



Hoosier Organic Gardener

January, 2018

Indiana Organic Gardeners Association

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IOGA MISSION:

To educate ourselves and others in reasons for and methods of environmentally friendly gardening; and to encourage the reduction of chemical dependency in gardens, lawns and farms.

President's Message

Happy New Year! By the time you read this I hope that the weather cooperates and we don't slide into the Franklin Road Branch Library like we did in 2016. Actually we had a lot of members show up to hear Jo Ellen Meyers Sharp, maybe that was the reason. This time we're having Kris Medic, who should also be great.

We sure had a great bunch of organic places that we visited last year. I was amazed at the South Circle Farm and the intensive organic gardening they do! I was drooling at the demo of the small tiller from Johnny's Selected Seeds, run by a battery powered hand drill. That is, until I looked it up in the Johnny's catalog and checked out the price. Wow! But it sure is impressive but not worth the price for my small garden where my Johnny's broad fork does the tilling under the Rohde arm and back power machine.

Due to Indiana's long fall, I have my three compost beds filled to the brim with ground up leaves and garden residue plus I dumped another good measure under my oak tree shade garden and onto my mini prairie. The latest recommendations are NOT to rake your leaves but let them remain on your yard so that all the pollinator eggs as well as hibernating bumblebees and other pollinators aren't raked up into plastic bags for the trash pick up. Since I live in one of the many "plastic" suburbs (those with lawn service, self-spraying Round-uppers, non-native shrubs, trees and flower planters) I have to maintain a neat, front prescribed lawn and I understand that. But the rear area is mine so no chemical fertilizer and of course, I grow a garden, maybe not large but good enough. I try to be careful about my leaf grinding and I know I wipe out some pollinators but I try to make up for it with what I plant and with pollinator houses.

I feed the birds all year round. In the summer they are on summer rations, just enough to keep them around and a bird house or two. About December, depending on the weather temperatures and snow, I up their rations along with suet and my 4x4 block of wood which I have drilled 1 inch holes about 1 inch deep into which I fill with peanut butter. That's the most popular place and I can fill it up in the morning and by the evening it's all cleaned out. The best place to buy high quality feeders and other bird items is Wild Birds Unlimited but the same items, perhaps not of that high quality, can be found at other places as well as most of you know. The best feeder seeds are simply black oil sunflower seeds. A lot of the normal cheaper "bird seed" has a lot of filler seeds in it that makes up the bulk and the birds don't really like it. Just get black oil sunflower seeds as that's what will satisfy the vast majority of the birds that visit your feeder(s). I get mine at Menards and the birds do just fine. I still feed the Gold Finches Niger thistle seeds. The Gold Finches are still here, they just changed into their winter feathers.

A good book that I just finished which all of you would like too, *The Humane Gardener Nurturing a Backyard Habitat for Wildlife*, by Nancy Lawson. One of the better ones that I have read concerning gardening and wildlife. Although not a big book and a relative easy



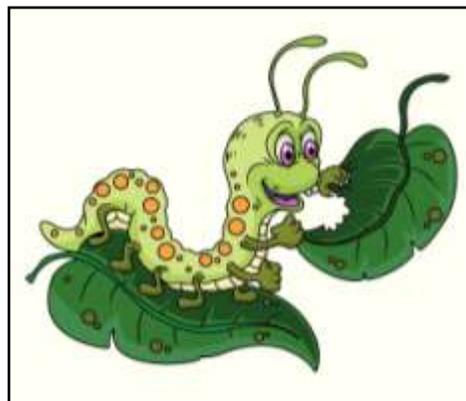
Doug Rohde

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Bt (*Bacillus thuringiensis*)

Grow Broccoli, Kale, Cauliflower, Brussels Sprouts, Cabbage Etc. Without Worms

For many years we tried growing broccoli, kale, and cabbage and every year we would have worms invade our plants. The worms were the offspring of those pretty, white butterflies in your garden that one sees from early spring and throughout the summer. You can use netting over your plants to keep the butterflies from laying their eggs, or you can let your chickens roam amongst your plants. But another, easier approach that we found is to spray your plants with a mixture of the bacteria **Bt** (*Bacillus thuringiensis*) every 7-10 days, depending upon the weather. Problem solved, no more worms.



Using **Bt** is using biological warfare against the worms. **Bt** disrupts the worm's digestive system. The worms stop eating and starve to death. **Bt** works against the worms that affect all members of the *Brassica* family of plants (broccoli, kale, cauliflower, Brussels sprouts, cabbage etc.). The **Bt** bacteria is found naturally in the soil and is not genetically altered.

Bt is a superior, natural insecticide that kills only the pest insects (the worms that eat your plants) and not the predatory, beneficial insects (the good guys). **Bt** is also nontoxic to humans and other mammals.

There are several versions of **Bt** (*Bacillus thuringiensis*). One common version (**subspecies kurstaki**) is used in organic farming and gardening and another (**subspecies israelensis**) is used to kill mosquito larvae.

Bt subspecies kurstaki (Btk) [Organic Farming/Gardening]

Bacillus thuringiensis kurstaki (**Btk**) kills leaf-eating caterpillars and does not harm the beneficial insects. **Btk** is used to control many common leaf-eating caterpillars especially the worms that attack cabbage, kale, broccoli, cauliflower, and Brussels sprouts. **Btk** also kills bagworms, tomato hornworms, tent caterpillars; gypsy moth larvae, and corn borer larvae. Infected insects may remain on plants for a while after treatment, but they stop eating and soon die.

Usage & Storage

Sunlight degrades **Btk** after a few hours, so it is best to apply the **Btk** mixture in the late afternoon or evening so the worms can have a good, last dinner overnight. Treating on a cloudy, but not rainy, day gives the same result. For best results cover both sides of the plant's leaves. For corn earworms spray the **Btk** mixture on the silk hair of each ear. On your plants repeat treatment every 7-10 days or more often if it rains. Continue to apply the **Btk** mixture to your Brassica plants as long as the little white butterflies continue to fly around your garden.

Once mixed, the **Btk** mixture loses its potency. Dispose of any unused **Btk** mixture within a few days. Store the **Btk** powder or liquid concentrate in a cool place. Under good storage conditions, **Btk** powder will last five years, liquid **Btk** concentrate about two to three years.

Insect Resistance

If after using **Btk** on your plants you still encounter insect damage, your **Btk** mixture may be losing its potency due to its age or the insects may have become resistant to **Btk**. In order to avoid insects resistance to **Btk** in your garden, alternate occasionally with the organic insecticide **Spinosad**. Use **Spinosad** infrequently since it is somewhat more likely to interfere with beneficial insects than **Btk**.

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Products

Some of the retail products containing **Btk** are the following:

Garden Safe Bt Worm & Caterpillar Killer

[found at TSC (Tractor Supply Co.) store locally],

Monterey Bt Insecticide, and

Bonide Thuricide *Bacillus Thuringiensis* (Bt) Conc.



Caution

Although **Bt** is nontoxic to humans, bacterial spores could cause allergic reactions if they are inhaled or rubbed on the skin. Do not breathe dusts or mists of **Bt** insecticides.

Bt subspecies israelensis (Bti) [Mosquito Control]



Bacillus thuringiensis israelensis (**Bti**) kills the larvae of certain flies and mosquitoes.

The most effective way to eliminate mosquito larvae is to remove sources of standing water such as in tires, flower pots, children's toys, plastic containers, and clogged gutters. However, if you have standing water that cannot be drained such as birdbaths, fountains, ponds, etc., then use **Bti**. Be aware, however, that **Bti** is not as effective for the control of mosquito larvae in cloudy water or water that contains high levels of organic pollutants.

According to Purdue there are approximately 55 species of mosquitoes in Indiana. Of those only about 12-15 species seriously affect public health. Several species of the *Culex* mosquito transmit the West Nile Virus. Several bloodsucking, nuisance species of the *Aedes*, *Ochlerotatus*, and *Psorophora* mosquitoes also make their home in Indiana.

The most susceptible mosquitoes to **Bti** are species of the *Aedes* and *Psorophora* mosquitoes. The *Anopheles* and *Culex* mosquito species require higher than normal rates of **Bti**. Some *Anopheles* mosquitoes transmit human malaria.

The most readily available retail products containing the **Bt israelensis** bacteria are Mosquito Bits and Mosquito Dunks. Mosquito Bits are used to treat smaller areas of standing water while Mosquito Dunks are used in larger ponds etc. Of course, you can just crush the Dunks to make Bits. Each dunk lasts about 30 days.

Mosquito Bits



Mosquito Dunks



October IOGA Meeting

The meeting was held October 21, 2017 at the [South Circle Farm](#) two miles south of the Indianapolis city center on south Meridian St.

After a pitch-in lunch at picnic tables under a roof, President Doug Rohde began the meeting. He said that Heidi Watson was looking for iris rhizomes and Doug had dug some for her. She doesn't care what color. Doug also said that, unfortunately, rabbits had eaten all of his tomatoes this year.

During a question and answer period, Paul Gaston asked if anyone had noticed brown patches on peppers. Bev Agnew and Mikel Thorne said it was sun scald. Claudia Clark said Mary Biggs had heirloom white lilacs for sale. Paul also had wilt on his tomato plants. Bev said her tomatoes all dried up. Ron Clark said it was probably caused by the [Septoria Leaf Spot](#) fungus. Claudia reported that their Zucchini collapsed and they had to replant early in July and the replanted Zucchini turned out great having Zucchini until frost. Susan Irwin-Simmons has two light Sussex roosters to give away. Doug talked about making houses for pollinators. They should be put out by the 1st of March. Margaret Smith asked for program ideas. Doug said nominations for officers should have been done last meeting. However, all current officers have agreed to serve for one more term. However, if anyone wants to volunteer for an office, please let Doug know. Officers will be voted on at the January meeting.

After the Q&A period, Amy Matthews of South Circle Farm, gave us some information about the farm which she founded in 2011. It took 6 months to establish the soil by dumping wood chips 24 inches deep which formed a base layer. The raised beds were filled with a mix of top soil and compost. It took 5 years to complete the 1.5 acres. She grows 2-4 crops per year depending upon whether it is a root crop or something like salad greens. South Circle Farm is affiliated with [Big City Farms](#) and they manage and market together. They sell at farmer's markets (Garfield, City Market, and Indy Winter Market) and to some local restaurants.

Amy said there were 10-12 bed plots, each 50 ft. long. The beds are not all raised. Salad greens are repeated, root crops are rotated on a three year cycle. After harvest, they cut the tops off the root crops, throw a tarp over the bed, and compost in place. She uses nets with no heat. With two layers of row covers and plastic over that, they didn't lose any crops over the winter. She mostly uses various kinds of netting instead of chemicals or even organic pesticides to counter insect pests. For leaves, she goes around the neighborhood in a pickup truck and collects bags of leaves left on the curb. Amy harvests through December and starts again in March. She starts seeds in the greenhouse and transplants into the beds. They use a lot of tarps held down by UV-treated sandbags which she gets from E&R Ag. They don't do a lot of spraying. For weeds they use three different hoes.



President Doug Rohde



The Pitch-In Lunch

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Farmer Amy Matthews

We then took a tour of the farm. She uses a weed eater, adds compost and fertilizer and tarps the beds for winter. She had a problem with bindweed. It takes months to kill using a tarp. For annual weeds, she prepares the bed, waters, and covers with a tarp. She then removes the tarp and uses flame to kill any weeds that germinated under the tarp. She gets their compost from [Greencycle](#). The small hoops are made from electrical conduit, covered with shade cloth in the summer. She raised \$10,000 through a crowdfund for the large hoop houses purchased from [Nifty Hoops](#) in Ann Arbor, MI, who came down and helped install them. Carrots are covered from the time of seeding to protect from the carrot fly. In spring and fall they seed spinach in the greenhouse and transplant 3 weeks later. Everything is harvested by hand and scissors.

Amy demonstrated the tools they use. A [broadfork](#) loosens the soil but doesn't destroy soil structure. She uses a very light weight [tiller](#) powered by a battery powered drill which is run over the top of the loosened soil and then transplants. One to three wheelbarrow loads of compost are added per bed, 1 for each planting.

Toward the back of the farm they use a cover crop of peas and oats. Prevention is better than spraying. If a plant gets too bad, just take it out to prevent the spread of the disease. Variety selection is important, as is spacing so the plants get good air flow. Landscape fabric was laid out in one bed and then, using a pattern, holes were cut out for the transplants using a flame. This bed was planted with [Winterbor](#) kale which got very tall and still had kale to be harvested. Biodegradable fabric is used for cucumbers and zucchini.

They use no heaters. In the greenhouse, they use sand with a gutter cable to provide bottom heat for the seed trays and keep the soil moist.

If anyone wants to see what the soil in their garden should look like, they should visit South Circle Farm. Amy has done an amazing job of preparing her soil.

Judith Houser, Secretary



Eating the Pitch-In Lunch

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Amy Demonstrates the Broadfork to Loosen the Soil
(Editors' Note: Do not try This on Indiana clay soil)



Amy Demonstrates the Light Weight Tiller Powered by a Battery Powered Drill
(Editors' Note: Again, this will not work on heavy clay soils)



Cover Crop of Peas and Oats



Towers of Kale

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Lettuce



Swiss Chard



Spinach



Inside One of the Greenhouses
(Note the Drip Water Hoses)



Seedling Starting Area



Covered Crops

LETTERS:



9/18/17

Wanted to encourage others and whoever grew the Polish Linguisa tomato plants that I have had amazing results this year.

They are a paste tomato that are as big as my hand, meaty, with few seeds, and a nice flavor. I had a bumper crop of them.

For those of you who grow tomatoes for sauces, these are super! My other tomatoes did OK, not great, but these tomatoes were superb.

Blessings, Darlene Miller

(Editors' note: The Polish Linguisa is more a general purpose tomato than just a paste tomato. It is our daughter-in-law's favorite tomato. [Tomato Fest](#) has this to say about the Polish Linguisa tomato:

"Polish Linguisa is an heirloom tomato brought to New York by Polish gardeners in the 1800's.

Indeterminate, regular-leaf, vigorous tomato plants with wispy foliage that bear excellent yields of HUGE, 10-ounce, 2-inch x 5 inch, sausage-shaped, very meaty, bright-red, paste tomatoes with firm flesh and few seeds. Very sweet for a paste tomato. Excellent for making tomato paste, tomato sauce, slicing into salads, eating fresh off the vine, drying or freezing.

Plants produce abundantly well until frost."

There will be some Polish Linguisa seedlings at the Plant and Garden Auction during the April IOGA meeting.)



Polish Linguisa Tomato

Election of Officers

IOGA officers will be elected at the January meeting for a two year term. The following incumbent members have agreed to serve for two more years, if elected:

President: Doug Rohde

Vice President/Programs: Margaret Smith

Secretary: Judith Houser

Treasurer: Ron Clark

According to the IOGA by-laws, the membership present at the meeting shall elect the officers by simple majority from the selected nominees or nominations from the floor.

The Claudia Tomato

The editors have "developed" another great tomato that we may bring to the Plant Auction in April. It is a natural cross in our garden between a Brandywine tomato and a Polish Linguisa tomato. The tomato combines the extremely good taste of both tomatoes. It look like a Brandywine tomato but with a pointed bottom and is a little more dense than the Brandywine tomato. The tomato has bred true for two seasons. The tomato is called the "Claudia" tomato because it Claudia's favorite tomato..

The New American Backyard

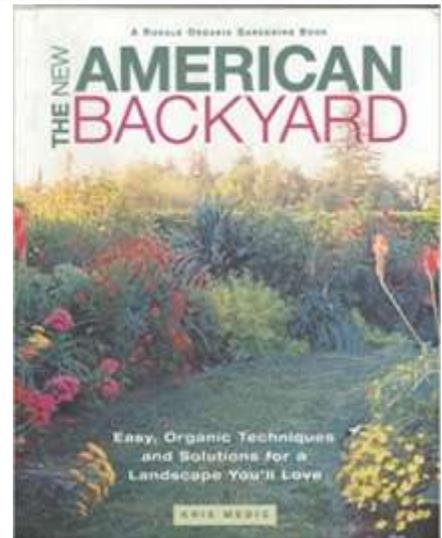
Book by *Kris Medic*

Whether you've just moved into a new house or you've been in the neighborhood for years, *The New American Backyard* will inspire and guide you in transforming your backyard into the landscape of your dreams. Author Kris Medic introduces home gardeners to sustainable design and maintenance practices for the landscape—proven tips and techniques that can help you to save time, money, natural resources, and the environment. You'll discover things you can do—and stop doing—to help your home grounds be more environmentally friendly, as well as more beautiful and useful.

Kris starts off by showing you, step-by-step, how to plan your backyard like a pro. Her real-life before and after landscape plants are a rich source of ideas to incorporate in your own yard. And Kris' landscaping design tips on everything from creating berms and windblocks to installing a beautiful vine covered pergola will actually help you save on your home heating and cooling costs.

But she doesn't stop there. Kris shares all her secrets for low-maintenance, easy-care techniques that will actually free you from the drudgery of yard care, leaving you more hours at leisure to enjoy your new backyard. Her easy pruning techniques take the guesswork out of trimming so you'll be successful every time. Endless watering chores will become a thing of the past. And when you follow Kris's mowing tips, you'll spend less time pushing or riding a mower—and end up with a healthier lawn.

If you've been dreaming about making some changes in your backyard—whether you just want to add a few plants or you want to redo that old cracked concrete patio—make your dreams come true with the help of the *New American Backyard*. **Publisher: Rodale**



Important Announcement!

The April IOGA meeting will be held on Saturday April 28 rather than on Saturday April 21, the normal day of our April meeting (the third Saturday of the month). The meeting date is changed because of conflict with the Earth Day Festival in Indianapolis at Military Park which is being held on April 21. Please mark your calendar! The April meeting will be at the Zionsville Library.



For those members growing seedlings for the Plant and Garden Auction at the April meeting, please note that the April meeting this year will be nearly two weeks later than our April meeting last year. So plant your seeds accordingly.

President's Message (Continued from Page 1)

one to read, there's a lot of great information and sources of additional information to be had. A few of the gardeners who have written chapters in this book also have written gardening and/or pollinator books also. I found that I have all of those too so this book is also a mini autobiography of the authors and how they view and accept wildlife in their gardens.

Special congrats to our IOGA Darlene Miller for becoming a new Indiana Master Gardener

I'll see you all at the Franklin Road Branch Library. (See last page for meeting details and directions.) It should be another good meeting.

Keep IOGA organic! Doug

A Green Bean Review

by Paul Matzek

To begin this tale, one must travel back to spring. The mists of time have obscured the name of the bean I planted. They sprouted, grew to about 16 inches tall, bloomed, and produced beans. It was a pretty good crop, I felt. They tasted fine and many now look out from mason jars on our basement shelf.



As bush beans do though, many fell over, making it hard to get between the rows and to find the pods. On top of that, they required two hands to pick a bean, one to hold the stalk and one to pull the pod loose. Doing otherwise would result in a broken bean, a torn off branch, or a completely uprooted plant. They were two-handed beans.

In August, I succumbed to the drive to plant beans in one of our newly formed beds. After adding compost and tilling it in, I planted a 25 ft row of Gurney's *Provider*. This time, even though they are bush beans. I put up a trellis in which to train them. They sprouted, grew to about 24 inches tall, bloomed, and produced long, lovely beans. We picked the first on September first, and in about two weeks we were picking twice a day, over half a gallon bucket full each time. Things tapered off by the 25th to picking once a day, and by October we were picking every other day. During that time, though, the beans kept blooming some, then started putting on new foliage.

These are single-handed beans. You can part the foliage with one hand and pull beans off with the other, damaging neither bean, nor bough, nor root. The beans come loose easily, sometimes almost falling off. Add to that, taste. They are better raw than other beans I have munched while picking. And those strays that escape collection at one picking and get too big are still tender and stringless the next pass through.

We continued picking beans until the 26th of October when a hard frost ended them, the tomatoes, and the peas. The harvest had ramped back up nearly to peak production at that point.

If you're lying awake nights trying to decide which bean to select from the pile of seed catalogs, order Gurney's *Provider* and sleep.

Paul and Annie Matzek are IOGA members formerly living in Elizabeth, Indiana, now residing in Meriden, Kansas

Our Speaker for the January IOGA Meeting

Kris Medic serves as Agriculture & Natural Resources and Community Development Educator for Purdue Extension in Bartholomew County, and her core competencies are in landscape sustainability and arboriculture. She is a Board-Certified Master Arborist, past president of the Indiana Arborist Association and an award-winning newspaper columnist.

Kris is an alumna of Purdue University and the University of Delaware where **she was a Longwood Graduate Fellow. She is the author of the book, "[The New American Backyard](#)," published by Rodale. The book focuses on home landscape sustainability.** She likes to see community resilience and sustainability improvements as a result of her work, whether in local food systems, agriculture, landscape or public spaces.



Kris Medic

Ask us...!

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Treasurer's \$ Report

4th Quarter 2017

Opening Balance Oct. 1, 2017 **\$ 6161.93**

Income

AmazonSmile \$ 5.77

Membership \$ 40.00

Total **\$ 45.77**

Expenses

TURN Festival Exhibitor Fee \$ 250.00

Room Rental - Zionsville Lib \$ 10.00

Newsletter—Stamps \$ 39.20

Total **\$ 299.20**

Closing Balance Dec. 31, 2017 **\$ 5908.50**

Respectfully submitted by Ron Clark, Treasurer

Gardener's Amnesia

*The toil of tilling and summer's heat
I can scarcely remember,
When I unshelved a jar of June
To feed us in December.*

Paul Matzek

UPCOMING MEETINGS

Mark your calendar

IOGA generally meets quarterly on the third Saturday of the month. Mark your calendar for upcoming meetings.

January 20 2017
April 28, 2017
(Plant Auction)
July 21, 2017
October 20, 2017



How do I join IOGA?

Dues are \$10.00 per individual member, and \$12.00 for a dual membership (same address, one newsletter).

To join, please send your annual dues to:

Please include ALL of the following information:

I prefer my newsletter to be ___ emailed ___ mailed.

IOGA
7282 E 550 S
Whitestown, IN 46075

Full Name
2nd Name (if dual membership)
Address
Phone Number
Email Address



**IOGA
Meeting
Sat. Jan. 20
10:45 am**

Franklin Road Branch, Indianapolis Public Library
5550 S. Franklin Road
Indianapolis, IN 46239 ([Map](#))
317-275-4380

10:45 Arrive & Welcome Guests
11:00—11:45 Great Pitch-in Lunch
11:45—12:00 Business Meeting
12:00—12:30 Gardening Q&A
12:30—12:40 Break
12:40— Speaker & Questions

Meeting: The speaker will be Kris Medic who is the County Extension Educator in **Bartholomew County** (Columbus, Indiana) and also an IOGA member. Last year she visited several organic farms in Maine and **Vermont on a study trip and will give a presentation on her findings. (See Kris's profile on page 10)**

Pitch-in lunch: Bring a favorite dish filled with food ("home-made" and/or "organic" appreciated) to share and your plate, fork, and drink.

Directions: Take exit 96 on I-74 to south Post Rd. Go 0.6 miles south on Post Rd. and bear right (southwest) onto Northwestern Ave. Follow Northwestern Ave. another 0.6 miles and turn left (south) onto Franklin Rd. Go 1.1 miles south on Franklin Rd. to the library on the right (west side). (For precise **directions and time of travel from your home, click the word "Map" above, then "Directions" in the upper left part of the web page, enter your home address, and click "Get Directions".**)

Everyone welcome! Questions, or if lost, call Margaret Smith cell phone (317) 698-0526

Remember to car pool, if possible.

Join us and bring a friend!

Hoosier Organic Gardener
Claudia and Ron Clark, editors
7282 E 550 S
Whitestown, IN 46075



**Annual Dues Are
Due in January!**

**Join us!
IOGA Meeting
Sat. Jan. 20**