

Kindness
is like snow-
It beautifies
everything
it covers.
~ Kahlil Gibran

Garden Thyme

January 2019

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

Volume 5, Issue 1

Garden Thyme

Getting to Know Porter County's New Extension Educator

By Nikky Witkowski

I am Nikky Witkowski, the new Ag and Natural Resources (ANR) Purdue Extension Educator for Porter County. Originally from the New Palestine area (Southeast Indianapolis), I moved into this area when I married my husband, Daryl. We have lived in Kouts the entire time after coming to Northwest Indiana and have learned more of what winter REALLY is like since being here. We have two children, Eli (first grade) and Daphne (preschool) and we love animals.

I have been with Purdue Extension since May of 2007 in Lake County--not too far away. A Purdue University graduate in 2007, my degrees are in Horticulture and Ag Education. I am also a Master Indiana Accredited Horticulturist.

Since I came from Purdue Extension, I have already brought some ideas of things I hope to share with Porter County. Also, I am ready to create new opportunities for Master Gardeners as well! My plan is to provide one or two Master Gardener classes in 2019. We may try a new format of an all-day class which I've seen work well. Another inspiration of mine is to offer a vegetable-growing or fruit-growing series every year that lasts one evening a week for five weeks. (See pages 9-10) A home gardening course that will give individuals training like the Master Gardener course but without commitments is also on my agenda.

If you have thoughts or questions, I am always open to hearing from you. Just call 219-465-3555 or email me at nikky@purdue.edu. #



Nikky Witkowski
*Extension Educator,
Agriculture & Natural
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Extension-Porter County*

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RECAP: PCMGA in 2018

By President Ann Cierniak

PCMGA Class of 2003

The PCMGA year-end meeting was held on November 13, 2018 at the Library Service Center in Chesterton. Traditionally, our last meeting of the year includes a potluck dinner, election of officers, presentation of certificates of appreciation and new or upgraded badges to our members. It was great to have time to share a meal and visit with each other.

The officers for 2019 were elected as follows: Sue Spelde, president; Shelli Henry, vice president; Debbie McCormick, treasurer; Ellen Standafer, secretary; members at large: Sue Arnold, Kristine Sandrick, Dana Dodson, John Steffen; and Ann Cierniak as past president.

Silver badges were awarded to Jackie Fenchak, Sandy Appleby, Debbie McCormick and Marty Seroczynski. A gold badge (1,000 hours) was presented to Marilyn Dyson. Certificates of Appreciation were presented to many members for their valued service to our organization. Certificates were also presented to those that served on committees, served as committee chairs and as officers and as chairs of the Garden Walk and Gardening Show. How lucky we are as an organization to have so many talented and committed members who donate their time and talents. I am truly in awe of the many skills of our members. Various members have donated hours of their time over the course of many years, all for the love of gardening and in our efforts to answer gardening questions and to provide information on plants, both ornamental and edible.

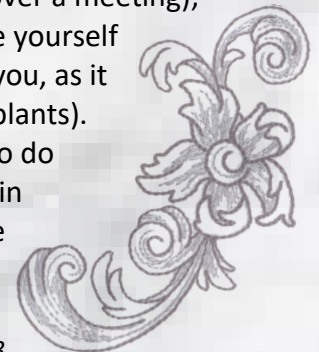


Marilyn Dyson, our newest Gold Badge PCMGA member is congratulated by President Ann Cierniak.



2018 PCMGA award winners (left front) Jackie Fenchak, Marilyn Dyson, (left back) President Ann Cierniak, Bev Ripley and Debbie McCormick.

I have to give a shout out to those of our members that do presentations to the public. It is difficult to get in front of a group of people to speak, and I know it takes time to prepare for and to give a presentation. I have always been nervous about speaking to a group (which is evidenced by sometimes tripping over my words while presiding over a meeting); however, I think it is a good idea to make yourself do something that is uncomfortable for you, as it helps you grow as a person (kind of like plants). Member Zann Wilson was kind enough to donate her time and conduct three classes in public speaking for our members, which I did participate in. This is another example of one of our talented members donating their time. As a result of these classes, I think I am ready to do a presentation to the membership, and I hope members who have not done presentations in the past will consider doing presentations in the future. *Continued on page 3.*



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Continued from page 2.
Recap: PCGMA in 2018

Our meeting included a special presentation of a plaque to Chuck Roth of Chesterton Feed and Garden Center in recognition of the donation of his time in speaking to our members and at some of our shows. Chesterton Feed and Garden Center has also rented booth space at our PCMGA Garden Shows through the years. Finally, Chuck Roth donated fountains to two of our shows, one to an early show held at Washington Township schools. The second donated fountain was raffled at our last show in January of 2018. Chuck not only brought that beautiful and



Chuck Roth, owner of Chesterton Feed and Garden Center, receives a plaque of appreciation from LuAnn Troxel for his many years of collaboration with PCMGA.



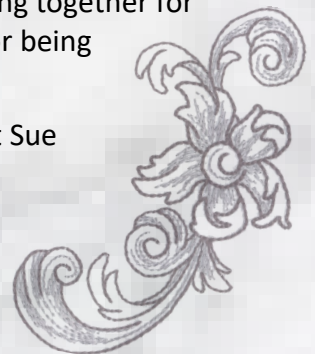
President Ann Cierniak presents a certificate to Jackie Fenchak.

large fountain to the show and set it up, he also took it down and delivered it! These are valuable contributions to our association and are much appreciated.

Finally, I have enjoyed serving as president the past two years. The position is not a difficult one because of the awesome members that serve on the committees. The committees all come together as a cohesive unit to make this such an effective organization. Many of us have made life-long friends and have great memories of working together at the Garden Show, the Garden Walk and through getting together for our field trips. Congratulations to our members for being such a hard working and generous group!

I look forward to working with our 2019 President Sue Spelde and with our new Extension Educator Nikky Witkowski.

Here is to a wonderful 2019! ❄️



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The Star Garden Tool: The Information Highway

By Suzanna Tudor, PCMGA Class of 2002



A chat with sister, Pat, gleaned the nugget for this article. She was excited to tell me about her latest re-purposed treasure: a seed-saving cabinet. A cute little wooden gem she found at Shipshewana with drawers in which to store her prized seeds.

"Yes, I saw the idea from Laura," she told me.

"Who?" I asked.

"You know, on Garden Answer," was her response.

"I watch her videos all the time."

A Google quest found Garden Answer has 2.2 million followers and over 450 million video views. As we know, MGs do not endorse anyone or products. However, we do share educational opportunities, and this is one.

Then it hit me. There at our finger tips is one of our most valuable tools: the web, a treasure chest of information.

A site all MGs need to be aware and visit is one of Purdue's at <https://www.purdue.edu/hla/sites/yardandgarden/> to find the latest gardening news, answers to questions, how-to information, plant and pest ID, and even Indiana gardens to visit.

Now, back to the cabinet and a quick tidbit picked up from viewing Youtube videos. When seed saving, remember C-D-D, cool, dry and dark. With proper care seeds may be viable for 5-10 years. Hope sister Pat puts hers in a C and D spot.

Happy surfing! ❄️



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Photography Tips - II

The Moment

By Nancy Rosene, PCMGA Class of 2012



Before sharing more tangible rules of photography in later editions of *Garden Thyme*, here is an abstract one to consider.

The famous portrait photographer, Yousuf Karsh, (think Winston Churchill, Grace Kelly, Albert Einstein) said, “Look and think before opening the shutter. The heart and mind are the true lens of the camera.”

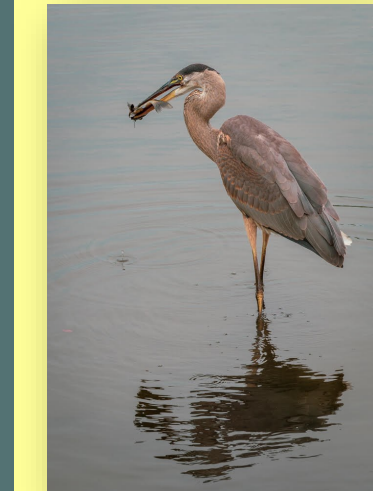
I remind myself of this quote whenever I’m out and about—even when I don’t have my camera. It is great practice as an aspiring fine art photographer to compose photographs wherever you are. Take your time to live in the moment, explore every aspect and detail around you, and calculate how the elements conspire to make that particular framed vision a work of art.

*Take your
time to live
in the
moment.*

In the digital world it is so easy to turn your camera into a machine gun and just fire away at anything and everything. I’m guilty of that myself. Now that I am more seasoned, I’ve learned to stop and ask myself, “Does this pretty flower really tell a story? Does it elicit an emotion? Is it the Lady Gaga of flowers, or is it just another pretty flower?” Sure it is a digital world, but there is still cost involved—time to download and edit, not to mention storage megabytes. If you absolutely would not plant another coneflower in your garden, stop to consider why this particular coneflower is worthy of your time and megabytes.

It is true. There are those rare moments when a spontaneous snap of the shutter results in a brilliant shot. Like anything else, though, putting your heart and soul into it can make all the difference! ❄️

Editor’s note: To read *Photography Tips - I*, see Volume 4 Issue 5, page 2 of the September *Garden Thyme* article entitled “Photography Inspired by Nature.”



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Welcome
to my
Garden

Public Speaking and Flower Gardens

By Marlene Vanderlin, PCMGA Class of 2017

I recently participated in the public speaking class presented by Zann Wilson for the Purdue Master Gardeners Association. As part of the class, each participant gave a short speech to practice and demonstrate the skills we had learned. My presentation choice was the border gardens planted along the edge of my driveway, featuring long rows of dwarf, yellow marigolds. Hovering over the marigolds, zinnias popped with color, while tall and airy cosmos, mimicking the marigold hues provided a backdrop for the multi-colored zinnias. I loved them so much; I planted more zinnias and marigolds along the vegetable garden!

The focus was on how inexpensive and easy it is to grow a beautiful flower garden. Cost was nil since seeds were saved from the previous year. Several years ago, a package or two of flower seeds were purchased. Total expense was not more than five dollars. My plan is to save the seeds each year. Now, there are extra seeds to give away [hint: Seed and Bulb Exchange], and there are still some to spare.

*I loved them
so much
I planted more...*



Teaching others the fine points of public speaking, then sharing their horticultural experiences through these newly learned skills is what the Master Gardener program is all about--helping others grow. ❄️



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Missouri Botanical Garden

By Bonnie Girton, PCMGA Class 2016

What is the criterion for a great public garden? Missouri Botanical Garden sets the bar high. I was fortunate to tour the gardens in July while on an RV trip as it is conveniently located near Interstate 70.

Beginning with a dramatic entrance, many of the garden's features are unique and a cut above. Preservation, education, and pure enjoyment are obvious throughout.

I especially enjoyed the many water elements and several Chihuly glass blown art installments. A massive conservatory, the Clim-a-tron, is an outstanding collection of exotic plants. There also are several internationally themed gardens of which my favorites are the Japanese & Chinese Gardens.

I have named but a few of the highlights, so I invite you to research their website and plan a trip!



Missouri Botanical Garden

4344 Shaw Blvd.

St Louis, Missouri 63110

www.missouribotanicalgarden.org

Founded in 1859, the Missouri Botanical Garden is the nation's oldest botanical garden in continuous operation and a

National Historic Landmark.



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Porter County Master Gardeners

OPPORTUNITIES



Porter County Master Gardeners

2018 Row Crop Ag Days

Dates: January 30 & 31, 2019. Location is La Porte Armory 2391 W State Rd 2 La Porte, IN. If interested in volunteering at the event contact Lisa Gerardi at kaliherbs2011@gmail.com or call 219-262-5146.

Master Gardener Seminars

Dates: Thursdays Feb 7, 14, 21, 28 & March 7, 2019. Theme: "Growing through Leadership". Time: 1:00-4:00pm CST. Fee: \$60/person. Master Gardeners are invited to learn about the nature of leadership, communication, working with others, leading groups, managing conflict and how to interact with others during this fun and engaging 5-week series. Location is La Porte County Purdue Extension Office 2857 W. State Road 2, La Porte. Contact Gene Matzat at 219-324-9407 or email emmatzat@purdue.edu

La Porte County Spring Garden Show: March 23

2019 Purdue Master Gardener State Tour

Date: Friday June 21, 2019. Theme is: "Building Botanical Bridges: Yesterday, Today & Tomorrow". Host: Sunnyside MBA in New Albany, IN. See info at <https://tinyurl.com/purduemgtour>

Purdue Master Gardener Study Abroad 2019

Dates: July 16-27, 2019. Location is "Gardens of Ireland". Learn garden and landscape history in Ireland and Northern Ireland <https://www.purdue.edu/hla/sites/MGStudyAbroad/>

Elkhart County Garden Expo

Date: February 23, 2019. Location: Elkhart County Community Center and Ag Hall at 17746-D County Road 34, Goshen, IN 46528. Time: 8 a.m.- 4 p.m. EST (one hour ahead of Porter County.) Michiana Master Gardeners present the First Annual Elkhart County Garden Expo in 2019, in cooperation with Purdue Extension Elkhart County. The Garden Expo will include nationally known speakers, educational workshops, and opportunities to shop and purchase from a variety of vendors throughout the day. For more info e-mail cjnvj@comcast.net or call 574-903-4848. <http://www.4hfairgrounds.com/event/elkhart-county-garden-expo/>

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www.pcgarden.info

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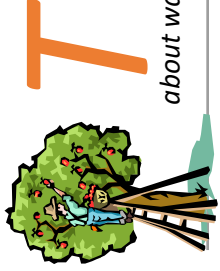
Wilma Willard, Designer

Earn volunteer hours for contributing to the newsletter;
contact the Extension Office for more information.

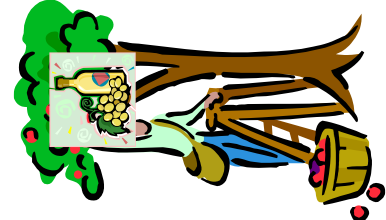
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This series offers current and aspiring backyard fruit growers the opportunity to learn from the experts about ways to increase the success



Who should attend?

This series should be of special interest to those with existing fruit plantings wishing to improve productivity and fruit quality as well as those just considering the addition of fruit to the home landscape.

What is the goal of the series?

This series will offer the home fruit grower a working knowledge of the modern tools and techniques that will improve their productivity of quality fruit. Participants will increase their satisfaction in their ability to produce fruit from their own land and labors that will contribute to the nutrition of their family .

What are the expected outcomes?

Participants will produce quality fruit of the type and quality that will be used by their family and friends to contribute to their diets and quality of life. Participants will build a network among themselves, current fruit growers, educators and specialists and this program will provide the resources to facilitate their learning well after the conclusion of the series.

Attend the nearest site...or Join Us Remotely!

- Allen County—Terri Theisen, Fort Wayne, 260-481-6826, ttheisen@purdue.edu
- Clay County—Bob Bruner, Brazil, 812-448-9041, rbruner@purdue.edu
- Dubois County—Kenny Eck, Ferdinand, 812-482-1782, kjeck@purdue.edu
- Hamilton County—Amanda Baird, Noblesville, 317-776-0854, alocker@purdue.edu
- Harrison County—Miranda Edge, Corydon, 812-738-4236, medge@purdue.edu
- Knox County—Valerie Clingerman, Vincennes, 812-882-3509, clingerman@purdue.edu
- Madison County—Beth Vansickle, Anderson, 765-641-9514, bleonhar@purdue.edu
- Marion County—Steve Mayer, Indianapolis, 317-275-9290, mayers@purdue.edu
- Marshall County**—Bob Yoder, Plymouth, 574-935-8545, ryoder@purdue.edu
- Porter County**—Nikky Witkowski, Wanatah, 219-465-3555, nikky@purdue.edu
- Spencer County**—Nick Held, Chrisney, 812-362-8066, nheld@purdue.edu
- Steuben County—Crystal Van Pelt, Angola, 260-668-1000 x1400, cvanpelt@purdue.edu

**These Sites are on Central Time! Plan accordingly.

Note: Sites may close if not enough registrations are received by March 5, 2018. Please register by that time!

If you have questions or need more information, please contact:

Purdue Extension—Porter County

Nikky Witkowski, Valparaiso, IN
Phone: 219-465-3555 E-mail: nikky@purdue.edu

Backyard Fruit Production



March 12, 19, & 26, April 2 & 9

6:30 p.m.-9:00 p.m. Eastern

5:30 p.m.-8:00 p.m. Central

12 Sites across Indiana*

*Remote viewing available

Sponsored by:

Purdue Extension

Porter County

Registration information inside or register at:

<https://tinyurl.com/PurdueFruit2019>

In each session participants will have the opportunity to:

- ✓ Learn about modern fruit production practices appropriate for the home landscape
- ✓ Learn from experts how to select varieties and kinds of fruit to meet your needs
- ✓ Network with others who are interested in the production of quality Indiana fruit
- ✓ Learn about how to manage pests that reduce quality and yield



**2019 Backyard Fruit
Grower Series**

Name: _____

Address: _____

Home County: _____

Telephone: _____

Email: _____

Names of Additional Attendees: _____

Registration Fee:
**\$40 per person— for all sessions
 OFF SITE VIEWING AVAILABLE!**
Mailing Deadline: February 26!
Online Registration Due: March 5!
<https://tinyurl.com/PurdueFruit2019>

Number Attending:.....\$ _____
 X \$40/person/all sessions=.....\$ _____
No FEE for second person from same home

Total Enclosed=.....\$ _____

Location (County or Remote Viewing): _____

Credit Card # _____

Exp. Date _____ CVV (3 digits) _____

Credit Card Billing Zip _____

*For Checks: Make them Payable to
 Purdue University and mail to:*

Purdue Extension - The Education Store
 301 South 2nd Street
 Lafayette, IN 47901

Questions? Call 1-765-494-6794

More about the Program Sessions

Each session is from 5:30 p.m. —8:00 p.m. Central Time

Session 1—March 12

Program Overview & “It All Begins with You”

- ◆ Assessment of your goals and the realities of time and site limitations.
- ◆ General fruit culture...how is home production different? What are the realities of fruit culture in Indiana?
- ◆ Site selection, overview of the possibilities, soil preparation, sources of information, plants, pest control products, tools etc.
- ◆ Specialty varieties like Aronia, Gooseberry??



Session 4—April 2

Tree Fruit—Branching out!

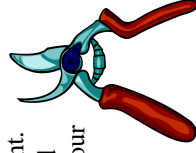
- ◆ Overview of possibilities and limitations...
- ◆ Special soil prep, planting, support, training/pruning, production calendars, maintenance schedules.
- ◆ Variety and rootstock selection, fruit quality.
- ◆ Apples, Pears, Peaches, Cherries, others?



Session 5—April 9

Tree Fruits—What to be Watching For

- ◆ Fruits Pest Identification Management.
- ◆ Delving into the common insects and diseases that afflict the tree fruits in our area and ways to combat or live with them.
- ◆ Is Organic an option?



If you require auxiliary aids and services due to a disability or special food needs, please contact us by February 26 at 219-465-3555.

Session 2—March 19

Small Fruit is BIG in the Landscape

- ◆ Overview of possibilities and limitations...
- ◆ Special soil prep, planting, support, training, production calendars, maintenance schedules.
- ◆ Grapes, Strawberries, Brambles, Blueberries, and more!

Session 3—March 26

Small Fruits—What to be Watching For

- ◆ Delving into the common insect and disease issues you might see during a growing year.
- ◆ Safe use and application equipment for getting the job done.
- ◆ What new invaders you might want to be on the watch for and possible controls.