



Garden Thyme

March 2020

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

Volume 6, Issue 2



Warm Spring Thoughts

By Nicole "Nikky" Witkowski

Purdue Extension Educator - Agriculture & Natural Resources

This has been such a mild winter so far, but did it really ever come? It is getting close to gardening season. However, never get ahead of Mother Nature! This winter has proven it can warm up and then get bitterly cold again. The average last frost date is near Mother's Day in May and that is when you need to remember to wait to put out sensitive plants unless you plan to protect them.

This goes for flowers and vegetables. If a plant is bare-root, then get it out and planted as soon as you get it to help it establish faster and stay healthy.

Congratulations on an impressive Garden Show event! This was the first one I have experienced with the Porter County Master Gardeners Association. All the background work that is done amazes me and as for the day of the show— I had a great time. Since I started as your Porter County Purdue Extension Educator I have witnessed that the PCMGA does outstanding work. It's hard for me to believe it's only been a year and a half, but yet I've experienced so much with you. I know there have been changes, but I hope most of them, if not all, have benefitted both of us. Time has gone quickly. In fact, we are already in the middle of our second Master Gardener Training. New faces continue to increase and we all grow and benefit from our connection.

I am looking forward to warmer temperatures in spring, our PCMGA Conference (see page 7), then to our big summer events including the Garden Walk and Porter County Fair.

Garden Walk 2020 GARDENS NEEDED

We need more gardens for Garden Walk 2020, Saturday, June 27. Through a series of unfortunate events the number of confirmed gardens for this year's walk is down to three. There are no PCMGA member gardens on our list, so we need YOU! If you've been thinking of participating, this is the year to act. Please contact one of our Garden Walk leaders:

*Ellen Standafer estandafer@comcast.net
Kaye Lynn Beeler klbeeler@msn.com*

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By Ann Cierniak, Chair, PCMG Class of 2003

Wow, what a great 16th annual Gardening Show! It was a snowy day, but at last count we had 1,797 paid admissions. Speakers, vendors, 200 volunteers and children, brought the number to about 2,300. Attendees came from Illinois, Michigan, and cities in Indiana of Elkhart, South Bend, Columbia City, and Kokomo; some drove 3 hours to attend! With recent improvements to the Expo and changes we made to enlarge the entry area, a lovely sight of lush green plants and flowers around the gift fountain welcomed guests.

Attendees commented on the variety of great speakers. Kathy Ruble, Education Chair, stated we provided 1,815 hours of education to the public. Few places can offer a full day of seminars for \$10.00 and free parking. We also received compliments on the mixture of quality vendors. I am glad we can accommodate our guests with offering topnotch speakers and vendors--though there were also comments that the attendees need more time or a break in the seminars, so they can shop too!

The seed and bulb area was enlarged and well received as were our food vendors, Suzie's and Tate's. The Kids's Corner was well decorated and welcoming with an assortment of children's crafts. A big thank you goes to the Art Barn for donating supplies and to Sandy Appleby for

One attendee commented that we are a well-oiled machine.

I have to agree. We have a lot of talented people working on the show."

~Ann Cierniak



coordinating the activities.

Since our theme for this show was 2020 Vision for your Garden, we invited the Lions Club to collect glasses at the show and 663 glasses were collected for those in need.

Friends I asked about the show said they are always excited to come, see it as a

welcome break from the winter weather, and feel the excitement generated throughout the building(s). That was good to hear.

My role as Chair was a very small part of making a successful show. Many lovely comments were received about our volunteers, how helpful, wonderful and kind they were. One attendee commented that we are a well-oiled machine. I have to agree--we have a lot of talented people working on the show.

Our volunteers and Show Committee members do a wonderful job prior to the show, locating speakers, vendors, supplies, putting the program together, managing volunteers, managing the photo contest, collecting seeds and bulbs, advertising, making sure we have the right amount of tables and skirts, organizing placement of booths,

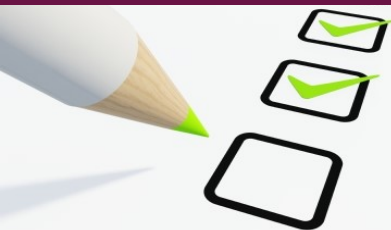
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In this three-part series I'll share some trends, tips, and tasks for our new decade's landscape.

Featured Series

Landscape Design: TRENDS FOR

By Wilma Willard, PCMG Class of 2011

2020

Still thinking about an upgrade for your yard and gardens this year? In the January issue of *Garden Thyme*, we asked, "What is trending for 2020?" We discussed three trends so far. We will discuss three in this issue, then finish the series in May with more fresh trends for the 20s, and some great carry-overs from the past decade. Know that simplicity and sustainability are the overarching trends for the new decade.

Companion Planting is an ongoing trend that has been recharged for 2020. What plants go together? Pairing plants by color, season of bloom, texture and shape can sometimes be confusing. So, here are a few beautiful combinations:

In spring, plant cheerful yellow narcissus with blue *Chionodoxa* (glory-in-the-snow). Try Persian lily with a bed of red tulips. For late spring blooms, join herbs and blooms such as chives and lavender in front of *Amsonia* (bluestars), bearded iris, and peony. Roses, particularly shrub and landscape varieties, blend well with annuals or perennials from spring to fall. Choose plants with a different shape and color foliage. For hot summer, annuals such as petunias and pentas bloom non-stop and look great together. Plants that add spark to a shady area are bright green sweet woodruff fronting a bed of Japanese forest grass and a cluster of blue- and chartreuse-leaf hosta varieties. Try planting (photo 1) astible with varied colors of flowers beside variegated foliage plants. Mix flowers with different shapes together, like trumpet-shape blooms of day-lily with dainty white flower stalks of penstemon. Make a big impression with different versions of the same color. For example, the lovely blue/purple hues of (2) delphinium, foxglove, allium, agapanthus, and sea lavender make stunning companions. **Indigo is 2020's trend color** of choice, so consider adding (3) chives, which also double as edibles. **Plants doing double duty is another trend for 2020.** Want a garden that's both colorful and delicious? Then tuck brightly colored vegetables alongside your annual and perennial flowers. For example, plant wide swaths of (4) chartreuse black-seeded Simpson lettuce weaving in

and out of patches of blue viola that are also edible. Other great plants for doing double duty include tall hydrangeas which provide privacy and can give structure to an open garden, ground a building or edge the property. Pack the forefront with perennials and annuals like (5) begonia, sweet alyssum, *Oxalis*, *phlox*, *sedum*, *Lythrum*, *Torenia*, and marigold.

Sources used for this series include: Timberlinelandscaping.com, bhg.com, and kdlandscapeinc.com



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Frederik Meijer Gardens & Sculpture Park

By Nancy Rosene, PCMG Class of 2012

A 2.5-hour drive from Valparaiso will take you to a one-of-a-kind garden in Grand Rapids, Michigan, the [Frederik Meijer Gardens & Sculpture Park](#). This garden, consisting of a miraculous blending of amazing sculptures and diverse plantings on a 158-acre campus, is a must-see location for anyone who loves art and the use of art in the landscape.

Despite the rainy August day of my visit, the scenery was breathtaking. I can see why their website encourages visitors all year round. Not only are things continually coming into bloom, the colors and textures of each garden neighborhood will be spectacular over the course of the year.

There literally is something for everyone—art lover, plant enthusiast and family fun seekers alike. Highlights include a tropical conservatory, woodland shade garden, carnivorous plant house, arid garden, Japanese garden, children’s garden, farm garden and other exhibits depending on the season. There is a tram tour I can highly recommend. In June through September, there is a concert series in a lovely garden-terraced amphitheater with a mixed genre of music for all ages.

Finally, I must admit there is some construction underway at the Garden. As their reputation grew (the Garden has become one of the top 100 cultural destinations in the United States) so did their attendance grow. They have created new garden spaces, more parking and will open a new Visitors Center in 2021. I did not find any of this construction to disturb the tranquil beauty of the gardens at Frederick Meijer Gardens & Sculpture Park.



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Recap continued from page 2

managing volunteers, managing the photo contest, collecting seeds and bulbs, advertising, making sure we have the right amount of tables and skirts, organizing placement of booths, managing ticket sales, volunteering the day of the show ... as you can see, the list goes on. We are lucky to have such a talented and gifted group donating their time so that we continue to have a successful show that provides grants and scholarships. I am lucky to have worked with these awesome gardeners in making the 2020 Gardening Show a successful one and thanks to each and every one of you!

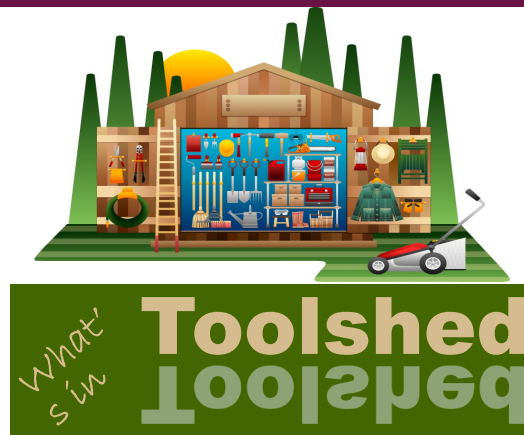
Please save the date of our next show Saturday, January 23, 2021; we hope to have another successful event!



Amy Carter preps centerpiece with the "2020 Vision" theme.



Newly enlarged entryway



A Place for Every Garden Tool, and Every Garden Tool in It's Place

By Margaret Mudd, PCMG Class of 2019

"A place for everything, and everything in its place." That sounds easy enough to accomplish, but not when it comes to managing your garden tools.

We can all relate to a weary search for one we used just moments ago. We may daydream of buying duplicates, but we know from experience that it is never a guarantee we will always have one on hand. Need a solution? Here's a plan to help.

Start carving out a garden work area to call your own that is hands off for everyone else. It should be large enough area to accommodate all your tools without cramming them into tight spaces. You will want them to be clearly visible and placed in an order that makes the most sense to you.

Take your tools out to the garden in a favorite receptacle that you will keep near you as you work.

Bring the larger tools out together and routinely place them in the same area of the garden. When you switch tools, always make it a one-for-one swap. Tools should then remain together with the last one added when it's time to leave.

Finally, we do so much of our gardening instinctively, so it is worth thinking about doing our gardening mindfully. When we are fully present in each moment, it will help us keep our tools organized and connect us more deeply to our practice of gardening.

Springtime, we're ready for you!



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Plant Hardiness Zones

By John Nash, PCMG Class of 2010

Knowing the Plant Hardiness Zone for their area is a useful tool for the successful gardener. Why? So the right plant is grown in the correct climatic zone.

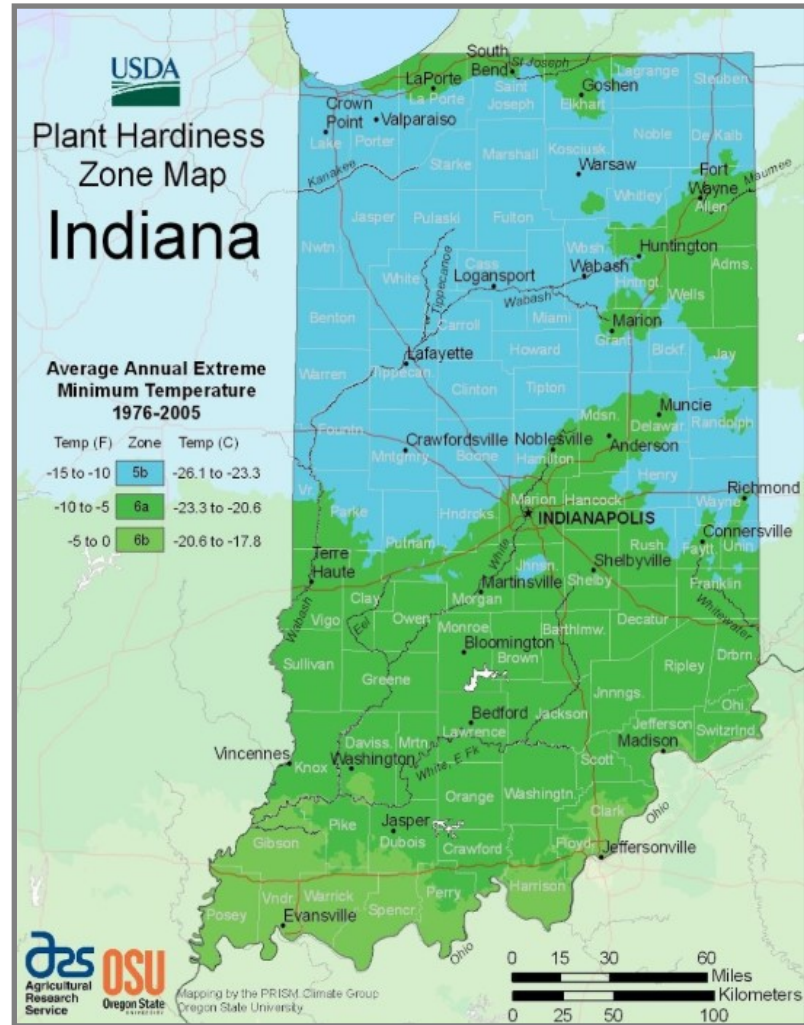
The United States Department of Agriculture has divided North America into eleven separate climatic planting zones (planthardiness.ars.usda.gov). The zones were determined by using the average winter temperatures within the United States.

Indiana has two Plant Hardiness Zones, 5b (-15° to -10°) and 6a (-10° to -5°). Most of Porter County is in the 5b zone except the top of the county nearest Lake Michigan. This area is in zone 6a. The reason for the difference is the moderating effect of the warmer waters along Lake Michigan's coastline.

Avoid unnecessary frustration and disappointment. Before planting check USDA Plant Hardiness Zone map for your area, and plant only those plants rated for the area. This information is also readily available on plant cultivar on-line descriptions, plant catalogues or plant tags.

One last word of warning, the Plant Hardiness Zones were developed using average winter temperatures. As you can recall from the "polar vortex" last winter, our area can and does have some very frigid temperatures.

If you are planning to grow a plant which you suspect maybe marginal in your zone, reconsider your choice.



Editor's Note: USDA Hardiness Zones: <https://planthardiness.ars.usda.gov/PHZMWeb/>

As a perennial, which of these plants would you choose for YOUR landscape?

Spurflower, zone 10

Forest Grass, zones 4-8

Hyssop, zones 6-10

Wind flower, zones 5-9

Salvia, zones 3-8

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EXTENSION CONNECTION

Porter County Master Gardener Conference

Saturday, April 4, 2020 8:30a.m. – 1:00p.m.

Duneland Falls Banquet and Meeting Center
1100 Max Mochal Highway 149
Chesterton, IN 46304

Speaker: Kim Shearer

Manager, New Plant Development Program
Morton Arboretum

Topic: Developed Landscapes, Developed Plants

The urban forest and the trees that comprise it play a crucial role in our developed landscapes. However, the growing conditions these trees face are often harsh, and few tree species are suited to withstand them. How can we support a greener landscape in the face of these challenges? Kim will discuss the growing conditions in urban and suburban landscapes, share how Morton Arboretum selects and improves the best performing tree species for these areas and how new plant development has helped change the urban landscape.

Speaker: Mark Dwyer

Landscape Architect and former Director of Horticulture at the Rotary Botanical Garden in Janesville, WI.

Topic: Cool Conifers for Form, Function & Beauty

Conifers are aptly described as the bones of the four season garden. With such a wide array of colors, forms and uses, we'll explore some exciting opportunities to include conifers successfully throughout the landscape. The use of beautiful conifers as role players and focal points will be encouraged and highlighted.

Attendance earns 3 education hours. Snack and Lunch included.
Member registration fee: \$20.00 (refunded upon arrival to the conference)
Guest fee: \$30.00 (non-refundable)

Questions: Contact Kathy Ruble 464-0990



Registration Form—PCMG Conference 4.4.2020

Please complete; detach and mail to: Jill Kilhefner, 563 Kensington Court, Valparaiso, IN 46385

Include check payable to PCMGGA

Name: _____

Phone no: _____

Check enclosed (no cash): _____ PCMGGA Member (\$20)

_____ Guest (\$30)

Registration due Friday, March 27th

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Education and Volunteer Opportunities

Gabis Arboretum and Gardens at Purdue Northwest
450 W 100 N, Valparaiso, IN 46385 Interested in learning more about our programs? Follow calendar listings on our website: <https://www.pnw.edu/gabis-arboretum/> Contact Deb Way at wayd@pnw.edu or call (219)989-8492.

2020 Spring Garden Show presented by the La Porte County Master Gardeners, Saturday, March 21, 2020, 8:00 AM – 4:00 PM (Central Time) Michigan City High School, Michigan City, IN Admission: \$10 at the door or through the [website](#). Kids under 12 are free. Gardening sessions, kid's workshops, vendors & food.

Valpo Parks Seedlings Transplant Volunteers Monday, April 6, 2020, 8:00 a.m.- 3:00 p.m. We will be transplanting seedlings in our greenhouses to finished flats on Monday, April 6, 2020. This is an invite to any volunteers who wish to help. Transplanting will be from 8:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. Any amount of volunteer time that day is helpful. This is an indoor task. Rain or shine. The Horticulture Center is located at 2902 Campbell St., next door to the dog park www.valpoparks.org

Hellebores bring beauty in early spring

Hybrid hellebores get their common name, **Lenten rose**, from the rose-like flowers that appear in early spring around the Christian observance of Lent. The "blooms" (which are actually sepals that protect the true flowers) last for several months, from February until May, and the foliage is evergreen in most zones.

- **Common name:** Hybrid Lenten rose
- **Zones:** 4 to 9; evergreen in 6 to 9
- **Bloom time:** February-May
- **Bloom size:** 2 to 3 1/2"
- **Height/Spread:** 18 to 24" tall and 24" wide
- **Site:** Partial shade, well-draining soil
- **Characteristics:** Low-maintenance, deer-resistant



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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/mg-continuing-education-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 on the Member Pages.

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