



Hoosier Organic Gardener

July 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



Doug Rohde

Happy July! I hope all of your garden plantings are doing well so far. I have my rabbit wire up, plastic cut-out cups around the bottom of the tomato plants and so far so good. I grow all my plants from seed of course and this year found a few different ones. German Stripe and a neat dark Japanese one called "Japanese Trifele Black". I still have my good old Alan Chadwick Cherry, Black Krim and a few Cherokee Purples. I'm battling chipmunks in my raised bed this year. So far I've caught about 10 chipmunks and 3 young squirrels, all of which are carted off about 7 miles away to a local forest/park. Quite often the ants invade my peanut butter that I smeared on my Havaheart trap bait plate and no self-respecting chipmunk will attempt to enter the trap to lick it off and spring the door shut. I think the ants have developed a liking for Jiffy Peanut Butter.

I've been really busy so far this year, spent a day in the French Embassy, attended a science lecture on Rusty Patched Bumble Bees, spent several days working at the Hamilton County Master Gardener's Plant Sale and, of course, we had our own always fun plant sale. Everything I purchased is alive and doing well! I worked downtown at the Earth Day Festival and Ron, Judy, Paul and we had a fun day. We may have picked up a few new members. In June I attended the Indiana Conservation Alliance meeting which is a collection of quite a few of the Indiana conservation organization such as the Sierra Club, Wilderness Society, Hoosier Environmental Council, DNR, Indiana Wildlife Federation, INPAWS, etc. Interesting discussions that the public never is aware of such as state funding, invasive plants, land and water management and a host of other subjects. Gardening isn't normally one of the subjects but learning how the state/federal budgeting works for parks, DNR and all the new funding proposals is quite interesting.

I haven't spent too much time on Facebook and generally fumble around on it once in a while. I did join a group called "Raised Bed Gardening". So far I like it as they post interesting pics of their gardens, ask for information and give it. I think I'd recommend it as there is a lot of good advice handed out (of course, a few that aren't that good but on the whole, not bad).

About 3 weeks ago I got a new toy. A lawn and garden torch by BernzOmatic at Lowes. Pretty neat as you can take care of a lot of weeds without chemicals. It uses small propane camper gas containers, relatively lightweight and sure takes care of weeds around the garden, cracks in your driveway/sidewalk, edges of your flowerbeds.....but don't get too carried away or like I did, start small fires of burning leaves and seeds around my garden bed. Not serious of course but it does cause a little excitement. I attacked, not only my garden, but the street grass growing along side of the gutter and that of both neighbors. This thing is addicting. The other thing I got was a small Ryobi 1600 power washer at Home Depot. Great for blasting off all that alga that grows on sidewalks and driveways plus I blasted all the dirt, alga and other plant growth off my cedar fence and now it looks new again. Even my patio furniture came out clean. Ah yes, good useful toys.

Keep IOGA organic!

Doug

Reflection on High Tunnels

by Kathy Ambler

The view from my front porch is pleasant. Beyond the flower gardens and the lawn there is a freshly planted field. Beyond that, a thicket of trees and shrubs that is alive with the day to day drama of the natural world. It's difficult to imagine that for ten years, all that was hidden by three plastic and steel behemoths.



I'm sometimes asked about my experience with high tunnels hoophouses - at times by someone who is building one. I try to be objective about the pros and cons but I'm among friends here and will speak freely. That is exactly what I did when the person who bought the high tunnels from me asked "Would you use them again?". I honestly answered "No".

Three High Tunnel Hoophouses on the Former "Yeager Farm Produce" Organic Farm in Fairland, IN

So, here's some good, some bad, and the rest broken down into two categories: 1) structure and 2) growing area. I'll start with structure.

Structure

Our high tunnels were made of galvanized pipe, some lumber, and two layers of heavy plastic. We used two layers of plastic to create an air cushion between them that helped manage condensation during cool months and also to prevent sagging under heavy snow. Two of the structures were 12' high x 48' long x 24' wide and one 9' high x 48' long x 14' wide. The cost up front was daunting, but because you can extend the growing season, it was soon mitigated by early sales of vegetables at a premium price. Raising a high tunnel is not too difficult. With some hand tools, a drill, a sledge hammer, and a little help from your friends, they're up and you're ready to grow. Well maybe.



Tomatoes Growing Inside One High Tunnel

You need to wait for a dead calm day to apply the plastic. Believe me, I know. If all that plastic starts to go, LET IT GO! One fellow didn't heed my advice. From my front porch I could see the whites of eyes as he was left dangling from a rafter after the ladder went out from under him.

After they were up and the initial cost paid for, it seemed that there was a constant flow of "one thing leads to another" - like the flow of money and maintenance issues. Something had to be done about the rain that runs off the top. High tunnels are prone to flooding. So, we had to install a drain system around each structure. Cha Ching! The structures are like giant sails curved over some pipes. They must be tightly closed during high winds. The simple pleasure of the sound of thunder, while

Continued from page 2

you're tucked safely in bed, vanishes when you remember the high tunnels are still open. So, you dash out, still in PJs, into the wind and lightening to close them. The plastic occasionally needed patching - hopefully not the middle of the top - and usually after about four to six years replaced. The rafters, being galvanized steel set into pipes driven four feet into the ground, were strong. Their groaning and creaking in the wind just made it sound worse that it really was. Ours stood well and failed only when the 2006 tornado passed by.

Growing Area

In the growing area, things went well enough as promised by all the catalogues, books and videos. We were able to bring produce to market early but we often ran out of cool season greens and crucifers. This was not a problem with the high tunnels though, just problems with seasonal flooding in the fields. The tomatoes were always superior to those in the field and we were able to continue with them later into the fall. We remarkably had very few pest problems, including disease. The high tunnel tomatoes survived a widespread attack by late season blight one year that virtually ended the tomato season for everyone. The best crop of cucumbers I ever grew were the plants I trellised on strings tied to the rafters at the sides of the high tunnels. Summer herbs and the heat-loving green Malabar, did well and also were relatively pest free.

Winter temperatures inside were warm enough for the plants, even if the greens got a little frosty. That just made them taste better. But the thing is, the sun doesn't give a hoot about what books and catalogues say. It stays on its low path, says hello late and goodbye early. And, while it's up, seedlings stretch and bow to the south but they improve as time passes. Tomato plants also expect more sun during their formative weeks, but still got to market about a month early in fine shape.

The soil needed extra care. It gets no rain so anywhere away from the irrigation tapes baked. It became a hostile desert below the surface as well, too much for its residents. Soil fertility was a problem because it never got a rest. So, we needed to purchase compost to address it. My little compost bins just couldn't keep up. One reason we needed more than one high tunnel was to be able to rotate crops. Finally, for now, we had to buy shade covers to mitigate the summer heat (Cha Ching again). The summer of 2012 was very hot. Even with shade covers, the tomatoes inside the tunnel began to drop blossoms and production slowed. Their stress was extreme. The field tomatoes fared better, but it was tough.

So, there you have it. Do I think it was mistake to use high tunnels? Not really. The experience just kind of falls into a neutral category. It was right for the times, but I'd rather not do it again. I prefer that my plants and I are outside, following the seasons as nature guides us to do. Also, at night when I hear the thunder I can just listen and enjoy the moment.



Tornado Damage to the High Tunnel Hoophouses in 2006

Kathy Ambler is an IOGA member living in Fairland, IN. Kathy and her late partner Gayle Swant until recently were the owner/operators of the Yeager Farm Produce organic farm.

April IOGA Meeting

The meeting on April 28, 2018 was held at the Zionsville Library

Starting at 10:30, donated plants and items for the auction were brought in and sorted. Everyone was trying to decide what they might bid on. There were also some tools donated for the auction. And someone had brought in some free blackberry lilies.

We had a great pitch-in lunch which, as always, included many home-made and organic dishes.

After the lunch, Doug Rohde began the meeting by telling us about a pollinator presentation he had made at Morse Lake for a garden club. Also 28 members of the European Union have expanded a ban on three neonicotinoid pesticides.

Darlene Miller had brought along a copy of The Midwestern Native Garden which shows native alternatives to invasive plants which was very helpful in identifying and offering more information on some of the plants in the auction.

Mikel Thorne had found a white laced emerald moth in his garden and contacted Eagle Creek Park to confirm his sighting of a very rare species of moth.

Doug had sighted a Rusty Patch Bumble Bee in his garden. He also mentioned certifying your native plant gardens by the Indiana Native Plant & Wild Flower Society (INPAWS) [link](#).

Margaret Smith asked about where to recycle batteries – (Editors' Note: A call to Boone Co. Solid Waste Management District confirmed that ALKALINE BATTERIES (like for flashlights) can

NO longer be recycled in the US because they contain so few usable components that it costs more energy to get that small amount than it's worth. Just throw them away in the trash. RECHARGEABLE batteries CAN be recycled at Lowes and other places.)

Margaret had brought seeds for the Zucchetta which is a vining squash. (Editors' Note: The Zucchetta has a solid stem and is not affected by the squash vine borer. When picked young the Zucchetta can be used as a substitute for Zucchini squash. When grown to maturity the Zucchetta can be over three feet long and twisted in shape. Beware, this squash may take over your garden!)

Claudia Clark showed us a Lesser Celandine plant which is invasive and sometimes confused with the Celandine Poppy.

Paul Gaston said radishes prevent squash borers.

Darlene said for powdery mildew use 1/8 tsp ground cinnamon to 1 cup water.

IOGA T-shirts and polo shirts were on sale. There are only a few left. When they are gone there will be no more. Those remaining will be brought to the July IOGA meeting. There are only medium and large T-shirts remaining (\$10/Sale Price \$5) There are 1-small, 1-medium, 6-large polo shirts remaining (\$15/Sale Price \$10).

The plant auction was then held. Ron Clark was the auctioneer. Claudia assisted him. The proceeds from the auction were \$420.50. The proceeds from the shirt, bag, & hat sale were \$78.00.

Judy Houser
Secretary



IOGA President Doug Rohde Conducting the Business/Q&A Portion of the Meeting.



Julie Wells (left) & Kathy Ambler (right)



Karen Sowinski (left) and Darlene Miller (right)



"BuzzWorthy" Donation
from Blossom and Bead

Beautiful Eggs



Some of the Items for the Auction



IOGA T-Shirts, Polo
Shirts, and Bags On Sale

LETTERS:



Rabbits

May 23 2018

Rabbits ate my Claudia and my Polish Linguisa tomatoes (from the April Plant Auction) down to the ground. When you have some to harvest would you share one of each so I could taste them?

Karen Sowinski

We will give you some tomatoes this summer. I recall that Doug Rohde had the same problem last year. He probably has a rabbit fence around his garden this year. We had a similar problem a few years ago in our garden. We put up a 6 foot fence. Our rabbits had antlers.

Ron and Claudia

Asparagus Beetles

May 10, 2018

Help! What do I do to eliminate asparagus beetles?

Mary Ladd

In early spring we have many asparagus beetles on our plants. Since we eat the stalks we don't want to spray anything on them. So we vacuum the beetles off the stalks. See the [IOGA newsletter for July, 2014](#) to see the portable vacuum that we use. This vacuum is a little expensive with the high-capacity battery and charger, but Claudia really, really loves this vacuum for vacuuming around the house.

About asparagus beetles. This time of the year the beetles are mating and laying eggs on the asparagus stalks. The eggs are just small black specks along the side of the stalk. The nice thing about asparagus is that as you pick the stalks you also eliminate any eggs that the beetles have laid. By the end of the picking season (early June) the egg laying season for the beetles is pretty much over. And, if you clear cut all the stalks at the end of the picking season, you have eliminated most of the

eggs so you shouldn't have too much problem with the beetles during the summer. Predator insects should also help in the summer. If you see any asparagus beetles on the asparagus ferns in the summer, you can again use your vacuum. I sometimes just spot spray individual beetles or their grubs on the ferns with the short-lived, organic insecticide [Pyrethrin](#) spray.

Ron

May 11, 2018

Thanks very helpful. I have tried the vacuum and it works great.

Mary

Rhubarb

Despite spending well over \$50 for rhubarb plants we have never gotten more than one picking and we only have one plant left. We clearly don't know the magic for rhubarb!

Claudia

I have found that getting rhubarb from some local person works best for me. My plant has been struggling because it went from sandy gravel soil to clay. Plus it has been transplanted two times since we have moved. Looks good this spring, two years in this location.

From what I have learned, it needs a rich soil. Lots of compost & composted manure. Plant it in the fall (or very early spring) while dormant, in a big bushel size hole, but don't plant the roots more than 2" deep. Sunny location & good drainage. I accidentally planted mine over a drain tile, but it likes the location. I just don't let it get too dry.

After 1 year, In the early spring I fertilize with 10-10-10* just as it is starting to show growth. Do not pull any stalks for at least one year. Cut off any flowering stalks. In the fall top dress with compost.

Pull, don't cut the stalks. I often whack off the leaves & let them lay around the plant for mulch.

I'm sure you have tried all this. I think getting some plants locally will really make the difference. Besides, they might not cost so much.

Darlene Miller

*(Editors' Note: On a garden [forum](#) it was said that
7.5 lbs soybean meal
4.5 lbs bone meal
10 lbs greensand
is equivalent to 5 lbs of inorganic 10-10-10
fertilizer.)

Solstice and Equinox

April 16, 2018

Just got the April newsletter. Maybe needs clarification from the president? It is the Spring Equinox i.e. equal day/equal night, Autumnal Equinox equal day/equal night. A little confusing to those who do not know the etymology of words. Solstice meaning Sun standing still and is the longest day, Summer Solstice, shortest day Winter Solstice. The sun stands still at it's northern or southern limits before reversing direction. Just a thought! :)

Constance Ferry

Solstice and Equinox are different and unfortunately often become co-mingled and I probably could have been far more clear. However I tended to glob it together a bit. I often get greetings in Spring "Happy Solstice" and I usually sent a note back that it's technically "Happy Equinox". So to your question/s: the official equinox date was around the 20th of March and will also be on the 22/23 of September. That's when the center of the visible sun is directly over the equator. The sun may not be precisely over the equator but close enough. On the day of an equinox, daytime and nighttime are of approximately equal duration all over the planet. They are not exactly equal due to the angular size of the Sun and atmospheric refraction.

A Solstice is when the Sun appears to reach its most northerly or southerly distance from the equator. The day of the solstice in either hemisphere has either the most sunlight of the year (summer solstice or the least sunlight of the winter (winter solstice) for any place other than the equator. In this context, are the June solstice and December solstice. The June solstice is on the 21st and the December solstice is also on the 21st.

As you noted "solstice" is derived from the Latin sol (sun) and sister (to stand still), because at the solstices, the Sun's donation "stands still", that is, the seasonal movement of the Sun's daily path (as seen from the Earth) stops at a northern or southern limit before reversing directions.

So for an observer on the North Pole, the sun reaches the highest position in the sky once a year in June. The day this occurs is call the June solstice day. Similarly, for an observer on the South Pole, it is the winter solstice on the other. The Sun's westerly motion never ceases as Earth is continually in rotation. However, the Sun's motion in declination comes to a stop at the moment of solstice. In that sense, solstice means "sun standing".

Doug Rohde



IOGA Member and Past IOGA President Rosie Bishop at the Earth Day Festival in Indianapolis last April in Her "STOP Single-use Plastics" Costume.

Rosie said "since I didn't have a gardening booth this year (at the festival), I had a mobile campaign. (See plasticpollutioncoalition.org or [No Straws Please](#) to begin to grasp the MAJOR issue.) A woman said she likes my 'STRAW HAT'."

Shallot Slip Up

by Paul Matzek

This year's experiment was shallots, those delicate, delectable alliums prized by chefs. I tilled the newly turned sod in the fall, then gathered cow chips from the old cow shed on our place. They must have been there twenty five years. The tiller couldn't break them up but I figured the rains of winter and spring would cause them to disintegrate. I planted and placed the chips between the plantings to allow the enriched rain water that soaked through to nourish the bulbs. Shallots form cloves and the bulbs should be split up like garlic before planting.



Shallots Growing

I didn't know this.

Spring brought forth shallots, but each clump looked like an overseeded lawn, twenty or more plants in a clump. I probably could have dug them up and replanted at that point, but it still hadn't dawned on me what the problem was. Short version of the story is, a lot of the new bulbs must have been strangled by their clump-mates. I harvested only a small bucket of marble sized bulbs. The cow chips remained.

The moral of this story? If you're trying something new, do a little research.

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



Letter from Beulah Cobb

(Editors' Note: Beulah and Clarence Cobb are the only charter members of IOGA that are still members of IOGA. Beulah attended the first organizational meeting of IOGA in the early 1970s.)

In the spring of 1969, a Johnny Appleseed type of young man came into our neighborhood of Nora-Broad Ripple in Indianapolis.

He talked to anyone who would listen about taking care of the earth, about growing their own food, and about feeding their families with their own nourishing food. He was very persuasive and had quite a following. Then he set a day for a real celebration of home-grown food: Saturday, April 22, 1970.

That day, a large crowd gathered on the sidewalks of Broad Ripple. There were lots of speeches and **conversations. Everyone was "gung ho" to plant. Thus was the launch the Indiana Growers Association.**

The young man visited everybody's garden and encouraged everyone.

Then one day, as suddenly as he appeared, he disappeared. But people continued with their gardening. I never saw him again. Perhaps he went across our country encouraging people to grow their own food. After 48 years, we are still celebrating Earth Day in Indianapolis, Indiana and as [this](#) article in the *Indianapolis Star* shows, throughout Indiana and beyond.

So this is my memory of how Earth Day began. May it continue and involve more people every year.

Sincerely, *Beulah Cobb*

Ask us...!

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Treasurer's Report

2nd Quarter 2017

Opening Balance April 1, 2017 \$ 5916.94

Income

Membership Dues	\$ 176.00
Plant & Garden Auction	\$ 420.50
IOGA T-Shirts & Bags	4 78.00
AmazonSmile Foundation	\$ 6.05

Total \$ **670.55**

Expenses

Total \$ **0.00**

Closing Balance June 30, 2017 \$ 6597.49

Respectfully submitted by Ron Clark, Treasurer



UPCOMING MEETINGS

Mark your calendar

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

October 21, 2017
January 19, 2018
April 27, 2018
(Plant Auction)
July 20, 2018



New IOGA Members

Mary Ladd , Indianapolis, IN 47260
(Returning Member)
Michael Welber, Bloomington, IN 47401



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. July, 21
11:00 am

Susan Irwin-**Simmons's Garden**
9054 W County Road 575 N
Middletown, IN 47356 ([Map](#))

11:00 Arrive and Welcome Guests
11:15—12:00 Great Pitch-in Lunch
12:00— 1:00 Introductions & Gardening Q&A
1:00— 1:15 Business Meeting
1:15— Garden Tour

Meeting: The July 21 IOGA meeting will be a visit to the garden of Susan Irwin-Simmons east of Pendelton. Susan lives on 6 1/2 acres, has an enclosed garden, and a beautiful potting shed/house. She uses raised beds in her garden, grows fruit trees, and raises chickens. Bring some chairs just in case.

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: From I-465 take I-69 North from Indianapolis 26.3 miles to exit 226. At exit 226 take the ramp right and turn right (south) onto IN-109. On IN-109 go 3.5 miles and turn left (east) onto US-36, On US-36 go 4.3 miles and turn left (north) onto Mechanicsburg Rd. On Mechanicsburg Rd. go 0.8 miles and turn left onto W County Road 575 N. Then go 384 feet to destination on the right. Park in the driveway by the house, down by the barn, or on the road. (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 the "Go Button".)

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

Join us and bring a friend!

Hoosier Organic Gardener
Claudia and Ron Clark, editors
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Whitestown, IN 46075



Join us!
IOGA Meeting
Sat. July 21