

VOLUME 10 / ISSUE 1

JANUARY / FEBRUARY 2024



# GARDEN THYME



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PURDUE EXTENSION PORTER COUNTY 155 INDIANA AVENUE, SUITE 301 VALPARAISO, IN 46383

## — *In this Issue*

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The Porter County Master Gardeners Association (PCMGA) is a not-for-profit corporation that promotes the education and pleasure of gardening in cooperation with Purdue University Cooperative Extension Service in Porter County, Indiana.





## — *A Note from Nikky*



# Nikky Witkowski

*Extension Educator, Agriculture & Natural Resources Purdue Extension Porter County*

Welcome to the new year! And welcome to our new Purdue Extension Master Gardener Interns; 20 finished the fall class!

The 2024 Statewide virtual and on-site training with Porter County as a host site will be offered on Tuesday evenings, beginning in February. Make sure your friends and neighbors know if they are interested, as a fall class may not be held if there are many participants. [Click here](#) for more details.

Some of you know we now have Spotted Lanternfly officially in our county. The good news is that it prefers the Tree of Heaven, which is also an invasive tree—so, if we can control and manage the Tree of Heaven, we should have partial control of Lanternfly. However, it will feed on other trees as well. In November, I visited the site of an infestation and saw how difficult it will be to spot egg masses. When the weather warms up, we can arrange identification training for those interested.

Local gardeners who have boxwoods as border plants should be advised that they are susceptible to new problems approaching our region. The box tree moth sometimes mimics the leafminer we already have; it is disastrous as the larvae can strip leaves. Some diseases including Boxwood blight are also on our radar but not officially in our area yet. So be on guard for plants that look a little off, and start thinking about an alternative if you have them.

The larval stage of *C. perspectalis*, the box tree moth, causes extensive feeding damage to boxwoods.

Boxwood blight (*Calonectria pseudonavicuata*) arrived in 23 Indiana stores in May, found particularly on the “Graham Blandy” cultivar.

Signs of infection: black spots followed by defoliation.

- *Purdue Extension*

*Saturday*  
Jan. 20, 2024

8 a.m. to 4 p.m. CST

*Admission at the door*

*\$10 Cash or Check*

*Children under 12 Free*

*Free Door Prizes*

*Free Parking*

# 18th Annual Gardening Show!

Porter County Expo Center  
215 East Division Road  
Valparaiso, IN 46383

The 18th Annual Gardening Show is sponsored by Purdue Extension - Porter County and Porter County Master Gardeners Association (PCMGA).

*Volunteer here!*



**Ann Cierniak**



We are enthusiastic about extending a personal welcome to you on January 20, 2024! We want to emphasize how thrilled we are to be able to get together again and celebrate our love for growing things. We invite you to join us once again to learn and to grow.



## *Gardening Show continued*

*Seed & Bulb Exchange*

*Over 100 Exhibitor and Vendor Booths*

*Garden Photography Contest*

*Recycled Yard & Garden Tools and Decor*

*Gardening Books & Magazines*

*Children's Corner*

# Seminars

## **Spring!**

Galen Gates, Chicago Botanic Garden Emeritus and Landscape Garden Consultant

## **Pollinator Gardening for Small Spaces**

Dolly Foster, Landscape Horticulturist, Advanced Master Gardener

## **A Truly Green Lawn: Alternatives to Fertilizers & Pesticides in Turf**

Justin Curley, Purdue Extension Educator - Delaware County

## **How to Become a Better Gardener Faster**

Scott Beuerlein, Manager of Botanical Garden Outreach at the Cincinnati Zoo & Botanical Garden

# Demos

## **Vegetable Gardens From the Ground Up**

Melissa Mills, Advanced Master Gardener and Outdoor Educator with the Dunes Learning Center

## **Herbs, Not Just for Cooking!**

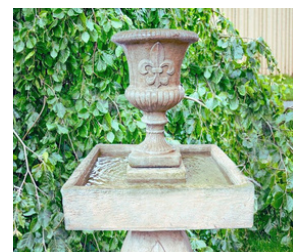
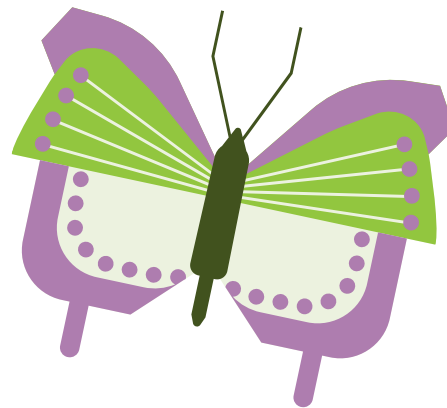
Lisa Barton

## **Tree Grafting Tricks and Techniques for the Novice Grafter**

Nikky Witkowski, Extension Educator, Agriculture & Natural Resources, Porter County

## **Creating Garden Art Using Hypertufa**

Robert Goin



2024 Raffle Prizes



# CONTEST

**Mail** your 8x10" mounted, unmatted entries (3 per person) to:

Purdue University Cooperative Extension  
155 Indiana Avenue, Suite 301  
Valparaiso, IN 46383

*Click here for more details*



**Or deliver** entries between the hours of 8:30 a.m. and 4:30 p.m., Mon-Fri, on or before **January 12, 2024**

**10 JUDGED CATEGORIES: FLOWERS ALONE - PLANTS IN BLACK AND WHITE - FOLIAGE - FIELD OF FLOWERS - BUGS AND INSECTS IN THE GARDEN - BUTTERFLIES AND MOTHS IN THE GARDEN - BIRDS IN THE GARDEN - WILDLIFE IN THE GARDEN - FUNGUS IN THE GARDEN - FRUITS AND VEGETABLES IN THE GARDEN**

## MEET YOUR 2024 PCMGA OFFICERS

President: Frank Lizak  
Vice Pres: Timburley Ecklund  
Secretary : Ronald Hermance  
Treasurer: Debbie McCormick

Extension Advisor: Nikky Witkowski

Education.....Kathy Ruble  
Gardening Show Chair.....Ann Cierniak  
Garden Walk.....Martha Seroczynski  
Membership.....Margaret Mudd & Jill Kilhefner  
Publicity/Promotion.....LuAnn Troxel  
Philanthropy.....Martha Seroczynski & Kathy Ruble

Past President: Jim Albers

Members at Large: Sue Arnold  
Szu-Ping Chang Wong  
David Parry  
Hillary Miles

Printing and Graphic Design.....Nancy Rosene  
Print Media.....Suzanna Tudor  
AAMG booth.....Jim Albers  
Webmaster and Messaging.....Maureen Phillips  
Website Member Page.....Gloria Notaro  
Press Releases.....Open (TBD)  
Ad Sales.....Open (TBD)





# 2023 Master Gardener Awards

## **Master Gardener Level (White):**

Greg Carter, Beth Gemeinhart, Carol Redlin-Cooper\*, Melissa Mills, David Parry\*, Karla Staley, Szu-Ping Wong

## **Advanced Master Gardener Level (Black):**

Mary Baird, Jennifer Hawkins, Carol Redlin-Cooper\*, Sharon Stucky, David Parry\*, Barb Harvey

**Bronze:** Amy Carter, Frank Lizak, Marlene Vanderlin


**Silver:** Daniel Ruggaber, Kristine Sandrick

**Gold 1,000 hours:** Maureen Phillips, Marty Seroczynski, Wilma Willard

**Gold 2,000 hours:** Nancy Rosene

*\*Moved up two levels*

Photography credits: (left to right: Maureen Phillips by Maureen Phillips, Wilma Willard by Wilma Willard, Nancy Rosene & Marty Seroczynski by LuAnn Troxel)



"Being given this award means so very much to me. The Master Gardener Program, what it does, and the awesome people that I have come to know and work with is something that I will always cherish."

– Marty Seroczynski

# Volunteer of the Year: Marty Seroczynski

**BY FRANK LISAK, PRESIDENT, PCMGA**

Each year we honor one of our PCMGA volunteers who has shown a lot of dedication, and worked tirelessly on projects for the Association—not only to assure the program(s) are a success, but because they believe in sharing gardening knowledge, and completing the mission and task they took on.

This year's 2023 Volunteer of the Year is Martha Seroczynski. Marty, as she is known to all of us, has been a Master Gardener since 2000. After 24 years (and still going), she has shown a belief in our mission, and a huge amount of dedication that reveals the joy she gets from gardening.

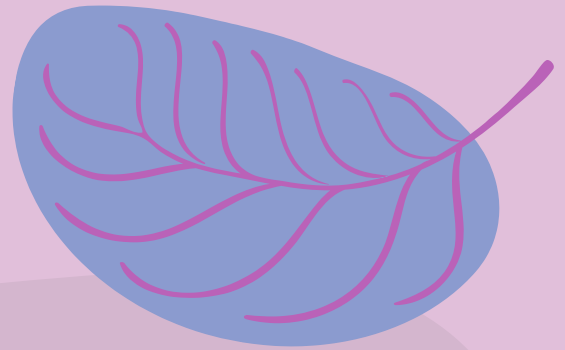
(continued on page 06)



Over the past 2 ½ years since I have been a member, I have noticed the amount of time Marty dedicates to the PCMGA, especially this past year making the Garden Walk 2023 a success. When homes on the Walk cancelled, she rose to the challenge and went to find others—whether it was by seeing some nice landscaping and knocking on doors, or other members directing her to an address with potential. Marty has done an amazing job in other areas of the Association; in the various committees she contributes to in addition to chairing the Garden Walk. It is wonderful having Marty

as a member of the Porter County Master Gardener Association. I appreciate your dedication, knowledge and drive, and I am looking forward to working with you in the years to come.

Thank you again for all you do. Congratulations, Marty!



### **Marty's PCMGA Volunteer C.V.**

- Marty began the maintenance program at VNA Hospice in 2011 when Janet Magnuson was president. The organization awarded them a grant, and Janet thought that it would be a good thing if someone would take over care of the grounds around Hospice. Marty thought so too, so she volunteered to do it.
- Philanthropy Committee Co-chair
- Education Committee member
- Began magazine booth at the Garden Show many years ago, and she has been so very glad of its success.
- Marty has been in charge of securing the guest speakers for the small speaker room at the Garden Show.
- Her greatest challenge was taking on the Garden Walk for the past three years.



— *Garden  
Wanderer*

# Naples Botanical Garden

**BY BECKY BYERS, GUEST WRITER**

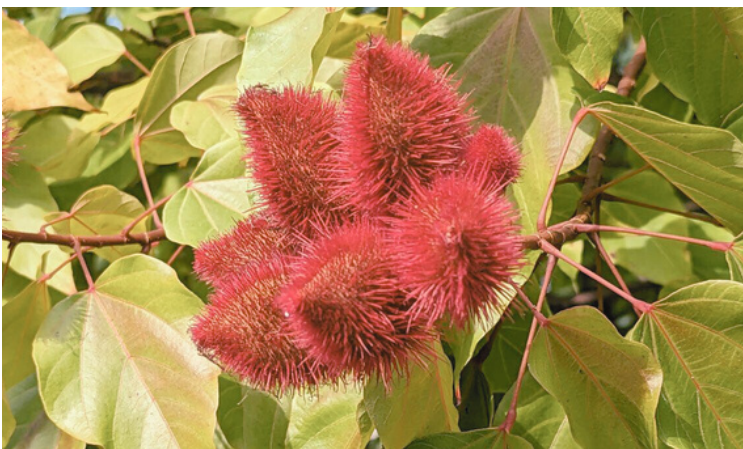
PAST GARDEN WALK HOST NOW RESIDING IN FT. MYERS, FL

In a few words: Amazing 170 acres!

Upon entering, you are surrounded by lush gardens as you traverse the boardwalk to the ticket kiosk (\$25/adults). This entryway encompasses Kathryn's Garden, full of exotic colors and fragrances. Along the boardwalk is a station to sign up for tours of orchids, pollinators, palms, cacti and native plants.

- Wandering through varied foliage, one enters Irma's Garden with striking plant forms and textures.
- Next is the Brazilian Garden with bright bursts of color on a backdrop to the lotus pool, made of brilliantly colored tiles, influenced by cubism and geometric shapes.

(continued on page 08)





- The Florida Garden provides an expansive view of The Preserve, a diverse 90-acre Southwest Florida ecosystem, which serves as a research park. Walk a one-mile paved path along a lake to view birds and aquatic creatures.
- An oolite\* pergola centers the Caribbean, which holds prehistoric and endangered cycads\* and fruit trees.
- The Asian Garden offers temple ruins, a Thai pavilion, a large lotus pool and bamboo jungle areas.
- In the middle of the gardens sits the Water Garden. Sizable water lily pools flow under the boardwalk.
- A stage area, used for lawn seating during concerts, neighbors the Fogg Café where one can enjoy delicious food faire, wine and beer.
- The Orchid Garden, with flowing water throughout, is teeming with gorgeous, hanging and strategically placed orchids.
- As you exit, visit the Garden Shop for a live plant or memory keepsake of this fabulous experience.



\*Oolite pergola with Queen's wreath skyvine (*Petrea volubilis*). Oolite is a limestone composed of minute rounded concretions resembling fish roe (eggs), in some places altered to ironstone by replacement with iron oxide. (*Dictionary.com*)



[Click here](#) to explore Naples Botanical Garden's summer issue of their publication *Cultivate*

\*\*[Click here](#) to watch an Earth Works Jax video, *The Facts about Cycads*.



Perennial Plant of the Year

# Meet *Phlox paniculata* 'Jeana'

The Perennial Plant Association has selected *Phlox paniculata* 'Jeana' as the 2024 Perennial Plant of the Year®. This exceptional garden phlox is known for its amazing flowers, held on tall and sturdy stems from midsummer to early fall. Hummingbirds, butterflies – especially Eastern Tiger Swallowtails – and other pollinators are attracted to the nectar-rich flowers. 'Jeana's' fragrant lavender-pink flowers are significantly smaller than typical garden phlox — only about half an inch wide — but the show at peak is eye-popping. This is a case where bigger is not better, from a pollinator's perspective anyhow. It was discovered by Jeana Prewitt along the Harpeth River near Nashville, Tennessee.

Tall 'Jeana' is a new standout *Phlox paniculata* since recently, breeding has focused on a shorter, retail-friendly versions. Choose 'Jeana' if you want a classy perennial with squeaky clean foliage that attracts 10x the

butterflies! Choose 'Jeana' as an excellent bridging plant between early and later flowering perennials.

*Phlox paniculata* 'Jeana' is easy to grow in Zones 3 to 8. It likes full sun and moist, fertile, well-drained soils. Regarding care, *Phlox paniculata* 'Jeana' performs best when regularly deadheaded as it promotes blooming. Deadheading also prevents self-seeding, avoiding inferior seedling production. Avoid dry conditions for best performance. It is highly resistant to powdery mildew which makes it look great, even without flowers.

The Perennial Plant of the Year® program began in 1990. Perennials chosen for this honor are suitable for a wide range of growing climates, require low maintenance, have multiple-season interest, and are relatively pest/disease-free.



— *Crafty Creations*

# Tree of Life Memory Wreath

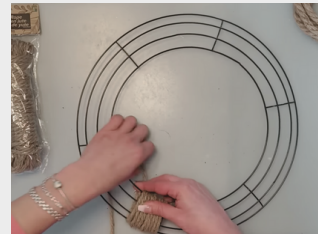
BY SUZANNA TUDOR, PCMG CLASS OF 2003



Materials: 14-inch wire wreath form, small and large package of jute rope, river rocks, reindeer moss, hot glue and gun, scissors and whatever items you desire to personalize.

If you are looking for a craft that exudes warm sentiment and nature all in one, here it is: the Tree of Life Memory Wreath. After my husband's passing, my daughter made this sweet wreath for me. She spied this earthy and rustic-looking craft by [The Crafty Shopper](#) online with most materials from The Dollar Tree. I just love it, and it would make a heartwarming gift.

- 01 Begin by hot gluing smaller jute rope to bottom center of wreath. Wrap tightly and hot glue about every three wraps. Work up and left to the top. Do the same on right side.
- 02 When wire frame is covered with jute rope, glue river rocks to bottom of wreath.
- 03 Glue strand of larger jute rope to center and then wrap around to create trunk of tree.
- 04 Separate large jute pieces at top and bottom of tree to form branches and roots, gluing to desired places on the wreath. Add reindeer moss to replicate the look of green leaves.



My daughter's memory wreath let the roots flow at the bottom to hold the framed sentiment. She also put family names on the rocks, added a cardinal, and our initials on center heart. There are many other suggested additions for personalizing wreaths available in the tutorial, but one's only limit is their imagination.





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