

The Latest Dirt

La Porte County Master Gardener Newsletter



JUNE 2020

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2020 MEETING SCHEDULE

Meetings will be held at 6:00 p.m. on Thursdays at the Purdue Extension Office unless otherwise noted

June 4	Zoom workshop Janet Macunovich “Plant it well, Even if the Roots aren’t Right”
July 2	Business Meeting
August 6	Workshop Location TBA 6:00 p.m.
September 3	Business Meeting
October 1	Workshop
November 5	Business Meeting Election of Officers
December 3	Holiday Dinner

“THE LATEST DIRT” is published monthly.
The next deadline is:
June 20, 2020



www.facebook.com/MasterGardenersOfLaPorteCountyIndiana
www.lpmastergardener.com



Walt Sell returns to La Porte County Extension

By: Tina DeWitt

We are pleased to announce that Walt Sell will be joining the La Porte County Extension Office staff on a part-time temporary basis. Some of you may remember Walt as he was the ANR Educator here in La Porte County prior to moving on to Lake County in 2010.



Walt grew up on a grain/livestock farm in Cass County which is currently operated by his nephews. He was a 4-Her participating in swine, gardening, and a few other projects. Walt has been married to Melinda for 37 years and they have two sons Brice and Brock, granddaughters Sammi, Livi and Oaklynn. Activities that Walt enjoys includes yardwork, walking, backyard poultry, watching Purdue sports and rooting for the Indianapolis Colts.

Below is a listing of what Walt has been up to for the last 36 years with Purdue.

- BS and MS in Ag from Purdue University
- Purdue Extension Educator in La Porte County from 1984 to 2010 mostly as the ANR Educator and later as the Community Development Educator and County Extension Director
- Purdue Extension Educator in Lake County from 2010 to 2012 as the County Extension Director and Community Development Educator
- Central District Director for 3 years
- Assistant Program Leader for Agriculture and Natural Resources from 2015 to present – emphasis on soil health. As Assistant Program Leader he focuses on Extension educational efforts in soil health working closely with Extension Educators, Purdue specialists and our Indiana Conservation Partners

Walt will begin on June 1, 2020 with his focus being on private applicator training for producers, Master Gardeners, partnering with neighboring Extension Educators on educational programming and addressing phone calls and walk in questions.

**MASTER GARDENERS OF LA PORTE COUNTY,
LET’S GIVE WALT A BIG WARM WELCOME!**

ASSOCIATION NEWS

The La Porte County Master Gardeners

Invite you to a ZOOM Presentation with Janet Macunovich

June 4, 2020 6:00 p.m. CDT (US and Canada)

OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

The topic is “**Plant it well, Even if the Roots aren't Right.**”

Janet will discuss why the majority of new tree and shrub plantings are failing. Vital information for all gardeners about how roots grow; why trees and shrubs fail; identifying at-risk plants; and how to plant to increase success.

A little about **Janet Macunovich**:

Janet's formal education in gardening and design includes hundreds of hours of seminars and workshops at botanical gardens and educational institutions in several states. She has completed the Michigan State University Extension gardening program and is active in the community as an Advanced Master Gardener. She sees education as a lifelong process and continues it for herself in formal classes, industry seminars, Agriculture Department programs, books, videotapes, articles, and discussions with students in her classes. In 1985 Janet established Perennial Favorites, a garden and landscape design firm. In 1988 she expanded the business from part-time to full-time.

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88282103378>

Meeting ID: 882 8210 3378

One tap mobile

+13126266799,,88282103378# US (Chicago)

Dial by your location

+1 312 626 6799 US (Chicago)

Meeting ID: 882 8210 3378

Find your local number: <https://us02web.zoom.us/u/kcMJUOqVzQ>



Association Meetings and Workshops

By: Wendy Shafer

I am including below the Purdue Extension policies for meetings for you to review. With this policy in mind, we are holding our June Workshop as a virtual meeting. Obviously, this isn't the ideal method, but we are excited about the presenter and the topic, and we do what we can during these strange times. What we haven't determined is how we will move forward. If we want to meet in person, where can we do this that offers a large enough space for social distancing? We have determined that we will not be able to have the August picnic, as the requirements for food packaging would not allow for it. We will instead have a workshop, but as yet we don't know if it will be virtual or in person. As we figure these things out, we will keep you posted. Thanks for all your patience and all you do to support the Association.

Purdue Extension will continue its current policy of no in-person events through **June 30, 2020**.

Starting **July 1, 2020**, Purdue Extension will permit in-person events that comply with Indiana's Back on Track plan <https://www.backontrack.in.gov/>.

Here are some highlights from the "Event Safety Alliance Reopening Guide" for Purdue Extension events and activities:

- Follow social distancing guidelines of 6 feet between people.
- Conduct daily health screening of employees and volunteers working on behalf of Purdue Extension.
- Register all attendees in case contact tracing is needed in the future.
- Develop a communications plan with local health officials in case of a COVID-19 incident.

More specific guidelines to consider are provided below:

Daily Screening of Employees and Volunteers

- At the start of each workday, employees and volunteers must be screened for COVID-19 symptoms (fever, cough or shortness of breath). Any employee or volunteer presenting any of these symptoms must not report to work.
- Volunteers must follow employee protocols as they are working on behalf of Purdue Extension.

Social Distancing Guidelines:

- Meetings and events must provide enough space to comply with the CDC requirement of 6-foot distance between each person to allow for appropriate social distancing during the event.
- Employees and volunteers must wear face coverings at meetings and events.
- If food is provided, individually packaged meals shall be distributed. Group meals are prohibited, especially buffet meals that use shared utensils to distribute food.

Cleaning and Sanitation Guidelines

- Follow cleaning and sanitation guidelines, including the frequent sanitation of high-contact surfaces and shared materials, tools, and equipment.
- Provide hand sanitizers and disinfectants to employees, volunteers and the general public.

ANNOUNCEMENT

Social & Learning Institute Garden Project

The Social & Learning Institute is seeking assistance in recruiting an individual/or several Master Gardeners for their Health & Wellness Program. Volunteers have already prepared the beds and planted for this season, as shown above from last year.



What they really need is an individual or several willing to oversee the annual garden process AND be willing to devote a couple of classroom hours each week/bi-weekly throughout the gardening season to educate students (or coordinate "guest speakers" to visit). Anything from importance of soil, fertilizer, nutritional value of plants, and maintenance needs. This individual or individuals would not need to be a trained educator, just someone with a passion for the process and comfortable working with adult students with intellectual disabilities. They are looking for 30 minutes to 1 hour of class sessions once a week or biweekly possibly on Thursdays from 1:00 to 2:30. Class can be outside in the garden area. Details on when this would start will be communicated at a later date.

If you have questions about this opportunity please call Debbie Sellers, Executive Director, at The Social & Learning Institute, 219-879-2200.

Free daffodil bulbs and Irises

Assorted varieties free for the taking. If interested contact Donna Pouzar at donna.pouzar@comcast.net as soon as possible. Need to get them dug up before they go dormant.

Thanks!

Standing Committee Coordinators

Communication _____ Chair: Wendy Shafer
 _____ Co-chair: Vacant
 Development/Planning _____ Chair: Wendy Shafer
 _____ Co-chair: Paula Nevers
 Education: _____ Chair: Paula Nevers
 _____ Co-chair: Vacant
 Event _____ Chair: Vacant
 _____ Co-chair: Vacant
 Hospitality _____ Chair: Eunice Conway
 _____ Co-chair: Linda Hough
 Project: _____ Chair: Karen Sarver
 _____ Co-chair: George Sarver

2020 PROJECT COORDINATORS

Brown Bag Gardening Series

Karren Coplen _____ 219-390-4118
 _____ karrenc@comcast.net

Farmers' Market – La Porte

Chris Svoboda _____ 614-377-6409
 _____ svoboda.christina@att.net

Habitat for Humanity

Randa Magill _____ 219-851-8618
 _____ rmagill4013@msn.com

Friendship Botanic Gardens

Lisa Gerardi _____ 219-262-5146
 _____ kaliherbs2011@gmail.com

Pioneer Heritage Days

Lisa Gerardi _____ 219-262-5146
 _____ kaliherbs2011@gmail.com

Pioneer Heritage Garden

Connie Shei _____ 219-362-4866
 _____ jshei@comcast.net

Sunflower Fair

Megan Countryman _____ 574-532-8480
 _____ mcountry46552@gmail.com

Symposium/Garden Show

Ann Klosinski _____ 219-872-8367
 _____ annak47@comcast.net
 Eunice Conway _____ 219-778-2400
 _____ tconway5971@comcast.net

Wabash Street Rain Gardens

Laura Henderson _____ 219-871-9896
 _____ lhendeliz@yahoo.com

NEXT BOARD MEETING
 June 16th, 2020 – 4:30 p.m.
 Zoom meeting

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

The June calendar for sign-ups is below. If you would like to sign-up just give Tina DeWitt a call or email to let her know what day you would like to help.



June 2020 HOTLINE		
Monday	Wednesday	Friday
1 Steve Zolvinski	3 Jan Manik Nancy Jahnel-Barnes	5 Jan Manik Nancy Jahnel-Barnes
8 Steve Zolvinski	10 NEED TWO	12 NEED TWO
15 NEED TWO	17 NEED TWO	19 Steve Zolvinski
22 NEED TWO	24 Steve Zolvinski	26 NEED TWO
29 Steve Zolvinski		

EDUCATION OPPORTUNITIES

Botanical Gardens and Master Gardener Seminar Information			
Fernwood Botanical Gardens	www.fernwoodbotanical.org LPCMGA is a member of Fernwood Botanical Gardens. Membership card can be signed out at the Extension Office.		
Gabis Arboretum at Purdue NW	https://www.pnw.edu/gabis-arboretum		
Friendship Botanic Gardens	www.friendshipgardens.org		
Advanced Master Gardener Training			
Master Gardener Seminars			
Click on this link for more information on these events. https://www.purdue.edu/hla/sites/master-gardener/events/			
Date	Event/Time/Fee	Description	Location / Contact
June 12 and 29	Free Webinars	IU Northwest Community Garden	For more information and listing of webinars: http://libguides.iun.edu/c.php?g=867525

For volunteer activity and continued training ideas for Purdue EMG's while at home, visit the web pages below:

<https://www.purdue.edu/hla/sites/master-gardener/volunteerideas-at-home/>
<https://www.purdue.edu/hla/sites/master-gardener/continuedhours/>

Virtual Master Gardener College
JUNE 25-28, 2020

The Virginia Cooperative Extension Master Gardener Program would like to share an upcoming education opportunity for your EMG volunteers. Due to the ongoing pandemic, our office moved our annual continuing education conference, Master Gardener College, to an online platform. We will be utilizing Zoom and our university's course management system, Canvas, to host the conference this year.

We would like to invite you and your volunteers to join us from June 25 - 28! Registration is \$50 and all recorded sessions will be available for viewing through December 31, 2020 for registered participants. You can find our conference program, including details on our keynote and concurrent sessions, attached to this email.

For more information and to register click the link below by June 19:

<https://mastergardener.ext.vt.edu/college/registration/>

Please let us know if you have any questions! We hope you are all staying safe and well.
Best,

The Virginia EMG State Office Team

Kathleen Reed

State Coordinator, Extension Master Gardener Program
Virginia Tech School of Plant and Environmental Sciences (0327)
490 West Campus Drive
306F Saunders Hall
Blacksburg, VA 24061
(540)231-2714
reedka@vt.edu

GARDENING ARTICLES

“Petunias are as hopelessly impractical as a chiffon ball dress” – Eleanor Perenyi

By: Sharon Cholewa



There is always that plant that gardeners either love or hate and through the ages the petunia has been that plant. Anyone in Britain during the 1500s believed that the petunia was a symbol of demonic powers as it was believed to harbor anger and resentment. Introduced to American gardens around 1850, petunias became enormously popular because of their ability to grow in varying soil and climate conditions and flowering non-stop from early summer to frost.

However, European visitors to America in the 1860s deplored widespread planting of petunias, referring to them as worthless and weedy, considering them common and vulgar. One wonders what they saw. The 1865 Breck's catalog described new and colorful strains; beautifully veined or shaded crimson or purple with dark throats and fragrance.

The petunia that first appeared in 19th century gardens are a far cry from the petunias we know today. They are all based on two species that were discovered in South America; white flowered *Petunia axillaris* and purple-flowered *Petunia violacea*.

In the early 1500s Spanish explorers in South America discovered a low-growing, trail forming plant with small, scented, white flowers about 2" across. In the native language it was called Petun, which translated to "worthless tobacco plant". It was considered as ugly and not worth sending samples back to Spain. About three hundred years later, explorers returned to Argentina and this time sent samples of the plant back to Spain, where botanists placed it in the tobacco family. A few years later in 1831 the Scottish explorer, John Tweedie, came across the purple genus in Brazil and sent specimens to the Glasgow Botanical Gardens.

Introduced into Europe in the early 1800s, these leggy and small flowered species were not spectacular garden flowers, but breeders, especially in England and Germany, began crossing the 2 samples of petunias in search of more varied colors and larger petals. These early crossings were referred to as *Petunia X hybrida*, although they were not strictly hybrids; they were chance crossings of species. The result was the garden petunia, a group of plants in exciting colors, some with large, sometimes double flowers, others with fringed single flowers. Vaughan's seed catalog of 1900 noted double flowers occurred in only 20 to 30 % of the plants grown from seed; the rest would be large singles.

Japan came to the forefront of petunia breeding with the first consistently fully-double petunias in 1934. They succeeded in applying Mendel's law of gene dominance in the search for a fully-double petunia, one that would come true to type from seed. During the 1930's, German seed companies bred grandiflora petunias, all open-pollinated varieties, and greatly expanded the diversity of the plants, especially in the area of colors. Other seed companies around the world began offering their own unique varieties. The hybridizing of petunias involved an exchange of information, individuals and companies learning from, and building on, what others had done.

In the late 1930s, Charles Weddle, of W. Atlee Burpee & Company, applied the same law in his search for the fully double petunia. When he discovered the key, that the gene for double flowers was a dominant gene and crossing a true double-flowered petunia with a compatible petunia would result in seeds that would only produce double flowers, the production of modern-day petunias was on the way.

After the interruption of World War II, work began again in earnest. Double-flowered wasn't the only characteristic breeders were looking for and in the 1950s breeders were still trying to find the perfect petunia. They also wanted larger flowers and more of them for a longer time, more compact plants with better branching habits, better disease and weather-resistance. Fred Statt, of Harris Seeds, worked on disease-resistance, while still coming up with petunias that looked beautiful. Then Weddle and Claude Hope, founders of Pan American Seed Company, went on to hybridize double and single grandifloras and multifloras. These types certainly revolutionized the bedding plant industry.

The breeding work involved with F1 hybrids and seed production made the seed very expensive, but it also allowed hybridizers to greatly improve the plants over their species or open-pollinated types. The cost and the increased chances for failure on the part of the home gardener made the purchase of bedding plants more desirable. Coincidence or not, garden centers began to spring up around the country in the 50's, and petunias quickly became gardeners' number one choice for annual color.

Changes and improvements have continued for decades. The first truly red petunia, a multiflora called 'Comanche', bred by Pan American Seed, was introduced in 1953. The first yellow petunia, called 'Summer Sun', was bred by Claude Hope and introduced in 1977 by a relatively new company, Goldsmith Seeds. A new class of petunias, called floribunda, was created by Ball Seed Company in 1983, and they introduced the 'Madness' series. In 1995 a new variety bred by Kiriin Brewery in Japan, 'Purple Wave', was introduced as an AAS Winner and began a new class of spreading petunias. Another new class, milliflora, was bred by Goldsmith in 1996. In 2006, Proven Winners introduced the supertunia. These different classes and continued research in petunias may lead to changes that completely transform the garden petunia we know today.

References:

Jo Ann Gardner, *Heirloom Flower Gardens*

Amanda Davies, *The History of the Petunia*

www.esbenshades.com/petunia-history/

June Garden Calendar

By: B. Rosie Lerner,

Extension Consumer Horticulturist, Purdue University

HOME (Indoor plants and activities)

- Indoor plants will require more frequent watering and fertilizing as they increase their summer growth.
- You can move houseplants outdoors to a shady location but pay close attention to their watering needs.
- Cut garden flowers for indoor beauty. Recut the stems again just before placing in water. Add a floral preservative and change the solution frequently.
- Root cuttings of houseplants and garden plants to increase your collection or share with a friend.

YARD (Lawns, woody ornamentals and fruits)

- Prune spring-flowering shrubs after blooms fade.
- Apply fungicide to prevent and control black spot on roses.
- Water newly planted trees and shrubs. Water deeply every seven to 10 days when rain is lacking.
- Propagate deciduous shrubs (such as forsythia, lilac, pyracantha, and weigela) by stem tip cuttings.
- Remove faded flowers and seed pods on lilac and other spring-flowering shrubs.

2020 EXECUTIVE BOARD

PRESIDENT	WENDY SHAFER
VICE PRESIDENT	PAULA NEVERS
SECRETARY	JOE SZYNAL
TREASURER	SUSAN KIEFFER
ED. COMMITTEE/ SPEAKERS BUREAU	PAULA NEVERS MIKE ALTMAN MAUREEN SHERRICK LISA GERARDI GEORGE SARVER
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Purdue Extension Office __ 324-9407

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Tina DeWitt _____ dewitt8@purdue.edu

The Latest Dirt is published monthly. The deadline for submission is the 20th of each month. Our mission is to publish articles and events of interest to other Master Gardeners and the community. Articles about personal experiences, suggestions on gardening books, catalogs, helpful websites, tips and tricks, book reviews, seminars you've attended are welcomed.

Submission requirements: Articles should be no longer than a page and can include photos. References must be included. Latin names of plants should be italicized. We do not accept articles pertaining to medicinal information. Master Gardeners will get volunteer hours for time spent working on an article.

Have a garden item for sale or trade?

Buy, Sell, Trade at the
Trading Shed

Place your free ad in *The Latest Dirt*.

Tools, tillers, mowers, plants, or anything garden related. Keep ads brief and provide your phone number and/or e-mail address. Ads will be limited to space available.

Send ads, photos, events or articles by the 20th of the month to either:

DONNAPOUZAR@COMCAST.NET

PURDUE UNIVERSITY IS AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY/EQUAL ACCESS/AFFIRMATIVE ACTION INSTITUTION

- Many fruit trees had few to no flowers this year thanks to the brutal winter, but some apples and pears may still have fruit set. If they have much of a crop, don't be alarmed by a June drop of some fruit. It is a natural thinning process for most trees to prevent excessive loads, although there might not be as much to thin this year. Thin the remaining fruit, if necessary, or prop up heavy branches to avoid breakage. Most fruit should be spaced 6 to 8 inches apart on a branch.
- Mow grass regularly but mow high to help protect plant crowns from heat stress.
- Unless excessive, leave lawn clippings on the lawn.
- To keep the lawn green and growing, water as needed to supply a total of 1 to 1.5 inches of water per week. If left unwatered, lawns will turn brown and become dormant during extended hot, dry spells, but will green up again when conditions are more favorable.

GARDEN (Flowers, vegetables and small fruits)

- Discontinue harvesting asparagus and rhubarb around mid-June to allow foliage to develop and store food reserves for next year's harvest. Fertilize and water when dry to promote healthy growth.
- Mulch to control weeds and conserve soil moisture after soil has warmed. You can use many materials, including straw, chopped corncobs, bark chips, shredded paper, and grass clippings.
- Blanch (exclude light from) cauliflower when heads are just 2 inches in diameter. Tie leaves up and over the developing head.
- Control weeds. They're easier to pull when they are still young.
- Start seeds of cabbage, Brussels sprouts, broccoli, and cauliflower for fall garden transplants.
- Plan now for your Halloween pumpkin. Determine the days to harvest for the particular cultivar you want to plant (usually on the seed packet) and count backward to determine the proper planting date.
- Harvest spring plantings of broccoli, cabbage, and peas.
- Remove cool-season plants, such as radish, spinach, and lettuce, because they will bolt (that is, form seed stalks) during hot summer weather.
- Continue planting carrots, beans, and sweet corn for successive harvests.
- For staked tomatoes, remove suckers (branches that form where the leaf joins the stem) while they are 1 to 1.5 inches long to allow easier training.
- Remove the spent blooms of peony, iris, delphiniums, and other flowers.
- Pinch the shoot tips of chrysanthemums, impatiens, petunias, and coleus to promote bushier growth.
- Remove the tops of spring-flowering bulbs only after they have yellowed and withered.
- Continue planting gladiolus for a succession of bloom.
- Pick strawberries from the garden or a U-pick operation.
- Protect ripening strawberries from birds by covering with netting.
- Supplement natural rainfall (as needed) to supply a total of 1 to 1.5 inches of water per week to the garden.