

# The Latest Dirt

La Porte County Master Gardener Newsletter



OCTOBER 2021

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## 2021 MEETING SCHEDULE

Meetings will be held at 6:00 p.m. on Thursdays at the Purdue Extension Office unless otherwise noted

October 7	Workshop New Website Presentation Nancy Rosene
November 4	Election of Officers
December 2	Holiday Dinner

"THE LATEST DIRT" is published monthly.  
The next deadline is:  
October 20, 2021

NEXT BOARD MEETING  
October 13<sup>th</sup>, 6:00 p.m.  
La Porte Library



[www.facebook.com/MasterGardenersOfLaPorteCountyIndiana](https://www.facebook.com/MasterGardenersOfLaPorteCountyIndiana)  
[www.lpmastergardener.com](https://www.lpmastergardener.com)



PURDUE EXTENSION  
MASTER GARDENER PROGRAM

## New Website for LPCMGA

By: Geri Lamb, Webmaster

We are happy to announce the La Porte County Extension Master Gardeners Association will be launching a new website at a **NEW** website address <https://lpmastergardener.org> on October 8, 2021. You won't want to miss the demonstration of the new site that is scheduled for the Association Membership meeting on October 7, 2021, 6 p.m. CDT.



Some of the great new features of this site include:

- Contemporary botanical graphic design refreshed with an environmental, earthy color palette.
- Updated software platform that is responsive to all your devices - desktop, tablet and mobile phone.
- Streamlined menu layout—familiar enough, but with cleaner styling and organization.
- Conforms to Purdue University Extension Master Gardener Program graphic guidelines including use of new logos, nomenclature and EEO statements, and more!

After the official launch of the new site on October 8, our existing website, <https://lpmastergardener.com> will run in parallel with <https://lpmastergardener.org> until November 1, when our contract with the current hosting company ends. You are free to explore the new site in the meantime. Be sure to bookmark the new link: <https://lpmastergardener.org>.

The new site includes a feedback form. If you get a chance to browse the new site, please share your feedback or concerns to ensure the Association Website Committee can serve you well.

# ASSOCIATION NEWS

## Looking Forward—Looking Back

By: Randa Magill

The October Master Gardener Workshop on October 7<sup>th</sup> will be held at the Extension Office in person and on Zoom. Social time and refreshments will be from 6:00-6:30 p.m.

As you read on Page 1, the website committee has worked hard to bring a new and improved website to help represent our association with style!

Nancy Rosene of Porter County Master Gardener Association has designed the site and will present the details and use of it. You won't want to miss this!



### REMINDERS

Project Coordinators need to submit a report of current year's activities and proposed budget for next year to Debbie Moore.

### ELECTIONS

Thursday, November 4<sup>th</sup> will be our annual meeting. Please join us to submit your vote for our new board members for 2022.



## Project Updates

### Rima Binder: Friendship Botanic Gardens

Volunteers are always needed to help maintain the beauty of the gardens as well as for events. Many thanks to the following Master Gardener Interns who have been consistent in sharing ideas, plants and working in various areas in the Gardens: Janice Cowell, Jackie Carroll, Bob Kozelka, and Marcia Kozelka. And Donna Pouzar, who for years has contributed with ideas, donated plants, and helps in so many ways! These volunteers are very special to the Gardens. All are welcome to come on out and earn hours by helping the Gardens Grow!!

### Chris Svoboda: La Porte Farmers' Market Update

There is only one more Saturday this year for the Master Gardener Q&A booth at the Farmers' Market! If you would like to help on October 9, 2021, please sign-up online!

### Maureen Sherrick: Garden Walk Update

It looks like it is still a challenging time for group activities and planning. I would like to propose to make next year's Garden Walk an inside job! Please share your opinion with me on the following idea.

What if the first Garden Walk was for Master Gardeners by Master Gardeners? We could ask for a few volunteers to share their own garden/yard from our own group. Then all LPCMGA members would be welcome to do the walk. There would be no fliers, no advertising, no admission. We could use it as a precursor to a public event. What do you think? Message me at [shezamurphy@yahoo.com](mailto:shezamurphy@yahoo.com)

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## Garden Show 2022

By: Maureen Sherrick

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The majority at the last association meeting gave a positive vote to go forward with plans for a 2022 Garden Show! Wendy Shafer and I will co-chair the event this year.

The show will be held on March 19, 2022, at the Michigan City High School once again. We have decided to center on the theme: *Gardening in a Changing World*. We hope to tie the speakers and activities together to match the theme.

There are already many volunteers who have committed to helping with various tasks. There are still a few positions that need leaders. We will be reaching out to you for help!

**T**ogether **E**veryone **A**chieves **M**ore!

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## Seed Savings and Pioneer Garden Update

By: Mary Davis and Connie Shei

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We are winding things down at the pioneer garden. The fall school tours are on schedule for the end of September, and we have harvested over one hundred pounds of produce that was mostly given to

the Salvation Army food bank in La Porte. We are now collecting seeds that will be dried and cleaned and eventually bagged up to be sold at the La Porte County Fair next summer. Many people that visit the gardens are happy to find that they can get heirloom seeds and grow their own plants that they see in the Pioneer Garden. We were happy to have many helping hands and new faces joining us in the garden this year. There were a few challenges with critters that enjoyed helping themselves to our plants that we needed to be ready for the fair, but somehow it always seems to work out ok. When the weather cools, we will do fall cleanup, but we do leave seeds on some plants for wildlife and to reseed themselves for next year.

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## La Porte County Master Gardener Association Meeting Minutes

September 2, 2021

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In Person Meeting at office with 18 present and 10 more people attending by Zoom

**Call to order:** 6:30 p.m. Chaired by Randa Magill

**Treasurer's Report:** Questions asked about grants. Awarded grants went to Keys To Hope for a community garden and to Little Learners Preschool in LaPorte. The third grant was unused, and will be awarded next year.

**Secretary's Report:** No report, last meeting was picnic and auction

### Pending Business

**Sunflower Fair-** Megan Countryman -Master Gardeners are responsible this year for running and judging the sunflower contest. Some volunteers have signed up but need more. The booth for Master Gardeners and the judging booth are side by side so it should be easy to take in all of the contestants and judge.

**Garden Show 2022-Ann Klosinski-**one hour discussion covered: need for volunteers for each area of responsibility, especially chair; lots of money was lost last year when the event was cancelled because of Covid, mostly because of purchased ads and printed programs; vendors are asking about having booths at the show; Eunice reported that the main speaker has been chosen, but not reserved yet; we invested in materials, table cover and other things that will be used for the next show, yard signs; discussions about time needed to attend frequent meetings; committee positions needed- recording secretary, volunteer coordinator, donations, door awards. Motion made and seconded on whether or not to hold the Garden Show in 2022 and the majority voted yes, to hold the show. Wendy Shafer and Maureen Sherrick volunteered to co-chair the event for 2022.

**Mary Davis** asked Dennis Brittain for an estimate of how many seed packets he passed out at the last show in 2019. She has already solicited donated seeds for the next show. His estimate of 200 packages was well below the 500 she has already gotten promised.

**Pioneer Garden-Connie Shei**-Lots of volunteer help this year to maintain the garden. Nancy Jahnel's daughter has made some note cards and they are thinking of making them a fund raiser to sell.

**Garden Tours-Linda Hough**. People are signing up for school tours. Enough volunteers have signed up.

**Brown Bag Series-Karren Coplen**-No planning at present because of Covid.

**Wabash St. Gardens-Laura Henderson** is chair, no report

**Seed Savers-Mary Davis**-Lots of seed packets sold at fair. We need to gather and clean seeds. In the past, we have had a seed cleaning event indoors in January, but this year there are so many seeds to save, and they take up so much space, we need to hold an event in the fall to clean the seeds

**Habitat for Humanity-Randa Magill**-Still need a chair for this project. Tina reported that the growing bed in back of the office is used as a holding bed for Habitat houses and needs a good cleanup. The beds in front of the office are unfinished too.

**Farmer's Market**-no report

**Project Committee-Karen Sarver**-Planning to hold a meeting to help keep more projects going. Meeting should consist of coordinators for all projects.

**Nominating Committee-Randa Magill** will head the 3 member nominating committee to find candidates for the 3 board positions that will be vacant. Linda Hough, Ann Klosinski and Donna Pouzar volunteered to be on the committee. Election will be held at November meeting.

**Tina DeWitt**-no comments from Azad. Members are welcome to sit in on the sessions of the Master Gardener upcoming class. We have 14 students signed up to take the class.

**Motion to adjourn** made by Linda Hough and seconded by Donna Pouzar. Adjourn at 7:54 p.m.

**Next meeting** will be October 7 at the office. Karren Coplen will give a presentation about the history of Master Gardeners of La Porte County.

## VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

### What's that Brown Bag All About?

By: Karren Coplen



Some members haven't been around long enough to have joined us in a Brown Bag Session, so I thought I'd explain it a bit here. This is a series of classes that we held in the early months of the year, to share gardening information.

It was a great chance for Master Gardeners to share the gardening knowledge they were passionate about with members of the community.

We kept the time short, just one hour, held it at lunchtime and lots of people brought along their lunch and ate while they learned. We focused on one small topic, so it could be discussed thoroughly in that short time. We had sessions on: seed starting, planning your garden layout, pruning, sprouting, monarch butterfly raising, choosing the right tree for your space, gardening tools, saving seeds, and lots more great stuff-even one on choosing the right Christmas gift for your favorite gardener!

Of course, with the Covid restrictions this year, we couldn't hold them at all, but hopefully we can bring it back next year. In the meantime, please think about what you as a Master Gardener are passionate about and how you could share that valuable knowledge. It's a great way to earn more volunteer hours and we always learn more ourselves when we present our knowledge to others. If you'd like to make a presentation, let me know. I'll take care of finding you a space and an audience. It's fun.

# EDUCATION OPPORTUNITIES

## GOING NATIVE

### How to Plant and Maintain Native Wildflower Habitat

**OCTOBER 14TH**

**2:00-4:00 PM CST**

**5694 S 500 W, LA PORTE, IN 46350**

**FOR REGISTRATION AND DIRECTIONS VISIT  
LAPORTENATIVEFIELDDAY.EVENTBRITE.COM**

**REGISTRATION REQUIRED  
ATTENDANCE IS LIMITED**

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## FALL FORESTRY SERIES

October 7th, 14th, & 21st, 6pm – 7pm EST

**Register At:**

**<https://tinyurl.com/tak4vefm>**

Contact:

Bob Bruner, ANR Extension Educator

812-829-5020

[rfbruner@purdue.edu](mailto:rfbruner@purdue.edu)

**Botanical Gardens and Master Gardener Seminar Information**

<b>Fernwood Botanical Gardens</b>	<a href="http://www.fernwoodbotanical.org">www.fernwoodbotanical.org</a> LPCMGA is a member of Fernwood Botanical Gardens. Membership card can be signed out at the Extension Office.
<b>Gabis Arboretum at Purdue NW</b>	<a href="https://www.pnw.edu/gabis-arboretum">https://www.pnw.edu/gabis-arboretum</a>
<b>Friendship Botanic Gardens</b>	<a href="http://www.friendshipgardens.org">www.friendshipgardens.org</a>

**Advanced Master Gardener Training****Master Gardener Seminars**

Click on this link for more information on these events. <https://www.purdue.edu/hla/sites/master-gardener/events/>

<b>Date</b>	<b>Event/Time/Fee</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Location / Contact</b>

**Master Gardener Class 2021 Update**

By Tina DeWitt

Below is the 2021 Master Gardener Class schedule for the class that has started in La Porte County. We have 14 participants in the class. Classes are held at the Extension Office from 1:00 to 4:00 p.m. CDT. As a certified Master Gardener or an Intern, you are welcome to attend any of the classes for a refresher on the topic of choice. The speaker may be different, you may have missed a particular class or for some of you, there are now a couple classes that were not part of the curriculum when you took the class. If you plan to attend, please let me know ahead of time so I can have a spot ready and have enough handouts copied. If you have any questions let me know.

**2021 LaPorte County Master Gardener Class Schedule**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Subject</b>	<b>Instructor</b>
September 9	Orientation - Pre-Test PMG Manual Overview	Azad Chahal/Tina DeWitt
September 16	Soils & Plant Nutrition PMG Manual Ch. 2,6,7	Karen Mitchell
September 23	Plant Science PMG Manual Ch. 1,3,8	Nikky Witkowski
September 30	Woody Ornamentals PMG Manual Ch. 10,7	Phil Woolery
October 7 (1-4)	Plant Disease Diagnosis PMG Manual Ch.16,17,21,22,25	Nikky Witkowski
October 14	Herbaceous Ornamentals PMG Manual Ch. 9,7	Nikky Witkowski
October 21	Invasive Species PMG Manual Ch. 20,26	Phil Woolery
October 28	Pesticides and Plant Care PMG Manual Ch. 23,24	Fred Whitford
November 04	Lawn Care PMG Manual Ch. 11	Jeff Burbrink
November 11	Insects ID and Control PMG Manual Ch. 18,21,24,25	Rebecca Koetz
November 18	Vegetables PMG Manual Ch. 7,13	Rebecca Koetz
December 02	Fruits PMG Manual Ch. 14	Jeff Burbrink
December 9	Animal Damage & Weeds PMG Manual Ch. 19,20	Bob Yoder
December 16	Final Exam and Invitation to join LPCMGA	Azad Chahal/Tina DeWitt & Association Reps

No Class for week of Thanksgiving (Nov. 25); Classes are scheduled from 1-4 p.m. CDT/CST at the Purdue Extension-La Porte County office located at 2857 W. SR 2, La Porte, IN 46350 (219-324-9407); [www.extension.purdue.edu/laporte](http://www.extension.purdue.edu/laporte)

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### Two New Virtual Programs from Purdue!

By: Bob Bruner, Purdue Extension Educator  
ANR, Clay and Owen Counties

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Purdue has two new programs to bring you. Both are virtual, so you can learn in the safety and comfort of your own home. Following are the descriptions for each program.

‘Grass to Garden’, is meant to educate community organizations, local business, and gardeners on how to start and be successful at creating a community garden. This program will cost \$50 per person and take place on the nights of Oct. 27, Nov. 3, Nov. 10, and Nov. 17, from 6pm to 9pm EST. This program will be virtual, and you’ll be able to hear from a variety of experts and gardeners, including myself! If you or your organization is interested, please register by calling 765-653-8411.

Second, continuing with our Deep Dive series, we will be hosting a program on our favorite Halloween produce, the pumpkin! I’ve been really looking forward to doing a program on this plant for a while now, and I hope you will all join me! This program will take place Oct 28<sup>th</sup>, at our usual time of 6-7:00 p.m. EST. You can register for this program using this link:

<https://tinyurl.com/y98audzz>

I look forward to seeing you there!

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### Master Gardener Hotline

By: Tina DeWitt

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The Master Gardener Hotline has come to an end. Things were a little different again this year with several of you working the Hotline from home, which worked out just fine, but it was sure great to see those of you that came into the office to work the hotline. Thank you to everyone that helped answer all the questions that came in.

There were 10 Master Gardener volunteers, 68 calls/visits and a total of 198 hours volunteered during the hotline so far. A total of 43 days were manned with a volunteer and 27 days were left without a volunteer on hand.

The Garden Hotline is a valuable service that you, The La Porte County Master Gardeners, provide to our community. Giving research-based answers and information to consumer horticulture questions provides an important resource to the community.

### 2021 EXECUTIVE BOARD

PRESIDENT	RANDA MAGILL
VICE PRESIDENT	MAUREEN SHERRICK
CO-SECRETARIES	KARREN COPLEN
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TREASURER	DEBBIE MOORE
ED. COMMITTEE/	GEORGE SARVER
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	MARY DAVIS

PAST PRESIDENT WENDY SHAFER

**Purdue Extension Office** \_\_ 324-9407

Azad Chahal \_\_ [aschahal@purdue.edu](mailto:aschahal@purdue.edu)  
Tina DeWitt \_\_ [dewitt8@purdue.edu](mailto:dewitt8@purdue.edu)

*The Latest Dirt* is published monthly. The deadline for submission is the 20<sup>th</sup> of each month. Our mission is to publish articles and events of interest to other Master Gardeners and the community. Articles about personal experiences, suggestions on gardening books, catalogs, helpful websites, tips and tricks, book reviews, seminars you’ve attended are welcomed.

Submission requirements: Articles should be no longer than a page and can include photos. References must be included. Latin names of plants should be italicized. We do not accept articles pertaining to medicinal information. Master Gardeners will get volunteer hours for time spent working on an article.

Have a garden item for sale or trade?

Buy, Sell, Trade at the

*Trading Shed*

Place your free ad in *The Latest Dirt*.

Tools, tillers, mowers, plants, or anything garden related. Keep ads brief and provide your phone number and/or e-mail address. Ads will be limited to space available.

Send ads, photos, events or articles by the 20<sup>th</sup> of the month to either:

[DONNAPOUZAR@COMCAST.NET](mailto:DONNAPOUZAR@COMCAST.NET)

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## GARDENING ARTICLES

### A Flower for All Gardens

By: Sharon Cholewa



Few plants can compete with zinnias for size of bloom, bright colors and impressive appearance in the garden. They can grow just about anywhere in full sun and require so little care. The more you deadhead them, the more flowers they will produce. Today, we can buy zinnias plants ranging from 6 inches tall to almost 4 feet tall and in just about any color of the rainbow except blue. They attract hummingbirds, bees and butterflies – lots and lots of butterflies. The large-flowered varieties provide pollen and nectar in late summer when native sources are running low.

Zinnias are primarily native to Mexico, but wild zinnias have been found as far north as Colorado and as far south as Guatemala. Wild zinnias are no more than a straggly, ugly weed with sparse foliage and tiny, orange or yellow, daisy-like blossoms. The Aztec referred to zinnias as “eyesore” because their vibrant blooms were hard on the eyes. Discovered in Mexico by the Spanish in the 1500s, zinnias were called “mal de ojos” (which translates as sickness of the eyes), thinking it was a small and unattractive flower.

Because of the plant’s weedy appearance, it did not create any interest until several centuries later. The German ambassador to Mexico sent seeds in 1750 to his friend, Dr. Gottfried Zinn, who specialized in the anatomy of the eye. Zinn, dying at the age of 32, in addition to writing an important work on the anatomy of the eye, had also taken up the trendy hobby of botany as did many of the educated across Europe. He became the director of the botanic garden at the University of Gottingen, and the first to describe the plant botanically. The flowers became known throughout Europe, but were scarcely cultivated. Zinnias were named in Dr. Zinn's honor by Carl Linnaeus.

In 1798, Landreth seed house offered the first zinnia seed for sale to the public in the United States. Americans were not interested. However, French horticulturists began to experiment with zinnias, developing the first truly double blooms by 1856. It was not until the late 1800s that breeders in Germany, Holland and Italy also began selecting zinnias for their desirable characteristics. *Zinnia haageana*, *Z. peruvian* and *Z. elegans* are three (of nearly 20) zinnia species that provided the best results. Zinnias became the rage, especially in England where gardeners were eager to grow anything exotic. Due to England’s cool, cloudy climate, and zinnias being native to the hot, drier climate of Mexico, their sickly zinnias (at best) looked nothing like the robust specimens growing in Italian gardens.

By 1864, double flowered zinnias in purple, orange, red and salmon had made their way back to North America, catching the attention of American breeders and gardeners. By 1876, the Philadelphia seed house, Henry A. Dreer, was offering dwarf zinnias. *Z. haageana* Persian Carpet and Old Mexico are still available today. The most significant development for the zinnia came when John Bodger of Bodger Seeds Ltd. found a beautiful, natural mutation growing in a field of Mammoth zinnias. This zinnia had huge flowers with an incredible number of petals. The plants were robust and the variety appeared to be stable. For several years, Bodger worked on



the variety which was named ‘California Giants’ before introducing them in the 1920s. Bodger also introduced the dahlia-flowered zinnias. Gardeners in Europe, the US and Great Britain were ecstatic. The love affair had begun. For decades Bodger Seed and several other American seed houses sought to develop a truly green zinnia. None had much luck until Bodger found a promising mutant in the late 1950s. By the early 1960s, Bodger introduced the truly green zinnia, Envy, and it was an instant and continued success.

Finally, zinnias caught the attention of other American growers. Luther Burbank and William Henderson, followed by Burbank’s cousin, W. Atlee Burpee and his son, David, led the field in hybridization. A significant horticultural innovation occurred in the 1940s when Burpee's experimental breeders began to "shock" the chromosome structures of flowers with tiny amounts of colchicine, a poisonous alkaloid obtained from the autumn crocus, enabling the plants to emerge in dramatic new forms. Breeders had basically invented zinnias from seeds of Mexican wildflowers. It took a few decades of breeding, but eventually Burpee Co. developed the many faces of zinnia – the button zinnias, giant and dahlia sized, cactus, pompom, mini and the cut flower zinnias.

Today, zinnia breeders continue to engineer new flowers for modern gardens. There seems to be no end to gardeners’ love affair with this charming flower.

References:  
 Eric Grissell *A History of Zinnias: Flower for the Ages*  
 highplainsgardening.com *Journey of the Zinnia*  
 harvestinghistory.com *Zinnia*



**Standing Committee Coordinators**

Communication \_\_\_\_\_ Chair: Vacant  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Co-chair: Vacant  
 Development/Planning \_\_\_\_\_ Chair: Wendy Shafer  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Co-chair: Paula Nevers  
 Education: \_\_\_\_\_ Chair: Paula Nevers  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Co-chair: Vacant  
 Events \_\_\_\_\_ Chair: Linda Hough  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Co-chair: Vacant  
 Hospitality \_\_\_\_\_ Chair: Eunice Conway  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Co-chair: Linda Hough  
 Project: \_\_\_\_\_ Chair: Karen Sarver  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Co-chair: George Sarver

**2021 PROJECT COORDINATORS**

**Brown Bag Gardening Series**

Karren Coplen \_\_\_\_\_ 219-390-4118  
 \_\_\_\_\_ karrenc@comcast.net

**Farmers’ Market – La Porte**

Chris Svoboda \_\_\_\_\_ 614-377-6409  
 \_\_\_\_\_ svoboda.christina@att.net

**Garden Hotline**

Extension Office \_\_\_\_\_ 219-324-9407

**Garden Walk**

Maureen Sherrick \_\_\_\_\_ 610-737-3398  
 \_\_\_\_\_ shezamurphy@yahoo.com

**Habitat for Humanity**

Randa Magill \_\_\_\_\_ 219-851-8618  
 \_\_\_\_\_ rmagill4013@msn.com

**Friendship Botanic Gardens**

Rima Binder \_\_\_\_\_ 219-878-8128  
 \_\_\_\_\_ rimabinder@comcast.net

**Pioneer Land School Tours**

Linda Hough \_\_\_\_\_ 219-324-0424  
 \_\_\_\_\_ ljhough614@gmail.com

**Pioneer Heritage Garden**

Connie Shei \_\_\_\_\_ 219-362-4866  
 \_\_\_\_\_ jshei@comcast.net

**Seed Savers**

Mary Davis \_\_\_\_\_ 219-877-5339  
 \_\_\_\_\_ mdavis9757@gmail.com

**Sunflower Fair**

Megan Countryman \_\_\_\_\_ 574-532-8480  
 \_\_\_\_\_ mcountry46552@gmail.com

**Garden Show**

Maureen Sherrick \_\_\_\_\_ 610-737-3398  
 \_\_\_\_\_ shezamurphy@yahoo.com  
 Wendy Shafer \_\_\_\_\_ 219-878-3018  
 \_\_\_\_\_ winterone50@gmail.com

**Wabash Street Rain Gardens**

Laura Henderson \_\_\_\_\_ 219-871-9896  
 \_\_\_\_\_ lhendeliz@yahoo.com

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## October Garden Calendar

By: Rosie Lerner

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### HOME (Indoor plants and activities)

- Keep poinsettia in complete darkness for 15 hours each day — for example, between 5 p.m. and 8 a.m. — for eight to 10 weeks until red bracts begin to show.
- Pot spring-flowering bulbs to force into bloom indoors. Moisten soil and refrigerate 10 to 13 weeks. Transfer to a cool, sunny location, and allow an additional three to four weeks for blooming.
- Houseplants, especially those grown outdoors during the summer, commonly drop some or many of their leaves in response to the lower natural light intensity in the autumn and reduced light intensity indoors.
- Water indoor plants less frequently, and discontinue fertilizer as plants slow down or stop growing for the winter season.

### YARD (Lawns, woody ornamentals, and fruits)

- Keep plants, especially newly planted stock, well-watered until ground freezes.
- Have soil ready to mound roses for winter protection. Do not mound or cover roses until after leaves drop and soil is near freezing, usually late November or early December.
- Strawberry plants need protection from winter's extremes, but applying winter mulch too early may cause crowns to rot. Apply winter protection when plants are dormant but before temperatures drop below 20F, usually late November or early December.
- Rake or shred large, fallen tree leaves, such as maple, to prevent them from matting down and smothering grass. Raking smaller leaves, such as honey locust, is optional.
- Continue mowing lawn as needed.

### GARDEN (Flowers, vegetables, and small fruits)

- Harvest root crops and store in a cold (32 F), humid location. Storing produce in perforated plastic bags is a convenient, easy way to increase humidity.
- Harvest Brussels sprouts as they develop in the axils of the leaves from the bottom of the stem. Brussels sprouts will continue to develop up the stem.
- Harvest pumpkins and winter squash before frost, but when rind is hard and fully colored. Store in a cool location until ready to use.
- Harvest gourds when stems begin to brown and dry. Cure at 70-80 F for two to four weeks.
- Harvest mature, green tomatoes before frost and ripen indoors in the dark. Warmer temperatures lead to faster ripening.
- Asparagus top growth should not be removed until foliage yellows. Let foliage stand over winter to collect snow for insulation and moisture.
- Remove plant debris from the garden to protect next year's plantings from insect and disease buildup. Compost plant refuse by alternating layers of soil, plant material, and manure or commercial fertilizer.
- Have garden soil tested for fertilizer needs every three to five years.
- Plowing and incorporating organic matter in fall avoids the rush of garden activities and waterlogged soil in spring. Soils prepared in the fall tend to warm faster and allow earlier planting in spring.

- Carve a Halloween jack-o'-lantern.
- Dig tender garden flower bulbs for winter storage. Gladiolus corms should be dug when leaves begin turning yellow. Caladiums, geraniums and tuberous begonias should be lifted before killing frost. Dig canna and dahlia roots after a heavy frost. Allow to air dry, then pack in dry peat moss or vermiculite, and store in a cool location.
- Complete planting of spring-flowering bulbs.

