

"Winter is an etching,  
 spring a watercolor,  
 summer an oil painting, and  
 autumn a mosaic of them all."  
 ~ Stanley Horowitz ~

# Garden Thyme

November 2019

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

Volume 5, Issue 6

# Θαλασσινά Ψαχνά

## Fall for Transition

By Nicole "Nikky" Witkowski

Purdue Extension Educator - Agriculture & Natural Resources



Fairy Wings

Fairy Wings

Fall is a coming—or maybe it's been here for awhile? I can't believe November is the one-year anniversary of my transition to join you in Porter County! I think we have learned a lot together and hopefully more in the coming months.

I will be sending out notices starting this time of year to let you know your status in the Master Gardener Program. Don't worry, no one is in trouble this year as there has been so much we have had to work through. I thank everyone that has taken time to work with me to get things rolling again with you and your volunteer and education hours. I want to make sure everyone can be included to the best of my ability. If getting hours is a problem, let me know and I'll see where we can fit you in. If entering hours is difficult, talk to me, and we will make it so that it works. I don't want someone left out just because reporting hours is too hard. And remember, you can count driving time for 2018 volunteer activities and all the years to come.

### Fall is a season of transition and a great time to evaluate and prepare:

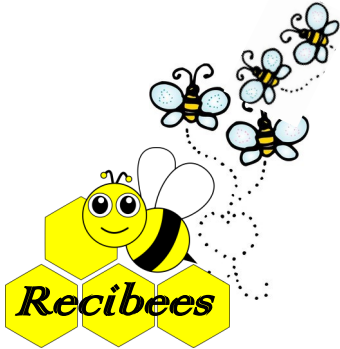
Evaluate trees for poor structure. You can still have some leaves on the trees and see which tree is having some trouble by leaves changing more quickly in one spot compared to another. Check if bark is damaged or falling off when it shouldn't be. Keep in mind those evergreen trees are going to shed needles; don't be alarmed when they do.

Prepare your gardening tools. Make sure to sharpen and oil tools as you put them to bed. Pruners will do better if maintained and so will lawnmowers. Don't just shove them away and forget about them. Take care of them now when there is not a spring rush.

After all, spring is only six months away! 🍂

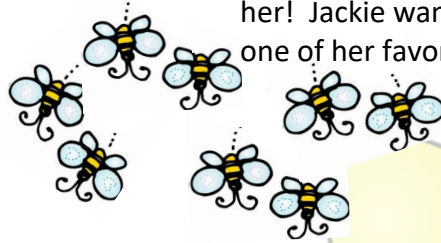
### IN THIS ISSUE

Notes from Nikky	1
Recibeas— Pumpkin!	2
Extension Connection	3
Meet a Master Gardener	4
Crafty Creations—Holly	5
Nature Watch—Alaska	6
Safety in the Garden	7
2019 Perennial of the Year	8



By Marcia Carson, 2012  
and Jackie Fenchak 2003

Did you try Jackie Fenchak's Pumpkin Cheesecake at the September picnic? I heard so many comments I had to put some on my dessert plate, and it was wonderful! If you're looking for an alternative pumpkin recipe for this fall, this is a good one. The best part is that when I asked Jackie if she was willing to put it in Garden Thyme, she not only made the cheesecake, but then invited me to her home to have it with her! Jackie wanted a new recipe for the picnic, so she went to one of her favorite cookbooks. She bought the cookbook at a garage sale and says it has great recipes that have never failed her.



## Pumpkin Cheesecake

Preheat oven to 350 degrees  
Use a 10-inch springform pan

By Jackie Fenchak

Garden Thyme November 2019

### Crust

- 1 package spice cake mix
- 1/2 cup melted butter

### Topping

- 1 1/2 cups whipping cream
- 1/4 cup confectioner's sugar, sifted
- 1/4 cup sliced almonds, toasted

### Filling

- 1 1/2 lbs. cream cheese, softened
- 1 can sweetened condensed milk
- 1 can pumpkin puree (not pie filling)
- 4 eggs
- 1 Tbsp. pumpkin pie spice

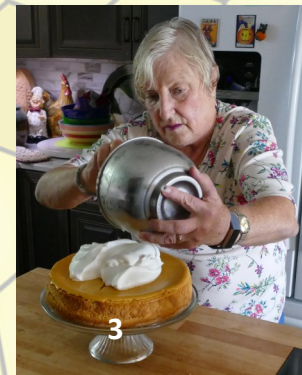
### Directions

- Crust:** Combine cake mix and melted butter. Mix well. Press firmly on bottom of pan. Set aside.
- Filling:** In a large mixer bowl, beat cream cheese and sweetened condensed milk on high speed for 2 minutes. Add pumpkin, eggs and spice. Beat for 1 minute longer, or until smooth. Pour over prepared crust. Bake 55-60 minutes or just until set. Run knife around edge of pan to loosen cake. Cool completely, then chill 2 hours or overnight.
- Topping:** Beat cream and confectioner's sugar to stiff peaks. Spread over cheesecake. Sprinkle with toasted almonds. Chill until serving. Store leftover cheesecake in refrigerator.

**Variations:** Bake cheesecake in a 9x13 inch pan at 350 for 30-35 min. Jackie also thought she might try it with a graham cracker crust-- sounds good to me!



Jackie's garage sale cookbook lucky find.



Bake, chill, prepare topping, then spread it over pumpkin cheesecake.



Toasted sliced almonds add a perfect crunch. Thanks, Jackie!

## EXTENSION CONNECTION

### 100th Anniversary for Pinney Purdue Agricultural Center (PPAC)

By Jim Albers, PCMG Class of 2016

Have you heard of Pinney-Purdue Agricultural Center or at least have seen road signs pointing to it—on U.S. Hwy. 30 near the Porter-LaPorte County line? Who was Pinney, and what is the PPAC?

In 1919, William E. Pinney and his daughter, Myra, deeded the Pinney's 486-acre homestead to Purdue University for agricultural research and experimentation. The Agricultural Center was the third of what are now eight sites located across the soils, topographies and temperature zones of Indiana.

Born on the farm in 1847, Pinney graduated from the Valparaiso Male and Female College in 1869 (the same year Purdue was founded) and in Valparaiso became a successful lawyer, banker, civic leader, and farmland investor.

In 1923, he described the challenges and joys of pioneer life and fruit and vegetable cultivation and preservation. These pioneers were "master gardeners," including grafting their apple trees! The PPAC

implements the scientific study of plants, implicit in Master Gardening.


Experiments, some lasting several years, are currently conducted at the PPAC by Purdue researchers. The actual farming at PPAC is done under Superintendent Gary Tragesser.

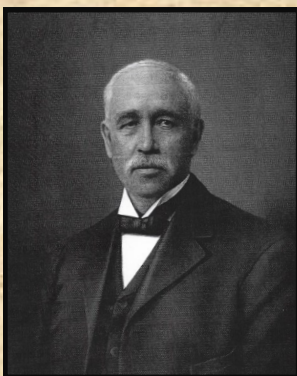
The farm operates in close connection with the Porter and LaPorte Counties extension offices who jointly sponsor "Field Day" instruction every summer for area professional producers and interested Master Gardeners. Yes, you could even get education hours, a meal, good conversation with area farmers, and join the corn-tasting contest.

The 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary Pinney gift was celebrated in June on the farm.

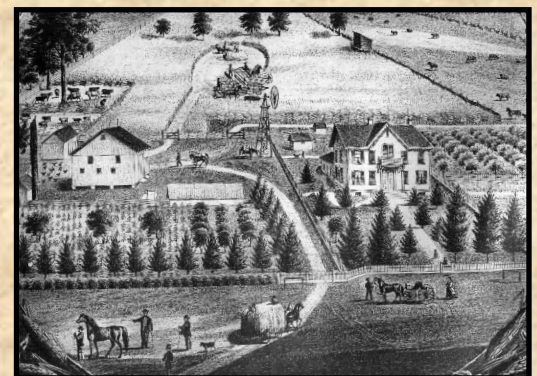
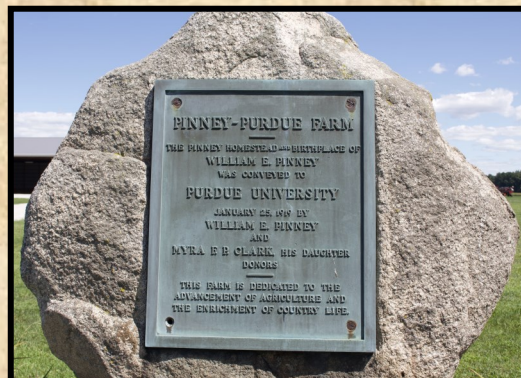
Thank you, Pinneys! Your gift keeps on growing!

Link to 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary program:

[https://ag.purdue.edu/arge/pac/Documents/Pinney\\_100\\_Program-v7.pdf](https://ag.purdue.edu/arge/pac/Documents/Pinney_100_Program-v7.pdf) 



WILLIAM PINNEY, ESQ.



FARM RESIDENCE OF WILLIAM PINNEY, ESQ. CLINTON TP, LAPORTE CO, IND.

*"As a mother and registered nurse, I view gardening as a natural expression of who I am as a person."  
~ Margaret Mudd*



## Meet a Master Gardener

By Margaret Mudd, PCMG Class of 2019

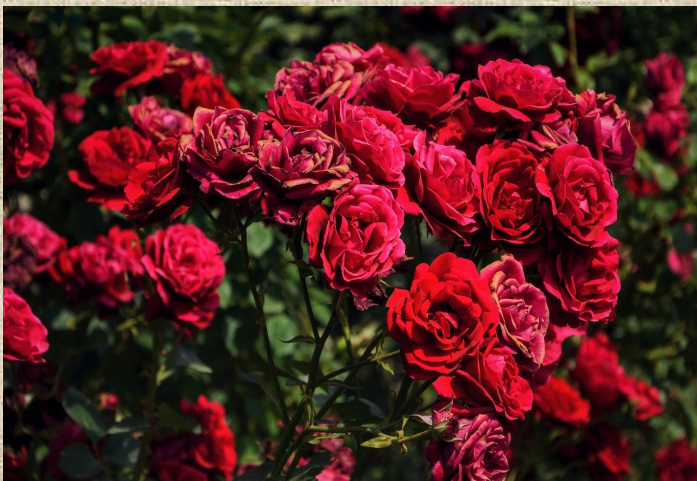
For as long as I can remember, I have been drawn to, and in awe of the beauty and diversity of the natural world. I am deeply happy and tranquil when I explore or work in a garden. The experience can be compared to how a child feels when finding themselves in a candy store. The joy remains with me today as a profound satisfaction from creating things of beauty and nurturing them to their potential. As a mother and a registered nurse, I view gardening as a natural expression of who I am as a person. Even amid the challenges, I know that whatever happens, it will always be worth the work.

My love of gardening began when I witnessed my parents cultivating separate gardens of their own. I distinctly remember my mother's beautiful and fragrant roses shining as the stars of her flower garden.

My father tended his vegetable garden, regularly sharing the bounty of his delicious tomatoes, zucchini and cucumbers.

I learned of the Purdue Master Gardener Program a few years ago, and having a desire to grow my gardening knowledge and skills, I believed this would be a great opportunity. I took the class this past summer and have now met the requirements for certification.

Currently, I have the good fortune to volunteer at Gabis Arboretum and hope to train as a docent. With time, I know I can "help others grow" and hope to instill in others a genuine appreciation and respect for nature. 🍂



Margaret Mudd and Denise Pruitt

## Easy Enough Christmas Holly Centerpiece

By Wilma Willard, PCMG Class of 2011

What happens when your 32-year-old holly bush finally produces some berries? You greatly admire it and think, "How can I use those festive branches and berries in my Christmas decorating this year?"

Searching the internet I came across Emily Fazio's ideas for nature crafts on HGTV. She noted that floating candles nestled atop holly leaves makes for a lovely holiday centerpiece and shared a photo. Well, it looked simple, so I tried it. I'll share what I learned in my step-by-step format. It's easy enough and needs no glue gun or glitter!

### Materials needed:

- 12-20 holly branches, artificial holly sprays, box wood branches, or artificial fall leaves
- 6-12 holly berries or cranberries
- 1 glass bowl - height 4", width of 9", or any size
- 1 medium or 3-5 small floating candles
- Holiday placemat or a circle of decorative fabric
- More décor to set beside your centerpiece

### Directions:

1. Trim the holly/boxwood branches or artificial sprays to 3" leaving no stem at the end.
2. Rinse the foliage and berries in water.
3. Fill the glass bowl half full with fresh water.
4. Place foliage in bowl. Adjust water level.
5. Carefully and evenly place candles on top of the holly to float on the water. Add berries or cranberries.
7. Lay a placemat or piece of fabric on your table and center the bowl on top.
8. Add additional décor around bowl like more candles, ribbons, figurines, or florals.
9. Light the candles and dim the lights.

**Merry Christmas!**



*Tips: I used my finger to measure the lengths. Trim tight to the bottom leaf so that no stem exists. Lay the foliage around in a circle like you would a round cheese tray—top up and stem down.*

*What is a "floating candle"? It is typically short and rounded on the bottom. They come in many colors and shapes. Find them online or in craft stores.*



*My color theme was gold. But, be creative—copy the basic idea but use different colors for a party or for your Thanksgiving dinner centerpiece.*



For more Christmas craft ideas from nature:  
<https://www.hgtv.com/design/make-and-celebrate/holidays/holly-diy-decor-ideas> 🌿



## Alaska's Unique Growing Season

By Sue Spelde, PCMG Class of 2004

One of the first things I noticed on my visit to Alaska was the abundance of gardens and container plantings. Every restaurant and shop displayed large planters overflowing with colorful blooms, and the plants were huge--considering it was only June. This surprised me. I was expecting to see gardens and container plants just getting started since their spring arrives much later than ours. But what I did not consider is that Alaska is known for its midnight sun. In the spring and summer time, Alaska receives more sunshine than any other state. The sun is out in Barrow, Alaska for 24 hours from May 10<sup>th</sup> to August 2<sup>nd</sup>, and further south in Seward the sun can shine for 18 hours a day.

Plants happily use all that extra sunlight to photosynthesize and promote growth. A study in 1960 compared the seasonal growth of white spruce in Alaska to those in Massachusetts and found that the wood produced over the year was the same, but the Alaskan spruce did it in half the time.

Growing and shipping peonies is a fairly recent and rapidly growing commodity for Alaska. The long, cool growing season and cool soils make for ideal conditions for growing peonies that bloom well into September. Alaskan growers claim their peonies are larger and more saturated with color too.

All that photosynthesis also causes vegetables to not only grow larger, but the extra sugar that is produced enhances their flavor. The Alaskan State Fair in Palmer hosts a giant vegetable competition each year, and some of the produce entered has set world records. For example: 64.8 lb. cantaloupe, 138.25 lb. cabbage, 63.3 lb. celery and an 18.985 lb. carrot. Harvesting vegetables in Alaska is like weight lifting. This year a state record was set for a pumpkin which weighed 2051 pounds. That's a lot of pies.

For gardeners, all that extra sunlight means more time to garden. Or better yet maybe it allows time to actually relax and enjoy the fruits of their labor. 🍂

Nature Watch



## Safety in the Garden OUCH!

By Suzanna Tudor, PCMG Class of 2002

As necessity is sometimes referred to as the mother of invention, so it is with Garden Thyme topics. Recently while pruning, I sliced into my left hand, ring finger with just-sharpened pruners. Ouch! A trip to the doctor, a tetanus shot and antibiotic regimen for a week resulted. Plus, adding insult to injury, not being able to do much gardening when there's a lot of fall chores to do--swift move Shurlock.

Thus, this topic, and my plea to you, gardening friends, never be ho-hum when keeping those precious hands protected like I was. Besides being much more careful, my son has offered his fish-filleting glove for future pruning projects. Great idea. But I'm wondering what else is available?

It seems there are lots of choices, <https://www.edcmag.com/best-cut-resistant-gloves/>, as researched by Veronica James in her list of "Top Ten Best Cut-Resistant Gloves to Buy for 2019." NoCry gloves made number one, which I found rather humorous given the serious subject. Gloves come in an array of fibers: kevlar, spectra, dyneema, metal weave or mesh, nitrile, spandex, polyethylene, fiberglass, rubber, leather, wool or cotton. Five levels of protection grade these PPEs (personal protective equipment) with five being strongest. James outlines the likes/dislikes of each product.

Curious, I asked what deer-processing grandson wears, he replied, "Mechanics' nitrile gloves, too hard to work with anything thicker."

In closing, please get and wear cut-resistant gloves for your pruning tasks and avoid trips to the doctor and being laid up for a couple weeks. 🍁



Left: My new flexible, comfortable, cut-resistant gloves.

Right: Close-up of the construction of the glove.



## 2019 Perennial Plant of the Year—Stachys ‘Hummelo’

**“Hardiness:** USDA Zones 4 to 8, foliage may remain evergreen in warmer climates.

**Light:** Full sun to part shade.

**Soil:** Well drained soil; water as necessary.

**Uses:** This colorful and compact winner makes an excellent addition to the full sun perennial border. Terrific in combination with ornamental grasses, *Echinacea purpurea*, and *Asclepias tuberosa* (2018 Perennial Plant of the Year®). Wiry stems make for a great cut flower as well.

**Unique Qualities:** Pollinators can't resist the striking midsummer spikes of magenta flowers rising above bright green, trouble-free foliage. 'Hummelo' was the highest rated *Stachys* in the Chicago Botanic Garden Evaluation Trials for its strong flower production, vigor, habit, quality and winter hardiness.

**Maintenance:** Spreads slowly by creeping rhizomes. May benefit from division every few years. Strong stems and seed heads add to winter interest.” - Perennial Plant Association 🍂



<https://perennialplant.org/page/PPOY>

### ***Garden Thyme***

is a publication of the Indiana  
Porter County Master Gardeners Association  
[www.pcgarden.info](http://www.pcgarden.info)

#### **Newsletter Team**

Marcia Carson, Coordinator  
Suzanna Tudor, Editor  
Wilma Willard, Designer

Earn volunteer credit for contributing to the newsletter;  
contact the Extension Office for more information.  
219-465-3555

### **EARN EDUCATION CREDIT!**

#### **Education Opportunities around Indiana**

<https://www.purdue.edu/hla/sites/master-gardener/events/categories/advanced-mg-training-opportunities/>

**Monthly PCMGA meetings** typically held on the 2nd Wednesday of the month, often include an educational topic after the business meeting. These can be logged as educational hours, as well as, educational videos of former Garden Show seminars found at [pcgarden.info](http://pcgarden.info) on the Member Pages.

**Equal Opportunity Statement** It is the policy of the Purdue University Cooperative Extension Service that all persons have equal opportunity and access to its educational programs, services, activities, and facilities without regard to race, religion, color, sex, age, national origin or ancestry, marital status, parental status, sexual orientation, disability or status as a veteran. Purdue University is an Affirmative Action institution. This material may be available in alternative formats.