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GARDEN THYME



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— *In this Issue*

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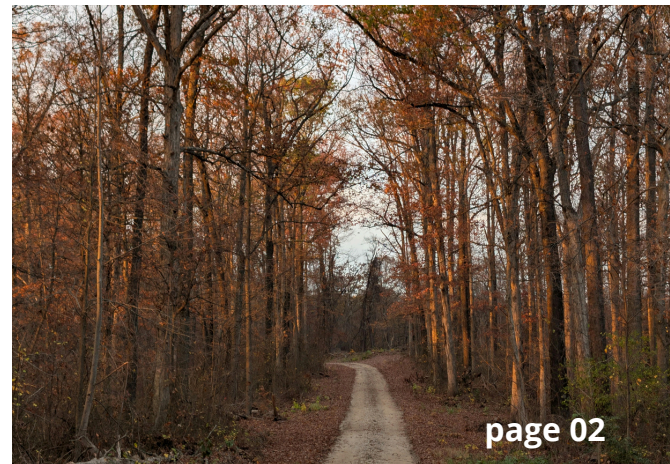


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The Porter County Master Gardeners Association (PCMGA) is a not-for-profit corporation that promotes the education and pleasure of gardening in cooperation with Purdue University Cooperative Extension Service in Porter County, Indiana.



Jeannette Zelhart Smith, Margaret Mudd, and Kris Sandrick



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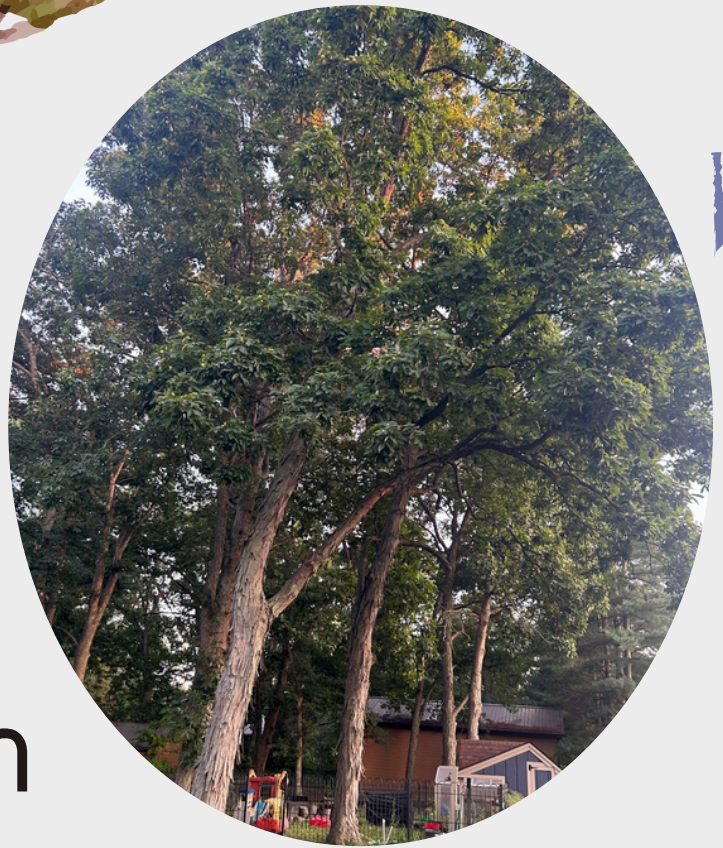


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— *My Plant, My Project*



"Shagbark Hickory are great trees because they are valuable for wildlife, and offer a beautiful, distinctive appearance," says Kayla Tracy. Pictured here is a tall one in her yard!



Our Favs: Tree Edition

BY GREG CARTER, PCMG CLASS OF 2011

An old wag once said that the best time to plant a tree is 20 years ago; and further suggested that the next best time is today. Trees are wonderful companions. They not only do their part in reducing global climate change, with appropriate siting on your property, they can lower air conditioning costs. The enjoyment of an iced tea is magnified when you are sitting under a gorgeous King Crimson Maple. Alternatively, smaller trees can make great accent plants in your landscape. The Purdue extension website offers [suggestions](#) on which trees can work best for your needs.

What are some of Porter County Extension Master Gardener's favorite trees? Our recent survey revealed a nice variety that may be new to you. Try them - they are highly recommended by your peers!

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Photo Credit: Kayla Tracy



"Our **Jonathan apple tree** will soon be taken down after 30+ years of providing homemade apple sauce. In its last few years we kept it to enjoy watching squirrels and chipmunks chasing one another into and out of the numerous holes in the hollow trunk and limbs," says Jack Steffen.



"The **Tulip Poplar** is Indiana State Tree which grows to a large size to provide shade," states Marlene Vanderlin.



My current favorite tree is the **Paperbark Maple** because of its peeling bark," says Zann Wilson.



Melinda Bateman recommends **White Pine**. "This tree is so beautiful in the winter especially after a snowfall."

Our favorite trees:

Gordona Gerbick says her current favorite is **Magnolia** because of its beautiful flowers. Lois Peterman likes **Sugar Maple** because you can make syrup! **Crimson King Maple** is the favorite of both Greg Carter and Mary Baird. For Greg because it's different from standard green-leaved trees and for Mary because of family memories. Christine Schrey's favorite tree is the **White Pine** because they provide habitat, shelter, and nesting sites for many birds. "Since we have about 100 white pines, we have lots of birds around." Sue Spelde likes **Shagbark Maple** because they are a reasonable size for most yards and have beautiful fall color and exfoliating bark.

"**Japanese Maple** are a beautiful shape and have colorful leaves." This is why Laura Hrusovsky likes them so much. Wilma Willard says **Lodi Apple Trees** are perfect for yummy applesauce just like mom made, thus, a favorite tree!



GARDEN SKIP SUCCESS

**BY WILMA WILLARD, PCMG CLASS OF 2011
& GARDEN SKIP COORDINATOR**

Many thanks to our three 2025 Garden Skip hosts this September: Sue Spelde, Gail Kemper and Nikki Witkowski. Sixty guests came to south Porter County to visit our host's landscapes and learn from each other. Know that all hosts and guests are able to consider their hours in attendance as education hours of credit. Not only did we learn, but we enjoyed the beauty, connection and the relaxation with fellow Porter County Master Gardeners as we helped each other grow!



Spelde Skip

By Host Sue Spelde

I can sum up my September 4 Garden Skip experience in a few words: wonderful, delightful, fun and educational. I am grateful to Wilma whose guidance made it all go smoothly (even the decision process to go with the rain date.)

I am also thankful to all the members and their guests who came to enjoy my garden and offered very helpful suggestions. The advice on how to prune a Japanese Maple gave me the confidence to just do it. I received several shrub suggestions to replace my struggling Rhododendrons and I look forward to tackling that long awaited project.

The best part was just having the opportunity to relax and hang out with gardening friends. Thanks everyone for a great afternoon!

Kemper Skip

By Host Gail Kemper

My Garden Skip on September 16 was wonderful! I got a lot of great advice.

I have a maple tree we must cut down in the spring, but I was stuck on what kind of a large tree to replace it with. I received lots of good ideas for replacement trees and advice to use a specimen tree instead. Now I have all winter to mull it over... dogwood? Another redbud? An autumn brilliance serviceberry? Other great advice was to remove an invasive ground cover and develop a native woodland garden.

I got to share my favorite plant - an old-fashioned oakleaf hydrangea. Guests liked the garden shed that my husband built for me using salvaged windows, a door, and old barn wood for the roof. It's flanked by a cat's head fence he made for me which was copied from the Maine Botanical Gardens in Boothbay Harbor, Maine.



Next year, consider hosting a Garden Skip. I highly recommend it!

Witkowski Skip

By Host Nikky Witkowski

Hosting a Garden Skip on September 19 was a great experience. My garden may not have been the cleanest and for sure a work in progress, but the skip was a great way for guests to learn about the various trees, shrubs, and perennials we have planted and the resulting successes and problems.

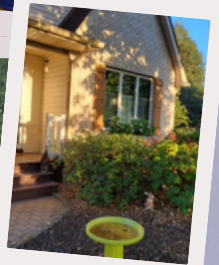
What struck many guests is that the issues with our basswood trees are aphids, rather than the typical Japanese Beetles. Also, my "Royal Family" hollies are not so royal anymore. The "girls" are dying off and the "boys" are growing fast due to the location of the berries on them.

It was great to see the guest's excitement as we toured the landscape. This includes the joining of our passions (my husband and I) as featured in one garden bed - his reel mower with short plants behind and taller plants in front which mimic a cut and uncut lawn. See photo!





2025 GARDEN SKIP





Garden Wanderer Take a Walk on the Wild Mile

BY SHARON STUCKY, PCMG CLASS OF 2019

The Wild Mile in Chicago is a must see. It is the world's first ever floating eco-park! It is conveniently located along the north branch canal of the Chicago River. Open 24 hours a day, it can be enjoyed by foot or by boat. The Wild Mile has ADA accessible boardwalks with floating artificial habitats. This fascinating spot is being used for education, research, community gatherings and recreation.

The habitats actually mimic a natural wetland eco system. They are pontoon based and all made from environment friendly materials. The species are native to Illinois and the gardens allow plant roots to grow through the actual framework and directly into the river. Because it is anchored to both the river floor and sea wall the Wild Mile can move up and down as the water level changes.

You can rent a kayak or bring your own kayak, take a walking tour, or attend a free event. There are many free events to choose from such as workshops, yoga class, fishing events, a light show, and book launches.

Check out the website at wildmile.org for more information. It's such an interesting place that I highly recommend visiting. You'll be happy you did!





— *International MG Conference*

Passport to Plants

BY KRIS SANDRICK, PCMG CLASS OF 2014

Attending an international MG conference has been on my radar since 2014, but it seemed out of reach. It wasn't about the travel but the cost. The conference has been around \$185. That was ok, but I had to get there. Pennsylvania MGs hosted the last one I investigated, and it was going to be \$1,000 for a flight or gas, hotel room, meals plus the conference. Of course, I was delighted to learn this year's conference would be virtual.

The Texas MG program, an extension of Texas A&M, reported working on this event 2 1/2 years in advance. I remember getting a "Save the Dates" email, Aug. 25-28, more than a year ago. They were promoting access to all sessions: 9 keynote speakers, 70 breakout sessions, 4 tours and 3 movies.

Conference planners sent advance information, including a count-down and training sessions via Zoom to enable us to easily access the "conference lobby" and learn to participate in real time in sessions.

Day One fell on a beautiful August morning, so I set up my laptop on the patio. After opening remarks, the first speaker was Anna Ball, Chairman and CEO, Ball Horticulture Company, on Trends in Horticulture. She covered so much ground, from advanced technology in plant breeding to the elimination of "boring gardens," to "exciting -- bigger, bolder and more dramatic."

We "toured" gardens in New Zealand. Participants' comments came in from across the country, Canada and Korea. I realized I couldn't possibly sit at my computer for four days. It was too much to absorb.

The major benefit of this virtual conference is that I have access to all sessions through the end of January. BTW, the next bi-annual conference will be hosted by the Florida EMGs in 2027. Start saving your pennies!

Here's a link to the Search for Excellence award winners <https://www.imgc2025.com/sfe/>

Purdue EMG State Conference

Growing Together

Garden ornaments
abound in the
demonstration garden.



BY MARGARET MUDD, PCMG CLASS OF 2019

On September 12th and 13th, The Hendrick County Master Gardeners did a beautiful and seamless job of hosting and facilitating this year's Master Gardener State Conference.

Our Porter County Master Gardener members Kris Sandrick, David Parry, Jeannette Zelhart Smith and I were in attendance. To varying degrees, and for a number of reasons, I am certain we all found something of value. This biennial occasion provides Master Gardeners across the state a tremendous opportunity for growth, whether in deepening existing relationships, making new ones, or in expanding knowledge.

I enjoyed the company and the presentations, some more than others, but all in all, it motivates me and gives me ideas for the future, and for our Gardening Show in particular. You'll have to wait a little bit to find out what that is exactly. For now, it is my hope that we can also one day host this conference.

Propagating with
"Wandering Dudes"



Hendrick's County
Master Gardeners'
Demonstration Gardens





Left to right: Chris, Alice and Bill stand in front of DNR trees black walnut and persimmon planted 10 to 12 years past and river birch planted 5 years past.

DNR Provides Life-Giving Trees and Shrubs

BY CHRISTINE SCHREY, PCMG CLASS OF 2013

Fifteen years ago, the moving truck unloaded all our belongings on a Friday at the home we share with our daughter Alice, son-in-law Bill, and their four daughters, then aged 3 to 10. Saturday morning at breakfast our son-in-law announced that we had 100 trees to plant that day. I knew there would be no unpacking that day! All eight of us spent that Saturday planting those trees. They are now about 20-feet tall and provide habitat for the wildlife around our home.

Bill bought these seedlings from the Indiana Department of Natural Resources (DNR) to create a windbreak on our property. Since then we have bought and planted black walnuts, more white pines and river birch trees, plus a variety of shrubs and trees. Not everything has survived; some thrive better than others.

The minimum order is 100. The seedlings are not expensive. I think the first 100 cost about \$50. This year they will start taking orders October 1 at 8 a.m. You must agree to plant them in Indiana for conservation plantings such as windbreaks, wildlife food, habitat, etc. They cannot be redistributed or resold for profit. When they're ready, you can pick them up at Jasper-Pulaski Nursery, 15508 West 700 North, Medaryville, IN 47957 (Hwy. 421; 5 miles north of Medaryville) or they can be shipped to you.

[Click here](#) to purchase tree seedlings from the DNR. You can also call 812-358-3621 to order.

My conclusion? These trees and the wildlife they support are life-giving additions to your environment!

— Welcome to My Garden

You Win Some You Lose Some

Not every seedling becomes a showstopper, but every attempt teaches us something new. Here's where we celebrate the year's gorgeous harvests and the mysterious flops, the thriving pollinator patches and the tomatoes that just wouldn't blush. Because in gardening, success isn't perfection; it's persistence (and a good sense of humor).

GLORIA POTTER, PCMG CLASS OF 2009

This is my 2nd year growing butterfly weed. They did well, but recently I was shocked to see large clusters of small orange & black insects enjoying a feast on the seed pods. I researched the insect, and it is a beetle that likes milkweed. One site said a female can lay eggs and its larvae can eat the roots! These beetles may also enjoy chomping down on nearby plants as well. You can use removal techniques like hand pick, wash down with a hose or use insecticidal soap. Another site said to leave them be as they can control spread of common milkweed (I have that too) and butterfly weed. Should I leave the beetles or eradicate them?



PAM CARPENTER, PCMG CLASS OF 2024

Peaches Are My Jam! We have five peach trees, three of which are the Red Haven variety. We pruned in late February, sprayed the lower branches early in the season, and even thinned out many peaches. The result: the trees kept producing! It was a great spring for fruit trees overall. Our plum and cherry trees were also bountiful. I froze peach slices, canned peach, plum, strawberry and cherry jam, and pie fillings. We will eat well all winter!



(continued on page 13)

**MARLENE VANDERLIN, PCMG CLASS OF 2018**

The most gorgeous little flower bloom from my Dahlia tuber was a win, thanks to the generous gift of a fellow master gardener. That's the "win some" part of the story. I love this plant, and the happiness it brings me! The "lose some" part stems from the fact that last year when I stored the tubers, I did not identify the different plants. Consequently, this beauty is hidden on the back side of a flower bed that only I can enjoy. Okay, I admit to dragging a few people around there to see the big beautiful blooms.

MARCIA CARSON, PCMG CLASS OF 2012

Bambi and family arrived early for my Garden Skip, so we postponed it until 2026. Although they missed a leaf here or there on my hosta, they destroyed a wide variety of my vegetation. Even the red twig dogwood became a treat. On the positive side, my butterfly weed, quinine and asters are doing well.

**KRIS SANDRICK, PCMG CLASS OF 2014**

I was volunteering at Lincoln Park Zoo when I met *Dendranthema* 'Clara Curtis' (aka hardy mum). Every fall she greeted the world with peachy pink blossoms. When I finally found one for my garden, the poor baby struggled to grow. It took me years to realize she wasn't getting enough sun. Clara and I are very happy together now. She bloomed in October!

**WILMA WILLARD, PCMG CLASS OF 2011**

When we planted this beautiful pear tree, 'Chanticleer' was promoted as a new and improved ornamental. I did not realize it was a variety of the invasive callery pear species. Dutifully, we cut it down in April. The WINS are multiple: more sun exposure for my new cutting garden, and the environment has one less stinky invader displacing native species in Liberty Township.

**ZANN WILSON, PCMG CLASS OF 2003**

The Passion Flower Vine (*Passiflora caerulea*) beauty is a real winner. Though it took until late August to bloom, it is stunning.





WINDBREAK OF WHITE PINES AND RIVER BIRCH IN FRONT - ALL FROM DNR

GARDEN THYME

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- WEB-BASED EDUCATION HOURS
- PURDUE CONSUMER HORTICULTURE
- PURDUE EXTENSION MASTER GARDENER EVENTS CALENDAR

Newsletter Team

Suzanna Tudor, Sara Tumbas, Wilma Willard

Christine Schrey, Greg Carter

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Photo Credit: Christine Schrey