

The Latest Dirt

La Porte County Master Gardener Newsletter



JANUARY 2025

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2025 MEETING SCHEDULE

Meetings will be held at 6:00 p.m. (DST) on Thursday at La Porte Main Library Meeting Room B

January 9	Business Meeting
February 6	Social Meeting
March 6	Business Meeting
April 3	Awards Dinner
May 1	Business Meeting
June 5	Social Meeting
July 3	Business Meeting
August 7	Annual Picnic
September 4	Business Meeting
October 2	Social Meeting
November 6	Business Meeting Elections
December 4	Holiday Dinner Party

NEXT BOARD MEETING

January 7th - 6:00 p.m.
Classroom at the Library Exchange

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

www.lpmastergardener.org



PURDUE EXTENSION
MASTER GARDENER PROGRAM

2025 Perennial Plant of the Year *Pycnanthemum muticum*

Pycnanthemum muticum is known as clustered mountain mint, blunt mountain mint or short-toothed mountain mint and is native to meadows and open woodlands across much of the eastern United States west to Texas. It is not a true mint (*Mentha* spp.) but, belongs to the same family and has similarly scented leaves.



The PPA said *Pycnanthemum muticum* is a must-have for pollinator gardens, with heads of tiny white to light pink blooms attracting butterflies, wasps and bees from July to September. Although the flowers are inconspicuous, they are surrounded by silver bracts that give the illusion of frost in summer and can persist for months. The leaves have a minty fragrance when touched.

Clustered mountain mint is a tough and adaptable perennial native with no serious disease or pest issues, **and due to its aromatic foliage, it is unpalatable to deer and rabbits.** Branched, vertical stems grow two to three feet tall and form a dense, weed-suppressing clump. It spreads through underground rhizomes and can be aggressive in moist conditions, but rhizomes are easy to control by cutting them to the desired size with a spade and pulling the shoots by hand in spring. Despite this, it is not invasive to the degree of true mints. It is less of a spreader when planted in a lean, well-drained location, and it looks great all season with no effort. Hardy in USDA Zones 4 to 8, *Pycnanthemum muticum* does well in full sun to part shade and grows 24 to 36 inches tall, and prefers an area where it can freely naturalize and mingle among other plants. Some good companions include black-eyed Susans (*Rudbeckia* spp.), bee balms (*Monarda* spp.), blazing stars (*Liatris* spp.), Joe Pye weeds (*Eutrochium* spp.) and native grasses such as little bluestem (*Schizachyrium scoparium*) and switchgrass (*Panicum virgatum*).

Source: Perennial Plant Association

ASSOCIATION NEWS

Looking forward to 2025

Hello fellow members of the LPCMGA! I am excited to take on the role of President and look forward to working with all of you.

By way of introduction, I am a wife, mother of three and a retired HR executive. I worked in Chicago for 42 years and am now retired. I have spent the last five years pursuing the dreams I could not complete while working. I authored the book "Authenticity Reawakened" in 2021, started an executive coaching practice and attended the Purdue Extension Master Gardener program in 2023. I am on the boards of The Red Cross of Illinois and Calumet College of St. Joseph.

Gardening is a beautiful art, and I am convinced that it is a better stress reduction tool than just about anything else. I have learned many lessons by gardening. Most apparent are gratitude and patience. I have also never met a gardener that was not a lovely person, and I have found that to be true by meeting and working alongside so many of you.

I am excited about being your new president, but I want you to know that I come to this position knowing far less about gardening than many of you. I am mostly a very enthusiastic person who wants to learn as much as I can and give back wherever possible. I, along with my fellow board members, will listen to you and do the absolute best job we can, but at the same time I know that the strength of the organization lies in the engagement of its members.

Every single one of you has something special to offer and it is our goal to enable you to bring your strengths to the organization.

I recently read the member survey responses from a few years ago and the overwhelming reason members enjoy being part of the organization is to learn more about gardening and to share our knowledge with others to help them grow. This is our purpose, and it is powerful.

Two ways to contribute in the near term is by attending the January 9th general meeting and considering ways that you can help with the gardening show in March. We will learn more about the garden show at the January meeting.

Lastly, I would like to thank Carol Nolan and all the previous board members. Your contributions have been tremendous, and you are deeply appreciated.

Happy New Year everyone! Let's make this a great year together.

With gratitude,
Vicki Znavor

2025 Garden Show Book Sale

By: Carol Nolan

For those wishing to donate gently used gardening books to the March 29, 2025 Garden Show, you may do so beginning January 10. Please bring your books to the Extension office and leave on the small table in the Hot Line Office.

The final day to drop off is February 14, 2025. Space is limited in this office, so please drop off during these dates only. Hours of drop off are 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. which are the hours of the Extension Office. Any questions, please email me at: cnolan1420@gmail.com. Thanks for your help.

2025 MEMBERSHIP DUES

Remember Association membership dues of \$20 is required by January 31st in order to be included in the Membership Directory. **Please bring your completed form and payment to the January meeting or mail it by January 31st to:**

La Porte County Master Gardener Association
Purdue Extension – La Porte County
2857 W. State Road 2, Suite A
La Porte, Indiana 46350



Gardener's Springtime Lament

By Marcy Dailey
Copyright 2005 Rolling Prairie, IN

The catalogs keep coming-
I don't know what to do!
I've barely skimmed the first ones
When another stack comes, too.

Agapanthus, Amaranthus, Baptisia, Cerastium,
Delphinium, Echinops, Forsythia, Geranium.

The catalogs keep coming-
I can't keep up this pace,
Glossy color photos
And descriptions IN MY FACE!

Helleborus, Iris, Jasminum, Kalimeris,
Lobelia, Monarda, Nasturtium, Oxalis.

The catalogs keep coming-
They're piled on the floor.
I've just made my selections,
When the mail truck brings me more!

Phlox, Quercus, Rosa, Salvia,
Trillium, Ulmus, Verbena, Weigela.

The catalogs keep coming-
I've just two questions to ask:
"What is my charge card limit?"
"Where can I remove more grass?"

Xeranthemum, Yucca, Zauscherna, now see?
Bet you didn't think that I could find an X, Y, Z!

2025 EXECUTIVE BOARD

PRESIDENT	VICKI. ZNAVOR
VICE PRESIDENT	TOM BOESEN
CORRESPONDING SECRETARY	MARIA FRAU
RECORDING SECRETARY	THERESA DEZOBO-BORG*
TREASURER	SUSAN KIEFFER*
EDUCATION COMMITTEE	JOAN KINTZELE
	JANET DAVIS*
	KAREN SARVER
PAST PRESIDENT	CAROL NOLAN

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

2024 PROJECT COORDINATORS

Friendship Botanic Gardens

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

Garden Hotline

Extension Office _____ 219-324-9407

Garden Show

Theresa Dzoba-Borg _____ 773-960-5848
_____ dzozo@yahoo.com

Ann Klosinski _____ 219-872-8367
_____ annak47@comcast.net

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

Karen Sarver _____ 219-921-9704
_____ ksarver@csinet.net

La Porte Builders Assn. Home Expo

Donna Pouzar _____ 219-363-2960
_____ pouzdlp@icloud.com

Pioneer Land School Tours

Linda Hough _____ 219-324-0424
_____ ljhough614@gmail.com

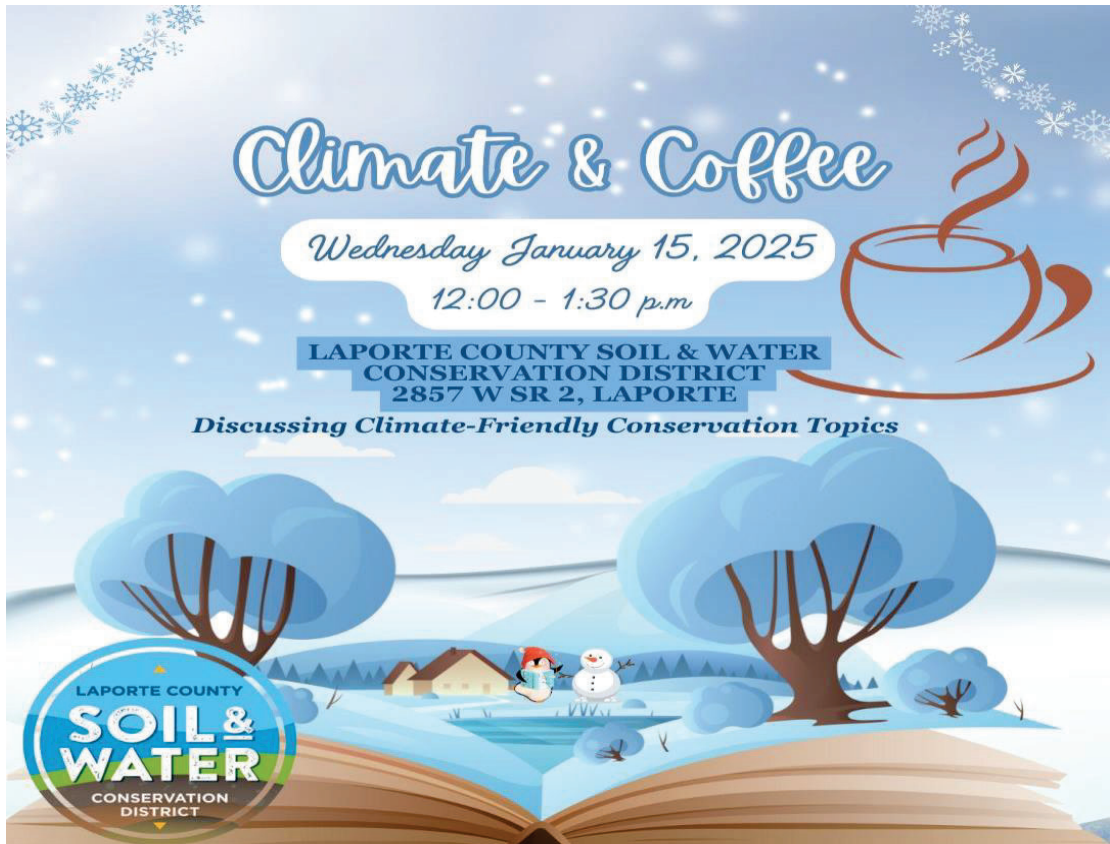
Pioneer Heritage Garden


Connie Shei _____ 219-362-4866
_____ jshei@comcast.net

Sunflower Fair

Linda Hough _____ 219-324-0424
_____ ljhough614@gmail.com

ANNOUNCEMENTS




Conservation & Canvas 

Native Flower Frost Seeding Education & Felted Flower Canvas Creation

Presented by:
LaPorte County Soil & Water Conservation District
and the Lubeznik Center for the Arts

Friday January 17, 2025 10:00 a.m. - 12:00 noon
Registration is Required
Limited to 25 adults age 18+

<https://forms.gle/FeG8dYwVzGhXzQLT9>

 **LUBEZNIK** 

Conservation & Canvas on Friday January 17th.

We will learn about frost seeding and native flowers while creating a piece of art! The felted canvas project will feature frost native flowers or a flower bouquet.

Participants felt right through a canvas, and it becomes a beautifully textured art piece, ready to hang on the wall.

This program is free; however, registration is required. Space is limited to 20 adults aged 18 yrs & over.

Link to the Registration Form is here:
<https://forms.gle/FeG8dYwVzGhXzQLT9>

For more information contact:
Linda Schwab at 219-326-6808 x 2112

JANUARY GARDEN

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 _ jfurness@purdue.edu
 Sue Salisbury __ salisbk@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.

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 20th of the month to:

pouzdlp@icloud.com

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

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.
- Evergreens, except pines and spruce, can be trimmed now for a fresh supply of holiday greenery.

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)

- Choose appropriate plant species and cultivars, and begin drawing your landscape plans.
- 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.