

I O G A



Hoosier Organic Gardener

April 2017

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

Well, I was going to start out by being glad that “winter” was over but it was a “what winter?”. Last week I carted both snow shovels back up above the garage, hoping that this didn't jinx the weather and snow would soon arrive in blizzard format. My early October started winter rye did well the entire time, putting down long roots deep into the ground and about a foot in top growth this year and it will be turned under. In February I attend a beekeeping day class at the high school next to where our January IOGA meeting was held. They had a good class on planting for bees with the thought that if you plant for honeybees, you will also get native pollinators as well.



Doug Rohde

Anyhow, Spring is here and I've got seeds in pots, some already coming up. I usually start late but one year started way too early and had to plant my tomato plants deep into the soil and the hardening off process was tricky as they were too tall for my plastic mini-greenhouse that sits just outside the patio door. I tend to have far too many tomato plants and run out of room for other veggies that would take up more space.

I'm anxious to get my broadfork going again as that sure worked well last year. I got mine from Johnny's Seeds as it has oak handles and I liked that. I hope Paul and Annie's Kansas garden does well this year; we'll miss them at our meetings. Paul/Annie, keep sending in those interesting articles and pics of your J-Hawk garden.

Don't forget to spare the dandelions this Spring. They're one of the early flowers that all of the pollinators need for pollen and nectar when there aren't a lot of other flowers blooming. I like to include the green leaves in salads as they create a slightly bitter taste that stands up to the salad dressing. All fall and winter, I've been at war with three fat squirrels that live under my bird feeders. They don't know about the squirrel sized HavaHeart trap that slathered with peanut butter, will transport them about 8 miles away to a forest preserve where they can learn to be normal woods squirrels and not spoiled suburban fatsos. My Bluejays will appreciate their permanent voyage and I won't have to stand guard as I throw out peanuts for the BJays and yellow-bellied woodpeckers.

See you on the 15th of April.

Keep IOGA organic!

Doug

Bumble Bee Conservation

by Doug Rohde

Bumble bees are an essential part of our wildlands, farms and urban areas yet many species are suffering very alarming population declines. It is critically important to protect these vital pollinators.

Spring - Early Summer

The overwintered queen bumble bee emerges, begins searching for a nest site and forages for pollen and nectar. Once a nest site is established, she begins laying eggs. So include early-blooming plants and maintain a diversity of flowers in your landscape. To protect overwintering queens, avoid early raking or mowing; raking is best done in April or May. Keep patches of land unmowed and untilled to provide secure nesting sites; healthy ground-nesting mammal populations help create future bumble bee nesting sites. Because queens are still foraging and colonies are usually very small, avoid the use of pesticides. After the initial brood emerges, worker bees do the foraging. The queen now stays in the nest, where her sole duty is to lay eggs and rear the young.



Summer - Fall

Include mid and late blooming plants such as goldenrod, milkweed, and aster in your landscape. Leave leaf litter, downed wood and uncut bunch grasses to serve as potential overwintering sites. As colonies are producing new queens at this time of year, once again avoid the use of pesticides. Do not use them at any time when bees are active or when plants are flowering. In late summer, the colony switches from producing worker bees to producing new queens and males. After mating, the males die and the newly mated queens begin searching for overwintering sites.

Winter

Late fall and winter are the best times for mowing. Set the mower deck at the highest safe level to avoid disturbing overwintering queens. To protect overwintering queens, continue to leave large sections of untilled ground. Small, controlled burns are okay, but burn less than $\frac{1}{3}$ of available land annually and leave unburned patches as a refuge for overwintering bees. If needed, this is the best time to use a targeted herbicide treatment for invasive species. The bumble bee colony dies in the late fall, leaving only the newly mated queens to overwinter, usually just below the soil surface or under leaves or grass. The mated queens are able to change their "blood" to an anti-freeze like consistency so they don't freeze during the long winter.

The bumble bees are the workhorses of the pollinators. They fly early, stay later in the evening and even fly during light rain. Bumble bee houses need to be placed away from paths, pet traffic, somewhere in a more secluded part of the backyard or away from the general traffic of humans and mowers. The bumble bees are one of our main native pollinators responsible for many garden plants and flower pollination. Your tomatoes are almost always pollinated by bumble bees.

Doug Rohde is IOGA President. He resides in Fishers, Indiana.

Native Bee Update

by Heather Holm

Attention to bees has increased substantially in recent years but mostly for a non-native species.

When talking about bees, most people will think of *Apis mellifera*, the European honey bee. With more than 1/3 of our food supply requiring pollination, we know that these charismatic and easily managed bees are important in agriculture. There are many more native bees that live around us, most going unnoticed. North America is home to nearly 4,000 species of native bees, many of which are essential for pollination, even doing a better job than their European cousins.

The need for effective pollination doesn't stop with agriculture. There are thousands of species of plants that support the ecological communities of North America, many of which require effective pollination to reproduce and persist on the landscape. Some species of native plants are "obligate" or nearly dependent on native bees for effective pollination. A frequently observed example of this is Bottle Gentian (*Gentiana andrewsii*) whose flowers are composed of a tightly closed corolla (petals). These petals are so difficult to open that bumble bees are typically the only bees strong enough to gain access and crawl inside.

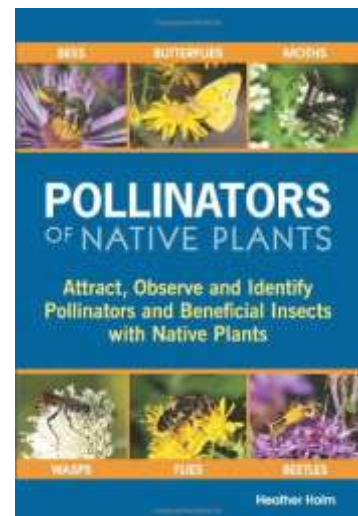
As more is learned about native bees, we are gaining insight into the insect/plant relationships that these bees foster. Fortunately or unfortunately, the recent boom in research is revealing how precarious the existence of our native bees has become and for some it is nearly too late. Time is running out for the rusty patched bumble bee (*Bombus affinis*), which has experienced an 87% decline in recent years. Fortunately a petition drafted by the Xerces Society in 2013 has prompted the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to recommend the rusty patched bumble bee for listing as an endangered species in September 2016. [Editors' Note: as of January, 2017, the current administration may have stopped adding to the endangered species list].

Other positive news for native bee protection came in October, 2016 when seven species of yellow-faced bees, all native to Hawaii, were given endangered-species status. These seven species are the first bees in the United States to be protected under the Endangered Species Act. While the increase in institutional research and legal protection for some native-bee species is encouraging, countless others remain unknown or under-recognized. For them, the timelines imposed by grant applications, public funding and environmental review cannot come soon enough. Luckily there is a direct way to help these imperiled native pollinators.

Providing native plants on your property will offer forage and cover for many well-known and lesser-known species of native bees, as well as other pollinators and insects. It really doesn't take much effort to start doing a lot of good.

This article is reprinted from the 2017 Prairie Moon Native Gardener's Companion with permission from the Prairie Moon Nursery, 32115 Prairie Lane, Winona, MN 55987. www.prairiemoon.com

Heather Holm's excellent book, "Pollinators of Native Plants" is available on Amazon or at Prairie Moon Nursery.



January IOGA Meeting

The meeting on January 21, 2017 was held at the Decatur Branch of the Indianapolis Public Library. There were 25 members in attendance

Following a great pitch-in lunch, President Doug Rohde opened the meeting with a demonstration of a bee hive. He had recently given a presentation on pollinators to the Hamilton County Master Gardeners and gave us some of that information. He recommended two books – “Pollinators of Native Plants” and “Butterflies of Indiana” and the Prairie Moon catalog. There was a discussion about butterfly weed being proposed as the state native flower of Indiana.

Former IOGA President, Lynne Sullivan gave a very thoughtful and interesting presentation on “**Organic Gardening Basics and Beyond.**”

Why Organic? Organic gardening results in less chemical exposure for people and pets; it’s better for the groundwater (nutrient loading) and results in less alga bloom; helps biodiversity; establishes balance; and creates a relationship with nature.

You need to find the right **Location** (sun or shade) for the plants you want to grow and have a water source nearby. The **Soil** should be the healthiest it can be. Perform a lead test and do soil sample tests. **Micronutrients** (make yourself).

Compost Pile needs to be directly on the ground; it needs air, turned occasionally and some water (moist). Add greens and browns. Use untreated



Some of the Fabulous Pitch-In Lunch Offering

grass clipping. Avoid walnut, and to a lesser extent, hickory leaves since the tannic acid in their leaves kills plants. Susan Irwin Simmons uses wood chips and horse manure.

Lynne discussed **When and How to Plant** – watch the frost date. Seeds are best and be sure to allow adequate spacing between plants.

She ended with **Pest and Weed Management** (not

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Former IOGA President Lynne Sullivan presenting, *Organic Gardening Basics and Beyond.*

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control). Pull the weeds out before they go to seed.

At the end of the meeting, milkweed seeds were passed around to those who wanted them.

Judy Houser
Secretary



President Doug Rohde Shows Some Dried, Hollow Joe Pye Weed Stems that He Uses to Construct Beneficial Wasp Houses (The Small Wasps Bore Out and Lay their Eggs in the Hollow Stems)



Tammy Hanson (left) and Martina Owen (right) Partake in the Delicious Pitch-In Lunch



Larry & LaVella Bills (left) and Steve & Jodi Swinford (right) Discussing Organic Gardening



Paul Gaston (left) and Margaret Smith (right) Discussing "Who Knows What"

LETTERS:



White Flies

I have a quick question for you we are having troubles with White Flies in our greenhouse. How can I take care of these without using poison?

Thanks. *Corky Dugan*



Hi Corky,

Try insecticidal soap. We used it once with white flies on tomato plants and it worked.

WIKIPEDIA: *Insecticidal soap is based on potassium fatty acids and is used to control many plant pests. Because insecticidal soap only works on direct contact with the pests, it is sprayed on plants in way such that the entire plant is wetted. Soaps have a low mammalian toxicity and are therefore considered safe to be used around children and pets and may be used in organic farming.*

Lowes carries a spray bottle of insecticidal soap. You will probably need more than that. There is a concentrate version. You may need to purchase that on line.

Or you can make it up yourself,

<https://www.todayshomeowner.com/how-to-make-homemade-insecticidal-soap-for-plants/>

Letter from Paula Boone

12/17/16

Our summer was incredibly busy helping Nathan, our nephew, with planting two acres of green beans every week all spring and then most of the summer. Then we harvested every week beginning in mid-July until early Oct. Dwight also kept the equipment in mechanical tip-top shape. Our nephew may go with a 4 row bean picker in 2017. A food bank buys the green beans. ...

We grew the best garden in the 46 years we have been gardening. The good Lord sent an inch of rain nearly every week. I did a lot of canning which I hadn't done in 2 years since the growing conditions were so bad. I canned green beans, 3 bean salad, salsa, vegetable soup mix, Pittsfield relish for hamburgers, hot dog relish (Linda McCuen's recipe). I froze okra and blackberries. I dehydrated green beans, zucchini, summer squash, okra, tomatoes, strawberries, fruit leathers with yogurt mixed in for my neighbor to take to an orphanage in Africa. The children there live on hominy and cabbage but the cabbage crop failed the last two years due to drought. They didn't even bother to plant in 2016. So hopefully the rice she brought in and the dehydrated veggies will be a welcome change in their diet. (The children had been getting pinto beans on Saturday nights during the drought.) I am reading the book When Helping Hurts. ...

Paula Boone



Planting Corn—Lessons Learned

by Paul Matzek

During the doldrums of winter 2015-16, when about the only thing gardening related one could do is eat the produce preserved last season, a different planting methodology crept into my mind along with the slowly growing garden fever. By March, I could ignore neither. I fashioned a tall narrow hoe with which I could dig a trench about 4 inches deep and two wide

The two beds I allocated for sweet corn lie side by side, (last year's sweet potato beds), which had been dug up, shoveled back into bed shape and smoothed last fall. During winter I had thrown on some cow and chicken manure, and in the spring tilled it in lightly. When the ground had warmed sufficiently to plant corn, I soaked sweet corn seed until it just started to sprout, a ploy I learned to thwart voles from eating all the seed.



Prior to planting, I realized that if I pulled about two inches of dirt from the surface of the two beds into the aisle area between them, I could get one more row of corn in that area. I reasoned the aisle area should produce well, since it was well loosened, and had most of the benefit of the winter's additives.

The first row went in the original bed area, planted in the traditional way; make a furrow, drop the seed in and cover. For the second, still in the original bed area, I wanted to plant in compost but not by spreading it on the area or side dressing. Here is where the new tool came into play. I scooped out a trench then poured in two to three inches of mature compost, then dropped the seed and covered with dirt. The third row, planted in the traditional way, fell in the aisle area, which had what should be the most nutrients.

A month down the road, the difference was quite noticeable. The first row is looking good- green sturdy stalks. The second looks as good, but the plants probably average 2 inches taller than the first, and more of the seed survived. The third row, in the aisle area, is stunted, about half the height of the second. The color is light, with even some yellowing of leaves. Even fewer of the seeds survived than in the first row. Rows 4 and 5, planted 3 weeks after the first, were just coming up.

At harvest, row 1 was still shorter than row 2. The first two rows made a fair showing of delectable ears. Row 3, still quite stunted, produced a few nubbins. Rows 4 and 5, a good foot taller than row 2 did well, though the raccoons figured out a route past the electric fence and helped themselves.

Conclusions? I thought that, for the third row, the soil structure and beneficial soil organisms had been totally disrupted, possibly destroyed when I pulled the top layer into the aisle prior to planting and the plants have suffered for it. But I had planted for years by deep tilling without this appalling result, so I have accepted that the manure was too strong. The new planting methodology provides a quite obvious benefit, with better seedling survival and stronger plants.

It is nice to get fresh sweet corn as early as possible and I will always play dodgem with the last frost. But rows 4 and 5 must have done better due to warmer temperatures in their early lives.

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

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.)



Dear Claudia and Ron,

I'm sending a check for my annual dues. I read the newsletter always and wish I could come.

I do still garden. It is my greatest pleasure, but I do less and less as time goes by. I celebrated my 91 birthday in November 2016.

Sincerely, *Beulah Cobb*



UPCOMING MEETINGS

Mark your calendar

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

April 15, 2017
(Plant Auction)
July 15, 2017
October 21, 2017
January 20, 2018



Ask us...!

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Important Dates:

IOGA Plant Sale.....15 April, 10:30 - 3:00 @ Zionsville Library.

Earth Day Festival.....22 April 11:00 - 4:00 @ Military Park, Downtown Indy

INPAWS Plant Sale...13 May 10:15 - 12:30 @ Park Tudor Gym, Indianapolis (Broad Ripple Area)

Hamilton County Master Gardeners

Plant Sale.....20 May 8:30 - 3:00 (Get there early for the best deals) @ Noblesville, Hamilton County Fair Grounds.

With all of these great sales, don't forget the free stuff at Earth Day Festival downtown. IOGA will be there.

Earth Day Indiana



free outdoor festival

Saturday April 22 • 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

Visit the IOGA Booth



Treasurer's Report



1st Quarter 2017

Opening Balance Jan. 1, 2017 \$5746.79

Income

Membership Dues \$ 528.00

Donations \$ 21.00

Total \$ **549.00**

Expenses

Web Site Hosting \$ 199.56

Earth Day Registration \$ 56.00

Business Entity Report \$ 22.00

Total \$ **4277.56**

Closing Balance Mar. 31, 2017 \$ **6018.23**

Respectfully submitted by Ron Clark, Treasurer

Weeder's Remorse

A thousand generations of DNA

In the dirt at my feet lay.

All that effort to survive,

To reproduce, to thrive,

Wiped out with one quick stroke

The nubile stalk bent then broke.

How could such wanton waste be so?

A mis-aimed swipe with my hoe.

Paul Matzek

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.



I O G A

7282 E 550 S

Whitestown, IN 46075

Full Name

2nd Name (if dual membership)

Address

Phone Number

Email Address

**IOGA
Meeting
Sat. April 15
10:30 am**

**Annual Plant Auction at Zionsville Library
250 North 5th Street, Zionsville, IN ([Map](#))**

317-873-3149

10:30 Arrive with Auction Items
11:00—11:45 Great Pitch-in Lunch
(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.

From I-465 take the Michigan Rd./421 exit #27. Then go north 2.3 miles and turn left on **E Sycamore** (W 116th St.) and go 1.1 miles. Turn right onto **S 1st St.** and go 0.2 miles, taking the 3rd left onto **W Oak St.** Go 0.2 miles and turn right onto **S 5th St.** Park on the 5th St. side of the library (lower level). **Or**,
From I-65 take the Zionsville exit #130. Go east 4.8 miles on **W Oak St.** through Zionsville and watch for **5th St.** Turn left onto **S 5th St.** Park on the 5th St. side of the library (lower level).

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 16**