

Garden Thyme

The breezes taste of apple peel. The air is full of smells to feel.
John Updike

September 2021

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

Volume 7, Issue 5



Germinate Knowledge – through Seeds

By Wilma Willard, PCMG Class of 2011

People save seeds for lots of different reasons. You may save seeds to save money or to preserve genetic diversity. For specific flavor or for helping to save the bees might be your reason. But as Master Gardeners, let's emphasize two additional reasons: to connect with your garden and to build community. And here's how:

The 17th Annual Gardening Show's Seed & Bulb Exchange is quite possibly the largest on-site event of its type in the country, and it is coming up January 22, 2022. This exchange hits the target for our mission to help others grow by sharing our knowledge. Each show attendee receives free tickets to swap for seeds and bulbs and has the opportunity to engage in conversation about how to grow the ornamentals or harvest the vegetables.

Seeds and bulbs are donated by local stores and seed companies. Co-Chairpersons Judy Engle and Bev Ripley write letters and make phone calls to secure a wide variety of commercially produced organic seed for the Seed & Bulb Exchange. "This year we have written to fourteen companies asking for seed," states Bev. "We often receive our vegetable seeds in this way." But this year brings a new challenge; companies experienced a seed shortage because of the garden craze brought on by COVID. One source of 7,000 seeds is not able to donate for the 2022 Gardening Show.

Per usual, the co-chairpersons encourage our Master Gardeners to save seeds from their own yards. It is very popular to save and donate seeds from annuals and perennials. This year, might you consider saving your vegetable seeds, as well? For an ample amount for the Gardening Show, the goal is to have 10,000 packages of seeds!

Plans are underway this fall to offer six fun events to package seeds as a group. You may also take some with you to clean and package at home. "Training is free!" shares Bev. Follow the link to this handy guide to help you <https://www.bhg.com/.../yard/garden-care/garden-seed-tips/>

You can play a part in germinating knowledge and in helping others grow through seed saving.



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Recibees

By Jill Kilhefner

PCMG Class of 2011

This recipe is from an “oldie but goodie” cookbook [A Midwest Gardener’s Cookbook](#) by Marian K. Towne. This apple butter is dark and strongly flavored and is made in the oven.

Oven Apple Butter

Yield: about 1 gallon

Ingredients:

7 lbs. apples (I use a variety of apples for depth of flavor)

1 cup apple cider (reserve more if needed)

3 lbs. light brown sugar (or 2 lbs. dark brown sugar)

2 T. ground cinnamon

Pinch of salt

(Optional: orange zest from 1 orange - add after the apple butter is done cooking)

Directions:

Peel, core and slice apples. Add apples and 1 cup apple cider to a saucepan and cook apples until soft. Press through a food mill or use an immersion blender to puree the apples.

Add apples to a large roasting pan (with a cover) and add remaining ingredients. Stir thoroughly. Bake covered for 3 hours at 350°F, stirring once hourly.

If consistency is too runny for your taste, remove cover for 5-10 minutes and allow steam to evaporate in oven. If consistency is too thick, add additional apple cider to achieve desired consistency.

Ladle into hot sterilized pint jars. Cover with lids and rings. Process in hot water bath for 10 minutes after water has come to a boil. Remove from water bath and place on a rack or towel to cool.

*Submitted by Jill Kilhefner
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Jill shares, “I have made this apple butter for years and put it in Christmas stockings and gift bags. It’s everyone’s favorite!”



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Young and old work together for the greater good—tasty apple butter!



Detwiler Family Applebutter



A Tradition Worth Tasting

By Wilma (Detwiler) Willard
PCMG Class of 2011

It's been a tradition all my life (and before) for our family to make apple butter together in a big copper kettle over an open fire. We now have made it into a weekend reunion that happens in October every 2-4 years in the Midwest. My six siblings are carrying on the tradition and teaching our children, grandchildren and great grandchildren the craft using my grandma's recipe and a replica of my grandpa's copper kettle. Now, at our "apple butter reunions" we not only make the apple butter as a team but add many fun bonding activities like games, hayrides, pumpkin carving and crafts. We always add some singing, worship, and family history to remember our roots of faith and family.

Detwiler Apple Butter:
It's a tradition worth tasting!

Tradition demands fresh homemade bread for dipping to wipe the kettle clean.



Canning happens quickly with everyone staking their claim on the sides of a long table with their jars ready. We help each other until the kettle is almost empty.



"Schnitzing" is the biggest job!



The kettle fills up gradually with 4-5 bushels of a variety of apples. Grandma's preference was Northern Spy, but Jonathon or Yellow Delicious are good. Boiled down cider and water is added and a bit of sugar. Stirring is constant for 4-6 hours!



In 2007, I'm making the traditional lunch of ham and bean soup, served with apple pie, of course.



1st cousins photo shenanigans

*Editor's Note: A botanical garden near the Arctic Circle? No way. Yes!
And fellow MG Jack Steffen has shared his experiences in this introduction.*



Skrúður - A Botanical Garden Near the Arctic Circle

By Jack Steffen, PCMG Class of 2017

Brief History: History informs us that Iceland was first inhabited by Nordic travelers in 874 A.D. At that time, birch forests covered nearly 40% of the island. However, centuries of felling trees to build houses, boats, and wood for cooking and heating led to near total deforestation. Current political pressure promotes reforestation, yet today only about 2% of Iceland is covered with trees.

In the early 1900's a Protestant pastor, Sigtryggur Guðlaugsson, began teaching at the nearby Núpur boarding school for boys. In addition to traditional academic subjects, he felt it important to educate students about the planting, care, and identification

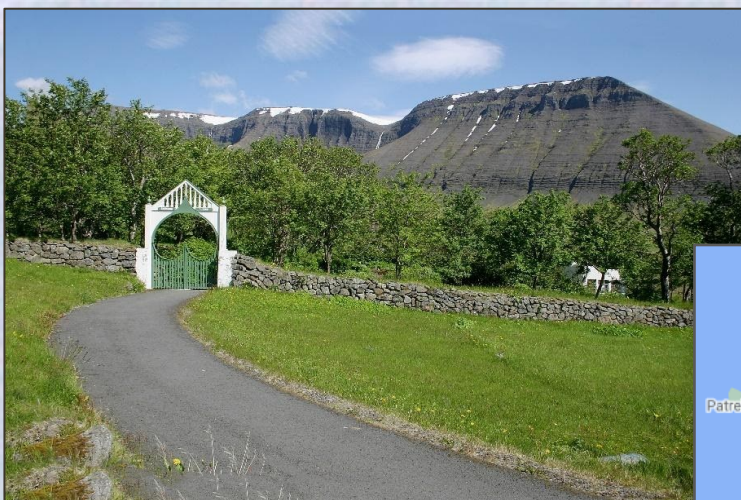
of various plants. Together they began the hard work of removing stones, preparing the soil, and planting trees. Skróður Botanical Garden was officially dedicated August 7th, 1909 to commemorate the first successful attempt at growing potatoes.

During ensuing years, many improvements were made and both students and teacher worked to determine plants that would survive the often inhospitable weather and gusty winds.

Skrúður Botanical Garden was properly maintained until 1980, when it fell into disrepair until 1992. Thereafter a committee was formed to restore and secure its future maintenance. It officially reopened in 1996. *To be continued...*

*"If traveling in the Western Fjords of Iceland, Skróður Botanical Garden is worthy of a visit!"
-Jack Steffen*

*Want to learn more about the plants, places, and unique climate of the garden? Scroll beyond page 8 of the newsletter and start with the heading **About the Garden.***



Top: Pathway & entrance gate to garden.

Right: Skróður Botanical Garden is located on sloping ground in Iceland's Western Fjords.





Left:
Hardneck
garlic
drying.

Note
yellow
outer
foliage.

Right:
Softneck
garlic stems
can be
braided.



Far Right:
Editor's
note:
I've used
metal
planters as
drying
racks.



Left:
Forgetting
to dig
garlic can
result in
this
multi-unit
next
year.



Garlic, *Allium sativum*

By Jill Kilhefner, PCMG Class of 2011

Garlic varieties can be hardneck (*ophioscorodon*) or softneck (*sativum*). Hardnecks produce bulbs with a central woody stem; cloves grow in a single row around this stem, have a shorter shelf life, and are a good choice for NWI climate. In late spring, hardnecks send up scapes, green flower stalks that should be cut to conserve energy for growing bulbs.

Softneck bulbs produce more cloves in several layers around a soft stem, have a strong, intense flavor. They have a longer shelf life. Stems can be braided and hung for storage.

Garlic planting guidelines:

- *Plant September-November in Zone 5
- *6-8 hours full sun
- *Plant individual cloves upright with flattened base down, about 2-4" deep and 3-4" apart
- *Add organic fertilizer and a thick layer of mulch
- *Keep well watered until winter.

Harvesting guidelines:

- *Harvest in July, when first set of foliage begins to yellow and flop
- *Gently dig up bulbs, leaving foliage and roots
- *Shake off excess soil
- *Place on rack in a dry, shady place to cure for two weeks. When thoroughly dry, cut roots close to bulb and cut or braid stems
- *Can be stored in dark-dry place, 4-10 months.

Garlic is available from most mail order seed companies. Grocery store cloves may not be suited for our area or treated. I ordered from Perkins' Good Earth Farm in DeMotte. I'm looking forward to picking up my order this fall.

Happy gardening and Bon Appetit!

"It's a comfort to always find pasta in the cupboard and garlic and parsley in the garden."
-Alice Waters
(I wholeheartedly agree!
-Jill Kilhefner)

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Branches from wild Autumn Olive trees along N Calumet are stapled backwards to the pallet backdrop.



Two bars across hold nine lengths of 100" long tulle. Attached atop, are garlands of greenery and white roses.



Above: Silver Dollar, roses, & baby's breath for the bridesmaid bouquets. Below: Silver Dollar, white hydrangeas, and Lamb's Quarters found under an IN State Road 49 bridge.



When Weeds Saved the Wedding

By Wilma Willard, PCMG Class of 2011

Friend (Mother of the Bride): Hi Wilma. Wondering if you could provide white hydrangeas for my daughter's wedding like you did for our friend's wedding a few years back— you remember—two big bouquets in the front and then some along the pews' ends with bows?

Me: Sure! When's the wedding?

Friend: Two weeks

Me: What's the bride's colors?

Friend: Sage green and cream.

Me: OK, but what are her colors?

Friend: Sage green and cream, and some navy.

Me: (Thinking to myself) Are those wedding colors?

Did God make any navy flowers? I ain't got no sage green foliage in my yard, nor whitish flowers other than my hydrangeas and, hum... end of August... they may be turning blush or bronze by then. Oh yes, I have white roses...hum...maybe...but, I *can't depend* on my roses! What have I just gotten myself into???

A flood of pictures came from the bride including an elaborate backdrop with voluptuous greenery and yards of tulle plus bridesmaid bouquets and pew bows, none of which had hydrangeas. No fault of her own, the bride did not know what a hydrangea was. She likes baby's breath and a wispy asymmetrical look. OK.

Thus, my frantic online research began, and I soon discovered that sage green and cream weddings are on trend and eucalyptus was going to be my friend. So I quickly ordered 10 bunches of Silver Dollar (*Eucalyptus cinerea*) to arrive a day before the wedding. One day.

To my surprise, my dependable 34-year-old hydrangea tree (*paniculata* 'Grandiflora') decided to take a year off, so I cast a plea on Facebook for free hydrangeas. A gracious friend of a friend said "come harvest as many as you want." With white roses from the florist and baby's breath from the grocery and scavenging for weeds... whew... the wedding turned out... beautiful!



Autumn Olive Tree (*Elaeagnus umbellata*) was brought to the US from Asia in the 1800s, planted widely in 1950s for erosion control and has spread as an invasive species. Its grayish green leaves with silvery scales bottom side, gives off a shimmering look—perfect greenery for this wedding!



Lamb's Quarters (*Chenopodium album*) seeds were stored and used by the American Blackfoot Indians during the sixteenth century. Lamb's Quarters is a purifying plant that helps to restore healthy nutrients to poor quality soil. It is edible! Lamb's Quarters' flowers are very small, greenish, densely grouped together into spikes. The leaves are light green on the top and whitish underneath and look dusty from a distance due to a white coating on the leaves—perfect white flowers and greenery for this wedding!

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Teacher Sara Porter and her fourth grade students from Myers Elementary proudly pose with Porter County Purdue Master Gardener, Vince "Papa" Fischer on the edge of their garden.

Fourth grade students from Crisman and Myers Elementary recently completed the Golden Ray Series of the Junior Master Gardener Program under the direction of Porter County Purdue Master Gardener, Vince "Papa" Fischer.

The Junior Master Gardener Program is a nationally recognized program that provides a hands-on approach to learning horticulture, environmental science, leadership, and life skills.

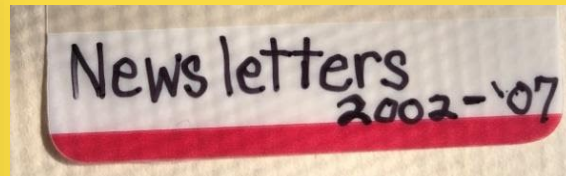
This program is committed to helping young people become gardeners and

contributing citizens. For more information, please check out the website at:

<http://www.jmgkids.us/>

and email pcmg@purdue.edu for local programs in our area. The Junior Master Gardener Program is connected to the Indiana Academic Standards Grades 3 through 8.

Myers Elementary School Photo is on page 2.



By Suzanna Tudor
PCMG Class of 2002

A flash from the past! I thought it would be fun to see who, what, when, and where we were doing things years ago. Here are a couple of snippets from old newsletters handed to me many moons ago by Kathy Ruble from January, 2005 and July, 2006.

Purdue Cooperative Extension Service Porter County Office



Master Gardeners Tips
Trips & Tools of the Trade

Volume 11, Issue 3 July 2006

Purdue Cooperative Extension Service Porter County Office

Gardeners Tips & Tools of the Trade

January 2005



Master Gardener Badges Awarded



2003 Master Gardeners awarded their first Master Gardening badge. From left to right: Flavia Cheng, John Fischer, LuAnn Troxel, Jackie Fenchak, Judy Engle, Ann Cierniak, and Mary Jackson.

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APPLE BITES

Fun facts about nature's perfect snack

There are more than 2,500 varieties of apples grown in the United States, and they come in all shades of red, green and yellow.

The most popular varieties of apples in the US are the Red Delicious, Golden Delicious, and the Granny Smith.

The Yellow Newton Pippin was George Washington's favorite. One of his hobbies was pruning his apple trees.

Apple trees can live to be about 100 years old.

The science of apple growing is called pomology.

The average apple has 10 seeds.

Apple trees take 4-5 years to produce their first fruit. A standard size tree starts bearing fruit 8-10 years after it is planted. A dwarf tree starts bearing fruit in 3-5 years.

Most apple blossoms are pink when they open but gradually transform into white.

It takes the energy of 50 leaves to produce one apple.

credit @ Applehollar.com



Which apple is good for what? Check this chart and find out.

<https://pickyourown.org/applevarietiestochoose.htm>

Education Rewind

How do you enter flowers in the **Flower Show Open Class** at the Porter County Fair? Click [here](#) to view the training video with tips by Janet Magnuson, Superintendent. Prepare for summer 2022!

Congrats to our 2021 Porter County Fair Flower Show winners! <https://www.pcgarden.info/porter-co-fair/>



Are you sure you don't have invasive species in your home landscape? Watch this video "**Invasive Species in the Home Landscape**" from Purdue Extension Educator, Phil Woolery. Click [here](#) to view the very informative video.

"**There's a Fungus Among Us!**" This is a webinar done for Gabis Arboretum by Victoria Jostes. It's excellent and well worth your time to watch. <https://youtu.be/1tWnLSDOafs>

See educational videos of former **PCMGA Garden 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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Skrúður - A Botanical Garden Near the Arctic Circle

By Jack Steffen

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Brief History

History informs us that Iceland was first inhabited by Nordic travelers in 874 A.D. At that time, birch forests covered nearly 40% of the island. However, centuries of felling trees to build houses, boats, and wood for cooking and heating led to near total deforestation. Current political pressure promotes reforestation, yet today only about 2% of Iceland is covered with trees.

In the early 1900's a Protestant pastor, Sigtryggur Guðlaugsson, began teaching at the nearby Núpur boarding school for boys. In addition to traditional academic subjects, he felt it important to educate students about the planting, care, and identification of various plants.

Together they began the hard work of removing stones, preparing the soil, and planting trees. The garden was officially dedicated August 7th, 1909 to commemorate the first successful attempt at growing potatoes. During ensuing years, many improvements were made and both students and teacher worked to determine plants that would survive the often-inhospitable weather and gusty winds. The garden was properly maintained until 1980, when it fell into disrepair until 1992. Thereafter a committee was formed to restore and secure its future maintenance.

It officially reopened in 1996.



A "crown" tops the garden's entry gate.

About The Garden

Skrúður Botanical Garden is located on sloping ground in Iceland's Western Fjords, . . . a bit off the beaten tourist track. The garden is about the size of a football field, is surrounded by a stacked-stone wall on three sides, and is located at the base of a barren earthen and ash lava mountain. However, soil adjacent to the Dýrafjörður fjord is flatter and more fertile than other similar locations.



Here is the Pathway and entrance gate to Skrúður Botanical Garden.

A wide pathway leads visitors from a free parking area through an accurate reproduction of an earlier gate. A nominal ISK¹ 300 per person (a little less than \$2.00 US) is suggested of visitors at a donation box located along the pathway.

Trees are located around the garden periphery and along gravel pathways that lead through various areas of the garden. While growing trees was an important part of the early curriculum, the modest size of most current trees indicates they likely are not original plantings. Parts of the garden are in deep to moderate shade, but ample patches of sunlight abound. A gently splashing fountain and spring-fed spillway provide a pleasant soundscape.



A bubbling fountain and spillway are fed by cold spring water from the base of the adjacent mountain.

Skrúður Botanical Garden is founded in the spirit of a true botanical garden which is “dedicated to the collection, cultivation, preservation, and display of a wide range of plants labeled with their botanical names.”² Most perennials in the garden are properly labeled, however, note in the image (below right) that labeling is in the Icelandic language. (... A new challenge! ...) .



Vegetable garden



Plants were appropriately labeled.

¹ ISK refers to the Icelandic Krónur (a monetary denomination meaning “crowns”)

² Wikipedia - definition

We visited the garden near the end of June, and there was evidence of a recently planted vegetable garden (above left). This late planting date is dictated by the region's hardiness zone being 7b. Although the growing season here is shorter by two months, consider that the summer sun sets at 12:30 a.m. and rises again about 2:00 a.m.; thereby providing ample hours of sunlight.

In addition to trees and shrubs, some flowering plants also native to northwest Indiana, are easily identified by similarities of their names in Icelandic and English (see image below left).



Illustrative sample of flowering plants in the garden.

Nestled near the center of the garden sits a little greenhouse. It is a mostly glass refuge capable of capturing warmth provided by the Arctic sun. Today, this structure is open to visitors and serves primarily as a place to relax and study the garden's history through photographs and written word.



Greenhouse



Monument

Nearby is a monument erected to honor the garden's founders Pastor Sigtryggur Guðlaugsson, and his wife Hjaltlína Guðjónsdóttir.³

Visitors who enter the garden through a grass field from the west are welcomed through a whale jawbone arch. Originally donated to the garden by local whalers in the early 1900's, the jawbone was replaced some thirty years later by the smaller jawbone we see today. The original jawbone was moved to a natural history museum due to its exceptional size.

Located just outside the garden wall is the garden tool shed. In typical Icelandic fashion, sides of the tool shed are dug into the adjacent hillside, and its roof is covered with sod.



Tool shed



Whale jawbone arch at west edge of garden.

Skrúður Botanical Garden may not rank highly among notable botanical gardens of the world, but it is believed to be the *first* in Iceland and is one of two in Iceland located closest to the Arctic Circle [Coordinates: 65.9°N – 23.6°W]. In 2013, the garden was awarded the Carlo Scarpa International Prize, a significant recognition in the world of landscape architecture.

There is no question about the powerful gesture made by the young students and their leaders in imagining the garden and transforming this small strip of deserted land into a place of learning and beauty. The Icelandic poet Guðmundur Ingi Kristjánsson described the garden like this in 1938:

Skrúður is a smiling mark
That deserves to be seen
Which shows how mild and powerful
The earth of your land can be.⁴

If traveling in the Western Fjords of Iceland, Skróður Botanical Garden is worthy of a visit!

³ Note the interesting naming tradition in Iceland. The ending of Pastor Guolaugsson's name tells us he was the son of Mr. & Mrs. Guolaugs while the pastor's wife was the daughter of the Gugjónsdóttir family.

⁴ Nannini, Sofia (translated by Nico Borbely), "The Story of a Garden That Survives on the Edge of the Arctic Circle," (un-dated)