



GARDEN THYME

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LYNDSAY'S VINE

by Lyndsay Ploehn, Porter County Extension Educator

In March, Porter County Government Facilities Director, Matt Stechly, and Commissioner, Laura Blaney, requested the talents of the Porter County Master Gardeners regarding a large planting area outside of the old courthouse. In the past, the two raised-bed plantings located on the north side of the courthouse included a mix of native and non-native plants that became unruly and did not offer much aesthetics for the high traffic area. Blaney and Stechly desired more color and “pizazz” to enhance the area and make it more welcoming. They requested the design skills of Purdue Extension and the Porter County Master Gardeners to re-vamp this landscape.



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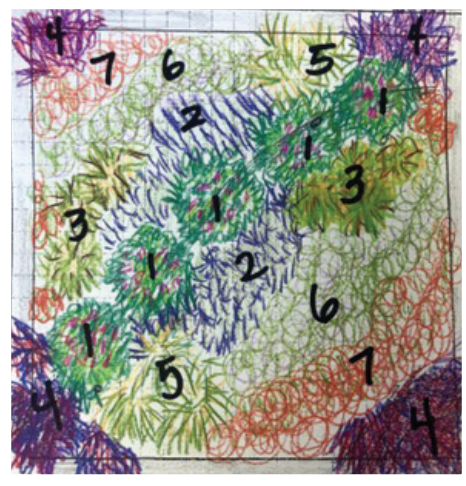
I was excited to accept this challenge and use this opportunity to educate some of our Master Gardeners in landscape design. Bonnie Girton and Marcia Carson met with me a couple of times in April to design the space and choose the plants. I sourced the plants from a few different nurseries, and we planted the raised beds on May 16. Our planting crew included Dennis Davis, David Colella, Marcia Carson, Bonnie

Girton, Melinda Bateman, Kathy Ruble, Carolyn Gring, and four County Facilities employees. The two raised beds are 21 feet by 21 feet and were no small task to fill. Our mirror-image design includes a mix of shrubs,

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evergreens, perennials and annuals to give year-round interest and height. (1) Hydrangea (*H. paniculata* 'Little Lime') is our feature shrub, which offers a chartreuse color in the summer and fades to a dusty rose in the fall. To complement the

chartreuse of the hydrangea and add texture, we incorporated (3) evergreen falsecypress (*Chamaecyparis pisifera* 'King's Gold') and (5) Japanese forest grass (*Hakonechloa macra* 'Aureola').

In front of the shrubs, we added drifts of purple with (2) salvia (*Salvia x sylvestris* 'May Night') and swaths of (6) perennial geranium (*Geranium* 'Gerwat' Rozanne). This leaves the color palette wide open for annuals, and this year we went for trailing ornamental (4) sweet potato vines (*Ipomoea batatas* 'Blackie') and (7) calibrachoa, lantana and petunia to add a mix of colored blossoms throughout the summer. This fall the annuals will change out, and after this year, the County will maintain the raised beds and change out the annual displays.



Thank you to all of the Porter County Master Gardeners that volunteered their design skills and muscles! You made this design happen, and I am thrilled to have our organization highlighted in such a prominent location in Porter County. 🌿

JUST NAME IT

Garden Thyme Plant Pest #5

by Suzanna Tudor



This particular invasive sometimes sneaks in and plays a landscape role. While driving through a Valparaiso neighborhood, I spied them, frolicking along a home's exterior and into the yard. Funny thing, we had the same pest growing next to our front porch at my childhood home. I never knew what they were—until now. Once you can ID them, you will see them everywhere, covering wide expanses along roadsides, in addition to yards. And whew—I just read it is listed by the World Conservation Union as “one of the world's worst invasive species.”

This plant has alternating leaves that are heart-shaped and 2-3 inches with hollow, bamboo-looking reddish stems, similar to rhubarb. Small, cream-colored flowers stand erect from stems. This landscape masquerader can grow 9 feet tall and spread as far as it is able by seed and 15 to 18-foot rhizomes. Its underground root system can penetrate concrete and other formidable barriers; I would not want this planted next to the foundation of my home. Learn about this wily invader by selecting this [link](#). 🌿





THE TOOL SHED

Raised Bed Garden Boxes

by Bonnie Girton

Just as I was finishing the Master Gardener Intern class in April 2016, I got approval from my HOA to put a garden in the front yard of my property (since the back of my house is wooded). Approval was conditional on the fencing (much needed to protect from deer) to be of “architectural quality.” I was in luck. A family member was nearly giving away some pool fencing that was not going to be used otherwise.



The next step was to purchase raised bed boxes. I had researched online all winter so was prepared to catch a great deal on Target.com for solid cedar tongue and groove modular boxes made by Grononmics. There were no tools required; the boards simply slid into the posts. I laid out these boxes myself, taking less than an hour. The layout pictured cost about \$50 per box. They are 4’ x 4’, two 10” boards deep.



Then, of course, the real work began. Photo #2 is my hero just after shoveling 4 yards of compost mix into the beds. (Four yards equals 600 shovels, by the way!) I then topped

the compost mix with Dr. Earth® planting mix that has fine wood chips in it. As the soil settles, the wood chips form a barrier that, I must say, provided a weed free garden for me. When the garden is bare in the winter, this barrier kept tree seedlings from invading in springtime.



In addition to planting vegetables in the beds, I did a border of marigolds and lavender to further deter the deer. Were it not for the Cooper’s Hawk family just above the garden, I would probably need to have rabbit fencing on top of the boxes.



In the spirit of the “edible lawn” movement, which is resisted by municipalities and homeowner associations, I feel I have achieved a hybrid of the concept. I realize not everyone needs to go to the expense of what I have done, but I have found that the joy of gardening, and happy neighbors, to be well worth it. 🌱



MR. MC GREGOR'S GARDEN

Growing Old With Your Garden

by Beverly Thevenin

For gardeners like myself who find the garden planted at age 40 to be overwhelming at age—well, you know, many years later—or for those who plan to become gardeners in retirement, there are strategies and tools to help during the aging gardener's advancing years.

With so many benefits to gardening—lowering blood pressure, improving self-esteem, reducing stress, strengthening the immune system and burning calories—time spent in the garden can actually help keep us fit and young. But before we even get into the garden, let's embrace:

Gardening as Exercise

Basic gardening can burn 180 calories or more per ½ hour, and it can be quite a workout. To avoid repetitive motion injuries, garden for shorter periods and vary activities. As with any exercise, it's important to stretch before and after, and maintain proper form. The [Ontario Chiropractic Association](#) suggests the following:

- [Tips for a healthy back in the garden \(PDF\)](#)
- [Stretch before you start \(PDF\)](#)
- [The right moves – the right tools \(PDF\)](#)
- [Bend your knees to lift with ease \(PDF\)](#)
- [Plant & Rake, Without the Ache \(PDF\)](#)

Let's take a walk around the garden and see what gardening for the aging might look like.



Tools of the Trade

It's time to ditch the heavy, dull tools you may have been using for years. Ergonomic [tools](#) are lightweight, [cushioned](#) and designed to be easier on the joints. Painting the tool handles in bright colors or wrapping with colored tape makes them easier to find if dropped. Dragging around a heavy hose or watering can is not necessary with the lightweight [hoses](#) available today. A cart makes moving heavier loads a breeze, and a two-wheel [wheelbarrow](#) is easier to balance. Purchase a [garden rocker seat](#), [kneeling bench](#) or [knee pads](#) to save the lower back.



Plant Selection

Select drought tolerant, low maintenance plants or go [native](#). Remove large shrubs that require yearly pruning and replace with shrub dogwoods, azaleas and rhododendrons which don't require pruning. Or opt for smaller versions of shrubs, such as 'Little Lime,' 'Little Quick Fire,' or 'Bobo' hydrangea, which are easier to prune. Replace perennials that require staking or deadheading with plants such as *Liatris spicata*, *Echinacea purpurea*, *Heuchera*, *Tiarella cordifolia*, and hosta. Begin removing plants that spread excessively and you find yourself constantly trying to corral, such as bee balm, Japanese anemones, gooseneck loosestrife and obedient plant. I have reined in some of these enthusiastic plants by potting and sinking the pot into the soil and by deadheading before the plant has time to re-seed.



I appreciate vertical gardening within my raised beds. Squash, peas, cucumbers and tomatoes are grown at the back of the raised bed and can be harvested with

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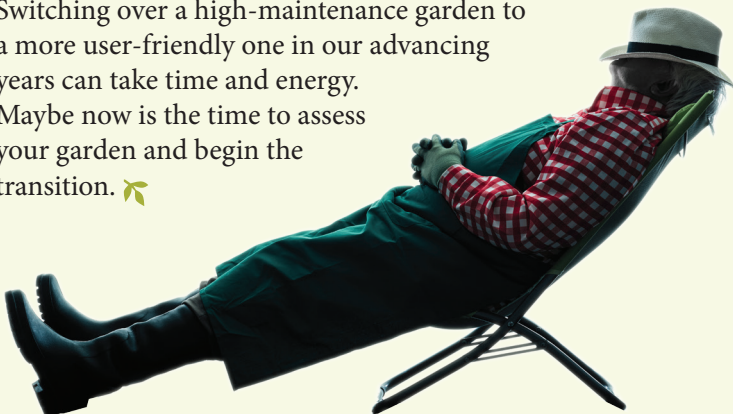
ease. Vegetables and flowers can be grown in containers with a connecting [automatic drip-irrigation system](#).

While researching transitioning for the aging gardener, I found a suggestion to replace the lawn with ground covers, mulched beds or paved areas and paths. I disagree. All those areas will eventually need weeding and re-mulching. Level grass provides a safe place to walk, while the other areas can be a tripping hazard. It is much easier to hire a teen or lawn service for a quick mow, rather than hire someone to remove the grass and install other types of coverage that require further maintenance.

Safety – Some basic safety precautions can prevent many injuries.

- Carry a whistle and cell phone with you.
- Remove tripping obstacles such as uneven ground, pavers or tools with cords. (Opt for battery-powered weed eaters and blowers.)
- Add low voltage lighting for late evening walks in the garden or covert slug control missions.
- Separate a larger load into several small ones, and purchase smaller bags of peat, etc.
- Keep work sessions brief and take frequent breaks.
- Don't work in the heat of the day and stay hydrated. I drink [electrolytes](#) while gardening to replenish lost nutrients.

Switching over a high-maintenance garden to a more user-friendly one in our advancing years can take time and energy. Maybe now is the time to assess your garden and begin the transition. 🌿



Springtime in a Bowl Salad

by Beverly Thevenin

Servings: 4



Ingredients:

2 cups asparagus, cut in pieces and blanched
2 cups strawberries, sliced

Dressing

1/4 cup lemon juice
2 tablespoons olive oil
1 tablespoon honey
2 tablespoon balsamic vinegar
Cracked black pepper and salt to taste

Directions:

1. Toss the asparagus and strawberries together in a bowl. Set aside.
2. In a small bowl, combine the dressing ingredients and mix well.
3. Pour dressing over salad and toss.
4. Chill before serving and serve the same day.

Note: Blanching the asparagus makes it easier to bite, but does not make it too soft. Optional additions include feta, goat or blue cheese, nuts or Dijon mustard. 🌿



VOLUNTEER SPOT

Gloria Potter, Co-Chair of Garden Walk

by Suzanna Tudor

This is the second year that Gloria Potter has co-chaired the Garden Walk. The PCMG member since 2010 says the enthusiasm of the homeowners and attendees is most rewarding for her. She stated that “people sharing information, exchanging ideas and enjoying the day together with others of similar interests” are what inspires her to continue with the Walk.



On the flip side, coordination of volunteers presents the biggest challenge as Gloria is concerned about matching helpers with their different needs. For example, some can't stand for extended periods or be in the sun. She also strives to place them where they will be happy with what they are doing. Last year, there were violinists and artists at the gardens, and Gloria wanted to continue that. Constant communication and visits with homeowners



are necessary to make sure everyone is on the same page. Last-minute changes continue to challenge, and setbacks, like having no one to make the Walk's map, a crucial detail. Gloria is not computer savvy. But thanks to her co-chair Barb Kunshek's husband, Rudy, and Nancy Rosene's computer expertise, they created it.

Besides co-chairing the Garden Walk, Gloria has served in other volunteer opportunities: PCMG board, master recycler class at the Farmer's Market, community garden, docent at Garden Walks, tree sale and Gardening Show.

And no, she's not related to Jack Potter, another member of PCMG, as Gloria shared that others have thought they were married. Gloria is a widow, with two sons. Her residential path included Chicago, to Iowa, then Valparaiso where she has lived since 1997.



When first taking on the job as Garden Walk Co-Chair, Gloria wondered how she would be able to do it all. She soon learned that many others step up when there is something to be done. Past Walk chairs and participants guided and gave her tips on how to perform many tasks.

“Everyone is so helpful with all the things they do,” Gloria said, thankfully. 🌿



GARDEN WANDERER

Spring Grove Cemetery and Arboretum

by Lyndsay Ploehn



In late April, my husband and I went on a weekend road trip to Cincinnati. I had only briefly visited Cincinnati once before on a field trip with the Morton Arboretum horticulturists, but my husband had never been before. The weather was beautiful, the Cubs were in town, and the spring flowers were blooming. On the day we left Cincinnati, my husband suggested we each do one thing of our choice. His choice was to find a barbecue restaurant for lunch, which we did—Eli’s BBQ, and it was fabulous! My choice was to see the Spring Grove Cemetery. At first, he was not excited to see a cemetery, but I assured him he would be impressed.

Spring Grove Cemetery is not your typical cemetery with uniform headstones and a flat landscape. It is the second largest cemetery in the United States and is one of two national cemeteries recognized as a level III accredited arboretum. (Mount Auburn Cemetery in Cambridge, Massachusetts, being the other accredited cemetery.) According to the Interactive Community of Arboreta, “There are four levels of accreditation. Level III arboretums have at least 500 species of woody plants, employ a collections curator, have substantial

educational programming, collaborate with other arboreta, publicize their collections, and actively participate in tree science and conservation.”

You could spend days meandering through the winding roads of Spring Grove. It’s nearly impossible to cover all 733 acres, but if you allow yourself even thirty minutes, you will be inspired and in awe. The cemetery, founded in 1845 by the Cincinnati Horticultural Society, was a not-for-profit cemetery. The first burial occurred on September 1, 1845. This cemetery is a window into our nation’s history. Civil war generals, congressional medal of honor recipients, major generals and revolutionary war soldiers are just a few of the notable burials at Spring Grove. Most of the gravestones throughout the cemetery are large monuments, pieces of architecture that are bold, majestic, and represent power. Graceful, peaceful draping plants and delicate flowers surround them.



In 1855, Albert Stauch became superintendent of the cemetery. His interest in using native plants and trees, located where “*the beauty of form, color, and size shall be most effective*,” along with his desire to create a natural landscape, led him to reroute roadways to follow the natural topography of the land. Stauch placed lakes, bridges, and islands throughout the cemetery grounds. The concept of a “Lawn Cemetery,” grassy expanses with native plants, trees, lakes, and meandering paths, was unique and soon became the desired concept for the majority of U.S. cemeteries.

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By the 1860's, the cemetery had the most diverse collection of trees in the country except for Central Park in New York. Today, it is home to over 1,200 species of trees, plants and shrubs, fifteen lakes, a cascading waterfall, and several footbridges.



My favorites to see in the spring are flowering dogwood (*Cornus florida*), azalea, eastern redbud (*Cercis canadensis*), and lilac (*Syringa*). The flowering trees and shrubs are what quickly catch your eye, but if you drive or walk slowly throughout the grounds, the massive trees steal the show. My favorite on this trip was a weeping katsura tree (*Cercidiphyllum japonicum* 'Amazing Grace').

To experience Spring Grove's art, history, architecture and horticulture in person, public and private [walking/tram/bus tours](#) are offered from April through October. More information about public tours can be found on the [events](#) page. 🌿



MEET A MASTER GARDENER

Master Gardener - Barb Caruso

by Marcia Carson

Meet Barbara Caruso! I recently had the opportunity to sit next to her on a PCMG bus trip to some of the Shirley Heinze Land Trust properties. Barbara spent many years commuting to Chicago to her job from Porter but has resided in Hobart for the last ten years. Now retired from her job in Chicago, she is a part-time real estate agent for



Coldwell Banker. Barb described herself as a city girl from Chicago who enjoys life in Indiana. She took the Master Gardener class in 2016 (pictured left) and has enjoyed volunteering at both the Porter County Fair and the Gardening Show.



Barb may enjoy gardening and the outdoors, but her first love is animals!

She presently shares her home with two dogs, but has had as many as eight cats. She is very active in the Indiana Cat Society, which is in Westville. The ICS is a no-kill cat shelter, which searches to find suitable homes for cats, reduce pet overpopulation and educate the public. Barb supports the ICS and spends time volunteering for the ICS.

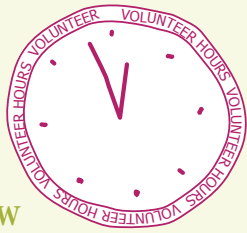
If you haven't met Barb yet, look for her at the fair in July or at the Gardening Show in January! She doesn't get to attend many meetings, but she is certainly a great asset and active PCMG! 🌿



OPPORTUNITIES

Volunteer / Educational

To publish volunteer or educational opportunities in our newsletter, please contact nrosene@icloud.com.



Volunteer

BANTA'S 2ND ANNUAL ART & GARDEN SHOW

What: Judges are needed for entries, including photography, painting, knitting, crochet, basket weaving, woodcarving, houseplants, flower arranging, baking, preserving and more.

Where: Banta Senior Center, 605 Beech St., Valparaiso, Ind.

When: Friday, June 16, 10:30 a.m.-2:30 p.m.

Info: Lyndsay Ploehn, 219-465-3555

GARDEN WALK 2017

What: PCMGA needs volunteers to sign up for a.m. and p.m. shifts to be docents at the gardens and sell tickets.

Where: 5 private gardens and 1 public garden plus ticket sales at Hayes Leonard School

When: Saturday, June 24, a.m. and p.m. shifts

Info: Access SignUp.com to volunteer

CAMP FUNset AT SUNSET HILL

What: Program and activity for children (one group of 15 to 20 children at a time for one hour, two groups in the morning and two in the afternoon).

Where: Sunset Hill Farm County Park, 775 N Meridian Road, Valparaiso, Ind.

When: Tuesday, June 27, various times

Info: Tyler K. Perry, TPerry@porterco.org

Educational

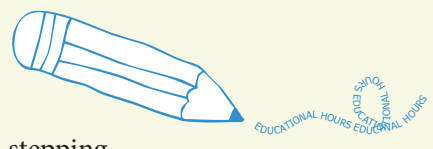
STEPPING STONE WORKSHOP

What: Make your very own stepping stones using leaves, bits of glass (or anything you want to include).

Where: 404 Shorewood Ct., Valparaiso, Ind.

When: June 8, 10 a.m.-2 p.m.

Info: Limited to 20 participants. \$10 registration fee includes lunch. Send check to Marcia Carson, 404 Shorewood Ct., Valparaiso, Ind. 46385



RAIN GARDENS - ADVANCED MG TRAINING PROGRAM

What: Learn about rain gardens and how they can positively impact our environment.

Where/When: June 9 from 9-10 a.m. at Valparaiso University and June 10 from 9 a.m.-12 p.m. at Shirley Heinze Meadowbrook location.

Info: Select this [link](#) for more details and registration information

2017 PURDUE MASTER GARDENER STATE TOUR

What: New Annual Purdue MG State Tour co-sponsored by Monroe County Master Gardener Association, Purdue Extension, and the Porter County Master Gardener Association.

Where: The tour will start at the Purdue Extension Site Office—open to the public. For more information, contact the coordinators to Purdue Extension, Porter County Master Gardener Association, 5700 N

When: Friday, June 16, 9 a.m.-6:30 p.m.

Info: Preregistration is required. Online registration and more information at MCMGA.net. Earn educational hours (1.5 hours for morning sessions—3 hours for afternoon tours).

PCMGA BUS TRIP

What: The Porter County Master Gardeners Association 2nd bus trip of 2017 to Lake Cliff Gardens, Benton Harbor, Mich.

Where: The bus will leave from Jewel in Chesterton

When: Wednesday, August 2, 8 a.m.-3 p.m.

Info: Cost of the trip is \$15 for members and \$30 for guests. Bring payment to the monthly PCMGA meeting. Contact kathyruble@yahoo.com.

2017 PCMGA MONTHLY MEETING SPEAKER SCHEDULE

- **July** - Mike Kobe - "Garden Photography"
- **August** - George Brenn, Four Seasons Landscape Nursery, "Pruning 101: How Plants Respond to Pruning" 🌿

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Saturday, June 24, 2017

9 a.m. - 4 p.m. CDT

Admission

**\$6.00 in Advance/\$8.00 Day of Walk
Children Under 12 Free**



Porter County Master Gardeners Association

GARDEN WALK 2017

A Bounty of Beautiful Gardens

by Gloria Potter

The Porter County Master Gardeners Association Garden Walk 2017 is fast approaching, and you will not want to miss it. Wear comfy shoes and bring your camera and notepad. There is something for everyone. Stroll through a veggie and herb garden and be inspired by the imaginative repurposing of garden items. View gardens for sun and shade, beautiful ponds and even a bog garden. Host gardeners can't wait to share their gardening tips and adventures with you.

Rain or shine, the Walk is scheduled for Saturday, June 24, from 9 a.m.-4 p.m. CDT. Advance tickets, available beginning on June 10, can be purchased for \$6 at our [Ticket Locations](#). Tickets may be purchased on day of Walk for \$8 at Hayes Leonard Elementary School, "Garden of Heroes." Children under 12 are free. Look for updates and additional information at www.pcgarden.info.

Ticket Locations

- Chesterton Feed & Garden
- Four Seasons Nursery
- Heinold & Feller Tire & Lawn Equipment
- Horses Garden Center
- Jakes' Feed & Garden
- Philips Ace Hardware (Valparaiso)
- Porter County Extension Office
- Reed's Nursery & Garden Center
- Town & Country Market (Valparaiso)
- WRF Nursery & Garden Center