

The Latest Dirt

La Porte County Master Gardener Newsletter



SEPTEMBER 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

September 3	Virtual Business Meeting Zoom 6:00 p.m.
October 1	Workshop
November 5	Business Meeting Election of Officers
December 3	Holiday Dinner

"THE LATEST DIRT" is published monthly.
The next deadline is:
September 20, 2020



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



Cicada Killers are Wimps

By: Tim Gibb, Department of Entomology, Purdue University

Spread the word - Cicada killers are wimps! Unfortunately, because of their size and the fact that they often live in lawns and landscapes close to where people live, cicada killers evoke a great deal of anxiety. These wasps are huge and look very much like oversized yellow jackets but they have some very important differences. First, cicada killers are not social wasps that build colonies and protect their queens. Because they have no colony or queen to protect, they are not aggressive and have no reason to sting people.



Cicada killers are one of the largest wasps that burrow into the ground in this area. At first glance, they are a very large, ominous looking wasp resembling a hornet or yellow jacket and evoke a good deal of fear. However, most of the wasps encountered are males, patrolling the nesting area. They may fly about, dive bomb, or even hover in front of, but they cannot sting people. They do not possess a stinger.

Females do not defend their burrows and will sting only if handled. Female cicada killers dig burrows in well drained, light textured soil, typically in an area with full sunlight. The 1½ inch diameter opening leads into an oblique tunnel that runs for 12-18 inches and reaches a depth of 6-10 inches. The female completes and stocks up to four cells, each containing from one to three paralyzed cicadas on which eggs are laid. When the eggs hatch the larvae bore into and feed on the cicada. Secondary tunnels are often built off the primary tunnel; thus each female may rear up to 16 larvae in a burrow.

Cicada killer wasps are beneficial and do not pose danger in most cases. When possible, they should be left alone.

The larvae pass the winter in their burrows and emerge the next July as adults. Between late July and mid-August, these new adults emerge, mate and the female digs new soil burrows, stocks them with cicadas, and the cycle is repeated. Adults usually die by mid-September.

On occasion a large nesting aggregation can result in many holes and unsightly mounds of soil in a small area of a yard or garden. Control of cicada killers is safely and most effectively done by placing a small amount of 5% carbaryl (Sevin) dust down into the soil tunnel. For a large nesting aggregation, the area can be sprayed. In both cases, the tunnel entrances should be left open.

In most cases, Cicada killer wasps are beneficial and do not pose danger. When possible, they should be left alone. Education is the single best strategy to help people deal with cicada killers. Teach people that they may look dangerous but in reality - they are wimps.

EXTENSION OFFICE

Suspension of Minimum Volunteer Hours Requirement for the Remainder of 2020

Due to cancelations and restrictions associated with Covid-19, the Purdue Extension Master Gardener (EMG) minimum volunteer hours requirement is suspended for the remainder of 2020. This means that Purdue Extension Master Gardeners will be able to report less than 12 volunteer hours and still maintain active status. Purdue EMG volunteers should not jeopardize their health or safety through their participation in the program. If Purdue Extension Master Gardeners are able to safely volunteer, they should continue to report these hours in MG Manager. Information reported in MG Manager is extremely important for communicating the impacts of the program to funding agencies and stakeholders. There are many opportunities for education hours – EMG volunteers should continue to report these as well. If EMG volunteers are unable to find sufficient educational opportunities, they should contact their EMG county coordinator.

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/>

ASSOCIATION NEWS

September Association News

By: Wendy Shafer

Our September Business meeting will be held virtually again on Zoom. We still have to maintain social distancing guidelines, wear masks, and we are required to submit a safety plan 3 weeks prior to any group meeting. With all these requirements we thought it best to hold the meeting virtually. We are still hoping to have our October workshop in person. If that works out, details will follow.

We are looking for 3 people to serve on the Nominating Committee. Your responsibility would be to find people who would be willing to serve on the Board and then facilitate the Association voting at the November meeting. It is an ad hoc committee and your role is finished once the November meeting is over. This is a great way to earn volunteer hours and a chance to get to know more people within the organization. It is an important part of keeping our organization moving forward.

We are coming close to the end of the year. All Project Coordinators should be submitting year end Project Reports, confirming if they will continue to be coordinators, and submit budgets for the 2021 year.

This has been a difficult year for everyone. It is especially difficult to keep our organization active and relevant when we are not able to meet face-to-face and when many of our projects have been canceled or are in limbo. If we are to continue as an organization, it is important that the membership find ways to stay connected and involved. Volunteering to be on the board or helping with projects is a great way for you to help insure this. Please consider doing one or both of these.

I hope to see many of you on our next Zoom meeting. Until then, stay healthy and safe.

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

Master Gardener Hotline

By: Walt Sell

Thanks to each of you for stepping up and staffing the Master Gardener Hotline especially with the increased challenges COVID-19 has brought to the table. The Hotline provides a valuable service to La Porte County residents and is a responsibility that we take seriously. Organization and coordination of the remote Master Gardener Hotline is more difficult and requires additional attention to detail to avoid delayed responses. Many inquiries are time sensitive highlighting the need for prompt and accurate responses. We have the following recommendations to assist in this effort.

Master Gardener Hotline Recommendations:

- All recommendations need to be from Purdue Extension/land grant institutions insuring that the advice given is research based. The easiest way to do that is to do a google search with the topic you are searching for, then add :edu to the end and you will get university based information. For example, vegetables:purdue.edu, ornamentals:purdue.edu or vegetables:.edu and ornamentals:.edu.

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

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
 September 15, 2020 – 4:30 p.m.
 Zoom meeting

- View the Hotline training video developed by Nikky Witkowski, ANR Extension Educator in Porter County at: <https://by/3e2yflz-MGHotlineTraining>
- Consider remotely pairing up with another Master Gardener/Intern for a shift. Often two heads are better than one in solving problems and finding answers. It can also add an element of fun and fellowship. This could be achieved via phones, facetime, skype, zoom or other platforms.
- Answer each call promptly. An initial call to the client is often helpful in gathering more information and it lets them know you are working on their inquiry. If you are having difficulty in finding an answer circle back to the Extension for guidance or for the inquiry to be addressed in an alternate fashion.
- Access to the internet via computer, smartphone or tablet is required for researching for information. In addition, your MG Manual is an excellent resource.
- If possible complete the call within the time frame of 9:00 to noon. If further research is needed please continue and complete in a timely fashion or send it back to the Extension office at the end of the shift.
- Once the inquiry has been taken care of, the Hotline sheet needs to be returned to Tina at the office with the recommendations given.
- When helpful, mention that they do have the opportunity to send their own sample to the Purdue Pest and Plant Diagnostic Lab for a modest fee. They can find all the necessary information at lab's website. <https://ag.purdue.edu/btny/ppdl/Pages/default.aspx>

September 2020 HOTLINE		
Monday	Wednesday	Friday
	2 Nancy Jahnel-Barnes Jan Manik	4 Nancy Jahnel-Barnes Jan Manik
7 Labor Day Office Closed	9 NEED ONE	11 Stacy McGinnis Sharon Stujenske
14 NEED ONE	16 NEED ONE	18 NEED ONE
21 Stacy McGinnis Sharon Stujenske	23 NEED ONE	25 NEED ONE
28 NEED ONE	30 NEED ONE	



To sign-up for the September Hotline please give Tina DeWitt a call or email her to let her know what day you would like to help. You can also sign-up through the MG Manager site.

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
Oct. 2 & 3	Indiana Tree Steward Workshop 8:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. \$35.00-A box lunch is included.	This two-day workshop provided by the Indiana Department of Natural Resources covers a number of topics on the planting and maintenance of trees. Forestry specialists lead both classroom and outdoor activities	Gabis Arboretum at Purdue NW 450 West 100 North Valparaiso, IN 46385 Phone: (219) 462-0025 Register Here

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<https://www.purdue.edu/hla/sites/master-gardener/continuededhours/>

GARDENING CALENDAR

September Garden Calendar

By: B. Rosie Lerner,
Extension Consumer Horticulturist, Purdue University

HOME (Indoor plants and activities)

- Prepare storage areas for overwintering tender flower bulbs and garden produce.
- Thanksgiving (or Christmas) cactus can be forced into bloom for the Thanksgiving holidays. Provide 15 hours of complete darkness each day, for instance, from 5 p.m. to 8 a.m., for approximately eight weeks. Keep temperature at about 60-65 degrees F. Temperatures of 55°F will cause flower buds to set without dark treatment.
- Dig and repot herbs, or take cuttings, for growing indoors over winter.
- Store leftover garden seed in a cool, dry place. A sealable jar with a layer of silica gel or powdered milk in the bottom works well.
- Bring houseplants moved outside for summer indoors before night temperatures fall below 55°F. Gradually decrease light to acclimate the plants and help reduce leaf drop. Check and control insects and diseases before putting these plants near other houseplants.
- Poinsettias saved from last year can be re-flowered for this year's holiday by providing complete darkness for 15 hours daily from about Oct. 1 until about Dec. 10.

YARD (Lawns, woody ornamentals and fruits)

- Fall is a good time to plant many container-grown or balled-and-burlapped nursery stock. Prepare a good-size planting hole wider than the ball, but plant at the same depth it grew in the nursery and water thoroughly. Mulching will help protect against large fluctuations in soil temperature and moisture.
- Do not be alarmed if your evergreens, particularly white pine and arborvitae, drop some older needles. All evergreens shed needles at some time, but not all at once as deciduous plants do.
- Harvest apples, pears, grapes, and everbearing strawberries and raspberries. For most fruits, flavor is the best indicator of ripeness, although color change also can be a good indicator. However, pears are best ripened off the tree, and grapes change color long before they are fully flavored, so sample the fruit to be sure.
- Remove raspberry canes after they bear fruit.
- Clean up fallen fruits, twigs and leaves around apple (including crabapple) and other fruit trees to reduce disease and insect carryover.
- To promote the lawn's recovery from summer stress, apply high-nitrogen fertilizer at the rate of 0.5 to 1 pound actual nitrogen per 1,000 square feet. More information on lawn fertilization is available at https://mdc.itap.purdue.edu/item.asp?item_number=AY-22-W
- Reseed bare spots or new lawns using a good-quality seed mixture. Seeding in late summer allows the turf to maximize its establishment and rooting prior to the next summer's heat and drought. For more information, see <http://purdueturftips.blogspot.com/2014/08/start-seeding-cool-season-turf-now.html>
- September and October are appropriate months to apply broadleaf weed killers to the lawn. Be sure to follow all label directions and choose a calm day to prevent spray drift.

GARDEN (Flowers, vegetables and small fruits)

- Dig onions and garlic after tops fall over naturally and necks begin to dry.
- Plant radishes, green onion sets, lettuce and spinach for fall harvest.
- Thin fall crops, such as lettuce and carrots, that were planted earlier.
- Harvest crops such as tomatoes, peppers, eggplants, melons and sweet potatoes before frost, or cover plants with blankets, newspaper, etc., (but not plastic) to protect them from light frost.

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
PAST PRESIDENT	ANN KLOSINSKI

Purdue Extension Office __ 324-9407

Walt Sell _____ wsell@purdue.edu
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

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OPPORTUNITY/EQUAL ACCESS/AFFIRMATIVE
ACTION INSTITUTION

- Mature green tomatoes can be ripened indoors. Individually wrap fruits in newspaper, or leave them on the vine, pulling the entire plant out of the garden. Store in a cool location – about 55-60°F.
- Harvest winter squash when mature (skin is tough) with deep, solid color, but before hard frost. Some cultivars will show an orange blush when mature.
- Plant, transplant or divide peonies, daylilies, iris and phlox only if you can apply irrigation during dry spells.
- Save plants such as coleus, wax begonias, impatiens or fuchsia for indoor growing over winter. Dig plants and cut them back about halfway, or take cuttings of shoot tips, and root them in moist vermiculite, soil mix or perlite.
- Watch for garden chrysanthemums to bloom as days grow shorter. Some may have bloomed earlier this summer, which will decrease the number of fall blooms.
- Plant spring-flowering bulbs beginning in late September. Planting too early can cause bulbs to sprout top growth before winter. However, allow at least four to six weeks before the ground freezes for good root formation.
- Dig tender bulbs, such as cannas, caladiums, tuberous begonias and gladiolus, before frost. Allow to air dry, and store in dry peat moss or vermiculite.



Water Now to Minimize Winter Injury

Dry summers are not that unusual in the Midwest. But this year the dry spell followed an unusually wet spring and early summer in many areas. Of particular concern this year is that the dry spell is lasting well into autumn, putting plants in poor condition to get through the winter when water will be unavailable due to frozen soil.

<https://www.purdue.edu/hla/sites/yardandgarden/water-now-to-minimize-winter-injury/>