

## Last Local Column

By Larry Caplan, Extension Horticulture Educator, Vanderburgh County, IN

For the Evansville Courier and Press, November 12, 2017

As you may have already heard, the Evansville Courier and Press (ECP) is changing format and content. One of the changes being made is eliminating this Extension Notes column.

I've been blessed with having the opportunity to write for the paper since 1998. If I take off my shoes and socks and use all my fingers, that comes up to 19 years' worth of columns. I'm actually quite amazed at the long run I've had.

The ECP has been a terrific way for me to share Purdue's horticultural research-based information with the greater Evansville gardening community. The paper provided a great way for me to let over 65,000 readers know about localized pest problems and how to control them. More than once, I felt like the print version of Paul Revere, calling out, "The beetles are coming! The beetles are coming!"

Over the years, I've been able to let you know upcoming educational events hosted by me or the Master Gardeners. I've used this space to help allied groups, like Wesselman Nature Society and the Solid Waste District, advertise recycling events and hazardous waste collection days.

I was able to win national awards in 2004 and 2010 for my columns with the ECP through the National Association of County Agricultural Agents. I remember searching online about ten years ago for information to provide to a local gardener; I thought I'd found a great article...only to realize that it was MY article that had been "recycled" by a fellow staff member across the country!

I hope that I provided a good balance between being a good steward of the land and protecting our environment, with readers' desires to have attractive yards and gardens. I hope I got across that spraying our problems away is not going to be the answer; that we need to adjust our ways of managing our properties in order to truly solve our pest problems.

Going forward, I'm going to need to be more innovative with the way I get my message out. I will most likely increase the frequency and regularity of the "Hort Alert" email newsletters I send out. Send me an email at [LCaplan@purdue.edu](mailto:LCaplan@purdue.edu) to get put on this free list. I will also be sharing gardening information on the Vanderburgh County Extension Facebook page, which you can join by visiting us here: <https://www.facebook.com/VanderburghCES/>. I'm also a weekly visitor on 44 News, WEVV, every Wednesday morning.

I may also eventually follow my mentor and friend, Fred Sievers, who wrote for the Evansville Press for many years. He gathered some of his best gardening columns together in book form (I've got both his 1975 and 1980 editions). Would any of you be interested in a book based on

my columns? Maybe with a few of the more...interesting...gardening anecdotes I've lived through over the years?

I want to thank my current editor, Abbey Doyle, and all the other staff I worked with over the years, for their efforts in keeping me from missing deadlines and going too far over my 500-word limit. It's been a great run!