



# Hoosier Organic Gardener

April, 2020

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

Well, that wasn't much of an Indiana winter, at least where I live. No complaints though! We are into an early Spring (officially, 19 March this year) and into April showers. I started tomatoes earlier this year assuming everything would be normal especially since we were going to have our April plant sale (18 April) the week before Earth Day (25 April). Now we are stuck with Corvid-19. I am making some assumptions that Earth Day, downtown Indy as well as elsewhere, will wisely be cancelled and along with that our plant sale the week before. A lot of us are in that age group that would be at high risk and with all the problems of hospitals and being hospitalized, I don't think a meeting of all of us would be the smartest thing to do.

I didn't start quite so many tomato plants as I did last year and even so, I don't have room for all of them so two of my neighbors will get a few and an older lady across the street will have me planting two behind her house. I have a leaf encroaching Shagbark Hickory and a White Oak that tend to create a shadow over one of my gardens at certain times. So, I read up on what grows well in semi-shade and will plant that bed accordingly. However, that puts me growing my tomatoes in the same bed where they are always grown but with the most sun. Right now all beds are green and covered in Winter Rye. Both compost bins are filled to the brim and are heating up. BTW, all that junk mail you get plus newspapers that you run through your shredder can be mixed into your compost bins. I tried some old Brandy Wine seeds to see if any would come up and out of the 6 I planted only 1 came up even after I soaked the seeds, as I always do with all seeds, overnight. I got a bag of onion starts and they grow well in semi-shade.

Carrots are good to grow with tomatoes—also with leaf lettuce, chives, onions, leeks, radishes, rosemary and sage. They do have a dislike for dill. They are also beneficial to the growth of peas. Of course, even though we are heavily “veggie” gardeners, don't forget native plants. Ron gave me some Mayapples that are doing very well under that White Oak. Two great books to get and read and re-read are: “Carrots love Tomatoes” by Louise Riotte, about the secrets of companion planting and “Go Native” by Carolyn Harstad about gardening with native plants and wildflowers in the lower Midwest (Indiana especially).

I/we will keep all of you informed via e-mail as our new health predicament develops as far as IOGA is concerned. Meanwhile, we may be confined to our gardens for the summer... we all will have fantastic and weedless gardens.

Be safe and keep IOGA organic.

Doug

# *The Impacts of Invasive Plant Species: Part 3 of 3*

By Tony Branam, USDA-NRCS

## Harm to Human Health

The impacts of invasive species on our forests has been well documented by their lack of natural controls here in the Midwest allowing them to over-crowd and outcompete our native plants. The economic impacts are becoming more apparent with invasive species limiting oak-hickory forest regeneration and threatening the timber industry, and the unexpected costs to government agencies at all levels in protecting public safety and our natural resources. It is the impact of non-native, invasive species on human health that may motivate citizens to take action and begin curbing the rampant spread of foreign plants, insects and animals.

The Tree of Heaven has been a problem in logging regions of the Midwest and some professional foresters say it's the greatest threat to our native woodlands. Originally from China the Tree of heaven grows quickly and will outcompete native hardwoods for sunlight, water and space. The tree of heaven is a prolific seed producer and when damaged or injured will send out root runners to generate new sprouts. According to an online fact sheet published by Penn State University Extension, October 8, 2018, human skin contact with various parts of the Tree of Heaven can become irritated. In rare cases "inflammation of the heart muscle from exposure to sap through broken skin, blisters or cuts" has been documented. I am aware some professional foresters will not cut Tree of heaven for fear of toxic sawdust getting into their lungs.

Another invasive species you do not want in contact with your skin is the Giant hogweed. Similar in appearance with Poison Hemlock, the giant hogweed is an annual plant originally from Eurasia. Contact with the sap makes skin photosensitive that can lead to severe burns and scarring. The use of protective clothing is essential when this plant is encountered.



One of the more interesting, and disturbing, impacts on human health is attributed to the Japanese barberry (photo left). An ornamental shrub from Asia, the Japanese barberry is a tight branched brush with a small stature planted in urban and suburban landscapes for its burgundy autumn foliage and contrasting bright red berries. This invasive shrub with thorn studded limbs has spread to native woodlands and parks via bird droppings after eating the berries. Mice are another consumer of the berries and with an increased availability of berries there is an increase in the populations of mice. Mice are also a significant carrier of ticks and you guessed it, as the number of mice increases so do

Continued on next page

the number of ticks. Specifically, the black legged tick also known as the deer tick, the carrier of Lyme disease. According to the findings of Williams, Linske and Ward in their paper entitled Long-Term Effects of *Berberis thunbergii* (Ranunculales: Berberidaceae) Management on *Ixodes scalularis* (Acari: Ixodidae) Abundance and *Borrelia burgdorferi* (Spirochaetales: Spirochaetaceae) Prevalence in Connecticut, USA, as densities of Japanese barberries increased so did the populations of black legged ticks. When the Japanese barberries were thinned and/or removed the numbers of black legged ticks also decreased. The barberry shrubs grow in tight clusters reducing air flow between their branches creating conditions of elevated humidity with an accumulation of leaf litter on the ground favoring both rodent and tick inhabitants. The following is a direct link to their study in the journal of Environmental Entomology, Volume 46, Issue 6, December 2017, pages 1329-1338, <https://academic.oup.com/ee/article/46/6/1329/4159248>

In one way or another we will all have to pay the costs of treating non-native and invasive species that have escaped our flowerbeds and have rooted in our forests. Whether it's our taxes going directly to local street departments to remove dead and dying ash trees from falling on parked cars or utility lines, or Federal programs to treat private and public lands infested with invasive brush for the benefit of wildlife and timber production. Regardless of how we address the impacts of invasive species it must a thorough and ongoing effort to minimize the risks of hospitalization because we wanted to take a leisurely walk in the woods.

References Cited and Additional Information:

*Southern Indiana Cooperative Invasive Management* <http://www.sicim.info/cisma-project/>

*Indiana USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service* <https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/in/programs/financial/>

*The Nature Conservancy* <https://www.nature.org/en-us/about-us/where-we-work/united-states/indiana/>

*Indiana Wildlife Federation* <https://www.indianawildlife.org/wildlife/invasive-plants/>

***Invasive Plants Induce the Taxonomic and Functional Replacement of Dune Spiders***

Gomes, M., Carvalho, J.C. & Gomes, P. Biol Invasions (2018) 20: 533. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10530-017-1555-5>

<https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007%2Fs10530-017-1555-5>

*Invasive Species*, June 21, 2018, By Ryan Colliton, Chief of Natural Resources & Regulatory Compliance <http://www.metroparks.com/natural-resources-department-updates/>

*Information on State Invasive Species laws, agencies and resources*, <https://bugwoodcloud.org/mura/mipn/assets/File/StateCWMAResourcesUpdatedJune2010.pdf>

*Indiana Woodland Steward magazine* <http://www.inwoodlands.org/publications/>

**50th ANNIVERSARY OF EARTH DAY IS APRIL 22, 2020.**

The theme for Earth Day 2020 is climate action. The enormous challenge — but also the vast opportunities — of action on climate change have distinguished the issue as the most pressing topic for the 50th anniversary.

Climate change represents the biggest challenge to the future of humanity and the life-support systems that make our world habitable.

Even with social distancing, there are many things we can do to benefit the earth — garden organically, eat more plants, compost, limit driving, conserve energy and many more at-home activities.



# January IOGA Meeting

The meeting on January 18, 2020 was held at the Franklin Road branch of the Indianapolis Public Library. There were 18 members and 3 guests present.

We had a great pitch-in lunch which, as always, included a good variety of organic and/or home-made dishes.

A special guest was brought by Tammy - Gary Shideler, who was the President of IOGA in 1997 when IOGA had its first plant sale and he served as its first auctioneer.

After the lunch at 12:10, President Doug Rohde began the meeting. We began with a question posed by Susan Irwin Simmons which was "What did you plant last year that you would you plant again and which one would not plant again".

Dwight likes Cherokee Purple. This variety cross-pollinates easily so don't plant with other tomato varieties. He also likes red okra which is a beautiful plant. He would not plant cantaloupe again.

Becky likes Mexican sunflower, green peppers and small pumpkins, but would not plant onions again.

Tammy likes Calenddula. You can eat the leaves.

Susan likes red mustard. She wouldn't plant ornamental peppers (too little) again and is over exotic tomatoes (no flavor).

Paul likes Valentine tomatoes. He planted zuchetta last year and had only one fruit and problems with fungus.

Margaret said she would bring enough zuchetta seeds for everyone and maybe some would try it again. She has had good luck with it.

Doug had good luck with tomatoes, but the asparagus was small and thin. He wouldn't plant garlic again.

Gary Shideler likes Ozark strawberries, Big Zac tomatoes (they get to 6-7 lbs) and Sweet 100 cherry tomatoes. He puts Big Zac seeds on a paper towel to dry and plants that right there. Elephant garlic is actually an onion. Cloves will grow true.

Carol likes glass gem popcorn. It is a different color every year.

Tammy is fighting invasives. She cuts the tops off and uses a puller bear to pull them out by the roots. You can borrow one from DNR.

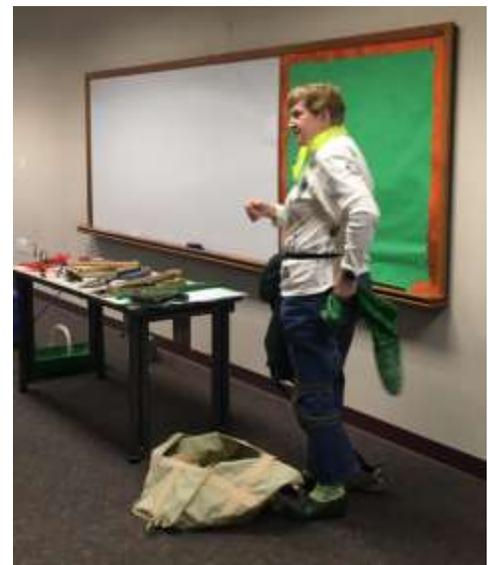
At 12:40 Carol Michel began her presentation on “Gardening Tools Beyond the Hoe”. She was wearing a vintage (late 80’s) tool shirt and tool-themed socks. January is the month to take stock - a good time to sharpen your tools. Vinegar only kills the top of weeds and does nothing for the soil. It is not EPA certified for weed control.

Then we did a fun quiz. “The Gardening Equation - A tool to assess your happiness with your garden and gardening.” We were to rate each category from 1 to 10 with 10 being highest, except for chemical usage where 10 is no chemicals. A score of 100 is perfection and a low score means you probably shouldn’t garden.

S (soil)	TI (time)
P (plants)	TO (tools)
C (climate)	W (weeds)
D (design)	CU (chemical usage)
$(P + S + C) \times D = G$	$TI + TO + W + CU = E$
Your score $G + E$	

After this, Carol went through all the tools she had brought.

- Brass hose swivel - use plumbers tape to stop leaks
- Seed spoons – 1 tiny seed – 4 sizes
- Spacers – for uniform seed planting (Pinetree Garden Seeds)
- Soil thermometer
- Compost thermometer
- Rockery trowel – good for planting crocus bulbs
- Perennial spade – (Sneeboer, DeWit)
- Stainless steel hand-forged trowel
- Hori-hori knife – good for digging, planting and cutting roots
- Japanese hand digging hoe
- Trake – scrapper and digger (Target)
- Cobra head cultivating tool (DeWit)
- Hoe-dag – multi-use hand held hoe
- Cape Cod weeder – available left or right handed (DeWit)
- Jakaoti hand shears– made to shear llamas, but very good for cutting grasses
- Plastic forks – build a “forktress” with tines out to keep rabbits out of green beans
- Time management system – use tomato timer for tasks you don’t really want to do. 10-20 min.
- Harvest trug



And then of course, there’s the proper clothes to make your neighbors really think you are crazy – hollow leg, knee pads, holster, clogs, scarf, handkerchief, seed spoons, sunglasses, sunscreen, gloves and hat.

Altogether an informative and interesting program.

Judy Houser  
Secretary

# Leafy vegetables ready for short, cool growing season

April 24, 2019

## Swiss chard tolerates warm weather

Leafy vegetables are more nutritious and have fewer calories than most other vegetables, and they're easy to grow. Most greens can be grown in relatively short, cool growing seasons, making them available for fresh harvest earlier than most other crops. If properly planned, fresh, leafy greens can be harvested all season long.

Leafy vegetables adapted to cool Indiana spring and fall growing conditions include lettuce, spinach, mustard, collards, endive, and kale. Many new cultivars of these cool-season crops have improved heat tolerance, making them productive into early summer. Root crops such as beets and turnips may also be harvested for their young, tender foliage. Greens that produce in the heat of summer include New Zealand spinach and Swiss chard.



## Spinach is a cool season crop

Leafy greens grow best in open, level areas where the soil is loose, rich, and well-drained. Although leafy crops tolerate shade better than plants grown for their fruits or roots, at least six hours of sunshine daily will help ensure a high-quality harvest. Avoid planting leafy greens in heavy clay or sandy soils. The soil pH should be between 5.8 and 6.8.

Most leafy vegetables can be planted as early in spring as the soil can be worked. The soil is ready for tilling and planting if a handful of soil crumbles when you squeeze it. If the soil forms a muddy ball when you squeeze it, the soil is still too wet and will form hard, long-lasting clods if you work it.



## Lettuce is a cool season crop

Seed may be directly sown in the garden for many leafy greens and must be planted at the proper depth to ensure good germination. The seed packet should include information on planting depth and spacing. Crops such as lettuce, spinach, chard kale, and collards may be transplanted to get an early start.

Home gardeners can choose that approach or decide to harvest only a few leaves as they are needed, allowing for a longer harvest season from a single planting. If you harvest leaves as needed, harvest the outer, more mature leaves first, leaving the young, inner leaves to continue growing. However, collards are an exception: harvest the center rosette of collard leaves.



As the days grow longer and warmer, cool-season greens tend to bolt (flower) and become tough or bitter. At this point, it is best to pull the plants and replace with a warm-season crop.

Additional information on growing leafy greens can be found at <https://ag.purdue.edu/hla/pubs/HO/HO-29.pdf>.

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## Treasurer's Report 1st Quarter 2020



**Opening Balance January 1, 2020**     **\$7,040.18**

### Income

Membership Dues	366.00
Ron Clark Memorial Donation	50.00
Amazon	5.24
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$421.24</b>

### Expenses

Speaker Fees	100.00
Newsletter Expenses	47.53
Office Supplies	111.80
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$259.33</b>

**Closing Balance March 31, 2020**     **\$7,202.09**

*Respectfully submitted by Larry Bills, Treasurer*

## New IOGA Members

Tina Godinez  
Kristan Ozier



## 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., 7159 W 200 N, Tipton, IN 46072-8637

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.



# April Plant Sale and Auction CANCELED.

## UPCOMING MEETINGS

Mark your calendar

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

July 18, 2020 — Teter Organic Farm  
October 17, 2020 — TBD



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