



# Garden Thyme

September 2023

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

Volume 9, Issue 5



## Reset your Membership

As a member of the Purdue Extension Master Gardener program, reporting your hours keeps you in good standing. Master Gardeners must re-certify each year to remain on the active list and maintain the Master Gardener title. Master Gardeners should use the [Purdue Master Gardener Manager](#) online volunteer management system to report volunteer activity and educational training hours. Please complete reporting by September 1 for this allows time for processing and ordering of Extension Master Gardener badges. Even though the deadline may be past, if you think your cumulated hours will boost you to a new certification before November 1, let me know. I will make sure you can get a new badge this year. Hours reported will also be used to generate the letters informing you of your yearly recertification as an active member. Letters will arrive in late October. If you have any questions, please let me know!

I am also happy to announce a new way for inactive Purdue Extension Master Gardeners to become active again. Previously, officially inactive members can only become active again by retaking the entire series of classes. Now, another option allows previous members to come back even if there is not a class coming up. There will be some requirements that include an application, state fee, manual fee (unless the person has a current version of the new manual), 9 hours of education, proof of being an Extension Master Gardener in the past, and that the person will need to do 12 hours of volunteer hours in 1 year. There is normally a local program fee in Porter County, but I am willing to waive this fee for one year. Please feel free to tell anyone you know that has fallen away that they can be welcomed back on this fast track method! I am very willing to work through the process with anyone interested.

*Editor's Note: See page 8 for details on recertification and "leveling up" to the next badge.*

## Notes from Nikky

By Nikky Witkowski 219-465-3555  
Extension Educator,  
Agriculture & Natural Resources  
Purdue Extension Porter County

### In This Issue

- 1 Notes from Nikky—Reset your Membership
- 2 International MG Conference—Part 1 of a Series—Taking Advantage of Education
- 3 Meet a MG—Sue Arnold
- 4 How to—DIY Wedding Bouquets
- 5 Porter County Fair Flower Show
- 6 Fair Surprises/Prizes for a Newbie Master Gardener
- 7 Recibees—Mini Fruit Cheesecake
- 8 Extension Connection and Education Opportunities

# Garden Thyme

September 2023

International Master  
Gardener Conference



June 18 – 22, 2023  
Overland Park, Kansas

## Taking Advantage of Education International Master Gardener Conference Series Intro

By Margaret Mudd, PCMG Class of 2019

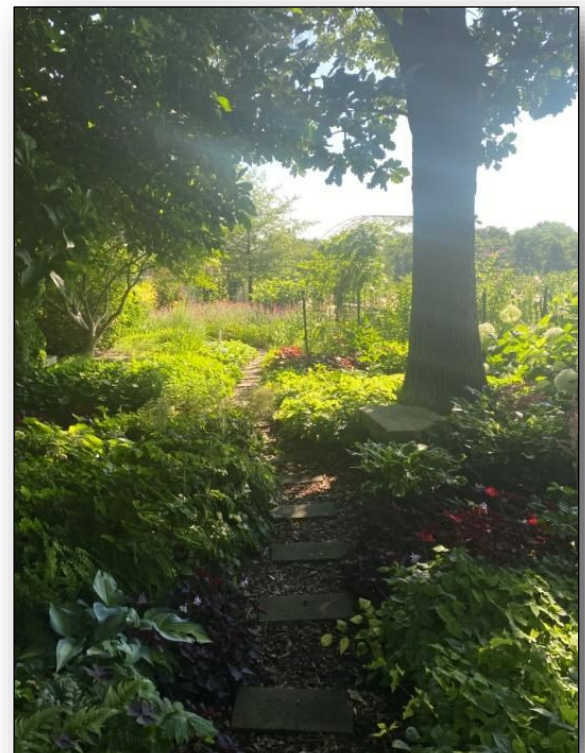
As Master Gardeners, we understand that our purpose is to “help others grow.” That sounds simple and straightforward, but it can also seem daunting, especially when one is a new Master Gardener and begins to realize the sheer volume of what there is to learn and understand about the world of gardening. Fortunately, we aren’t expected to know everything in order to help others. However, we are expected to continually grow our own knowledge and skills so that if we are unable to help others, we will at least know how best to direct them.

How do we become confident in our mission? I believe it’s by taking advantage of as many learning opportunities that come our way, and as we are able, so that what we share is timely, relevant and valuable. One such opportunity came to us in 2022 with an email invitation to attend the 2023 International Master Gardener Conference in Overland Park, Kansas. I believe it was initially shared by Zann Wilson, and then forwarded by Gloria Notaro to membership. This gardener is deeply grateful to them for making the opportunity known.

Educational conferences have always enlightened and energized me. This one in particular stands out, and far exceeded my expectations. So much so, that I have asked our editors if I could share some of what I learned in our publication in the coming months.

Until then, think “native” and “more garden and less turf,” so I’ve heard.

The hosts of the IMGC were Johnson County Master Gardener program and Kansas State University. Their program is one of the largest in the United States, with 400+ members. Over the past 5 years, they have volunteered an average 47,094 hours of community service each year. Their vegetable gardens provide nearly 5,000 lbs. of food to local food pantries each summer.



*I visited Rendall Garden in Lawrence, KS. With an emphasis on native plants, each garden bed is created to showcase a particular star flower with plants that enhance its beauty. Each bed is separated by a variety of design elements that flows beautifully between the wilder surrounding landscape and the well-tended garden.*





# Garden Thyme

September 2023

## Meet a Master Gardener

**Sue Arnold, PCMG Class of 2000**



*Sue's azaleas in full bloom*

I attended the Master Gardener class in 2000 with a friend who was already certified in LaPorte County but wished to repeat the course in Porter. I was appointed as Member at Large in 2018. Pollinators and invasives are specific interests of mine, two critical issues facing gardeners and the world.

I have volunteered at many of our events including the Garden Show Children's Corner, Garden Walk garden guide, tree sale, Earth Day program, and various projects that beautify our community. I am currently involved in the development of a Monarch Habitat at the Art Barn.

My husband Andy and I have lived in Chesterton for 28 years and were owners of a temperature control company which continues to operate in Griffith. In addition to gardening and Lake Michigan, we particularly enjoy attending theater locally and in Chicago, the Northwest Indiana Symphony, golf, traveling, and the Chicago Blackhawks.

Besides PCMGA, I am on the boards of the Women's Association for Northwest Indiana Symphony Society and the Art Barn. My husband is on the boards of the Crisis Center, South Shore Arts, and the Porter County Community Foundation. We are very happy to live in such a beautiful and vital area as the Indiana Dunes.

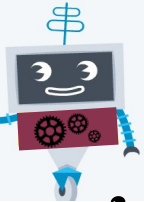


*The balcony garden*



# Garden Thyme

September 2023



## DIY Wedding Bouquets!

By Wilma Willard, PCMG Class of 2011



Emma Akert, of Chesterton, was confident that she and her bridesmaids could create beautiful wedding bouquets for her June wedding - just weeks after graduating with a nursing degree from Purdue. Armed with online resources and the support of her mother, Kristyn, and me, Emma ordered all her flowers online to arrive three days before the wedding. They were delivered in great shape. The team trimmed the stems under water and placed them in large clean buckets of fresh water.

Tips for your DIY wedding bouquets:

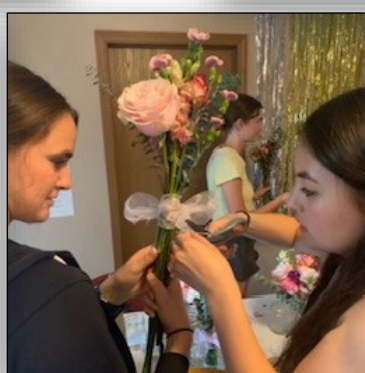
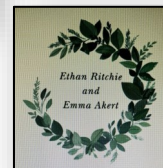
1. Order a Flower Combo Pack of coordinated flowers in your color. Less stress; fewer decisions!
2. Follow all detailed instructions on the flower website. Check out YouTube for more tutorials.
3. Cut stems (especially roses) underwater. It's a little tricky, but Emma got it down pat.
4. Place all flowers for each bridesmaid bouquet in a jar with their name on it. No confusion!
5. Assemble the bouquets the day before the wedding. Then keep them hydrated and in a cool place, keeping all ribbon dry!
6. You can't go wrong with beautiful flowers! The result will be amazing! (and you'll save \$\$\$)



*Such excitement when the flowers arrived!*



*Gorgeous flowers for the big day!*



*Brave bride and maids have a fabulous time with the do-it-yourself project. Emma had the project organized and gave tips on assembly.*



# Garden Thyme

September 2023



## 2023 Open Class Flower Show

By Janet Magnuson, Superintendent and PCMG Class of 1994

Thank you to all the volunteers, judges and exhibitors. It was another great flower show! There were 39 participants with 784 entries total over the course of three entry dates of 7/20, 7/24, and 7/27 providing fresh flowers throughout the fair.

Total prize money was \$1,904 with \$689 going to Master Gardeners. Top award winners were Wilma Willard with \$313, Diane Popa \$101 and Gloria Potter \$100. Ribbons for Master Gardeners totaled 63 Firsts, 58 Seconds, 51 Thirds, and 4 Honorable Mentions.

Winners for BEST OF SECTION – Nancy Cole (1), Monica Kerr(1), Susan Levenhagen (1), Gloria Potter(1), Audrie Saffrithis (3) and Wilma Willard (3)

Winners for BEST OF SHOW – Diane Popa (Design), Monica Kerr (Paniculata Hydrangea), and Hillary Miles (Bouquet of Annuals)



Best of Show  
7/24  
Monica Kerr  
Paniculata  
Hydrangea



7/27 Winners (left to right)  
Best of Section—Wilma Willard—Coleus  
Best of Show—Hillary Miles—Annual  
Bouquet (See page 6)  
Best of Section—Audrie Saffrithis—Basil



Best of Show  
7/20  
Diane Popa  
Design

# Garden Thyme

September 2023



## Newbie Master Gardener gets big surprise (and prize) at Porter County Fair

*Hillary Miles*

**Garden Thyme:** For you, what was a most interesting/helpful/rewarding aspect of the Master Gardener course?

**Hillary:** I met some great people in the MG course including fellow classmate Kathy Sipple—we volunteered at the fair booth together! John Nash is also a gem, he visited my property this spring and was very helpful with identification and garden planning questions.

**Garden Thyme:** When you volunteered at the Master Gardener booth at the fair, what was your impression?

**Hillary:** I was nervous that I would be unhelpful at the MG booth, being such a newbie (and somewhat of an introvert), but I quickly learned that when a few Master Gardeners put their brains together, **SOMEONE** always seems to have relevant experience and a helpful answer. It felt great to provide some advice about seed starting, and to identify some flowers for fair goers.

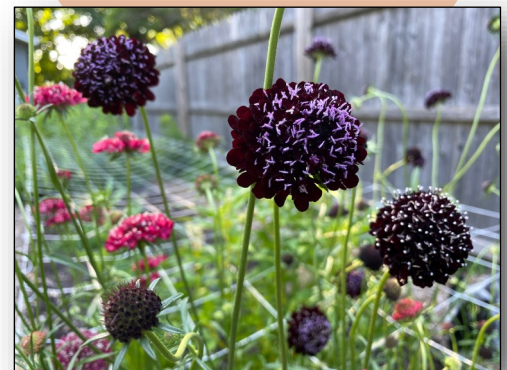
**Garden Thyme:** Tell us about your experience entering in the Porter County Fair Open Class Flower Show.

**Hillary:** I learned about the flower show during my afternoon shift at the MG booth two days before the last day of entries were due!! Janet Magnuson was amazing! I reached out to her on Tuesday after Zann Wilson connected me with her. My thought was to observe some of the judging, then volunteer to help next year. So, I took the guide book home with me to learn about judging. But when I walked my flower beds that night, I saw some possible entries—landing on four categories I thought might be up to snuff. The next morning at drop-off, the volunteers and Janet Magnuson were so kind to everyone, including this first-timer. When I returned for my next booth shift, Wilma Willard, with a big smile on her face, saw me in the fairgrounds parking lot hinting that I should check out the judges results right away. I was surprised, honored and truly “chuffed” to find wins for each of my entries!



Hillary Miles, PCMG Class of 2023, was a big winner her first time entering flowers into the Porter County Fair. On 7/27, Hillary won Best of Show for her annual bouquet picked from her gardens the night before.

What made the judges choose this bouquet for Best of Show? Seems they were particularly struck with the unusual and perfect scabiosas. Unbeknownst to the judges, Hillary grew them from seed! This is her second year growing cut flowers from seed. How rewarding!

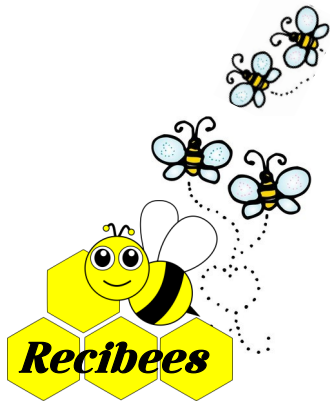


*Scabiosa atropurpurea 'Summer Fruits'*

*"I encourage other Master Gardeners to get involved in new ways that might be just outside of their comfort zones. You'll meet some lovely people in the process, and who knows, maybe even win a few moments of fame!" ~ HM*

# Garden Thyme

September 2023



By Suzanna Tudor

PCMG Class of 2002

Looking for a recipe that's quick, easy, has eye appeal—and most importantly, yummy? You've got it: Mini Fruit Cheesecakes. You can use fresh seasonal fruit like peaches, blueberries, raspberries, blackberries, strawberries or cooled fruit pie filling from your stove or the store.

The humorous back story of this not so low-caloric dessert is I received it at an exercise class! But, hey, they are "mini" so that's not so bad, right?

My son reminded me of this recipe when discussing what to make for his wife's August birthday. My sister had just given me one of those tiered cupcake holders, so I decided to nestle these little treats in it, along with some chocolate cupcakes too. A gal has to have chocolate, wouldn't be right without it.

## Mini Fruit Cheesecake

### Ingredients

- 2—8 oz packages of cream cheese, softened
- 2/3 cup sugar
- 2 large eggs
- 1 tablespoon lemon juice
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 24 vanilla wafer cookies
- Fruit pie filling or fresh fruit, such as: peaches, blueberries, kiwi, raspberries, blackberries, strawberries, mandarins, etc.

### Equipment

Mixer, 24 cupcake papers, muffin pan

By Suzanna Tudor  
Garden Thyme September 2023

### Directions

1. Mix together softened cream cheese and sugar.
2. Add eggs, lemon juice and vanilla. Beat until smooth.
3. Place cupcake papers in a muffin tin pan. Place a vanilla wafer in the bottom of each paper.
4. Fill each paper to the top with the cream cheese mixture.
5. Bake at 350 degrees for 15 to 20 minutes.
6. Cool.
7. Top with fruit or fruit pie filling. Chill and serve!

Tip: Cool the cheesecake before you top it with fruit. Chill it before serving. Refrigerate any left over—if there are any!



# Garden Thyme

September 2023

## EXTENSION CONNECTION

Master Gardeners should use the *Purdue Master Gardener Manager* online volunteer management system to report volunteer activity and educational training hours online.

It is important to report the number of hours you serve as a volunteer for several reasons:

- As an intern, those hours count toward achieving your Master Gardener certificate.
- As a member, reporting your hours keeps you in good standing. Master Gardeners must re-certify each year to remain on the active list and maintain the Master Gardener title.

Master Gardener Recertification is achieved by fulfilling the following requirements:

- Donating a minimum of twelve (12) hours of volunteer service each year AND
- Completing a minimum of six (6) hours educational training through any of the following options:
  1. Participation in state, regional, national, or international conferences
  2. Participation in county-sponsored advanced training sessions
  3. Participation in any other program approved by the local program
- Participation in any other programs approved by the local program

Keeping track of your volunteer hours gives you the satisfaction of knowing you're making a significant contribution to "Helping Others Grow" in Porter County.

Porter County reports the total number of volunteer hours served annually. Purdue Extension uses the number of hours volunteered throughout the state when they request funding from the legislature for the Extension Program.

More information is available at [pcgarden.info](http://pcgarden.info) Member Pages. Contact Nikky Witkowski with questions. 219-465-3555

As the number of your cumulative hours of service grows, your Master Gardener certification changes.

Minimum Certification Requirements

Certification	Cumulative Educational Hours	Cumulative Volunteer Hours
Master Gardener	35 (the class)	35
Advanced	45	60
Bronze	60	200
Silver	75	500
Gold	100	1000

*Purdue Extension Master Gardener Annual Agreement*  
*I agree to contribute at least 40 hours of volunteer service within two years of completing Purdue EMG Basic Training . I also understand that in order to continue my certification as a Purdue EMG I must contribute at least 12 hours of volunteer service and 6 hours of educational training approved by my EMG county coordinator each subsequent year. I agree to report volunteer activity and educational training hours to the EMG county coordinator at least once per year using a reporting method approved by her.*

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

**Newsletter Team**  
Suzanna Tudor, Co-Editor  
Wilma Willard, Co-Editor/Graphic Designer

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

**REMINDER:**  
*Save your seeds!*

See educational videos of former **PCMGA Gardening Show** seminars found at [pcgarden.info](http://pcgarden.info) on the Member Pages.

The **Purdue** website has added a link to numerous on-line education opportunities:

- <https://www.purdue.edu/hla/sites/master-gardener/education-hours-opportunities/>
- <https://www.purdue.edu/hla/sites/master-gardener/events/>
- <https://www.purdue.edu/hla/sites/yardandgarden/>
- <https://www.purdue.edu/hla/sites/master-gardener/continuedhours/>

**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.