



Garden Thyme

November 2023

<https://www.purdue.edu/hla/sites/master-gardener/>

Volume 9, Issue 6



A Letter from the PCMGA President Frank Lizak

*Comments/Questions?
Contact me at
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Hello Master Gardeners! Fall is finally here. I hope everyone has had a good summer in their gardens with many floral blooms and successful harvests.

It was good seeing many of you at the PCMGA September Picnic at the Forest Park Rotary Shelter where 44 attended. It's nice to relax, socialize, share our plants, and celebrate all our successful events this past year. I want to thank Liz Nobles and Gloria Notaro, our membership committee, for arranging the picnic, and to all who brought delicious side dishes.

Fall brings officer elections during our November 8th PCMGA meeting. Preparation for our January Gardening Show on January 20 is well underway. Save the date to volunteer and invite friends. We need many seeds to give away to attendees of the show, so gather yours this fall! Hopefully you can join the seed cleaning sessions listed below—also come to lunch either before or after at Culver's!

The fall Purdue Extension Master Gardener Training class is well underway with 22 trainees from area counties. Overall, there are some very knowledgeable people in the class. I will do my best to encourage the trainee's participation in a Master Gardener association by personal invitation and a promo during the last class.

Enjoy the cooler temperatures, the changing colors in the trees, and the migration of the birds flying overhead.

All of you truly are wonderful people, and I have enjoyed working with you. You have made my year as president of this association wonderful, and I look forward to working with you in the next year.

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Join our Seed Cleaning Sessions at Valparaiso Public Library, Rm A:

Thursday, November 2 from 10 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

Tuesday, November 14 from 1 p.m. to 3:30 p.m.

Monday, December 4 from 10 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.



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More successes than failures or, heaven forbid, more failures and successes? Even Master Gardeners can have a poor outcome when introducing a new plant to the landscape or trying a new fruit or vegetable. Keep trying new adventures and learn from each season! Help others (and yourself) GROW!



By Wilma Willard,
PCMG Class of 2011

LOSE: This summer I realized how big our maple tree had grown—so tall that a sun garden had become a part-sun garden. After moving out daylilies and Japanese iris, I spent a lot of time amending and tilling the soil and raking it evenly. I had some fun moving in some divided perennials and purchasing new ones— anemones. Much to my chagrin, the tiny patch of wild garlic in the original garden is now everywhere in the new garden. Seems I forgot to weed first!



Zoom in to see all the little wild garlic sprouting EVERYWHERE!



By Frank Lizak,
PCMG Class of 2021

WIN: Despite the late spring start and unusually hot summer, my garden did fairly well. Strawberries, blueberries, raspberries, and blackberries produced. I also planted kohlrabi, cucumbers (pickling and Marketmore), bell and sweet peppers, zucchini, beans (yellow wax, green pole and bush beans). A variety of tomatoes were abundant: Big Boy, Super Sweet 100, Roma and a new one for me, Amish Paste, which looked like an heirloom Roma. Sweet corn produced, but the heat diminished corn ears. I was proud of my garlic—first year planting and will do again.

LOSE: Cauliflower was a failure. Plants came up, but bolted so no yield. Pumpkins were also a no-show. Heat may have played a role. Apple and peach trees never flowered, thus, no fruit. I am also attributing that to the heat as they were successful last year. My neighbor's apple trees fruited so needs research.

Overall, I feel I had a very successful year with my vegetable garden and hope everyone else had more successes than failures.

(article continues on page 3)



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Orienpet lily

a
Winner
IS JUST A
Loser
WHO TRIED
one more time



Suzanna Tudor, PCMG Class of 2002

WIN: As a follow-up to last year, the Orienpet lilies I ordered and planted bloomed BIG. Remains to be seen next year if they reach the height and number of blossoms like the ones my cousin gave me.



'Strawberry vanilla' hydrangea, propped by stakes and twine—to no avail.



Dinnerplate Dahlia, 'Maki'

LOSE: My beautiful 'Strawberry Vanilla' hydrangea flopped after a rain.

WIN: Dahlias have become my heartthrob for the past couple of years. Truly, they are a labor of love for our zone, given you have to dig them up every fall, then meticulously store them in a 40-50 degrees environment, planting in late spring. Some get too dry and shrivel; others too wet and rot. Many don't make it through storage. This year, I thought I had also lost the dinner plate size 'Maki'. Much to my joy, one of the plants began to show a larger-than-normal bud. It was the 'Maki'! It's huge, 10-inch plus bloom in shades of pink seemed to shout, "WE SURVIVED AND AREN'T WE BEAUTIFUL!" A big WIN!

Marlene Vanderlin
PCMG Class of 2018

WIN, LOSE, or DRAW?

Did you ever wonder what would happen if you left all the self-seeded plants growing in your vegetable garden? Take a look at the results of that attitude when you get some rain and grass adds to the problem.





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growing through grief

By Hillary Miles, PCMG Class of 2023

I'm standing in my flower rows at dusk. My bare feet make contact with warm wood chips. There are no demands; I must only be present and visit my partners in healing. My therapist encourages me to ground here: amid the bright cornflowers, the verdant-scented bells of Ireland, the happy, busy buzzing pollinators, and fiddly long-necked cosmos. When I'm in the garden I connect to something that is both alive and utterly still, unknowable and relentlessly welcoming. Through the swift and wild weeks of summer, I experience an attunement. The flowers teach me about themselves; their language unfurling in every stem, leaf and petal. I walk the rows like a labyrinth, and my footsteps awaken something wiser, braver, more compassionate, and more serene within.

When a loved one dies we grieve, and sometimes when that loss feels especially big, or when (as for me) many losses come in rapid succession, the body experiences the loss as trauma. In six short years, I lost my mom, her sister Lynn and her best friend Cheryl (the trini-

ty), my maternal grandmother, paternal grandfather, two perfect elderly dogs, and my dad. It feels like a choked throat and a braced chest. It feels like severed limbs and open wounds. When we grow cut flowers, our pruning of young plants (pinching) encourages more robust growth. Later when the flowers finally appear, we cut the stems back deeply, in a way that feels violent, but the plants respond with both longer stems and more blooms over time. I wonder, can I do that? Can I emerge stronger and more beautiful as a result of my losses?

In a season: I sow seeds, raise young plants, harden them off, plant them out, encourage their good health, and eventually watch them die. What an honor to witness their brief, beautiful lives. Our gift of flowers after a loss communicates much the same: life is SO beautiful, unreasonably fragile, and far too brief—but how honored are we, the witnesses. My mom and Cheryl were Master Gardeners back in Maryland where I grew up. In my own garden I am close to them, guided by them—

my hands in the soil are also their hands in the soil. I do what they would have done; I help others grow, smile at the butterflies and welcome the bees. Through my relationship with flowers, I have experienced nourishment, healing, connection, and whispers of answers to some very big questions. I am noticing life and abundance in small green spaces and taking notes from the zinnias, so that I may regrow vigorously too.



Welcome
to my
Garden



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Want a fun craft to share with children this fall while the leaves are in glorious color? They are dropping to the ground waiting for you to pick them up and have a creative experience with your littles!

By Wilma Willard, PCMG Class of 2011



1. Gather all kinds of colorful leaves. For this project, small to medium size leaves are best.
2. Dry the leaves overnight between two pieces of paper towel with a cookie sheet and heavy object over top.
3. On a blue or white piece of paper either print an online image of a bird nest for pre-school age children, or encourage child to draw their own.
4. Choose a leaf for each bird in the nest, trimming off the stem to one half inch for the beak. Paste the leaf onto the paper with the beak tilting upwards. Use plenty of paste and press firmly.
5. Add a googly eye or use a sharpie for an eye.
6. Paste leaves on branches that are similar in shape and color.
7. Paste scraps of twine, yarn, feathers and plant material to create a nest or preschool children can use crayons to color the nest.
8. Be creative and have fun!



Crafty Creations

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International Master
Gardener Conference



June 18 – 22, 2023
Overland Park, Kansas

Birds and People Together International Master Gardener Conference Series, Part 2

By Margaret Mudd, PCMG Class of 2019

Marshall Johnson, Chief Conservation Officer at the National Audubon Society, was compelling in his urgent call to help protect our bird populations with his presentation. "Growing Healthy Communities for Birds and People Together."

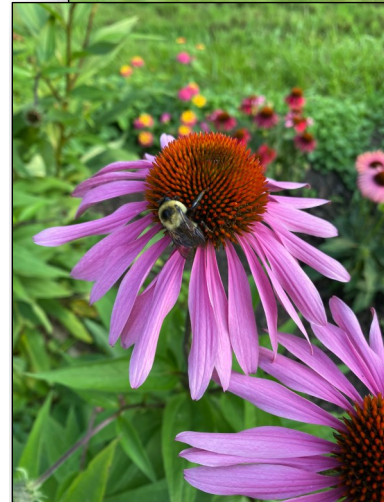
To what extent should we take interest? For starters, birds are integral to a healthy ecosystem and its sustainability. Melanie Driscoll, Director of Bird Conservation for the Gulf of Mexico and the Mississippi Flyway reminds us that "Birds are important because they keep systems in balance: they pollinate plants, disperse seeds, scavenge carcasses and recycle nutrients back into the earth."

Marshall informs us that since 1970, North America has experienced a loss of 33% of its bird population. That's a staggering reduction of 3 billion birds, and driven, in large part, by habitat loss and pesticides.

Previously, I asked you to think "native," and the reason is because plants, including trees, are the best food resources for a region's birds. They provide fruits, berries, nuts, seeds and insects. This is especially important for chicks who require pupae and caterpillars for food. As it stands, approxi-

mately 80% of our plants are non-native. Native plants provide essential resources necessary for survival. To learn more about taking steps to create a bird friendly yard, explore "Ten Plants For a Bird Friendly Yard."

Finally, Marshall, among many presenters, cited the importance of Doug Tallamy's research and his book, "Nature's Best Hope." As gardeners, we have the duty and power to spread the message and try to turn this threat around.



"Native plants provide essential resources necessary for survival."



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What's new?

Goth Gardening

By Suzanna Tudor, PCMG Class 2002



Kat Von D's Black "FloraMia Nero" vine, OwMell Gargoyle Statue, Kat Von D's Black Iris & Black Dahlia

Well, my ears perked up when I heard the term "goth gardening," by Heather Prince at her presentation to us in September. I've never heard of that. Have you? The word "goth," shortened version of "gothic," conjures up visions of black and darkness: hair, fingernail polish, lipstick, clothing and death. There's my limited thinking on the topic. So, here goes a jump into what the term means for gardening.

It seems everything "spooky and beautiful," sums up goth gardening. And before considering plants for this eerie environment, hardscape also needs consideration. "Stone arches, elaborate wrought iron gates, ornate cast-iron borders with dark reflecting pools, and meandering paths to tucked-away garden rooms, provide a perfect foundation for creating the garden of your dreams—or nightmares," according to the National Garden Bureau. <https://ngb.org/goth-garden-ideas>

Plants include anything with dark foliage to deep purple or black blooms. For plant lists and more details from National Garden Bureau. And for more examples, take a virtual walk through Kat Von D's black garden here.

<https://cafemom.com/lifestyle/kat-von-d-black-garden/8318-78630-feast-your-eyes-on-this-cute-little-black-columbine-also-called-a-chocolate>

But goth gardeners should not limit their creative dark juices to just flowering plants. Vegetables and fruits provide an array of dark colors. I'm reminded of the beautiful deep purple/black tomatoes or egg plant.

Adding to a somber garden mood, lighting and accessories like angelic or demonic statuary, a tombstone or two, antique pots, gargoyles, dragons or mythical creatures can be strategically placed. Options are only limited by your imagination.

Although not to my taste, this has been an interesting foray into another type of gardening. Curious to hear your thoughts about it?

Eggplant photo from HGTV, Tomato Midnight Snack, photo from National Garden Bureau



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I like my garden 'cause it reminds me of myself: growing, changing, and a little bit wild and crazy!

-an anonymous gardener



Make these "crazy" Pumpkin Pie Flowers!



Try a tangy Tomato Galette with your last garden tomatoes.



A fruit kabob "wild" turkey will brighten your Thanksgiving table!



Try making marinara sauce without removing the peels. After slow cooking, use an immersion blender.

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See educational videos of former **PCMGA Gardening Show** seminars found at 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/>

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