime can help raise it to optimal levels for grass growth. [Penn State Extension](#)

**Enhance Drainage:** Ensure the lawn has proper drainage to prevent water accumulation, which moss favors. Improving soil aeration through core aeration can alleviate soil compaction, promoting better water infiltration and root growth. [University of Maryland Extension, Rutgers NJAES](#)

**Increase Sunlight Exposure:** Prune trees and shrubs to allow more sunlight into shaded areas, as moss thrives in low-light conditions. [University of Maryland Extension, Iowa State University Extension](#)

**Overseed with Shade-Tolerant Grasses:** In shaded regions, consider planting shade-tolerant grass species such as fine-leaved fescues (creeping red fescue, chewings fescue, hard fescue) to outcompete moss. [Iowa State University Extension](#)

### **Chemical Control:**

While cultural practices address the root causes of moss, chemical treatments can provide temporary relief. Products containing iron compounds (e.g., ferrous sulfate) or potassium salts of fatty acids can effectively kill moss. However, these should be used cautiously, following label directions, as they can also harm desirable turfgrass if misapplied. [Purdue University, University of Maryland Extension, Penn State Extension](#)

### **Long-Term Prevention:**

Maintaining a healthy, vigorous lawn through proper fertilization, aeration, and appropriate grass selection is the most effective strategy to prevent moss invasion. Regularly addressing the factors that favor moss growth will help ensure a lush, moss-free lawn.

For more detailed information, refer to Purdue University's guidance on moss in lawns. [Pesticide.org](#)”

# EXTENSION NEWS

## JESI'S CORNER

### TIPS FOR HOTLINE WORKERS

With the Master Gardener Hotline back in operation, I believe it's an opportune moment to share some quick reminders for our volunteers. Even if you are not actively manning the hotline, these tips can be useful whenever you encounter gardening inquiries while out in the community.

1. As a Master Gardener, you are a volunteer representative for the Purdue University Cooperative Extension Service
  - a. We need to provide unbiased and research-based information. We are liable for the information we provide to clients. Please limit recommendations to those provided in Extension publications, this includes your MG Manual (the most recent edition is not in the Master Gardener office to assist with hotline calls). As a Purdue University volunteer, you are protected if you are giving recommendations from current research from Purdue University. If you are using the internet, make sure the internet site is a Land Grant University in the Midwest and that it is current. Please don't use a commercial site or a site with an "agenda." If you step outside of those parameters, you may lose your liability protection.
2. If you are hesitant to answer the phone because of lack of experience or knowledge on the subject
  - a. Consider teaming up with another Master Gardener and work the Hotline together.
  - b. Use the speaker phone to allow both Master Gardeners to hear and discuss the client's issues.
3. Client Message Recording Form: these will be provided to you on the desk
  - a. For each phone call, please fill out the following:
    - i. Date and time
    - ii. Name, address, phone number (and email, if they would prefer)
    - iii. Description of problem – please be as detailed as possible (use list of questions)
    - iv. Recommendations that you made
    - v. Note any follow-up necessary – and let office staff know
      1. Sending publications
      2. Requesting a sample to be brought in
4. Answering Questions
  - a. Be courteous and respectful
  - b. Use the Questions to Ask sheet to gather as much information as possible
  - c. Answer homeowner questions only, refer commercial or agriculture questions to Extension Staff
  - d. For chemical recommendations – stick strictly with recommendations in current Extension publications. Avoid expanding on these recommendations and do not interpret pesticide labels for clients – simply STATE, "READ AND FOLLOW THE LABEL"
  - e. If appropriate, provide a variety of solutions for the client – not just chemical or non
  - f. Information provided needs to be research-based and unbiased. Refer to MG Manual before searching the Internet, if you do use a search engine try typing in "Purdue Extension" followed by the topic you are looking for
  - g. Avoid recommending a specific garden center; if they ask, provide client with names (and locations or phone numbers) of several businesses
  - h. Do not make up answers – if you don't know, simply say so, but try to find out for them. Try to get the answer and call them back promptly.
  - i. Use wiggly words – never be 100% positive of your diagnosis.
  - j. Don't make recommendations based on your own experiences
5. When a phone call is not enough
  - a. Some situations cannot be dealt with over the phone; when that is the case, invite the client to bring a sample to the office; then it can be further diagnosed or a sample may be shipped to the Purdue Plant and Pest Diagnostic Lab (assist them with completing the submittal form and explain the process)

## ASSOCIATION NEWS

Letter from the President  
Vicki Znavor

Dear Members:

As I write this letter, I am feeling both sad and excited. As you know by now, our dear friend Karren Coplen passed away. Karren was an amazing person and someone from whom I learned so much. She will be missed because she was someone who helped others and left a tremendous legacy of kindness. We are currently exploring ways to honor Karren at the June social meeting, but plans are not yet fully developed. We will keep you updated.

I am getting excited about Spring. As a 2023 graduate from the MG program, this is a time when I realize that I know a little about some things and not much about many things. Nonetheless, I like learning and have learned so much from all of you. I am certain, however, that I am my best and happiest self while outside and I genuinely appreciate all that nature teaches us. I hope you feel the same.

My husband and I really enjoyed the awards dinner. I am in awe of those who have volunteered so many hours to help our community. Congratulations to everyone who advanced levels! It is great to see that by helping others grow, we are growing as well.

Speaking of helping others grow, the board has selected five community grant award winners this year. There is a brief description in this newsletter. The organizations are all doing important work in different parts of La Porte County and it is wonderful to help them fund their projects.

I really hope to see more of you at the May meeting. We will provide you with nomination forms for the Golden Trowel award, discuss our forthcoming memorial for Karren Coplen, the Community Grant awards, our ongoing projects and have an update on the garden show. And most importantly, it will be nice to be together.

### Community Grand Award Recipients

By: Vicki Znavor

We are delighted to have selected five amazing organizations in La Porte County to receive community grants. The awards will further our purpose of helping others grow in a variety of ways. The website for each organization is provided so that you can learn more about them.

**Eastpoint Neighborhood Association:** This organization's project is for the Walker Street Community Garden in Michigan City. Since 2017 this organization has worked to engage residents of the Eastport neighborhood in growing food, education and other community events. They will use their \$500 grant to purchase plants to be used in their 32 raised beds, hold workshops where residents can learn how to grow food and conduct workshops on food preparation. To learn more about what they do, see their **Facebook page**.

**Family Advocates:** This organization's purpose is to support, educate and advocate for youth and families. They received a grant from the LPCMGA in 2024 that enabled them to create a vegetable garden. Their 2025 grant of \$400 will help support their desire to add a butterfly garden so that the youth they serve can learn about the important role of pollinators. The youth will be heavily involved in the preparation and maintenance of the garden as well as enabling them to learn how to measure and plan a garden. To learn more about what they do, see **their website**.

**Kingsford Heights Elementary:** KHES is always seeking ways to engage students with efforts to revitalize their school. They will use their \$500 grant to purchase shrubs and bushes for the school and to teach the students about the selection, placement and care of them. This will be part of their process for teaching state standards related to science, agriculture, landscaping and food sourcing. To learn more about Kingsford Heights Elementary, see **their website**.

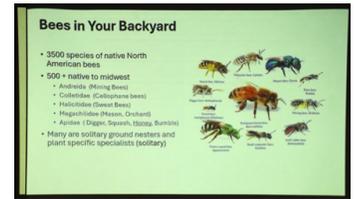
**La Porte County Historical Society:** The Historical Society is working with Paul Vicari to restore native prairie around the La Porte County Museum with the hope to share what La Porte County looked like when it was first settled. They will use their \$500 grant to purchase signage to describe the prairie and various species within it. To learn more about what they do, see **their website**.

**Westville United Methodist Church:** In 2024 a garden was created and they wish to extend it. They will use their \$458 grant to add fencing, soil, plants and other materials to their expanded garden. Because the town grocery store is closing, they will continue to offer fresh local produce for free. High school students will help maintain the garden and learn from doing so. To learn more about what they do, see **their website**.

**La Porte County Master Gardener Association Awards Dinner**  
April 3, 2025

The La Porte County Master Gardeners held their annual recognition meeting on Thursday, April 3, at Red Mill County Park. Everyone enjoyed a delicious meal, provided by the board and association members and a wonderful and informative presentation on Home Beekeeping by Peter Boesen.

President Vicki Znavor recognized Master Gardeners for their volunteer work and participation in education activities.



**Award Winners**

**2025 Intern**

Katie Mitschelen



**Master Gardeners**



(40 cumulative volunteer & education hours)  
From left: Vicki Znavor, Theresa Dzoga-Borg and Amy Cooper (not shown Georgette Behenna)

**Advanced Master Gardeners**



(65 cumulative volunteer hours & 50 cumulative education hours)  
Nancy Fournier (not shown Lisa Johnson)

**Advanced Master Gardeners-Bronze Level**

(200 cumulative volunteer hours & 60 cumulative education hours)



From left: Karen Sarver, Carol Nolan and Joan Kintzele. (not shown George Sarver)

**Advanced Master Gardener-Silver Level**

(500 cumulative volunteer hours & 75 cumulative education hours)



Susie Kieffer

**CONGRATULATIONS  
TO  
EVERYONE!**

## IN MEMORIAM



Karren Sue Coplen, known for her adventurous spirit and kind heart, passed away peacefully on April 7, 2025, near her hometown of La Porte, IN.

Karren's life was one of creativity, community involvement, and loving family relationships. With an associate's degree, Karren channeled her passion for art into a career in graphic arts design. Her creativity was not just her profession but also a vital part of her essence.

Karren's involvement with the La Porte County Master Gardeners Association reflected her love for growth, both in her garden and within her community. She and former member, Annette Van Dusen, took an idea offered by another association member, of Master Gardeners doing simple lunch-time presentations to the public, and turned it into an award winning project called "Brown Bag Series." When Annette moved out of state, Karren took it upon herself to continue the project on her own and brought many interesting and informative presentations to the community. She also was involved in many other association projects and was always there to help.

Karren embraced life with open arms. Whether she was creating beautiful art and crafts, canning the harvest from her garden, or exploring the wildlife habitat at her home, she brought a sense of wonder and joy to every day. Her curiosity knew no bounds, and she approached each new experience with zest. She leaves behind a true legacy of loving life in the world around her. She will most certainly be missed.

## Getting To Know Our Members

### Marcia Kolzelka

#### Tell us something about yourself:

I grew up loving trees and plants in Park Ridge, Illinois. My father was an early tree-hugger. In 2001, my husband and I were fortunate to buy a home in Duneland Beach. I insisted on shade, and he wanted a view. We achieved both, and we love spending time in Indiana. We still have a home in Park Ridge and divide our time between Indiana and Illinois. We have three children and five grandchildren whom we adore.

#### How long have you been a member of the LPCMGA?

During Covid, we saw an article in "*The Beacher*" promoting an online Master Garden Class. What a perfect opportunity to fill our time during Covid. We loved studying and talking about plants with our online classmates. We were in the 2020 class, I think.

#### What inspired you to join?

We are both life-long learners and avid gardeners. Becoming Master Gardeners was in the cards.

#### When did you start gardening and what's a favorite garden memory or experience you can share?

I have always loved playing in the dirt. When I was 10 years old, we moved to a new house. I petitioned to plant zinnias on the north side of the house. Getting the okay, I went ahead and planted these beautiful and colorful flowers. They did not seem to be doing well, so I found some "fertilizer" in the garage and sprinkled it on my flowers. Oops, the weed and feed mixture killed the flowers. Lesson learned: read the label!

**What have you learned from gardening that can be applied in all areas of life?**

Remember to embrace the joy. Have patience. Not everything will work out. Don't expect perfection.

**Do you have a favorite local garden that you enjoy visiting?**

We love Friendship Botanic Garden. The space is just majestic. We love helping out at the gardens and have met some terrific folks at the Garden.

**What advice would you have for a new gardener?**

Plants are like real estate, it is all about location, location, location.

**Stephen Zolvinski****Tell us something about yourself**

I have always considered home the Dunes region of Michigan City even after college, when jobs and graduate school took me away from here for 32 years. I returned to care for my elderly mother in 2010. I am a Vietnam veteran with additional service in Thailand. After graduating from Purdue in 1978, I was a reporter for local newspapers in Indiana, Kentucky, and Tennessee. At age 38 I returned to graduate school, getting a master's degree in anthropology at Iowa State University and then a doctorate in anthropology at Ohio State University in 2004. For 3-½ years I worked as a social scientist at the International Rice Research Institute, Philippines, from where I travelled to interview rice farmers in the Philippines, Laos, Thailand, Indonesia, Bangladesh, and India. I sweated, breathed in dust, and stepped in mud of rural areas where no tourists would ever want to go.

**How long have you been a member of the LPCMGA?**

I took the training in fall 2012 and started as an intern in 2013.

**What inspired you to join?**

A couple of things:

- I grew up on home-grown vegetables in our family garden in Coolspring Twp. I was in the 4-H gardening project for my 10-year 4-H membership. Our house, since sold to someone else, is still standing on County Road 400 North right across from Wal\*Mart. So, when I returned to Mom's home after 32-years of non-gardening, I was eager to get my hands soiled.
- In my overseas work, I had to interview farmers to understand why they did or didn't follow scientist's instructions for recently introduced technologies. Years later, when I returned to my mother's house, I wanted to investigate the same questions. First as a (MG volunteer) provider of scientific knowledge, ergo, why would people listen or not listen to me? Secondly as a consumer of scientific knowledge in gardening practices, ergo, why, or why not did I find the scientific information useful or not? In anthropology, we call this the emic perspective, or "insider's" view of why people in a particular culture do what they do from *their* explanation, not imposed by the researcher. This is a cultural relative view.

**When did you start gardening and what's a favorite garden memory or experience you can share?**

When my mother was still ambulatory, first thing she would do in April was plant a crooked row of onions in the garden. I always remembered this and follow her example even today. Secondly, we had a row of horseradish my late Dad planted, who knows (?) maybe 20 years earlier. In fall, I'd take my mom out there to dig up roots, always thinking this was my dad's legacy still showering us from his place in heaven.

**Do you have a favorite local garden that you enjoy visiting?**

I hate to avoid the question, but I will. My favorite gardens were those of farmers in a rural Northern Thai village where I did my doctoral dissertation research in early 2000. They really fooled me because their houses were surrounded by what appeared to be overgrown forests. I learned those unkempt so-called "forests" were their homegardens, pronounced "*suan*" (สวน). They knew every tree and plant and they used their gardens like a Wal\*Mart to provide many household needs. Furthermore, Thai are Buddhists, and they would bring garden produce as offerings honoring deceased relatives to the local temple. Below is an image of a monk accepting the villagers' offerings at a pre-dawn temple service on what the Thai considered a cold December day. Notice the monk's knit cap. Garden produce is in each congregant's white bowl. I really want to return to see Thai friends this year after a nearly 20-year absence.

**What advice would you have for a new gardener?**

As I learned in my professional life and as a practicing gardener, people are always experimenting from Day One. The natural environment of your garden, weather conditions, etc., do not always match the pristine controlled conditions of a horticultural research station. So, the scientific advice is important, but it may not always perfectly match your specific microenvironments. For example, how many seed packets or Extension materials say to plant in "well-drained" soils? Well, my mother's garden was in clay-type soils. We had no alternative but to plant in poorly drained soils. So, I had to tweak my gardening to the conditions that prevailed. Yes, I do seek out expert Purdue advice in gardening, keeping in mind I will have to tweak a thing or two for my particular situation. It's a give-and-take process. Some things work and some things don't. In the final analysis, Hoosier gardeners share a kinship to subsistence farmers in a developing country: we are always fooling around with what we got.



## VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITY

### Friendship Botanic Gardens – Workshop Series

By: Donna Pouzar

Volunteers are needed to work the Master Gardener Q&A table to answer general gardening questions to participants and visitors at the upcoming workshops at Friendship Botanic Gardens listed below. These sessions are one-hour long, open to the public and Master Gardeners are welcome to attend for education hours.

#### Need one volunteer

Right Plant in the Right Place and  
Deer Resistant Gardens - May 3 - 10:30 a.m.  
Janice Casper, Rima Binder and Donna Pouzar  
Master Gardeners Q & A Table

#### Need two volunteers

Making your own Hypertufa - May 10 - 10:30 a.m.  
Janice Casper and Val Askew  
Need volunteers with experience making Hypertufas  
Master Gardeners Q&A Table

#### Need two volunteers

Soil Knowledge/Plant Propagation - May 31 10:30 a.m.  
Tom Boesen  
Master Gardeners Q & A and to hand out Soil Test  
Packets

If you are interested in volunteering for any of the above sessions, please contact Donna Pouzar as soon as possible.

Thank you.

#### Sign up for the Hotline

Don't forget to volunteer and sign up for the Hotline. It's on-going on Mondays and Fridays, until September 26<sup>th</sup>. Please sign up on MG Manager. If you need help signing up, please contact Jesi at the Extension Office.



### 2025 EXECUTIVE BOARD

PRESIDENT	VICKI ZNAVOR
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\*INDICATES MEMBER IS FILLING ANOTHER PERSON'S TERM, OR EXTENDED THEIR TERM WITH THE APPROVAL OF THE BOARD

### 2025 PROJECT COORDINATORS

#### **Friendship Botanic Gardens**

Rima Binder \_\_\_\_\_ 219-878-8128  
\_\_\_\_\_ [rimabinder@comcast.net](mailto:rimabinder@comcast.net)

#### **Garden Hotline**

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

#### **Garden Show**

Theresa Dzoba-Borg \_\_\_\_\_ 773-960-5848  
\_\_\_\_\_ [dzozo@yahoo.com](mailto:dzozo@yahoo.com)

Ann Klosinski \_\_\_\_\_ 219-872-8367  
\_\_\_\_\_ [annak47@comcast.net](mailto:annak47@comcast.net)

Carol Nolan \_\_\_\_\_ 331-903-0091  
\_\_\_\_\_ [cnolan41@yahoo.com](mailto:cnolan41@yahoo.com)

Karen Sarver \_\_\_\_\_ 219-921-9704  
\_\_\_\_\_ [ksarver@csinet.net](mailto:ksarver@csinet.net)

#### **La Porte Builders Assn. Home Expo**

Donna Pouzar \_\_\_\_\_ 219-363-2960  
\_\_\_\_\_ [pouzdlp@icloud.com](mailto:pouzdlp@icloud.com)

#### **Pioneer Land School Tours**

Linda Hough \_\_\_\_\_ 219-324-0424  
\_\_\_\_\_ [ljhough614@gmail.com](mailto:ljhough614@gmail.com)

#### **Pioneer Heritage Garden**

Connie Shei \_\_\_\_\_ 219-362-4866  
\_\_\_\_\_ [jshei@comcast.net](mailto:jshei@comcast.net)

#### **Sunflower Fair**

Linda Hough \_\_\_\_\_ 219-324-0424  
\_\_\_\_\_ [ljhough614@gmail.com](mailto:ljhough614@gmail.com)

**STANDING COMMITTEE COORDINATORS**

History Book \_\_\_\_\_ Donna Pouzar  
 Hospitality \_\_\_\_\_ Eunice Conway  
 Librarian \_\_\_\_\_ Linda Hough  
 Newsletter \_\_\_\_\_ Donna Pouzar  
 Speakers Bureau \_ See Executive Board

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

Jesi Davenport \_ [ifurness@purdue.edu](mailto:ifurness@purdue.edu)  
 Sue Salisbury \_\_ [salisbk@purdue.edu](mailto:salisbk@purdue.edu)

*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.

### **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. Provide your phone number and/or e-mail address. Ads will be limited to space available.

Information must be submitted by the 20<sup>th</sup> of the month to:

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

PURDUE UNIVERSITY IS AN EQUAL  
 OPPORTUNITY/EQUAL ACCESS/AFFIRMATIVE  
 ACTION INSTITUTION

## **MAY GARDEN CALENDAR**

### **HOME (Indoor plants and activities)**

- Many indoor plants can be moved to shady locations outdoors but only after the danger of frost has passed. Plants will dry out more often outdoors, so keep a close eye on soil moisture. Sinking the pots in soil will help slow down moisture loss.
- Now is a good time to take cuttings of houseplants to increase a collection or share with friends. Stick cuttings to root in media, such as vermiculite, perlite, or potting soil. Roots grown in water tend to be weak from lack of oxygen and do not adjust well to planting in soil.
- Fertilize houseplants according to label directions. Foliage plants require relatively high nitrogen fertilizer; flowering houseplants respond best to fertilizer high in phosphorus.

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

- Plant frost-tender plants after the danger of frost has passed for your area. This includes warm-season vegetables (such as tomatoes, peppers, eggplant, and vine crops) as well as most annual flowers and tender perennials (such as cannas, gladiolus, dahlias, tuberous begonias, and caladiums).
- Pinch chrysanthemums and annual flower plants to keep them compact and well-branched.
- Make successive plantings of beans and sweet corn to extend the harvest season.
- Thin seedlings of early-planted crops such as carrots, lettuce, spinach, and beets to their proper spacing.
- Harvest early plantings of radishes, spinach, and lettuce.
- Both asparagus and rhubarb season may be delayed this year due to the slow progression of spring.
- Harvest asparagus by cutting or snapping spears at or just below soil level.

- Harvest rhubarb by cutting or grasping the stalk and pulling it up and slightly to one side.
- Control cucumber beetles (which are carriers of bacterial wilt) as soon as cucumber plants germinate or are transplanted to prevent disease.
- Remove blossoms from newly set strawberry plants to allow better runner formation.
- Remove unwanted sucker growth in raspberries when new shoots are about a foot tall.

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

- Prune early spring-flowering trees and shrubs after flowers fade.
- Plant balled-and-burlapped or container nursery stock, and water thoroughly.
- Remove and destroy overwintering bagworms from landscape trees and shrubs.
- Follow a spray schedule to keep home-orchard crops pest free. While trees are in bloom, use fungicide sprays without insecticide to avoid injuring bees. Follow label directions. More information is available in [Managing Pests in Home Fruit Plantings](#) (Purdue Extension publication ID-146-W).
- Thin apple tree fruits, if needed, about three weeks after petal fall. Apples should be about 8 inches apart. Mother Nature may have taken care of thinning fruit set this year!
- Apply fungicides to roses to control diseases such as black spot.
- Purdue turf experts recommend that if you are going to fertilize your lawn in May, apply 3/4-1 pound of nitrogen (N) per 1,000 square feet with a product that contains 50 percent or more of slow-release fertilizer. Try to schedule the application prior to a rain or irrigate following application to move the fertilizer off leaf blades.



## “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!