



October, 2020

Indiana Organic Gardeners Association

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Minutes****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

Hard to believe it's already October. I'm still in summer mode. Due to the pandemic, I figured that by not going anywhere all summer, I was going to have the best garden I've ever had. It was a summer long battle with my arch enemies, the chipmunks. They had a high casualty rate but I was finally forced to give up on the raised bed as far as red beets were concerned. My onion bulbs that I tried from Menards were puny so I'm going to try seeds next year from a regular seed company Johnny's would be good. Most of my tomato plants didn't really produce much this year, even my special Alan Chadwick cherry ones. My mini-prairie did great and now the Virginia Asters are blooming beautifully. I planted a Swamp Milkweed to see if there was any difference between that and Common Milkweed. It sure was taller but with thinner leaves. I did get one Monarch caterpillar on the Common Milkweed. My Shagbark Hickory nut tree didn't have a nut year which was a relief as nut years are a pain to clean up but my White Oak is having an acorn year which isn't too bad at all.

We did have the July IOGA meeting at Susan's house and toured her fantastic garden. Susan is always a gracious host and I really appreciated her suggestion of hosting the July meeting. There weren't a lot of us which was understandable, but touring Susan's garden is always a special treat plus I love to look inside of her wonderful garden potting house. I'm always green with envy. I'd probably have a neat stereo system in there with a beer refrigerator and a recliner (well gardening is work and one gets thirsty and with no air conditioning)...you know. Susan has more varieties of veggies, flowers, chickens, and other neat things planted than you would imagine. She has two horses I might add, perhaps that's why everything grows so well in her garden. We did manage to sit 6 feet apart, brought our own lunch, lemonade was furnished and had an interesting talk about gardening. I brought my Mantis tiller along for "show and tell" and we all had a great gardening tour. If Susan ever hosts again, make sure you attend as you will enjoy it. BTW, Susan is an Indiana Master Gardener.

I live in Fishers as some of you know and one of the things that I've really noticed is that very few people grow a garden here. It seems to be a lost art, parents probably that didn't grow one either but maybe there were grandparents

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that grew one. As a member of IOGA and being a Master Gardener with the Hamilton County Master Gardeners Association (HCMGA), at least I can associate with other gardeners and share ideas plus enjoy meetings with often outstanding speakers. I always return to my garden with renewed vigor and a “wait ‘til next year” attitude when I start all over again striving for that perfect garden, well planned and well planted (death to all chipmunks). However, however, somewhere along the way “stuff” happens. But, I never give up and I hope none of you do either. HCMGA (and Marian County Master Gardeners) are far, far larger than we are but we are special in that we try hard to avoid chemicals, store bought plants, we grow our own plants from seed, plant natives and take care of the soil. We try to avoid purchasing invasive and imported plants for the most part. Our large sister garden clubs aren’t necessarily like us in that they (some members) have a slightly more open attitude to Round-Up type of chemicals, planting of non-natives and don’t always strive for or even know about maintaining healthy soil. I am always gratified to see HCMGA pushing chemical free home grown plants at their massive Spring sale. There are quite a few great gardeners among them who are just like us, when it comes to avoiding chemicals, buying natives and taking care of the soil. Every once in a while I drive up to the Noblesville fair ground and check out the HCMGA veggie garden. It’s impressive as they have a drip watering system, large variety of garden plants, plus flowers, and numerous dedicated HCMGA volunteer workers that not only have a great gardening knowledge but are out there putting that knowledge to good use. I do my volunteer HCMGA required 12 hours of yearly volunteer work at a nearby Indiana/Fishers forested park, but I’ve been thinking about volunteering at the HCMGA veggie bed just to learn more about gardening. So I always urge all of you, if you’re not a Master Gardener, to sign up for the MG course as it’s a great class and you will learn a lot plus you’ll be putting it to work in your home gardens and bringing it into IOGA too. You’ll meet a large number of skilled gardeners and make some great gardening friends.

Keep IOGA organic  
Doug

## LETTERS:

October 2, 2020



After Ron died on December 12, I thought I was in good health, but a series of falls began, and it seems I have cerebellar degeneration, a neurological disease that affects my balance and walking. As a result of this, I am now using a walker or wheelchair all of the time and cannot really live alone even with people coming in to help. As a result, we have been looking at senior living facilities, and I am moving into assisted living tomorrow. It is in Carmel and is called Sunrise on Old Meridian. This weekend everyone is helping me move. It is important for my safety to be there, and also I need to be around more people so I will not be depressed. My address there is:

Sunrise on Old Meridian  
12130 Old Meridian Street  
Carmel, IN 46032  
My cell phone is 317-626-1553

Because of the pandemic, visitors are limited and must be scheduled ahead of time. If you would like to visit or have any questions, you can contact Carolyn at 317-437-5526

Love, Claudia

# Dig Deeper: A Warmer and Wetter Indiana

Over the last century Indiana's climate has become warmer and wetter. Projections show the pace picking up even more speed as heat-trapping gases, produced by humans burning fossil fuels, continue accumulating in the atmosphere. Indiana will continue to warm, more precipitation will fall, and extremely hot days will be common in many parts of the state. These changing climate patterns affect us individually and affect many aspects of our society, including human health, public infrastructure, water resources, agriculture, energy use, urban environments, and ecosystems. These findings are according to the IN CCIA inaugural report, *Indiana's Past and Future Climate*.



- **Key finding:** Indiana has already warmed 1.2°F since 1895. Temperatures are projected to rise about 5° F to 6°F by mid-century, with significantly more warming by century's end.
- **Why it matters:** A rising average temperature increases the chance of extreme heat and reduces the chance of extreme cold, and it also changes the timing and length of the frost-free season when plants grow. These shifts will impact air quality, extend the growing season and the allergy season and create more favorable conditions for some pests and invasive species.
- **Key finding:** The number of extremely hot days will rise significantly in all areas of the state. In the past<sup>3</sup>, southern Indiana averaged about seven of these days per year, but by mid-century this region is projected to experience 38 to 51 extremely hot days per year.
- **Why it matters:** Extreme heat raises the likelihood of heat-related illnesses, such as heat exhaustion and heat stroke, which can lead to increased hospitalizations and medical costs. Children and the elderly are especially vulnerable. Extreme heat also reduces crop yields, counteracting the benefits of a longer growing season.
- **Key finding:** Extreme cold events are declining. By mid-century, the northern third of Indiana will experience on average only six days per year below 5°F, down from 13 days in the past.
- **Why it matters:** Cold temperatures control populations of disease-carrying insects such as mosquitoes and ticks, as well as forest pests. Warmer winters would allow some of these species to remain active for longer periods or to expand their ranges into Indiana.
- **Key finding:** Average annual precipitation has increased 5.6 inches since 1895, and more rain is falling in heavy downpours. Winters and springs are likely to be much wetter by mid-century, while expected changes in summer and fall precipitation are less certain.
- **Why it matters:** Increased precipitation, especially in the form of heavy rain events, will increase flooding risks and pollute water as combined sewer systems overflow and fertilizers run off of farm fields. Warmer summers with the same or less rain would increase stress on agricultural crops and drinking water supplies.
- **Key finding:** The frost-free season has lengthened by nine days per year statewide since 1895. This trend is projected to continue and intensify. By mid-century, central Indiana's frost-free season is projected to increase by 3.5 to 4.5 weeks compared to the past.
- **Why it matters:** Longer growing seasons can increase the productivity of food crops and forests, and could expand crop-production opportunities in northern latitudes or the possibility of double-cropping further south. But they also increase growth of less desirable plants like ragweed and create favorable conditions for some invasive species.

The IN CCIA Climate Working Group has published the technical details behind these key findings in the peer-reviewed journal *Climatic Change*. □

Hamlet, A., Byun, K., Robeson, S., Widhalm, M., and M. Baldwin. (2019). Impacts of Climate Change on the State of Indiana: Ensemble future projections based on statistical downscaling. *Climatic Change*. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10584-018-2309-9> (Free access available at <https://docs.lib.purdue.edu/climatepub/1/>)

To subscribe to the free IN CCIA newsletter or to view the full report go to <https://ag.purdue.edu/climate/>

# Corn Ear Worms

By: Paul Matzek

Corn ear worms weren't much of a problem in my garden in Indiana. I assumed Monsanto and GMO field corn had pretty much conquered that pest and I was reaping the benefits.

In Kansas, it is a different matter entirely. I once heard a hawker at the farmer's market guarantee "a worm in every ear". I scoffed—until I harvested my own and got - yup, a worm in every ear. Though earworms turn cannibalistic when things get crowded, more than one ear had more than one worm.

The following year, a very early planting of corn had few worms so I figured that was one solution. For later plantings I dutifully sprayed at tassel time with pyrethrum, and dusted the silks with BT. I got at least one worm in every ear. The following year, even the early corn had such a yield.

Corn earworms are the larval stage of the *Helicoverpa zea* moth, a tan, drab, non-descript moth that consumes a large variety of crops. Eggs are laid on corn silks and hatch after about 70 hours. The larvae eat their way out of the shell, then begin eating plant material, that is the silk, which they follow into the shelter of the corn husks, then feed on the good stuff.

My favorite sweet corn is "Kandy Korn", a sweet, tender corn that keeps well in the refrigerator. This year, thanks to some manure and coffee grounds I raised the best looking sweet corn I have ever grown. I vowed to continue the fight. At the fabric store I purchased some nylon netting, that foo-foo wedding veil stuff. The 4 mm holes are plenty big enough to allow pollen through to the silks, but small enough that moths can't. From this gossamer material Annie and I cut and sewed forty socks just big enough to slip over an ear of sweet corn. I put socks on a number of ears as silks started to appear. At harvest time I found - yup, a worm in every ear. Had the socks ballooned out away from the silks, they might have worked, but we didn't make them big enough.

When those stalks were pulled and shredded into the compost pile, I planted a second crop between the first rows. Again, strong, green, tall stalks grew. As soon as the tassels started to appear, green katydids and a few grasshoppers found them, and began devouring them as fast as they grew. I began hand picking the insects, twice a day for a while. The chickens are like kids in a candy store with no supervision when I empty the can into their pen. The katydid population is down to a manageable level now, only 8-10 a picking and the tassels are rising above my head. But I pick every day, and follow that with a squirt of BT on the emerging silks. I'll let you know if the daily BT treatment solves the worm problem.

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

# TOMATOES

By: Doug Rohde

We all like tomatoes in our veggie gardens so here is some additional information on them. It's from a page out of an old Louise Riotte book entitled "Carrots Love Tomatoes", *Secrets of Companion Planting For Successful Gardening*, page 26, 1975, Storey Books.

Tomatoes and all members of the Brassica (Cabbage) family repel each other and should be kept apart. Tomatoes also dislike potatoes and fennel.

Tomatoes will protect asparagus against the asparagus beetle. Since they are tender plants, put tomatoes in during late spring after the early crop of asparagus spears has been harvested. Tomatoes also protect gooseberries against insects.

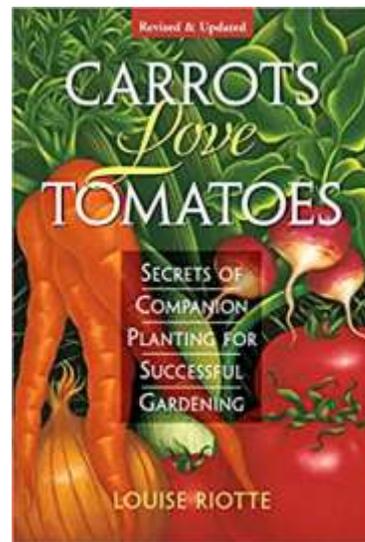
Tomatoes are compatible with chives, onion, parsley, marigold nasturtium, and carrot, and for several years I have planted garlic bulbs between my tomato plants to protect them from red spiders mites. Stinging nettle growing nearby improves their keeping qualities.

Though not containing fungicidal elements, tomatoes will protect roses against black spot. The active principle of tomato leaves is solanine, a volatile alkaloid that at one time was used as an agricultural insecticide. To make a spray for roses: Make a solution of tomato leaves in your vegetable juicer adding four or five pints of water and one tablespoon of cornstarch. Strain and spray on roses where it is not convenient to plant tomatoes as a companions. Keep any unused spray refrigerated.

Root excretions of tomatoes have an inhibiting effect on young apricot trees and don't plant near corn, since the tomato fruit worm is identical with the corn ear worm. Don't plant near potatoes either, since tomatoes render them more susceptible to potato blight.

Unlike most other vegetables, tomatoes prefer to grow in the same place year after year. This is all right unless you have a disease problem, in which case plant your tomatoes in a new site. Since they are heavy feeders, give them ample quantities of compost or decomposed manure. Mulch and water in dry weather to maintain soil moisture and stave off wilt disease and blossom end rot. But never water tomatoes from the top. Water from below and water deeply.

If you smoke, be sure to wash your hands thoroughly before you work in your garden, for tomatoes are susceptible.



# JULY 2020 IOGA MEETING

Six members gathered at the home of Susan Irwin-Simmons on July 18, 2020. We wore masks and social distanced as much as possible.

We gathered on Susan's back porch to eat our brown-bag lunches and to discuss gardening. Susan provided drinks and cookies. (see gluten-free recipe below).

We discussed the mostly poor state of our vegetable gardens. Susan was asked which seed catalogs she used and Larry and Doug mentioned a few they liked. Tina asked for suggestions for a hedge to obscure a neighbor's yard. She is also interested in Native-American plants.

Afterward, we took a tour of Susan's gardens. She grows a great variety of vegetables, herbs and native flowers. Her fruit trees didn't do well this year, probably due to an early freeze. We also saw her horse. Susan said she just can't find organic hay anymore or fly repellants that don't have a lot of chemicals in them. Susan's main problem is with chiggers. She has containers filled with water, plants and fish that seem to keep the mosquitos away.

Doug brought his Mantis tiller to demonstrate along with 2 types of rakes. He had added a stand to the tiller and said there were a lot of different attachments available from Mantis.

Judy Houser  
Secretary

## Five Ingredient Chocolate Chip Cookies

### Ingredients

1 cup smooth almond butter  
1 cup semisweet-chocolate chips  
¼ cup packed light-brown sugar  
2 large eggs  
½ teaspoon kosher salt

Preheat oven to 350°.

Stir ingredients together until a dough forms.

Place 1 tablespoon mounds on parchment-lined baking sheets. Bake until tops are set, about 10 minutes. Transfer to a wire rack and let cool completely. Cookies can be stored in an airtight container at room temperature up to 3 days.

Submitted by  
Susan Irwin-Simmons



Garden tour



Susan's garden shed



IOGA  
Meeting  
Sat. Oct. 17

**Cool Creek Park Nature Center**  
**2000 E. 151st St., Carmel, IN ([Map](#))**

11:00—11:45	Lunch
11:45—12:40	Introductions & Gardening Q&A, Business
12:45	Dan Popiela, Cool Creek Naturalist

**Meeting:** Dan Popiela, Cook Creek Naturalist, will make a presentation on seeds and seed collecting. Then, if weather permits, he will take us on a hike to collect seeds. He will also have a seed display inside, and we will be allowed to take some of these seeds home to plant in our gardens. Long pants and bug spray are advised. This should be a most interesting program.

Because of Covid-19, masks will be required inside the building except during lunch, and social distancing will be in place. Also, because of the virus, it will be helpful to know how many will be attending. Therefore please let Margaret Smith know if you can attend (email—[margaret.smith803@gmail.com](mailto:margaret.smith803@gmail.com)) or (cell phone 317-698-0526). We hope as many of you can attend as possible.

**Lunch:** Because of the pandemic, we will not be able to have a pitch-in. Instead everyone will be asked to bring their own lunch, plate, and utensils. Drinks, chips, cookies, cups and napkins will be provided.

**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 Cook Creek Park Rd. Continue 0.6 miles on Cool Creek Park Rd. through a traffic circle to your destination on the right (north). (For precise directions and time of travel from your home, click on “**Map**” above, then “**Directions**”, enter your home address, and click the “**Go Button**”.)

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



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