

# The Latest Dirt

La Porte County Master Gardener Newsletter



MARCH 2023

## INSIDE THIS ISSUE

STATE OF UNION ADDRESS	2
KARREN COPLEN RETIRING	3
EXTENSION NEWS	3
EDUCATION	4
VOL. OPPORTUNITIES UPDATE	6
MARCH GARDEN CALENDAR	7
GARDEN FOOTBALL TERMINOLOGY	8

### 2023 MEETING SCHEDULE

Meetings will be held at 6:00 p.m. on Thursday at Bethany Lutheran Church  
102 G Street, La Porte, IN

March 2	Business Meeting
April 6	Workshop
May 4	Business Meeting
June 1	Workshop
July 6	Business Meeting
August 3	Workshop
September 7	Business Meeting
October 5	Workshop
November 2	Business Meeting Elections

### NEXT BOARD MEETING

March 21<sup>st</sup> at - 6:00 p.m.  
La Porte Co. Library Exchange, Mtg. Rm. B  
Members are welcome to attend

"THE LATEST DIRT" is published monthly.  
The next deadline is March 20, 2023



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



PURDUE EXTENSION  
MASTER GARDENER PROGRAM

## Mild Weather Brings Up the Bulbs

By: Rosie Lerner

It's not unusual for Indiana weather to have trouble deciding what season it is. Recent warm spells have had many gardeners wondering what to do about bulbs, and perhaps a few plants that are poking their foliage through the soil. Just what should gardeners do about daffodils, dianthus and daylilies poking out of the ground?



Daffodils poking their heads up

The good news is that no action is required. We're used to seeing this happen in late winter during a February warm spell. The plants will survive just fine.



Freeze injury to daylily foliage

The longer the mild weather stays around, the more potential there is for damage when below-freezing temperatures return. Foliage that has popped up may be killed back, but the bulbs and storage roots should remain undamaged underground. As the plants completely push out in spring, damaged foliage will appear brown, giving plants a raggedy appearance. But the plants themselves will survive.

Flower buds on spring-flowering trees and shrubs are also starting to plump up, but should be fine so far. As buds progress in their development, they become more susceptible to freeze damage. And, spring is still over a month away, leaving plenty of opportunity for fluctuating temperatures. There isn't much we can do about the weather except to sit back and wait to see what Mother Nature has in store for us!

# ASSOCIATION NEWS

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## State of the Union Address

By: Carol Nolan, President

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### I do hope every member of our Association reads this message.

When I finished my weeks of training and began my hours of volunteer work, the one thing I heard over and over from the people I was working with was a fear of being disbanded. When I asked why that was even a consideration the answer I got was “I do not know” or “I do not understand the reasoning”. Now I am hearing “Members do not care” and have been hearing this throughout the past year.

As a viable entity of the Extension Office for La Porte County, we have a responsibility to commit and see that commitment through to the end.

Here is my take on the commitments that need to be made and carried out.

- Project coordinators must turn in their end of year reports on time. This means they are turned in to the Extension Office as well as to the board. Regardless of past practice, this board will review and act on issues that need to be addressed. We cannot do that if you do not live up to the commitment you made as a project coordinator. **PLEASE GET YOUR YEAR END REPORTS IN NOW!!**
- New projects need to be presented in the spirit of “helping others grow” not with a feeling of “being asked to maintain the garden for them”.
- If old projects are no longer viable and working as they should, then come up with ways to revitalize them or fix the issue. **Do not wait for someone else to do it for you.**
- Volunteering is the backbone of our association, and you must be willing to step up to the plate. Do not look at your shoes when someone asks if anyone would like to volunteer to head up a project. Be the first to raise your hand and say, “Yes, I will”
- Attendance at all monthly meetings needs to be by every member, not just a core group that seem always be present. Everyone has a voice, and it will only be heard if you are present and speak up.

While I fully understand we need new members, perhaps we need to be creative in how we get them and how we educate them. Let’s try thinking outside the box on how to increase interest.

The La Porte County Master Gardeners Association is only as strong as its weakest member. I believe we need to be stronger than ever. We need to be a face and voice in our community as well.

Please come to the next Business Meeting on March 2, 2023. It will be held at Bethany Lutheran Church. Social time begins at 6:00 p.m. and the meeting starts promptly at 6:30 p.m. There is ample parking, and the lot is well lit. Can we count on you?



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## Brown Bag Coordinator, Retiring

By: Karren Coplen

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In 2013, Annette Van Dusen and I started the Brown Bag program. After she moved to California, I continued the program for 5+ years, for 27 presentations and now it's time to retire. I'm tired. I will be happy to hand it over to two or three more energetic people who would like to take it on, and will be available, if wanted, to stick around and help with the organizing, promoting and coordination stuff, if we could find others to deal with the rest. I'm working on a procedures book to list all the ways we made it work, and promise not to complain if the next organizers find their own way, different from mine.



I want to give a heartfelt thank you to all the Master Gardeners who stepped up and shared their knowledge through the years, and especially Linda Hough, who provided our friendly greeting at the door for all the people who came to learn. Along the way, we were recognized with the Indiana Search for Excellence Award, and continued to follow the same guidelines until Covid suspended the program.

Our original main goal of this program was a way to publicize the Master Gardener program, and to interest others to take the class and join us. It was also for Master Gardeners to earn volunteer and educational hours, share their information with others in the community and our own membership. We were careful to keep it low cost, low frills and easy as possible to maintain and support. The most important component of this learning experience has always been fun. I've always known we were a success when the attendees stayed around to talk after the event was done. That happened a lot.

I sincerely hope that the program continues. It's been a good way to keep awareness of Master Gardening in the community and attract new members...and of course, achieve our motto:

**“Helping Others Grow.”**

## EXTENSION NEWS

### Master Gardener Merchandise Available for Purchase

By: Mary Komenas

Freckles Graphics, Inc. is working with the Purdue EMG Program to offer a temporary merchandise order for Purdue EMG branded, micro fleece pullovers, polo shirts, and aprons. All orders should be submitted and purchased through the temporary website below through midnight (ET), March 5, 2023. Freckles Graphics, Inc. will ship orders direct to individuals.

**Orders can be submitted through midnight (ET), March 5, 2023 at the website below:**

[https://shop.frecklesgraphics.com/purdue\\_master\\_gardener\\_summer\\_m/shop/home](https://shop.frecklesgraphics.com/purdue_master_gardener_summer_m/shop/home)

Until a new ANR is hired for La Porte, Nikky Witkowski, Extension Educator, ANR - Porter County and Mary Komenas, Extension Educator, CD, La Porte County will be helping us out approving hours and answering MG questions.

Nikky's contact information is:  
**nikky@purdue.edu** - 219-465-3555

Mary's contact information is:  
**mfoell@purdue.edu** - 219-324-9407

## EDUCATION

**Grow Native Massachusetts is delighted to present**  
**We Are The ARK by**  
**Mary Reynolds, Author, We Are The ARK**  
**March 4 | 1:00 - 2:30pm – EST Online (Zoom)**

**REGISTER**

Our current environmental crises are born of modern humanity’s destructive re-shaping of Earth to suit our short-term interest. We have become so profoundly detached from the natural world that we have forgotten that we too depend on the web of life.

Author and activist Mary Reynolds envisions a healing process where humans embrace our role as caretakers with Acts of Restorative Kindness to the Earth, or ARKs. Join us to learn how an ARK is different from a typical wildlife garden, and what principles to follow to create true sanctuaries for our shared kin, the rooted and the unrooted. Together, we can step up and become weavers of the web of life, re-stitch the threads we have broken, and build a patchwork quilt of life to restore our planet.

Mary Reynolds is a reformed, internationally acclaimed landscape designer. In 2002 as a complete unknown, she won a gold medal for her garden design at the Royal Horticultural Society’s Chelsea Flower Show in London, the story of which was made into the 2016 movie **Dare to Be Wild**. Best-selling author of **The Garden Awakening**,

Mary is a motivational speaker and founder of the global movement **We Are The ARK**.

<b><u>2023 EXECUTIVE BOARD</u></b>	
PRESIDENT	CAROL NOLAN
VICE PRESIDENT	KATHLEEN FOX
CO-SECRETARIES	ANN KLOSINSKI
	STEVE ZOLVINSKI
TREASURER	SUSAN KIEFFER
ED. COMMITTEE/ SPEAKERS BUREAU	EUNICE CONWAY
	JOAN KINTZELE
	DEB SARVER
PAST PRESIDENT	RANDA MAGILL
<b><u>2023 PROJECT COORDINATORS</u></b>	
<b>Brown Bag Gardening Series</b>	
Karren Coplen _____	219-390-4118
_____	<b>karrenc@comcast.net</b>
<b>Farmers’ Market – La Porte</b>	
Chris Svoboda _____	614-377-6409
_____	<b>svoboda.christina@att.net</b>
<b>Garden Hotline</b>	
Extension Office _____	219-324-9407
<b>Habitat for Humanity</b>	
_____	<b>OPEN</b>
<b>Friendship Botanic Gardens</b>	
Rima Binder _____	219-878-8128
_____	<b>rimabinder@comcast.net</b>
<b>Pioneer Land School Tours</b>	
Linda Hough _____	219-324-0424
_____	<b>ljhough614@gmail.com</b>
<b>Pioneer Heritage Garden</b>	
Connie Shei _____	219-362-4866
_____	<b>jshei@comcast.net</b>
<b>Seed Savers</b>	
Mary Davis _____	219-877-5339
_____	<b>mdavis9757@gmail.com</b>
<b>Sunflower Fair</b>	
_____	<b>OPEN</b>
<b>Garden Show</b>	
_____	<b>OPEN</b>
_____	

**PUTNAM COUNTY MASTER  
GARDENER ASSOCIATION  
PRESENTS**

# 2023 Garden Fair March 18th

**9 AM TO 3 PM**

**Putnam County Fairgrounds**

**191 N US HWY 231**

**Greencastle, IN**

**Tool Sharpening**

**Food Available**

**Gardener's Garage Sale**

**Lots of Vendors/Booths**

**Free  
Admission!**

**Free Trees**

**Kid's Activities**

**Join us for these  
great presentations!**

**Dolly Foster @ 10:00  
Winter Sowing**

**Vegetable Gardening  
Panel Discussion  
@ 11:30**

**Seib Honey @ 1:30  
Pollinator Protection**



**PURDUE EXTENSION  
MASTER GARDENER PROGRAM**

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## VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

### Builders Association of La Porte County 2023 Home and Lifestyle Expo

By: Donna Pouzar

Emails have been sent to those members who volunteered for the Builders' Association of La Porte County Home and Lifestyle Expo on Saturday, March 4<sup>th</sup> and Sunday, March 5<sup>th</sup> at the Blue Chip Casino in the Hotel Event Center.



The show is open Saturday from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. and Sunday from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Now that we have a date for our 2024 Spring Garden Show there will be "Save The Date" flyers to hand out promoting the show as well as other information. Thanks so much to those who are volunteering and for those who have not, come on out and check out the show.

## MARCH GARDEN CALENDAR

### HOME (Indoor plants and activities)

- Begin fertilizing houseplants as new growth appears. Remove spent leaves and flowers to improve appearance and encourage more blooms.
- Start garden seeds indoors for transplanting outdoors later in spring.
- Check stored bulbs and produce for decay; discard damaged items.
- Prune, repot, and clean houseplants as needed.

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

- Plant cool-season vegetables and flowers as soon as the ground has dried enough to work. Do not work the soil while it is wet; wait until it crumbles in your hand. If the soil forms a solid ball when you squeeze it, it's still too wet.
- Gradually harden-off transplants by setting them outdoors during the daytime for about a week before planting.
- Follow last fall's soil test recommendations for fertilizer and pH adjustment. It's not too late to test soil if you missed last year.
- Start the seeds of warm-season vegetables and flowers indoors. In northern and central Indiana, wait until the end of March or early April. Transplant seedlings to the garden after the danger of frost has passed. To find the average date of a frost in your area, consult maps provided by the Indiana State Climate Office.

- Remove old foliage from ornamental grasses and perennial flowers.
- Watch for blooms of early spring bulbs, such as daffodils, squill, crocus, dwarf iris, and snowdrops.
- Remove old asparagus and rhubarb tops, and side-dress the plants with nitrogen or manure. Plant or transplant asparagus, rhubarb, and small-fruit plants.
- Remove winter mulch from strawberry beds as soon as new growth begins but keep the mulch nearby to protect against frost and freezes.
- Remove weak, diseased, or damaged canes from raspberry plants before new growth begins. Remove old fruiting canes if you did not remove them last year, and shorten remaining canes if necessary.
- Prune grapevines after you can assess winter injury.
- Start seeds indoors for cool-season vegetables so they will be ready to transplant to the garden early in the season. You should start broccoli, cauliflower, and cabbage seeds five to seven weeks prior to transplanting.
- Test leftover garden seed for germination. Place 10 seeds between moist paper toweling or cover with a thin layer of soil. Keep seeds warm and moist. If fewer than six seeds germinate, then purchase fresh seed.

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

- Prune trees and shrubs (except those that bloom early in spring) while plants are still dormant. If you are concerned about winter injury, delay pruning until after dieback; you can assess desiccation injury as plants come out of dormancy.
- Plant new trees and shrubs as soon as the soil dries enough to be worked. Plant bare-root plants before they leaf out. Soils may be exceptionally wet as winter snows thaw.
- Fertilize woody plants if needed before new growth begins but after soil temperatures reach 40°F.
- Remove winter coverings from roses as soon as new growth begins. Prune out dead canes and fertilize as needed. Delay pruning into live canes until after you can assess winter injury.
- Apply superior oil spray to control scale insects and mites when the tips of leaves start to protrude from buds.



#### **STANDING COMMITTEE**

##### **COORDINATORS**

History Book \_\_\_\_\_ Donna Pouzar  
 Hospitality \_\_\_\_\_ Eunice Conway  
 Librarian \_\_\_\_\_ Linda Hough  
 Newsletter \_\_\_\_\_ Donna Pouzar  
 Speakers Bureau\_ See Executive Board  
 Sunshine \_\_\_\_\_ Julie Goetz

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

Interim ANR-Porter County  
 Nikky Witkowski \_\_\_\_\_ 219-465-3555  
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Interim ANR-La Porte County  
 Mary Komenas \_\_\_\_\_ 219-324-9407  
**mfoell@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 - 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:

**pouzdlp@icloud.com**

PURDUE UNIVERSITY IS AN EQUAL  
 OPPORTUNITY/EQUAL ACCESS/AFFIRMATIVE  
 ACTION INSTITUTION

Even though football season and the Super Bowl is over, thought you might enjoy this!

## Football Terminology for Gardeners

By: Marcy Dailey  
February 2009

**WIDE END** – What the neighbors view when we're weeding in the springtime

**TIGHT END**- What we're sporting by the end of the season after all that stooping

**TACKLE**- Pruning the shrub roses

**FIRST DOWN**- Un-hooped peonies in a rainstorm

**TOUCHDOWN**- To get to the "root" of it!

**OUT OF BOUNDS**- Mint- enough said!

**HALFTIME**- Halftime we can't remember what we were going to do before we got distracted!

**SAFETY**- mosquito repellent, sunscreen, gloves, & a wide-brimmed hat

**PERSONAL FOUL**- When the deodorant gives out around mid-day in August

**FIELD GOAL**- To convert the soybeans to all native prairie plants

**WIDE RECEIVER**- The orifice on a good chipper/shredder

**FLAG**- A variety of Iris

**PASS**- What organic gardeners do with chemicals

**PENALTY**- Not having grocery money after spending it all on new plants

**WINNING SEASON** – 1" of rain per week, moderate temperatures, enough good bugs to counter the bad bugs, wildlife that remains in the wild, and ample money and time to devote to gardening.

**THINK SPRING!!**

