



For those who share our interest in gardening . . .

October, 2016

Kris Medic, Bartholomew County Extension Educator and Becky Pinto, Master Gardener Newsletter Editor and Advanced Master Gardener, Bronze Level.



"Autumn...the year's last, loveliest smile.

-William Cullen Bryant

The University of Georgia and Iowa State University are working together on a research study entitled, "A National Study of Motivations of Extension Master Gardeners."

Completion of this online Motivations survey should take about 30 minutes, for which there is no reward except for the warm fuzzies you get from helping researchers to understand why we do stuff. (They will report back to us.)

To participate in the Motivations study, please click on this link.

<http://tinyurl.com/MasterGardenerMotivations>

Thanks!

It's a Bug Buffet – And You're on the Menu...

Kansas City residents and Midwesterners, in general, are falling victim to itchy, burning skin and, sometimes, even puffy, swollen eyes. A tiny (but mighty) mite is responsible: the oak leaf mite. In fact, the Kansas State Extension office in Olathe fielded its highest number of mite-related calls in 10 years, says horticulture agent Dennis Patton. He goes on to say that weather conditions have been favorable for “epidemic proportion” mite reproduction. Bob Bauernfeind, Kansas State University entomologist in Manhattan, says, “It’s just the year.” He reports that the mites ‘haven’t been a big thing’ since 2004 and 2005 – until this year.

The oak leaf mite, also referred to as *Pyemotes herfsi*, was first identified just a decade ago. It likes hanging around gall formations established on oak tree leaves. “This year we have had a spike in the number of these gall formations,” said Patton. Insects such as midges lay eggs in the gall formations.

The mites move right in, make themselves at home, and start feeding on the larvae inside the oak galls. While they provide a service to the trees in doing so -- they hold down the number of midge larvae --- mother midges everywhere are no doubt asking, “Who do you have to know?”

With the coming of cooler temperatures and shorter days, the mites exit the galls; in fact, entomologists estimate that in just one day a tree could shed more than 370,000 of them!

Odds are good that you're going to come away itching! Anyone under or near one of these trees, or even downwind from them, likely will be visited by the mites — which are almost microscopic at just .2 millimeters in size. Red itchy welts and swelling have been reported, with no repellent likely to work. The best strategy is to wear long sleeves and long pants when outside for any prolonged amount of time.

And hope for frost. A 2-week frost is likely to take care of them.

For more on mites, access this link:

<http://www.kansascity.com/news/local/article36877131.html>

-BP

Editor's note: *This pest has been reported in Bartholomew County by some very itchy residents.*

-KM

The Start of the Parks

Many of us have grown up with Indiana State Parks close by anywhere we choose to travel along Indiana highways and byways. It seems that they must have always been there, affording peace and tranquility to individuals seeking it, and fun and frolic for families, too, all in the same place in relative harmony with one another.

But, at their inception, Indiana State Parks had their share of drama. There were warriors and stubborn advocates, peaceful townsmen (and women) and politicians; heroes and villains, long before the parks we enjoy today saw their happy endings and were delivered into the hands of the people for their enjoyment.

Here are some hallmark moments along the state parks' journey:

- ❖ Starting in 1910, Richard Lieber, Indianapolis-based businessman and conservationist inspired by John Muir and Stephen Mather, played an integral role in the development of 10 Indiana state parks.
- ❖ In 1908, Lieber convinced then-governor Ralston to set up a committee to establish a state park system in Indiana like the one in he admired in California. Turkey Run was slated to be the first park, but Lieber was outbid! Instead the land which is now McCormick's Creek State Park was bid upon and became our first. Later a veneer company sold the acreage that now makes up Turkey Run State Park to the State of Indiana. By 1916, Indiana had two state parks in Owen County.
- ❖ Other parks established in the early years include Clifty Falls (1925), The Dunes, (1925) and Brown County State Park (1929).
- ❖ By the 1930's, Indiana's State Park System was ranked with the finest in the nation (right up there with New York's and California's), based on usage reports.
- ❖ The Civilian Conservation Corps, (CCC), a relief program for unemployed men during the Great Depression years, updated infrastructure and built many of the shelters and stone paths still in use statewide today.
- ❖ Because of a swell in parks' popularity for recreation and camping through the 50's and 60's and beyond, parks began to decline. A move away from the "hands off" approach to park management ---and toward park management organizations like the DNR --- helped secure funds and harness resources to focus on park revival. Today, parks are again thriving with life-giving programs like wildlife management and invasive species control.

Depending upon where we live in our cities and towns, we may be hard-pressed to see the "planning" evident in city planning - unless the plan is to do without trees and wildlife altogether. The rules for making a difference for habitat preservation haven't changed; it still starts with advocacy, funding, and influence.

But the true beginning is advocacy, like Lieber's. He said, "Our parks and preserves are not mere picnicking places. They are rich storehouses of memories and reveries. They are guides and counsels to the weary and faltering in spirit. They are bearers of wonderful tales to him who will listen; a solace to the aged and an inspiration to the young."

-BP

To learn more about Richard Lieber and the start of the parks, visit:

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Richard_Lieber



Turkey Run State Park

A Beautiful Night at Breeding Farm

Congratulations to our core group of Master Gardener association visionaries who hatched and executed a plan to hold a Master Gardener Homecoming earlier this month, complete with fine food, music by the immensely talented Jerry Maulin, review of projects, and a silent auction. Even the Weather Committee came through! It was a lovely event, and – if our visionaries have anything to do with it – someday we'll fill the barn!

-KM



Leaf it Alone

"Pound for pound, leaves contain twice the mineral content of manure," writes Robin Sweester, *The Farmer's Almanac's* gardening blogger. "The huge amount of organic matter they offer can be used to improve soil structure. Leaf humus can lighten heavy clay soils and increase the moisture retention of dry sandy soils. No organic gardener should pass up this opportunity for a free soil amendment."

If you're dreading getting into the whole leaf raking thing again this year as much as I am, this may serve as an alternative:

Go Zen and be the first in your neighborhood to make art instead. Rake leaves in concentric circle swaths around tree trunks, creating circles of cleared paths, akin to Japanese sand raking. See the cover of the book *New Harmony, Indiana Then and Now* in the Bartholomew County Public Library or on-line through Google images. Better done and appreciated if there's no wind disturbing your efforts...

You may ultimately rake some leaves to the curb for pick-up, but think of the fun & relaxation you'll have doing this one afternoon then going in the house for cocoa instead of driving yourself to distraction. ☺

-BP

Cool Pest of the Month: Blackberry Seed Gall



Missouri Botanic Garden

Blackberry seed gall on blackberry (*Rubus*) caused by a cynipid gall wasp (Hymenoptera) *Diastrophus cuscutaeformis*



Crystal Van Pelt

Thanks!

Jan Bruner, John Sohn, and Hannah Maulin, and Becky Pinto for ably assisting the Master Gardener Intern Training, which is wrapping up.

The association core planning group, for working toward a more active Master Gardener program in Bartholomew County. Recent accomplishments include an Effective Meetings training session, a Homecoming Pitch-in at Breeding Farm, and a Visioning session. Watch for new developments!

Hey, Save the Date!

Topics in Permaculture Small Livestock	14 November 6:30 pm	BCPL
Topics in Permaculture Energy	17 November 6:30 pm	BCPL
Wreath Making Call 372-3541 to register	19 November 2-4 pm	Breeding Farm \$20
Topics in Permaculture Grazing under Trees	28 November 6:30 pm	BCPL
Rain Barrels	17 January 6 pm	BCPL

Contact

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Topics in Permaculture: Home and Farm Resilience

Home landscape or working farm, permaculture practices can help to increase a property's productivity, resilience, and livability. The aim of permaculture is to create systems that are "ecologically sound and economically viable," based on understanding of natural systems, traditional farming systems, science and technology. Come find out more!

Monday 17 October – Principles of Permaculture with instructors Rhonda Baird and Cheryl Carter Jones

Thursday 27 October – Permaculture Site Design with Rhonda Baird and Cheryl Carter Jones

Monday 14 November – Small Livestock in a Permaculture System with Rhonda Baird and Cheryl Carter Jones

Thursday 17 November – Energy in a Permaculture System with instructor Peter Bane

Monday 28 November – Report from Wisconsin's Driftless Region: Tree Crops with Multi-Species Rotational Grazing with Kris Medic

All events are at 6:30 PM in the Red Room of the Bartholomew County Public Library

"Permaculture is a design system for creating sustainable human environments."
- Bill Mollison, author of Permaculture - a Designer's Manual, 1988.



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*Bartholomew County Master Gardeners
Present a Holiday Wreath-making
Workshop at the Henry Breeding Farm*

Saturday, November 19, 2016
2:00 – 4:00 pm; Henry Breeding Farm Barn

Bring a friend and learn to make a live evergreen wreath complete with festive decorations ready to hang on your door or just in time for holiday entertaining.

Workshop instruction & humor provided by Jack Schmeckebier, former Irwin family gardener.



All materials provided... along with hot cider.

Wear warm clothes—there's NO HEAT in the barn.

Bring pruning shears and gardening gloves.

Registration is required Call Bartholomew County Historical Society at 812-372-3541 to reserve a space.
Cost is \$20. Register early—class size is limited.
Must be 18 years of age.



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