



Hoosier Organic Gardener

October, 2021

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, we're into one of Indiana's neat features, a normally long fall. Margaret was busy lining up our October 16th meeting, this time at Purdue. This should be interesting. We'll have more information to send out later as we work on a few more small details. There are some "just-in-case" things that you might need to bring: 1. A folding chair/lawn chair, 2. Clothes to suit the predicted weather, 3. A dish to pass or you can brown-bag it if you want (I'll bring a 4 foot folding table) if any of you have a small folding table, bring it along, 4. Water, soda, coffee or whatever you want to drink, 5. Don't forget to bring a mask along.

I went back to the Teter Organic Farm with the Hamilton Master Gardeners a month after we were there. It was a special tour of the pollinator garden. We (IOGA) sort of skimmed over it a bit but this was a closer tour and we had a senior Girl Scout giving an interesting lecture on raising earthworms. She brought along some pails and boxes full of worms and explained how she raised them, what she fed them, etc. I especially enjoyed listening to her as I did the same thing when I was a kid.

My new raised bed that I built is great, no chipmunks tunneled under it (wire bottom) and no rabbits nibbled anything in it! However, however....several errors were made. I hate to throw away any of the tomatoes I grew or that I brought back from our plant sale so in addition to the 4 or 5 that I saved to begin with, I had about 4 extra tomatoes even after giving some to the neighbors to grow. So why not stick a few into the new raised bed....of course. They went wild with all the growing space, new soil heavily intermixed with my compost and took over half of the bed rather quickly. But I still had half a bed and decided to grow cabbage for the first time. Bad decision. I bought about 6 plants, plunked them in along with carrots and radishes. About 10 days later I noticed I had no cabbage leaves left only stems. Couldn't believe it. Lurking under those leaves that were left were little green cabbage moth caterpillars. So not to lose, I tore out the cabbage remains and planted peppers. They sort of worked out ok.

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President's Message continued.

Across from the new raised bed I have a small patch of soil that I grow various plants in. It has a rabbit fence around it. I planted 6 bush zucchini in it. Feeling good and watering the plants for a week, I went out to water one day and got attacked by small ground dwelling bees. They were all over me stinging away. I was backing away, spraying water at them but they were determined to make sure that I was properly chased away....which worked. I had about 6 stings on my left hand and two on my head and they were potent little bees as it wasn't long before my left hand was quite swollen as were the two lumps on my head. So of course this meant war. A quick trip to Home Depot for a can of Black Flag for wasps and hornets. Just in case I donned my beekeepers white suit and veil. Back I went with a rake to find their hole/hive. But to no avail could I find it but they attacked my white suit with a vengeance while bouncing off the screened veil. Another retreat to make better plans. Two days later while quietly watering the bush zucchini, zap, out of nowhere two were in my hair and I was brushing them out furiously. Another rapid and wise retreat. After several weeks and still not finding the hive I just quit watering the zucchini and stayed away from that bed and everyone was happy.

Bugged me though so one day I decided to just take a small stool and just quietly sit in the garden path and watch. Finally I saw them going in and out of a small opening under one of the 4 x 4s that I had lined the path with. I didn't have the heart to zap them any more as I moved a bit closer and just watched them, not bothering them and they paid no attention to me. The middle of September they disappeared so later that day I lifted up the wooden 4 x 4 (very carefully!) and there was a 4 inch by 4 inch hole they had dug out with comb that looked like a miniature honeybee comb where they raised quite a few bees so I was glad that I didn't kill them off but cleaned out the comb and filled in the hole and will make sure next year I don't have another visit....at least in the garden.

Back to more important things...Judy informed me that she no longer wishes to be the secretary but will continue producing and sending out our quarterly IOGA newsletter. So we will be voting on a new secretary in October. Not a hard job mainly taking good notes of the meetings, handle the attendance and get the notes, in a timely fashion, to Judy for inclusion into the next newsletter.

Margaret, Larry, and Steve indicated they wish to continue on in their positions but will also need to be officially voted in. Normally all positions are for two years so in 2023 it will be time for elections again. We also have to figure out a solution to the "operator" of the IOGA FaceBook page. We can't have that happen again, that is, have a person show up for the first time, volunteer to manage it, be voted in and not be a member or show up for meetings. That has to get resolved. Other than that, I haven't had any resumes or emails/calls on anyone wishing to run for president...yet. But in the meantime I will keep things rolling along as normal. Which brings me to think about January's meeting and where to we want to have it. And in January there needs to be a good speaker so something to think about. In April will be our plant sale. Probably we should have it as late in April as we can (start your seeds in the first week in March) and also in April, depending on Covid. it will be Earth Day downtown Indy and we always have a good time there.

From the Hindsight Department: We should probably have gone to the Purdue Horticulture Garden and student farm in July when it was in full bloom or had an additional meeting in August for Teter Organic Farm as they are both great places to go to in full bloom. Who says we can't have an additional meeting/trip? Food for thought.

I think I will make a trip to Purdue, in the coming weeks, to check out the horticulture garden just to see where exactly it is and what it's about.

Keep IOGA organic
Doug

COMPANION PLANTS

Companion planting is the practice of growing different plants together. It is a mixture of folklore and science. However, more and more research studies show the benefits of certain species. According to garden folklore, some plants get along well while others antagonize their neighbors. Though there is debate about whether plants actually repel pests, it is certain that some plants (herbs, native plants and flowers) do attract beneficial insects. *The Old Farmer's Almanac* has practiced Companion Planting for over a century, based on time-honored wisdom. Over time, as they gathered more scientific evidence, their thinking evolved on the best companion planting combinations. There are many lists of companion plants on the internet.

The best known combination of plants is that of the "Three Sisters" – corn, pole beans and either pumpkin or winter squash which were commonly planted together by various Native American communities due to the plants' complementary natures: the tall corn supports climbing beans; the low-growing squash shades the ground to prevent moisture loss and its big, prickly leaves discourage weeds and pests; and the fast-growing beans are 'nitrogen fixers' which make nitrogen available to other plants. The food provided by the Three Sisters provides a balanced diet.

Certain combinations of plants make them more productive—often because some plants have complementary characteristics, such as their nutrient requirements, growth habits, or pest-repelling abilities. Some herbs act as repellents by confusing insects with strong odors. Some act as trap plants drawing pests to them.

There is a wide variety of predators and parasites in your garden. An organic insect control system encourages natural enemies of pests to stay in your garden. To entice adult biocontrols to stay around your garden, plant companion plants that are rich in pollen and nectar. Choose smaller-flowered species. Companion plants also offer beneficials shelter from hot sun and drying winds.

According to Rodale... "it is highly likely that companion planting does reduce pest populations, but not necessarily because the companion plants repel pests. Most plants recommended for companion planting are herbs and flowers that are specifically attractive to native predators and parasites. Many of these beneficial species move so fast and are so small and inconspicuous that you don't realize that they are there. Once they are lured into your garden by your companion plantings, they attack pests. The only effect you see is a reduction in pest damage."

Resources

Rodale's Chemical-Free Yard & Garden, 1991, pp 168-172

The Old Farmer's Almanac Vegetable Gardener's Handbook, 2019, pp 54-56

jah

Spotted lanternfly

Earlier this summer the Spotted lanternfly was spotted in Switzerland County in southern Indiana. It is on the federally regulated invasive species list. The Spotted lanternfly is a planthopper. Although it has two pairs of wings, it jumps more than it flies. Its preferred host is *Ailanthus altissima* (Chinese sumac or tree of heaven).



The Spotted lanternfly moves from its hosts to native trees and other plants such as grapes, stone fruits and *Malus* species and can kill them. As they feed on the sap of plants they create a sticky substance called honeydew which falls to the ground and is a breeding ground for sooty mold which also can kill plants.

Anyone who sees a Spotted lanternfly should contact the Indiana Department of Natural Resources at 866-663-9684 or email DEPP@dnr.in.gov.

July 17, 2021 IOGA MEETING

The meeting on July 17, 2021 was held at Teter Retreat & Organic Farm in Noblesville, Indiana. There were 17 members and 3 guests present.

Members began arriving at 12:00 and arranged their food for the pitch-in. There was a good selection of entrees and also quite a few desserts. There was a lot of conversation and fellowship during lunch. Larry Bills, Treasurer, collected dues. The Lodge at Teter Farm was very comfortable and had a kitchen available.



There were kale and milkweed seeds donated by Greg Buck that were taken by some of the members and the remainder of the kale seeds were taken by Jenny Lambert for the seed library.



President Doug Rohde started the meeting at 1:49. Doug announced that we did not yet have a meeting place/program set for the October 16th meeting. Anyone with suggestions should contact Margaret Smith. Paul said there was an orchard in Bloomington he heard about on Earth Eats (a weekly podcast, public radio program and blog about local food around Bloomington). Doug talked about his new raised beds and his fights with chipmunks and squirrels.

Margaret visited with Claudia Clark and reported that she was doing very well but had trouble with falling. She would like visitors. Call ahead to the facility (317-810-1385) before going. Claudia's address is: Story Cottage, 13633 Carey Road, Carmel, IN 46033. Sending cards is also thoughtful.



Q&A:

Tammy said she has tried planting tomatoes in a 5 gal. bucket with pop cans in the bottom below the soil so that the pop cans act as a reservoir.

Pam said that rubbing a cloth with apple cider vinegar on shepherd hooks will keep squirrels out of bird feeders. You can also put rags soaked with apple cider vinegar in the garden. Doug mentioned using beer for slugs and that his cabbage was holy.

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Debby asked about controlling powdery mildew on zucchini. Paul said a paste of baking soda and water would work. Jennifer said to use 1 tablespoon baking soda to 1 gallon of water. Neem oil is bad for pollinators.

Paul asked about adding fish emulsion to compost. Susan said it was considered meat and not to use it.

Paul asked if anyone had seen any dead birds. Only one person had. Clean your feeders and bird baths with bleach solution and take down.

Susan asked is anyone had red tomatoes yet. Doug was the only one.

Program:

At 3:00 Katy Rogers, Farm Manager, started us on a tour of the farm.

We started off at an area where they are shifting from produce to cut flowers. They were using black plastic mulch and letting it decompose because organic straw was too expensive. One trick to get straight stems on the flowers is to use stakes covered with netting and the flowers grow up through the netting. The flowers are not sold at the Farmers Market but are offered to CSA members. Their CSA has 124 families as members.

From there we went to see the chickens. They have 40 hens and Katy's 8 pets. For every egg sold they donate one. Next to it is the Peace Garden with mostly native plants. They are also restoring a wetlands area and planting swamp milkweed.

Next was a visit to the greenhouse and the produce gardens. They do not till anymore. They do use a power harrow because it does not stir up more weed seeds. They have overhead shower heads in the tunnels and try to get the water off plants as soon as possible.

Someone asked if the water standing on the black plastic tarps was a problem breeding mosquitos. Katy said no – the water evaporates quickly.

Judy Houser
Secretary



Tomato Genetics

by Paul Matzek

Since reading about Gregor Mendel's experiments with peas when I was in grade school, genetics has been more than a passing interest for me. So when the tomato plants we planted last year failed I let some volunteers grow to study the results. They resulted from either the San Marzanos or the Romas we had grown the year before, or a cross of the two.

At the west end of the bed where the previous tomatoes had been, two plants produced nice, well shaped tomatoes. Thirty feet away at the east end, the plants produced grape tomatoes. I don't think the grapes are worth messing with, though I did make tomato soup out of some. I saved seed from the west end tomatoes, thinking I might just get lucky in the genetics lottery and develop a superior tomato to fill our needs in perpetuity.

I started four plants from those seeds this spring. After setting them out, rabbits destroyed two and almost a third, but I was able to save it. Since half of my experiment was wiped out, I let a couple of volunteers in the old west end grow where the big fruits had been last year. Those produced grape tomatoes. I pulled them up. The two surviving plants produced pretty, smooth, 3 inch tomatoes.

Coincident to this experiment, I planted four Bison tomatoes developed by Dr. Albert Yeager at the North Dakota Agricultural College between 1919 and 1937. He developed many plant varieties more suited to the colder, drier climate. Being determinate vines, the Bisons didn't produce the explosion of foliage I'm used to. But they did produce a lot of 2-3 inch tomatoes. They do seem to start to rot before completely ripe, maybe because it was too hot for them here.

To sum it up, Annie says the Bisons have fantastic flavor. I wouldn't know, I can't stand raw tomatoes. As for my dreams, my hopes for the future? She said they're "OK".

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



Jules Janick Horticulture Garden

Established in 1982, the Jules Janick Horticulture Garden is one of the most visually appealing landscapes on the Purdue campus. Located along Marsteller Street, adjacent to the Horticulture Building, the garden is home to hundreds of ornamental plants. In its re-incarnation as the Janick Garden, the plant collection has a heavy emphasis on herbaceous perennials, with just enough annuals to provide growing season-long color and woody plants to provide "strong bones." In its role as a horticultural teaching laboratory, this half acre living classroom maximizes plant diversity and offers learning opportunities for students from many other programs such as botany, plant pathology, entomology, veterinary medicine, and even the visual arts. Different types of soil and many small microclimates provide the garden with an ability to nurture and grow plants otherwise not found in the area. The public is always welcome in the Janick Garden.



Ask us...!

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Treasurer's Report 3rd Quarter 2021



Opening Balance June 30, 2021 **\$6,338.11**

Income

Dues & Shirt Sale 80.00

Check Adjustment 0.40

Total **\$80.04**

Expenses

Newsletter 128.40

Total **\$128.40**

Closing Balance Sept. 30, 2021 **\$6,290.11**

Respectfully submitted by Larry Bills, Treasurer

UPCOMING MEETINGS

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

January 15, 2022
April 16, 2022

July 16, 2022
October 15, 2022



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 _____

Address _____

Phone Number _____

Email Address _____

I prefer my newsletter to be _____ emailed _____ mailed.



IOGA
Meeting
Sat. Oct. 16

Purdue University
West Lafayette, IN ([Map](#))

11:00—12:00	Purdue Horticulture Garden
12:00—1:00	Pitch-in/Brown-Bag Lunch at Stevenson Pavilion
1:00—2:00	Introductions & Gardening Q&A, Business, Elections
2:15	Possible Tour of Student Farm

Meeting: We will begin with a tour of the Jules Janick Horticulture Garden on Marsteller Street. There should be ample parking across the street. We will then move to the Stevenson Pavilion for lunch and our meeting.

Lunch: Bring a favorite dish filled with food (“home-made” and/or organic appreciated) to share and your plate, fork and drink. If anyone is not comfortable with that, please feel free to bring your own lunch. No kitchen facilities. There will be space for 20 at tables. Please bring folding chairs in case they are needed. Restroom facilities will be available for a short period after the tour of the garden..

Student Farm Tour: We are trying to arrange for a tour of the Student Farm. More information will be available later.

Directions: From I-65 take Exit 172 and proceed west (toward Lafayette) on IN-26W straight to South Street. Proceed four miles to West Lafayette. South Street becomes Columbia and then State Street which runs past the Purdue Memorial Union. A half block past that, turn left onto Marsteller Street. Park in the second lot across the street from the Horticulture Garden. For more specific directions, click on MAP above.

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

Join us and bring a friend!



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