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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

Well, here we are again into a new year. And, I always think when we hit January, Spring is on the way. I'm already getting garden catalogs and I'm determined to throw out all my old seed packages, some bought with good intentions and never planted, some almost empty and others that were given to me by well-meaning friends, things I don't have room for or would never plant anyhow. Clean house for the New Year. The same goes for all those gardening magazines that accumulated for several years. Old gardening magazines are a good thing to bring to our April plant sale and give away.



Doug Rohde

My compost bins are filled with mulched leaves, kitchen scraps that are added daily and the bins are cooking away. Make sure you add water to those bins as it speeds up the composting as nothing much will happen to a dry bin. I was reading about certain tree leaves that do not belong in your bins. The worst of all is Black Walnut. Whatever you do, don't add those. Hickory is a not recommended too although not nearly as bad as BW. I have a mulching lawnmower and mulch away which is the best way to handle leaves. Leave them on your lawns mulched. I have a lot of leaves so I can mulch, fill up my three bins and still have more than enough to mulch and leave on the grass.

My winter rye is doing well as I started it about a week after our fall IOGA meeting. During the winter it will slow down on top but the roots will continue to grow deeper into the soil, breaking up some of my clay infested soil. I find a lot more worms in my garden soil now that I use winter rye as a cover crop. I get it at [Habig Garden Shop](#), across from the Nora Whole Foods on 86 Street. They sell it by the pound or however much you need. Tony Branam has a great article "Cover Crops for Your Garden" in this issue. Tony always writes great gardening articles. Adding to his "use the right tool to do the job right" I'd like to add, "and clean your garden tools completely after using especially getting all the dirt/mud off the metal parts as moisture in the left-on soil will quickly start rusting under the dry mud surface and you won't even notice it." Also put a little oil on after use and sharpen those spades, shears and other cutting tools!

Last Spring I bought and used a [U-Bar broadfork](#) to dig up my garden. This tool is outstanding! No tilling anymore but then I only have several relatively small gardens and at the moment, one raised bed. It was impressive and relatively easy to dig, it even didn't take very long. I'm sold on it. I used my spade to clean around the garden edges but that was it.

Continue to send articles, pictures and ideas to include in the IOGA newsletter to Ron/Claudia and continue to watch out for [neonicotinoids](#), invasive plants, continue to plant for pollinators and make houses for them.

Keep IOGA organic... Doug

Cover Crops for Your Garden

by Tony Branam

Cover crops continue to gain interest and use in gardens and commercial agriculture. Each year seed dealers scramble to meet their customers' demands in autumn and spring. Cover crops are another tool for managing our gardens and remind us of a more romantic image of agriculture as it used to be. So the question becomes "What do you want your cover crops to do?"

The following is not an all-inclusive list of cover crops for the garden as there are far greater resources on the topic. The list below provides a glimpse of how different cover crops perform in the garden. Cover crops provide a wide range of functions such as suppressing weeds, breaking soil compaction, loosening the soil for better drainage, attracting beneficial insects, deterring pest insects, building soil organic matter and scavenging nutrients, most notably nitrogen. Mixes or "cocktails" using more than one species or types of plant are beneficial because they work together and improve performance of each other while strengthening soil health. The more species the better.

Buckwheat, a fast-growing annual that will out-compete weeds with its dense canopy. This is not a winter-hardy plant; it will die during frosty nights, making termination easy. Most often used in spring to suppress weeds until vegetables are ready for transplanting. Buckwheat is not only excellent for honeybees, native pollinators and other beneficial garden insects when allowed to blossom, but a good scavenger of phosphorus in the soil.

Cereal rye, winter hardy, offering soil protection throughout the winter and spring when weather is most punishing on unprotected soils. Because it's an annual, you can terminate in the garden with close mowing or cutting. Deep rooting creates channels in the soil for water and gas exchange. Cereal rye is an excellent scavenger of nitrogen in the soil. There is potential allelopathy with desirable vegetables, but it can be used as a weed suppression strategy.

Oats, spring oats, an annual grain grass that is not winter hardy. Good for cover during summer and autumn to suppress weeds while providing residue on the surface, protecting the soil as it decomposes. As the roots decay they will leave small channels in the soil to enhance drainage in spring. Oats are a good scavenger of nitrogen in the soil while building organic matter.

Crimson clover, a spring annual that can reseed itself if allowed, with high value for native pollinators, honeybees and other beneficial insects. Commonly planted with a ryegrass or other grasses, crimson clover is a legume capable of building nitrogen in the soil. As an annual it can be controlled by cutting and mowing before it goes to seed.

Oilseed radishes, another annual that is not winter hardy. A prolonged freeze during the winter in Central Indiana is typically enough to kill this plant before spring. Their deep taproots are the ultimate tool in breaking soil compaction layers and enhancing drainage of the soil. While in bloom, this plant has high value for native pollinators, honeybees and other beneficial insects.

Autumn-spring cocktail, a mix of spring oats, radishes, cereal rye and crimson clover. The oats and radishes thrive in autumn, scavenging nitrogen and protecting the soil surface before they are killed by winter freezing. In early spring the cereal rye and crimson clover pick up where the previous plants left off, with additional weed suppression and nitrogen fixing. The end result is an optimal layer of residue on the soil, increased soil organic matter, nutrient availability and nectar sources for pollinators that you managed throughout autumn-winter-spring.

When choosing a cover crop we need to consider its purpose, when to plant and when to terminate. We need to consider how particular cover crop species fit into our rotations interacting with our planned

vegetables. Cover crops are no different than companion plantings and care is needed to avoid crops that can act as hosts for pests. Cover crops serve a vital role in our garden's overall soil health both above and below the surface. If you are not managing for soil health in your gardens then cover crops will not provide the big boost you hope to achieve.



Left, cereal rye (winter rye) cover crop cut at 18 inch height and dropped on soil surface. Right, 4-6 weeks later sweet corn, butternut squash and pole beans growing in rye residue (no tilling).

Managing your garden's soil health should be a simple year round task. Cover crops should be part of your garden planning with consideration of the functions you want them to perform and how they fit into the rotations. Remember the words of your high school shop teacher, "Use the right tool to do the job right." Keep notes of what works well, what doesn't work, and most importantly have fun.

Resources:

Midwest Cover Crop Council field guide ID-433 and online cover crop tools available at www.mccc.msu.edu

Sustainable Agriculture Research & Education (SARE) handbook 9: Managing Cover Crops Profitably and online www.sare.org

The Xerces Society guide: Farming with Native Beneficial Insects Ecological Pest Control Solutions, www.xerces.org

Tony Branam is an IOGA member living in Nashville, Indiana.

October IOGA Meeting

The meeting on October 15, 2016 was held at the Paramount Farm at the Paramount School of Excellence (PSOE) in Indianapolis. There were 25 members and 3 guests in attendance.

Following a great pitch-in lunch, President Doug Rohde opened the meeting with an introduction of Barb Richardson, Director of Advancement at PSOE, who gave an overview of the school. They have over 700 students and are opening a second school. Environmental science students are involved with the farm as part of their classes. The farm is organic. They also have goats, bees, and chickens and a cheese kitchen using goat milk. On September 30th the TURN Festival was held at the school.

Doug told members about environmental movies being shown at four churches. New members and guests introduced themselves. New members, Darlene and Gary Miller do straw bale gardening and had great success this year. David Delello from Plant Growth Management talked about the bio carbon soil amendment that his company produces. It was announced that Paul and Annie Matzek are moving to Kansas and this was their last meeting. They hope to start an organic gardeners group in Kansas. They still plan to remain members of IOGA.

During the Question & Answer Q&A portion of the meeting, questions were asked about transplanting milkweed (only when young); saving seeds from gourds (do nothing until gourds are dry); Pam Sims had new tiny gray worms on kale and chard that is not killed by Bt, but the Bt may be too old (if new Bt does not kill them, try alternating between Bt and Spinosad); lima beans (lots of leaves and blossoms, no pods (wait until Thanksgiving); whether to nip tomato foliage past the fruit or not (nutrients go just to fruit); and several people had gotten seeds from Urban Farmer that appeared to be in the wrong envelopes.

We then toured parts of the school beginning with the Time & Space Discovery Center for which they had received a \$300,000 grant. This includes

laptops for the students, access to the NASA channel, a solar room and a planetarium. The EcoRoom included an indoor bee hive. We saw the cheese kitchen. Produce from the farm is not used in the school cafeteria, but some is sold at their weekly farmers market, some to Tyner Pond Market in Irvington, and some donated to food pantries.



Annie, Claudia, and Barb Helping Themselves to the Pitch-in Lunch

Kaitlin Hosson, Goat Herder/Cheese Maker/Gardener, PSOE, joined us for the tour of the farm. The farm and animals are integrated into the classes, including some students walking the goats as part of physical education classes. They are involved with Community Health Network in preventative health, Purdue Extension, and the Marion County Soil and Water Conservation District. They have a cistern system, but not many rain barrels. They have two experimental wind turbines which provide 2% of the energy they use. There were still a lot of vegetables growing. Cover crops were where tomatoes had been. There were some raised beds. They have nine dairy goats, chickens and three outdoor bee hives. After viewing the farm, we went to the hoop greenhouse which was in its first year.

Judy Houser
Secretary

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IOGA Members and Guests Touring the Paramount Farm Garden



Sweet Potatoes Growing
in a Tall Raised Bed



Egg Plant



Swiss Chard (left) and Beets (right)



Water Collecting Cisterns



Some of the Nine Goats



Chickens



Bee Hives

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Basil Growing in the Hoop Greenhouse

Claudia (left) Talking with POSE Host Barb Richardson (right). Suellen and Debbie (back)



Inside The New Hoop Greenhouse

Fall Break at Our Kansas Garden

by Paul Matzek

Fall gives us a breather from gardening, a letup from the weeding, watering, and harvesting and preserving. We had beds plowed and disked during the summer, breaking new sod for beds, and planted cover crops. The Kansas dirt at our new home is dark and appears somewhat sandy, I imagine from ground rocks left as the glaciers of the last ice age receded, and with some moisture is soft and friable when tilled. But the soil has settled down, and with the late dry spell, has become quite hard.



With the newly acquired vintage Gravely walking tractor I coveted for years, I re-plowed the beds, burying the lush cover of field pea, Daikon radish, and rye. The old Gravelys were built like tanks and are nearly indestructible, and the rotary plow attachment leaves a nearly prepared seed bed. But as with any two wheel tractor, it takes some real work to control them.

While working the beds today for a little more depth, I uncovered the newly buried remains of some neighbor's hapless chicken, which tells me we have foxes to deal with here, too, and we will have pastured chickens instead of free range. Thanks to the fox for the planning info.

A Newly Raised Bed with a Daikon Radish, the Prized Gravely Tractor, a Mulched Area Planted to Garlic, and in the Background, a Bed with a Cover Crop

Most of the beds are on a gentle slope, and I wished to build up the downhill side to make the growing surface level. I found that the black plastic I laid in the summer to suffocate Johnson grass had conserved soil moisture, bringing up earthworms, which provided a feast for moles which had thoroughly dug up the entire area. That made it easy to scoop up the top several inches of topsoil to haul, wheel barrow after wheel barrow, to the garden. Moles ARE good for something!

Since there about eight acres of hay meadow, now a foot deep in grass, and a giant, spreading oak in the back yard, there is no lack of organic matter to gather, so I'm loading the beds with mulch to till in sometime before spring to loosen the soil more.

It sure is relaxing to have a break from gardening.

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



Paul & Annie at the October IOGA Meeting

Zucchetta Squash



September 1, 2016

I planted four (4) Zucchetta seeds saved from the IOGA meeting couple of years ago and they went crazy with 40' vines and more than dozen of zucchetts weighting from 3 lbs. to over 4 lbs. from 24" to 42". It took me 2 1/2 weeks to finish cooking one of them! I saved some seeds from last night, hoping to do them right for next year.

Hiedi Watson

(Editors' Note:
See [Zucchetta Squash](#))



Our Speaker for the January IOGA Meeting

Greetings organic gardeners and soon-to-be organic gardeners!

Please join the Indiana Organic Gardener's Association (IOGA) on Saturday, January 21, 2017 for a presentation on *Organic Gardening Basics and Beyond*. Former IOGA president, Lynne Sullivan, will present information for the new and seasoned organic gardener including: why going organic is important, how to get started, compost, compost, compost, when and how to plant, weed and pest management, as well as ways we can all support organics.



Lynne Sullivan

Lynne has been a member of IOGA since 2006 and was elected president from 2010 through 2015. She has been gardening since childhood and enjoys sharing her enthusiasm for organic gardening and healthy food with others. She has a bachelor's degree in biology from Denison University, and when she's not playing in the soil, she works as a compliance supervisor for the Indiana Department of Environmental Management's Office of Air Quality. She and her husband have been gardening organically for many years and enjoy tending their small yard of flowers, herbs, vegetables, and fruit trees.

The January IOGA Meeting will be held at the Decatur Branch of Indianapolis Public Library in southwestern Indianapolis. See the last page of this newsletter for details.

LETTERS:



Yard Waste at GreenCycle

Oct. 19, 2016

At the great meeting at Paramount School the subject of GreenCycle was mentioned. It appeared that there was little recognition of that Earth Healthy way to deal with yard waste. If taken to the trash in Indpls, it would be BURNED in the INCINERATOR! Find info on GreenCycle online. This stays on my mind thus this quick post.

Rosie (Bishop)

Oct. 20, 2016

Hi Rosie,

GreenCycle has four location around Indianapolis, Whitestown, Noblesville, Danville, and Central (1103 W Troy Ave). In the past we have gotten many trailer loads of compost from them at their Whitestown location for our gardens. They have a very large pile of yard waste at their Whitestown location. I don't know if they normally charge people to dump yard waste, but one time they had a sign that households could dump yard waste for free. Yard waste is one of their inputs for their mulch/compost so they are happy to get it.

Ron

Oct. 21, 2016

We pays \$10 fee per load--any size I think.

Rosie

Hi Rosie,

I contacted GreenCycle. They do accept yard waste. They sent the attached photo as to the types of materials they accept. Depending on what material & which location you visit you may incur a fee (\$10-\$20).

Ron

Materials accepted at GreenCycle



Brush
Brush includes anything larger than your pinky. There will be a fee for all material that measures 24" or more in width. All brush must not contain dirt or other debris and will be refused if mixed with any other material.

Leaves
We will accept compostable bags of leaves. However, all other bags must be emptied and taken with you.

Yard Waste
Yard Waste consists of leaves, weeds, flowers, ornamental grasses, and animal bedding. All brush larger than your pinky must be removed from the yard waste and put in the brush pile.

Tipping prices vary by site

Yard Waste Materials
Accepted at GreenCycle

Soil

10/4/16

I love the newsletter – keeps me feeling connected.

Great USDA quote (in the July IOGA newsletter), “The best soil on most farms is found in the fence row.” That is a sad state of affairs, huh!

Kent Blackledge



Treasurer's Report

4th Quarter 2016



Opening Balance Oct. 1, 2016 \$ 5780.26

Income

Membership Dues \$ 56.00

AmazonSmile \$ 10.53

Total \$ 66.53

Expenses

Hosting Gratuity \$ 100.00

Total \$ 100.00

Closing Balance Dec. 31, 2016 \$ 5746.79

Respectfully submitted by Ron Clark, Treasurer

Ask us...!

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AmazonSmile

Thanks IOGA members that have participated in the program of Amazon.com called [AmazonSmile](#).

Since last year IOGA has received \$33.57 from Amazon.com.

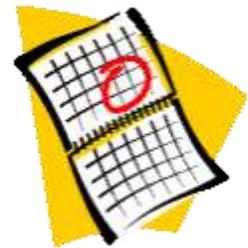
In the AmazonSmile program Amazon.com gives 0.5 percent of your purchase price to your designated charity.

UPCOMING MEETINGS

Mark your calendar

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

January 21, 2017
April 15, 2017
(Plant Auction)
July 15, 2017
October 21, 2017



New IOGA Members

Darlene & Gary Miller, Sheridan, IN 46069
Natalie Donahue, Indianapolis, IN 46220

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. Jan. 21
10:45 am

Decatur Branch, Indianapolis Public Library
5301 Kentucky Avenue
Indianapolis, IN 46221 ([Map](#))
317-275-4330

10:45 Arrive & Welcome Guests
11:00—11:45 Great Pitch-in Lunch
11:45—12:45 Introductions & Gardening Q&A
12:45— 1:00 Business Meeting
1:00— 1:10 Break
1:10— Speaker & Questions

Meeting: Former IOGA president Lynne Sullivan will give a presentation, *Organic Gardening Basics and Beyond*. Learn why going organic is important, how to get started, composting, when and how to plant, plus weed and pest management.

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: The Decatur Branch library is located adjacent to, just southwest of the Decatur High and Middle Schools. In the southwest side of Indianapolis take exit 8 from I-465 to SR-67/Kentucky Ave. Go southwest 1.8 miles on SR-67/Kentucky Ave. and turn left (southeast) into the entrance to the Decatur High and Middle Schools. Then take an immediate right into the library parking lot. (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 "Search" icon.)

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



Annual Dues Are
Due in January!

Join us!
IOGA Meeting
Sat. Jan. 21