

Garden Thyme

Nov 2022

<https://extension.purdue.edu/porter>

Volume 8, Issue 6



The Beauty of the Botanic

On September 7 it was off to the Chicago Botanic Garden for 30 PCMGA members and 8 guests on a bus trip. It was a perfect weather day with plenty of hours to tour the gardens to locations of personal interest. But first a treat was to get a PCMGA tour from a specialist!

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Speaker Richard Hawke, Chicago Botanic Garden Manager of Plant Evaluation Programs, shares his in-depth knowledge. We learned about his program's comparative evaluation efforts to determine the best perennials, vines, and shrubs to grow in the Chicagoland area.



Photo credit @ Suzanna Tudor



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Fun with Coleus!

By Sue Spelde
PCMG Class of 2004

My favorite plants have variegated foliage—choosing colorful or interesting foliage over a pretty flower anytime. One reason I love Coleus. The fact that they are easy to propagate and make great houseplants cinches the deal for me.



1. To begin propagating, take lots of cuttings. Successful rooting usually comes from new growth.



2. Cut stems should be 5"-6" long and have a couple leaf nodes. Remove most leaves from stem, leaving a few at top. (See #3)



3. This stem is trimmed, ready to be put in a jar of water. Notice the number of leaf nodes from where roots will grow.



4. Jars in window- The cuttings look pretty when grouped together. Keep them in a bright spot, out of direct sun. Monitor water level daily to ensure nodes are submerged and freshen if it gets cloudy.



5. Day 12- Notice where the roots are starting to grow.



6. Day 24- This cutting is ready to plant, but no rush if you wait for other cuttings. Just keep water fresh and roots will be patient, continuing to grow, depending on variety and age of stem. Older stems can be trickier and why lots of cuttings suggested.



Keep planted baby Coleus moist, but not soggy, out of direct sun for a couple weeks. After that, they can handle just about anything. Have fun with Coleus and enjoy year-round color in your house and garden.

Milk for Haiti

By LuAnn Troxel, PCMG Class of 2003

For the past seven years, I've had the great opportunity to serve on the board of a not-for-profit ministry for a dairy farm in Haiti. As a former dairy farmer and a current master gardener, it has been so interesting for me to learn more about this country. Sometimes I like to call it the "great and terrible" Haiti, since it seems to be a country of extremes: beauty, simplicity, smiles, color, warmth but also dysfunction, poverty, earthquakes, tropical storms, violence. Thankfully, this rural community on the Torbek plain of Haiti is peaceful.

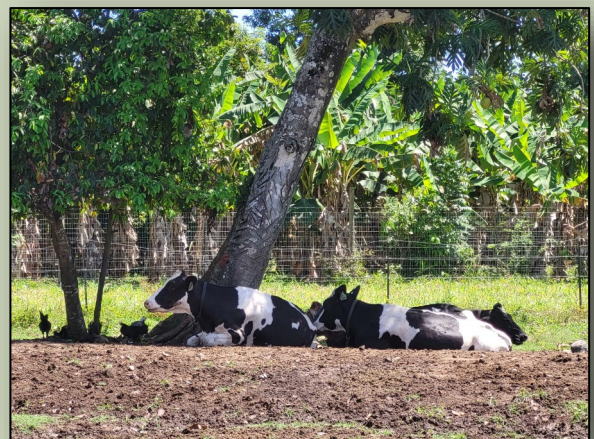
The Harvest Call Haiti Dairy program has constructed a dairy and research farm in southern Haiti named "Good Vision Farm" or "Fèm Bon Vizyon." One of the goals of this program is to have a small dairy farm and milk processing center where local farmers can bring their own cows to be milked, and they in turn are paid for the milk their cows produce. This milk, as well as milk from cows that live at the farm, is processed and bottled for the locals to purchase. It is also going to area orphanages. Research of crops and forages is constantly ongoing. There is a new youth training program being developed where children ages 10-18 are gardening and raising goats as well as learning to work together in teams, somewhat similar to a 4-H club. The first club has over 60 members!

We are able to grow four corn crops per year down in Haiti. This is very helpful, as the primary sources of feed for the cattle is corn silage and a tropical forage called Brachiaria grass. The average temperature all year in Haiti hovers right around 80 degrees. But that doesn't mean seed varieties that we have in the Midwest will work very well down there. The reason? Our long summer days in Indiana have a delightful 15-16 hours of sunshine. In Haiti, the longest day of sunlight in a year is 13 hours. The shortest and longest days only vary by about 90 minutes, which means that there is always about 12 hours of sunlight year round. So with the warm temps, it is definitely possible to grow a large variety of plants, but the

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Sunrise from Good Vision Farm



Holsteins resting in Haiti



LuAnn watches milking time

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length of day challenges the success of many seed varieties that are available to us. We are continually researching tropical seed varieties. We have found research on corn that was performed in Hawaii to be very helpful, as that is a similar climate to Haiti.

One of the paid services that this ministry provides to area farmers is to work the local farmers' fields using a tractor, plow, leveler and disc. It is simply amazing to see the soil hardpan of a field that has only previously been plowed by oxen. It's also incredible to think that some plants actually grow through this! Over the past few years, there has been a significant increase in crop production of the fields that have had the hardpan broken up. How rewarding to see the entire community benefit because of this production increase!

There is an over-arching Christian approach to all of this, and I'd be happy to share more if anyone has interest by emailing me at haitidairy@harvestcall.org, or you can learn more at www.harvestcall.org/haiti-dairy-program.



Working the Brachiaria grass



Oxen plowing the land



Tractor mows the Brachiaria grass



Tropical milk weed

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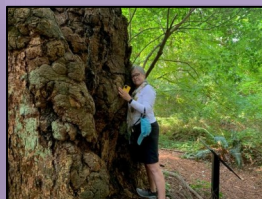


This garden is in growing zone 8b.



Centuries-old Douglas Fir, *Pseudotsuga menziesii*

Photo of the Douglas Fir and a “tree hugger” to show size comparison



University of British Columbia Botanical Garden, Vancouver, Canada

By Kristine Sandrick, PCMG Class of 2014



This engaging and thoughtful conservation garden was established in 1916, and today is a biologically diverse "growing repository" of selected native and exotic temperate trees, shrubs and plants. UBC has collected and shares information about each of its more than 120,000 plants – grown for research, teaching and scientific identification. (<https://botanicalgarden.ubc.ca>) Plants are tracked from "collection as a seed in the wild to when it is ... planted, for as long as it lives in the garden and even after its demise." Plants are allowed to grow naturally, some wildly, while showing researchers and visitors how plants can take care of each other.

Garden guide, Gundrun Hancock, an experienced and well-versed member of FOG (Friends of the Garden), shared some observations. "When plants are given a location that suits them and are left to their own devices, they do surprising things – like the mountain ash growing on the old-growth stump. When its roots became exposed because the stump deteriorated, it grew bark over the bare root to protect it."

Another wonderful example, the life-giving Eagle Tree is a 400-500-year-old Douglas Fir, *Pseudotsuga menziesii* – impressive girth, gnarled and colorful bark and sheer presence – hosted an eagles nest until struck by lightning. Rotting now, the tree's trunk is supporting new life.

UBC's Botanical Garden encompasses nine areas, from the Asian garden of native fir, cedar and hemlock to a Carolinian Forest featuring an exceptional diversity of native hardwoods and shrubs.

The University of British Columbia Botanical Garden is open from 10 a.m.– 4:30 p.m., May to September.

Asian Garden

Eagle Tree

This ancient Douglas-fir (*Pseudotsuga menziesii*), one of the oldest on-site native trees in the Garden, bears the scars of a long life.

Prominent among trees in the Garden for its height and age, the eagle tree has gathered wounds over its four or five centuries of life. Blackened bark is evidence of previous fires. Although lightning may have caused fires in the past, the most recent scarring was likely due to post-clearcut burning in the early 20th century.

The eagle tree has been protected from human fires and logging since gardens were established here in the mid-1950s. Still, nature is unpredictable; a lightning strike in 2009 set fire to the top of the tree, burning it like a candle. What is its biggest challenge in centuries to come? It is climate change, accompanied by disruptions of natural seasonal patterns and an increase in extreme weather phenomena.

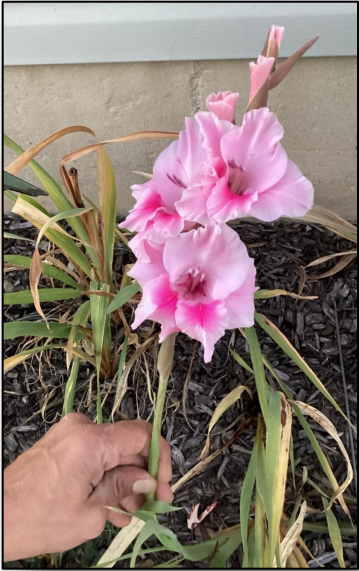
This ancient tree is a favoured perch for resident bald eagles.

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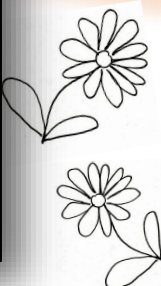
Gardeners have a vision in their heads (and hearts) of the perfect garden that thrives and thrills for a delightful long summer season, or more! Why can't all our dreams *always* come true? Here are a few of our gardening successes and failure stories for 2022 —even from Extension Master Gardeners! Learn from us and may YOUR garden be blessed with success!



Marlene Vanderlin , PCMG Class of 2018

Win: This gladiola was a winner at the 2022 Porter County Fair.

Win and Lose: These carrots fit into both categories as you can see. This result is the product of clay soil; plus, seedlings were not thinned out. All plants were left to germinate and grow where planted. Although plenty carrots grew, some had no room and developed into tiny carrots.



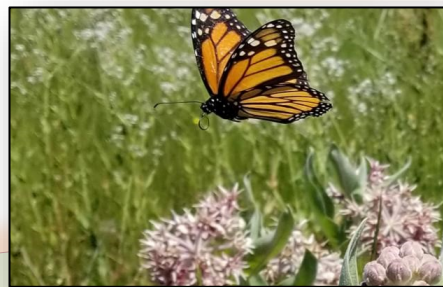
You Win Some; You Lose Some

Featuring fellow Master Gardeners!



Gloria Notaro, PCMG Class of 2011

Lose: Spared from critters, but still no blooms! "Don't practice what you read." I wanted to grow gladiolus again this year as last year. I tried and only had partial success because of the little critters with four legs. Out of 30 bulbs, I maybe had 12 that grew and they were so pretty. I read about making cages to put your bulbs in, so they don't get eaten. I made 2 cages with 10 bulbs inside and buried them. I'm still waiting for those to grow. Lol. Dug the cages out of the soil, and a few had started to grow. The cage had room for movement. Was it still too tight and the bulb's couldn't expand? I don't know the answer.



John Steffen, PCMG Class of 2017

Win and Lose: It was Milkweed Madness! Inspired by a Purdue University zoom broadcast, I set out to establish a butterfly garden. I already had a butterfly bush, so I planted seeds from a roadside milkweed in fall 2019. The following spring, two plants sprung up followed by four more plants in spring of 2021. Things were looking good . . . until . . . this year when 33 milkweed plants filled the area surrounding the butterfly bush. MY ERROR - I thought milkweed only spread by seeds carried on the wind, but discovered they also spread by rhizomes. A lesson learned the hard way. Now I'm looking for the domestic version of milkweed.



(P.S. per John Nash: weakened or diseased bulbs and near-draught growing conditions may have been the problem.)

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*a Winner
IS JUST A
Loser
WHO TRIED
one more time*



Dinnerplate Dahlia, 'Maki'

Suzanna Tudor, PCMG Class of 2002

Lose: Sadly, I lost one of my 2021 Best of Show dahlias to winter storage. My quick trip to FL the end of October last year didn't allow ample time for digging or proper storage. I was also unable to inspect them for shrinkage/dehydration in my absence. There are lots of procedures on line for dahlia digging/storage, here is one from Swan Island <https://www.dahlias.com/help-center/how-to-grow-dahlias/fall-winter/>. To me, they are worth the labor-intensive efforts.

Wins: Two successes enjoyed, Oriental lily gifts from a Michigan cousin and the Maki dinner plate dahlia purchased from last year's Elkhart Dahlia Society early spring sale (which did survive winter storage-yay!). Both lily and dahlia were tall, healthy, beautiful and show stoppers!

My Michigan cousin called the lilies, 'Stargazers,' but they aren't. My research finds that nurseries call them "Orienpet," a cross between fragrant oriental lilies and their trumpet-shaped bloom relatives. My cousin's lilies reached over six foot; the stalks boasted large, slightly fragrant pink blooms for 2-3 weeks (a pleasant fragrance, not overpowering like 'Stargazers'). Greatly impressed, I ordered more from a Dutch bulb company, 'Pretty Woman' and 'Conca d'Or that arrived last week--now where to plant them.

Wilma Willard, PCMG Class of 2011

Win or Lose? That is the question! I was told that if I didn't move my perennials, the work for the new septic system in our backyard would destroy them. So, in all, around 50 plants and bulbs were moved out. After being in pots for two months, will they survive in our new gardens?

Time will tell.
I'll keep ya posted.



2021 Best of Show dahlia did not survive winter storage.



Michigan cousin's lilies.
No name available.



Zann Wilson, PCMG Class of 2002

Win: This is my best Coleus display ever. It was an experiment that really paid off. Plant two Coleus in the ground in front of a tall container. Plant two more in the container. Give them a month and they appear to grow together as a very large display.

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It was last July when, on our anniversary trip to Indianapolis's Fort Harrison State Park Inn, that we spent a day at nearby Newfields and heard about Winterlights. Newfields is a 152-acre campus that houses The Indianapolis Art Museum, The Lilly House, The Virginia B. Fairbanks Art & Nature Park: 100 Acres, the Gardens at Newfields, the Beer Garden, and more. It is an impressive place! During that same trip we visited some of our Indy friends and they raved about Winterlights! - Wilma Willard



"The Garden at Newfields is aglow with more than a million and a half lights for the sixth season of *Winterlights* presented by Bank of America. The tradition continues, bringing wonder and warmth to the holiday season. Old favorites return and new additions shine bright. Landscape of Light dances to the *Nutcracker* on Lilly Allée, while wind whistles in the Ice Storm Walk. The season is bright inside Lilly House, where the halls are decked with elegant hand-made holiday cheer. Whimsy welcomes young and old to experience the all-new sculpture, *Big Piñata*, by Monterrey, Mexico based art collective, Happy Rebels. The *piñata* is a traditional symbol of Las Posadas, a Latin American seasonal celebration. Another new addition, *Astraeus*, by local artists Owens + Crawley, lights the way through the woods as guests wander from Lilly House to Winter Market. Guests will be enchanted by a dazzling display of color blossoms in the new Glowing Garden."

Festive fare includes beverages and sweet treats. *Winterlights* is open from 5pm to 9pm from November 20 to January 8. You may want to bundle up and enjoy the twinkling lights at *Winterlights*! <https://discovernewfields.org/winterlights>

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See educational videos of former **PCMGA Garden Show** seminars
found at pcgarden.info on the Member Pages.

The **Purdue** website has added a link to numerous on-line
education opportunities:

<https://www.purdue.edu/hla/sites/master-gardener/education-hours-opportunities/>

<https://www.purdue.edu/hla/sites/master-gardener/events/>

<https://www.purdue.edu/hla/sites/yardandgarden/>

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