



# Hoosier Organic Gardener

April 2019

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

We didn't have our normal January meeting due to the expected snow storm which didn't completely materialize, but I thought it was better to play it safe, as several years earlier we slid into the parking lot at that location after having an ice storm the day before. Coming up is, of course, our April IOGA plant sale/meeting at the Cool Creek Park Nature Center, 2000 E. 151st Street in Carmel. Arrive by 10:30 if you are bringing plants (and, by the way, bring sacks and boxes if you have them). This year we are going to do the auction a bit differently. It's likely that Ron (and Claudia



Doug Rohde

as well as Margaret) may not be available for the traditional auction that Ron normally does. So my thought is for you to mark your plants with a price you want for them, and be sure to note what kind of plants they are. We are trying to come up with a speaker for the meeting, also, and since our normal auction took quite a bit of the after lunch time, our plant sale will be a bit faster if we do it this way. We are "punting" a bit on this and will need someone to help!!! Any good ideas are welcome. Since we mainly sell to ourselves, it shouldn't be a major problem. I need suggestions on this so that it is fair to all, as Ron's auction utilized rising bids to separate the must-haves from the maybes. Or, of course, if someone wants to be the auctioneer in Ron's place, that would work, too, as long as we can get the auction as well as a speaker in. And you will find that Cool Creek Park has outside trails, as well as a fascinating Nature Center inside with one-way windows to watch the many birds at the bird feeder and other items of interest such as an indoor bee hive.

A few Spring rules that always need to be repeated: 1) Try to add organic matter as you dig. Add it before you plant, of course. I put in as much as two inches of compost from my two compost bins. If you can get into the habit, dig in the compost and/or leaves in the fall, then plant winter rye, red clover, or hairy vetch. 2) Don't work the soil when it's wet or when it's too dry. Dry soil gets pulverized, and the soil texture is destroyed. Wet clay soil will become a concrete disaster when it dries out if you have been digging in it when it's too wet. 3) Don't leave the soil bare for too long, as the hot sun can dry it out quickly, and your micro organisms will start to die off without moisture. 4) Keep off your dug beds! Half of the volume of soil should be pore space occupied by air and water. 5) Plant for pollinators.

Pollinator plants strategically planted in or close to your garden will provide forage for predatory or parasitic insects.

Keep IOGA organic!

Doug



# Lettuce – Cool Crop for Indiana Gardens

by Rosie Lerner



While it is too early to plant tomatoes, now is the perfect time to plant lettuce. The key to growing a successful crop is to plant and mature the lettuce in cool weather. Lettuce is an annual plant that will bolt (produce a flower stalk) and become bitter when temperatures stay above 70 F.

Iceberg, or more correctly called crisp head type lettuce, used to predominate produce shelves at most grocery stores. Crisp head cultivars require a fairly long, cool growing season of 70-85 days. Indiana's cool season is usually much too short to produce the crisp head types.

But, in recent years, the more nutritious, leaf-type lettuces have gained in popularity. Most leaf types require only half the growing time, generally, from 40-50 days. Leaf lettuce produces a loose arrangement of leaves on the stalk. Leaves may be green, such as the cultivars Black-Seeded Simpson, Green Ice, and Grand Rapids, or red, as in Ruby, Lolla Rossa, and Red Sails. For a uniquely shaped lettuce, try Oak Leaf, which comes in both green and red leaf forms. Leaf lettuce can be cut whenever the leaves are large enough to use. You can harvest just a few leaves at a time and allow the plants to keep producing more leaves or harvest the entire plant.

There are other non-crisp head types of lettuce that can also be grown successfully in Indiana. Some cultivars produce a loose head, often called butterhead-type lettuce. Butterhead types tend to have very soft, pliable leaves that have a delicate texture and flavor. Bibb, Boston and Buttercrunch are just a few examples and, in general, take 60-70 days from seed to harvest. Using transplants, instead of directly seeding into the garden, will get the plants off to a head start before warm weather arrives.

Cos or romaine type lettuce forms elongated, stiff leaves that make an upright, loose head. Paris Island and Paris White are common Cos cultivars and need about 70-75 days to mature. As with butterhead types, transplanting is recommended.

As temperatures get warm, lettuce begins to bolt, and the leaves develop a bitter flavor. It's best to pull up and discard bolted plants and replace them with a warm season crop.

If you've missed out on planting lettuce this spring, don't dismay. Leaf lettuce makes an excellent planting for a fall crop. Plant seeds in late August or early September to allow sufficient time to harvest a crop before killing temperatures arrive.

*B. Rosie Lerner is a member of the Department of Horticulture and Landscape Architecture, College of Agriculture at Purdue University and is the Purdue University Extension Consumer Horticulture Specialist. This article originally appeared in the Yard and Gardening News of the Purdue University Consumer Horticulture Program at Purdue University and is reprinted with permission.*

## Important Dates:

**April 13, 9:00 - 3:00, Organic Gardening Workshop**

Hamilton County 4-H Fair Grounds Exhibit Hall, 2003 Pleasant Street, Noblesville, IN

Cost: \$20.00 includes lunch. Register at <https://www.hamiltonswcd.org/sustainability-workshop.html>

Questions: [soil.water@hamiltoncounty.in.gov](mailto:soil.water@hamiltoncounty.in.gov) or 317-773-2181

**May 11, 9:30 - 12:30, Indiana Native Plant Society (INPS) plant sale**

Park Tudor School, 7200 N. College Ave., Indianapolis

**May 18, 8:00 - 3:00, Hamilton County Master Gardeners Association "mother of all plant sales"**

Hamilton County 4-H Fair Grounds Exhibit Hall, 2003 Pleasant Street, Noblesville, IN.

# January IOGA Meeting Was Canceled Due to Weather

The meeting scheduled for January 19, 2019, was canceled due to a snowstorm that was predicted to hit during the time of the meeting. The meeting was to be held at the Franklin Road branch of the Indianapolis Public Library and was to have Carol Michel as speaker. She was to give a presentation on gardening tools entitled, "Gardening Tools Beyond the Hoe." We definitely will try to have Carol come to a future IOGA meeting.



## Back to the Past

One of our First Auctions with then IOGA President Gary Shideler Acting as Auctioneer (About 20 Years Ago)



Gary Shideler, Auctioneer. Current Members, Tamara Shockley (Foreground), Kathleen Krueger (Center), and Susan Irwin-Simmons (Right)

Gary Shideler, Auctioneer. Current Member, Claudia Clark, Helper (Background)



# Can You Plant Cucumbers Next to Squash and Melons?



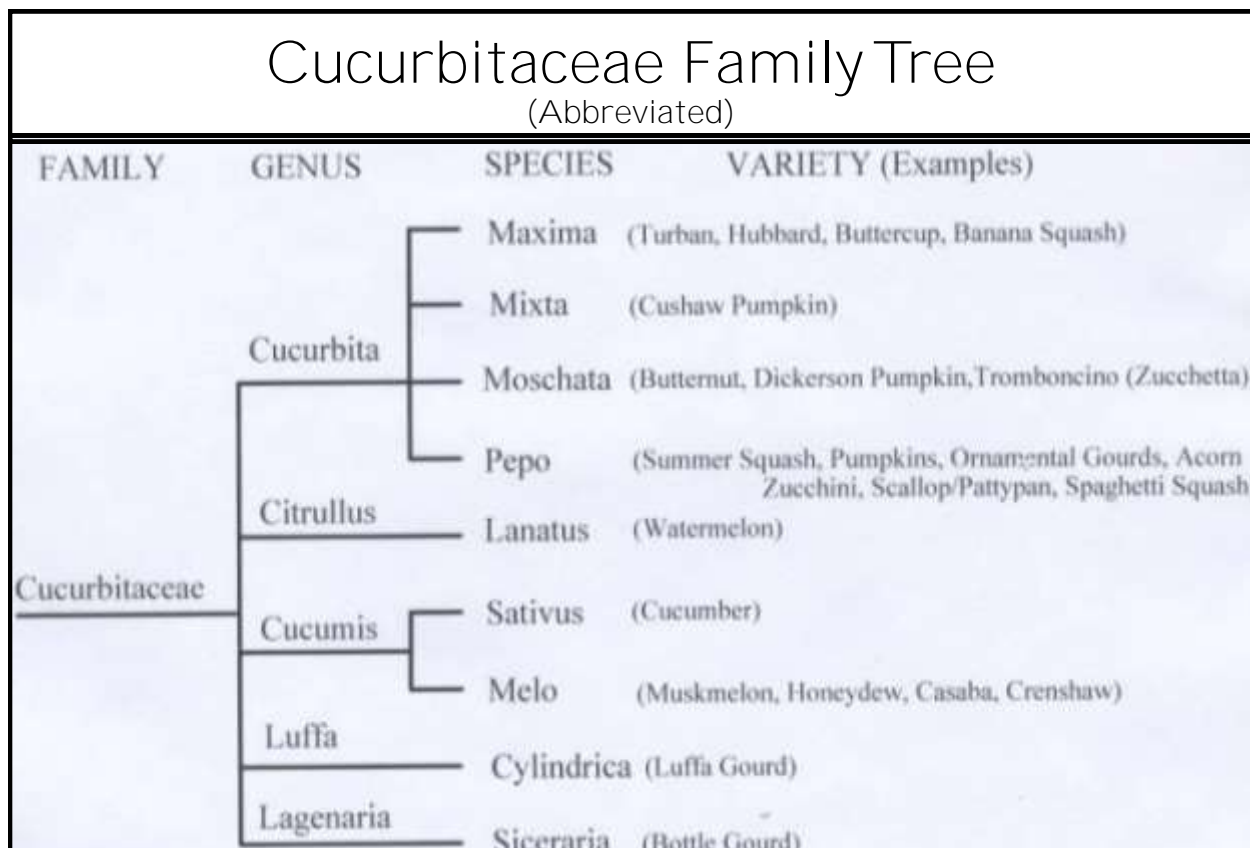
I have been told, "Never plant cucumbers next to squash, melons, or pumpkins. They will cross pollinate and give you unusual looking and weird tasting fruit" But is that true? Squash, pumpkins, melons, and cucumbers all belong to the same Cucurbitaceae family (also called the cucurbit family or the gourd family). The Cucurbitaceae family consists of about 965 species in around 95 genera. The diagram below illustrates the most important genera and species of the Cucurbitaceae family.

In general, cucumbers, squash, pumpkins, gourds and other varieties in the Cucurbitaceae family will cross pollinate only with varieties within the same species. So cucumbers, being in a different genus from squash, pumpkins and watermelons and in a different species than melons, will not cross pollinate with them.

And even among the varieties within a species that can cross pollinate, the fruit that results from the cross pollination will be true to the pollinated plant. Only the seeds that result will in the next planting produce plants whose fruit is unusual looking and weird tasting. So if you are only interested in the fruit and are not saving seed for the future, you need not worry about what you plant next to what.

Summer squash, pumpkins, decorative gourds, some types of winter squash (e.g. acorn), zucchini, scallop/pattypan, spaghetti squash, and others belonging to the species *Cucurbita pepo* will cross pollinate with each other. However, none of these members of this species will cross pollinate with muskmelon (*Cucumis melo*) and cucumbers (*Cucumis sativus*) and watermelon (*Citrullus Lanatus*) which belong to different genera and species. Also, cucumbers and muskmelons will not cross pollinate since they belong to different species.

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### Caveat

Some cross pollination has been seen to occur between species of the of the *Cucurbita* genus that results in fruit but with no seeds or with seeds that are not viable.

### Seed Saving

If you are saving seeds, you must make sure that your plant was pollinated only by the same variety member of the species. Since the plants are pollinated by bees, their pollen can travel great distances. one should keep members of the same species ¼ to ½ mile apart or use a physical barrier like a hoop house or a row cover.



## Green Pumpkins

Several years ago the editors planted pumpkins for Jack-O-Lanterns along with zucchini squash in our garden. We unwittingly saved the seeds from one of the pumpkins and planted them the next year. What grew the second year looked like medium-size pumpkins, but they were green. The pumpkin we grew the previous year had cross pollinated with the zucchini.

To make matters worse, we had a friend that had a girl scout troop of blind girls and she wanted to have them carve pumpkins for Jack-O-Lanterns. We thought our green pumpkins would be just the thing for them, as being blind, they would be unable to tell green from orange.

However, once they started to cut the pumpkins they found out that they did not smell like pumpkins and were very bitter -- very embarrassing!

# LETTERS:



## Letter from Beulah Cobb

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

Jan. 31, 2019

Dear Claudia,

It is nice to hear someone speaking of Spring! I hope I will be able to plant some garden this Spring. Last year it was very wet after I planted early seeds, and the rain drowned out all my vegetables, and weeds grew and grew.

Finally, in October, we had a wonderful grape harvest. Two friends came and picked grapes and made juice for me.

Through a strange set of circumstances, we had weeded the grapes and planted white clover seed at the foot of the vines. We had a great grape harvest!! We also have white clover in our yard. And this spring I saw white clover seeds advertised in all the seed catalogs. It is definitely worth a try!!

I am always glad when plants volunteer in my garden any time of the year. Like my ground cherries and Grandpa Admire's lettuce and asparagus and a special mid-size tomato that comes up around my compost patch.

Happy gardening 2019,

Beulah Cobb



# SAD

by Paul Matzek

Ahhhh fall, the time to plant. What? You may think I'm suffering from Seasonal Affective Disorder, and maybe so, but the winter has been mild and I've been able to work outside most days here on our Lost Pond Farm, (yes, there is a story behind that) hence, no cabin fever.

Seems the heirs that owned this place thought that, being at the junction of two state highways, it would sell for a fortune as a



commercial location, so they filled in the pond to make it even more attractive to a buyer. Old aerial photos and even present day Google Maps show a pond, but there is no evidence of it now but for a copse of willow where the upper end had been. The sellers' disappointment was probably just punishment for destroying that asset.

But I digress.

Last fall we planted cover crops, which have served their purpose, and strawberries. We planted two apple trees, a peach, pecan, and two hazelnuts, and along the drive, a row of tulip trees. The garlic and shallots we planted late, now feeling the longer days, are rising from the cold bed to welcome the vernal equinox along with the tulips.

Between other chores this early spring, I have been harvesting dead grass from the hay meadow by the pickup load for mulch and to increase the organic matter in the soil. Soon I will harvest a large tree from the woods to have sawn into lumber. The attempt to harvest walnut sap for syrup was a total loss. Either spring has been too warm or I too impatient. But, ahhh, spring, the time to harvest.

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

## Ask us...!

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## UPCOMING MEETINGS

### Mark Your Calendar!

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

April 27, 2019  
(Plant Auction)  
July 20, 2019  
October 19, 2019  
January 18, 2020



# Earth Day Indiana



*free outdoor festival*

**Saturday April 20 • 11 a.m. to 4 p.m.**

Fun, Exhibits, Food, Children's Activities,  
Live Music

## Military Park

601 W. New York St., Indianapolis

[www.earthdayindiana.org](http://www.earthdayindiana.org)

**Visit the IOGA Booth**

## Treasurer's Report

1st Quarter 2019

**Opening Balance Jan. 1, 2019**      \$ 6348.99

### Income

Membership Dues                      \$ 438.00

Amazon Smile                         \$ 7.38

Donations                                \$ 15.00

**Total**                                      \$ 460.38

### Expenses

Web Site Hosting                      \$ 199.56

Business Entity Report              \$ 22.00

Newsletter Stamps                    \$ 55.00

Insurance                                \$ 200.00

Room Rental                            \$ 100.00

Hosting Gratuity                      \$ 50.00

Earth Day Exhibitor Fee            \$ 61.00

**Total**                                      \$ 687.56

**Closing Balance Mar. 31, 2019**    \$ 6121.81

*Respectfully submitted by Ron Clark, Treasurer*



## 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:      I O G A  
7282 E 550 S  
Whitestown, IN 46075



Please include ALL of the following information:

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

I prefer my newsletter to be  emailed  mailed

IOGA  
Meeting  
Sat. April 27  
10:30 am

Annual Plant and Garden Auction  
at the Cool Creek Park Nature Center  
2000 E. 151st St., Carmel, IN ([Map](#))

317-774-2500

- |             |  |
|-------------|--|
| 10:30       | Arrive with Auction Items  |
| 11:00—11:45 | Great Pitch-in Lunch<br>(bring food to share plus table service) |
| 11:45—12:40 | Introductions, Q&A, and Business                                 |
| 12:45       | Auction Begins   |

Plants, books, and garden items will be available for auction. Your donations are appreciated. Please label plants. Proceeds will be used to fund future IOGA programs. Each year the IOGA plant auction is attended by recently converted organic gardeners who are looking for plants and ideas, as well as those who have more experience and have lots of plants, tips and techniques to share.

For the 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 north I-465 in Indianapolis take Exit 31 north onto US-31 N / N. Meridian St.. Go 4.7 miles north on US-31 and exit right (east) onto 146th St. (Use the 2nd from the right lane to turn right onto 146th St.) Go 0.2 miles on 146th St. and turn left (north) onto E Greyhound Pass. Continue 0.2 miles on E Greyhound Pass and turn right onto Cool Creek Park Rd. Continue 0.6 miles on Cool Creek Park Rd. through a traffic circle to your destination on the right (north).

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



Join us!  
IOGA Meeting  
Sat. April 27