

# 2020

*Fast away the old year passes,  
Hail the new, ye lads and lasses,  
Sing we joyous, all together,  
Heedless of the wind and weather...*

# Garden Thyme

January 2020

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

Volume 6, Issue 1



## Reflect on the Old - Learn - Plan for the New

By Nicole "Nikky" Witkowski

Purdue Extension Educator - Agriculture & Natural Resources

The holidays are over, and it's a great time to reflect back, learn, and plan ahead for the new year of gardening with PCMGA! Take time to get to know our new PCMGA administrative team on page 2. It's wonderful to have the Garden Show back in 2020 to start off the new decade. See page 8 for details. Then, we look forward to the Garden Walk on June 27. Both these events offer

many opportunities to get involved earning education and volunteer hours early in the year. Please contact me if you ever have problems earning hours and I will help you find even more opportunities to learn and share!

During winter months, it's a great time to reflect on your outdoor gardens and take care of your indoor plants.

Reflect on what went well in your landscape and vegetable gardens and what didn't. This allows for learning experiences or maybe things to change (even though the weather didn't help much this growing season.) If you did have insect or disease issues, research and learn to see what can be avoided or done to more gently take care of it. One great example is the issue of scale insects on magnolias. There is dormant oil that can be applied during the winter to the magnolias to help prevent so many scale insects this coming year. On another note, if there is not a lot of snow, make sure you are watering evergreens when it warms up. Lastly, plan your landscape for the new decade with help from pages 3, 4 and 7.

For your indoor plants, one of the most important things during dry winter months is to keep the humidity up. Group the plants together so they can transpire on each other increasing the humidity around them. Under the plants, place pebble trays with water that can evaporate to add humidity, as well. Remember you may need to water more if the air is dry. But if you have city water, its chemicals can accumulate and cause problems. Leaving the water out for even 24 hours before watering your indoor plants can help to prevent problems. See pages 5 and 6 for more learning about indoor gardens this winter.

Reflect, learn, plan—then share your gardening experience and enjoyment in the new decade through PCMGA!

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## Introducing the PCMGA Administrative Team

By Jim Albers, President, PCMG Class of 2016



*The executive board of the PCMGA is comprised of four officers and three members at large, all of whom are elected. The executive board also includes the various committee chairs who are responsible for the major programs and activities of the association. They and all who help them are at the heart of all the amazing things we do as an association. We are grateful for their continuing excellent leadership and service. Their names appear on the monthly agenda. Thank you!*

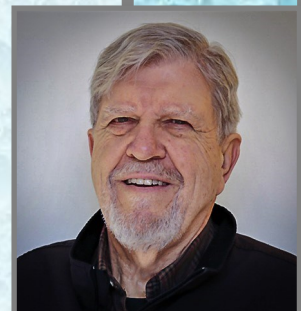
### Officers for 2020

**Ellen Standafer, Recording Secretary**, moved to Indiana and soon completed the MG Class in 2017 and quickly co-chaired the 2019 Garden Walk with Kaye Lynn Beeler, all the time serving in 2019 as recording secretary. In 2020 she will again co-chair the Garden Walk and serve her second year as recording secretary. Involvement in PCMGA fuels passion for gardening and nourishes new friendships.

**Debbie McCormick, Treasurer**, has been a master gardener since she completed the course in 2013. She has served PCMGA as its treasurer since 2014. Her garden is her hobby, and she notes that her 40 tomato plants provided produce for many family and friends. Her grandchildren enjoy helping her.

**Timburley Ecklund, Vice President**, class of 2015, has been a garden walk docent, helped with the photo contest, booth locations and seed tables at the gardening show. Having eliminated pesticides in her garden and yard, she now treasures increased wildlife, creatures great and small.

**Jim Albers, President**, began gardening by knocking potato bugs into a pail in a World War II victory garden. Since then he has wandered and/or worked in gardens of some form. Completing the MG class in 2016, he has coordinated the Ask A Master Gardener Booth in 2018.



EXTENSION CONNECTION

Extension Connection continued on Page 3.

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Extension Connection continued from page 2.

## Members at Large for 2020

**Ann Gwin**, Member at Large. Within weeks of moving to Valparaiso in 2019, Ann enrolled in the Master Gardener class and then joined our association. Master gardening was not, however, new, since she had completed classes in southern Indiana and in North Carolina. We welcome her to Zone 5. She has been active in butterfly life cycle/pollinator garden education in the public schools and 4H summer camps. In her "previous" life she was a Registered Nurse, Genetic Counselor and Legal Nurse Consultant. Oh, yes, last year she completed the Indiana Master Naturalist program.

**Sue Arnold**, a PCMGA member since 2000, continues as a member at large on the Executive Committee. Obviously her knowledge of the association is highly valued.

**Dana Dodson**, a new at-large member of the board, completed the class in 2017 and served as a master gardener assistant for the class of 2019. Her father was a master gardener in Texas and a son is enrolled in a MG class in Hawaii. Dana has helped with the Gardening Show and the Garden Walk. Her major gardening challenge: keeping deer from her hostas and daylilies.

## A Final Comment

The PCMGA is extremely fortunate to have numerous talented and dedicated members who have broad knowledge and deep reservoirs of energy and goodwill. We could not accomplish everything we do for the community without the goodwill and enthusiasm of our entire membership. Let's help each other grow in 2020!



## Perennial Plant of the Year

'Sun King' has a tropical look, but it's a fast-growing perennial that's hardy to USDA Zone 3 and grows to about three feet high and wide or larger. The large compound leaves measure up to three feet long. 'Sun King' emerges in mid-spring with bright gold leaves held on contrasting reddish-brown stems. If given at least a few hours of sun a day, the foliage will remain yellow all summer. In heavier shade, the foliage ranges from chartreuse to lime green. It forms a large clump of foliage and produces small



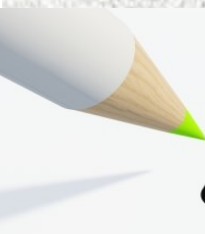
white flowers in mid to late summer followed by deep purple berries. It's a pollinator plant and is reportedly deer resistant.

'Sun King' is not patented and was brought to market by Barry Yinger.

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In this three-part series I'll share some trends, tips, and tasks for your new decade's landscape.

*Featured Series*



## Landscape Design: TRENDS FOR

By Wilma Willard, PCMG Class of 2011

# 2020

Thinking of an upgrade for your yard and gardens this coming year? Now is the time to download that landscape design program or simply grab your graph paper and pencil. But before you start, ask what is trending for 2020. You'll find trends which include some great carry-overs from "The Teens," as well as, fresh ideas for "The Twenties."

I'll get us started with three trends below, but know that simplicity and sustainability are the overarching trends for the new decade. Reflect on what is important to you, then select the trends you'll incorporate into your upgraded landscape design, garden, balcony or houseplant collection. Will they be a fit for YOUR style and YOUR landscape?

**Low-Maintenance Landscaping** Who wouldn't want to enjoy the garden more than work in it? Choose shrubs that fit the space so that pruning is rarely required. Select perennials that look good even after their blooming season, so there is no need to use annuals to hide them post-prime. Pick plants with colorful foliage that substitute for blooms that need deadheading. To minimize weeding, opt for plants that don't reseed where you don't want them. Consider rock, mulch or groundcovers which crowd out weeds. If an existing plant is maintenance-heavy, love yourself enough to say goodbye to it—maybe Marie Kondo style!

**Xeriscaping (zeh-ri-skeip-ing):** This trend's purpose is to create landscapes that use less water. You can devote your entire yard to xeriscaping, or choose a smaller section that is naturally dry or far from water availability. Choose plants that require little water and amend the soil to match those plants. Compost helps the soil retain water while gravel soil provides good drainage. Water infrequently, but deeply to develop deep roots. To reduce water lost in evaporation, never water during the day. Although many, two big benefits of xeriscaping are reduced work and reduced cost over time. Remember, turf grass is not a necessity for a beautiful landscape.

**Indoor Gardens and Garden Rooms:** Plants aren't just for their visual beauty. It's proven that indoor plants improve concentration and productivity (by up to 15 percent), reduce stress levels and boost your mood. No wonder devoting more space—even rooms, for plants in homes is on an upswing. Continuing to trend are miniature gardens, as well as, growing vegetables and aromatics like chives, basil and mint during the winter for culinary delight.

Sources used for this series: pennville.com, metro.com, gardendesign.com, gilmour.com, greenhousegrower.com, timberlinelandscaping.com and more.



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## Welcome to My Indoor, Winter Garden

By Suzanna Tudor, PCMG Class of 2002



Who says you can't continue gardening in the winter? A visit to Julie Ahearn's home proved differently.

With a large bay window in a southern exposure and grow lights, Ahearn winter gardens tomatoes, peppers, mint and three, robust pots of parsley. Blooming mandevilla, impatiens and a Christmas cactus provide color, among numerous houseplants grouped together for transpiration. Even a weed, Lamb's Quarters, *Chenopodium album*, is granted winter respite because of its nutritional value.

Filling a whole corner of the room with green splendor, her orphaned Norfolk Island Pine, *Araucaria heterophylla*, doubles as a Christmas tree. Rescued from an alley where it was thrown several years ago, Ahearn says it stood about five feet. Now it towers over her at six feet.

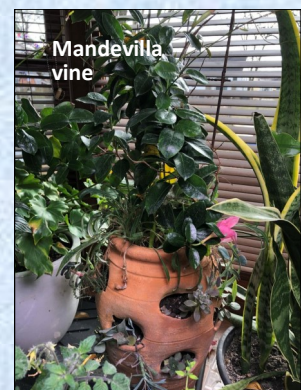
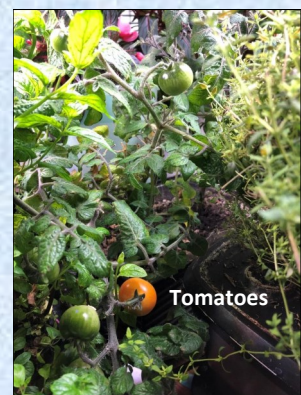
"I made the mistake of putting lights on it one year and burned it in places," Ahearn shared sadly. "I learned my lesson, and it recovered, thank goodness."

A cactus of unknown variety was given to her by her grandmother--origin Texas 60 or 70 years ago! Several divisions and repottings later have not deterred its growth and vigor, rewarding with blooms.

Ahearn also uses an Aero Garden, a home-gardening system for growing herbs and vegetables that utilizes a water medium and LED light, plus informs users when to add food and water.

"I usually have lettuce growing in my Aero Garden, but it is now has mint," Ahearn explained. "I can have fresh lettuce in two weeks after I plant."

Anyone enticed to try winter gardening?



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## Dracaena Rehab

By Wilma Willard, PCMG Class of 2011

Two big floor plants—dracaenas—bring height to our sunroom and make me *feel like* an accomplished horticulturist. It hasn't always been like that. In my interview to teach horticulture and landscape design to offenders at Westville Correctional Facility a few years back, I failed to mention that I had a black thumb with houseplants. So, upon hire, I

had to get learning since my students and our 30'x60' greenhouse's plants were in great need of rehab.

My corn plant (*Dracaena fragrans*) came from Lowe's clearance area about five years ago in very rough shape at a height of two-foot tall. My dragon tree (*Dracaena marginata*) was inherited about six years ago from my daughter when she moved to California. It was in good shape at a height of three-foot tall. But now as they've grown wobbly from their height, my grandchildren are not safe playing with my miniature gardens' enticing figurines like angels, fairies, gnomes, and



Big project = big mess.

dinosaurs located near my unstable, misshaped floor plants. Something had to be done soon.

My father was a farmer and gardening was my mother's hobby. Her specialty was propagating rubber plants. FEAR of cutting my dracaenas should not have been an issue, but it was. Without mom to "hold my hand," I hit the internet to research propagation, finding a variety of methods. So, I got started, analyzed roots, checked drainage, refurbished soil, pruned and propagated.

Will my propagated "babies" thrive? I'll nurture them, and then gift the corn plant to my local daughter's music classroom and the dragon tree back to my CA daughter's home.

Just do it; grow in 2020!



Just do it! CHOP!



Hmm, how to use them?



Two more ways to propagate. Cover with 1/4" soil.

BEFORE: Healthy and dramatic, but leaning and unsafe. Too tall for space.



AFTER: Straight, safe, clean, shiny, healthier and still dramatic with the bonus of two new plants (hopefully!)



Branches propagated here\* and here\*. Supports of bamboo and pencils here\*.

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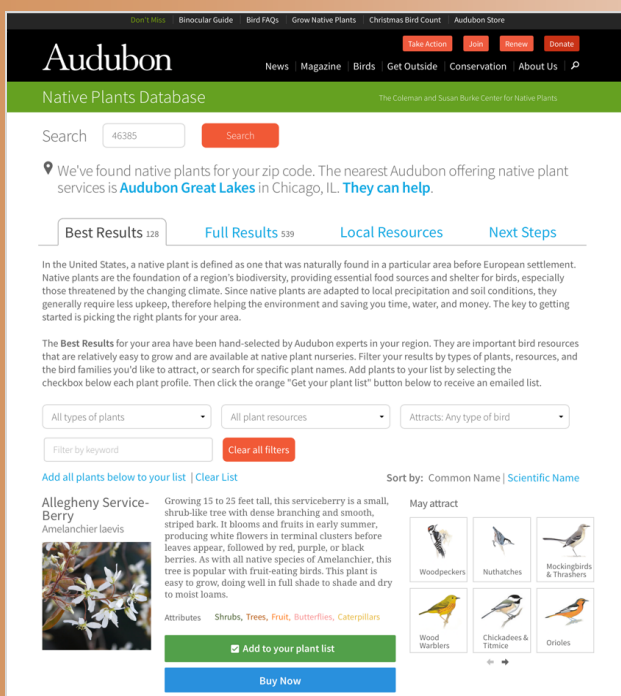
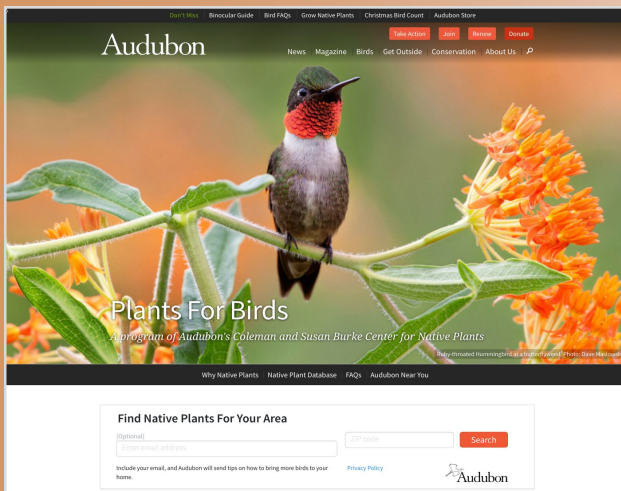
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## Plants for Birds

A Program of Audubon's Coleman and Susan Burke Center for Native Plants  
by Nancy Rosene, PCMG Class of 2012

As Master Gardeners, we learn that native plants in our gardens are beneficial for lots of reasons:

- They make wonderful rain garden subjects for water improvement and retention.
- In our home landscape, they require less maintenance in the way of human labor and chemicals.
- A diverse landscape with a variety of native plants is an excellent wildlife habitat for insects, birds and mammals.



If you are a bird lover, like me, there is no better way to attract birds to your yard than to include native plants in your landscape.

Now there is a wonderful [Plants for Birds](#) program with resources sponsored by one of the country's oldest and most respected conservancies, The National Audubon Society. The National Audubon Society has established [The Coleman and Susan Burke Center for Native Plants](#), "to promote the use of native plants that benefit birds in human communities." Among other wonderful and detailed information about the program on their website is the online [Audubon Native Plants Database](#). Entering your zip code will result in a "Best Results" list of native plants for your area (also a full list), a description for each, and examples of birds the plant may attract. You can even add plants on the list to a personal plant list. By selecting "Buy Now," you are referred to "Local Resources" for your area.

Please explore [The Coleman and Susan Burke Center for Native Plants](#) website to learn more on how to implement the program to develop a native-plant-that-benefit-birds project in your own backyard or community garden!



PLEASE COME!  
8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.  
CST (Chicago time)  
Admission only \$10

2020 Vision for Your Garden



# 16th ANNUAL GARDENING SHOW

JANUARY 25, 2020

MORE INFO AT [www.pcgarden.info/gardening-show](http://www.pcgarden.info/gardening-show)

It's one of the largest volunteer-organized gardening shows in the country, and we are really getting excited about it and having it in the newly updated Expo Center!

Ushering in the year 2020 sure made us think of 20/20 vision, so we've included some great ways to find 2020 vision for your garden. In addition, we are working with the International Lions Club to gather as many pairs of eye glasses as possible to help others achieve 20/20 vision too. Please bring those no-longer-used eye glasses you may have and donate them. (no cases, no sun glasses, but over-the-counter readers are fine!)

The show will have something for every gardener, even someone who likes the idea of gardening but hasn't quite put it into practice, or isn't doing it anymore. Highlights include:

- Eleven Seminar and Demonstration opportunities. Check our website for speaker bios and all the show information: [www.pcgarden.info/gardening-show](http://www.pcgarden.info/gardening-show)
- 100 plus vendors, 10,000 seed packets and hundreds of bulbs to choose, and free children's activities
- Gently used magazine/book area, mostly for a quarter
- Photography contest, deadline is Tues. Jan. 20. Details at [www.pcgarden.info/photo-contest](http://www.pcgarden.info/photo-contest).

With 200 volunteer slots to fill, there are ample opportunities to get volunteer hours. If you haven't already signed up and you are available to help, contact volunteer coordinator, LuAnn Troxel, at [luann@pcgarden.info](mailto:luann@pcgarden.info).

By LuAnn Troxel, PCMG Class of 2003

## ***Garden Thyme***

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[www.pcgarden.info](http://www.pcgarden.info)

### **Newsletter Team**

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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.

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