



Hoosier Organic Gardener

July 2019

Indiana Organic Gardeners Association

IN THIS ISSUE

**Charcoal
Retort**

April IOGA
Meeting

**Waterlogged
Vegetable
Gardens**

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

Summertime greetings and yes, April showers will bring May, June and July flowers and this year, soggy gardens and farmers fields I got my tomato plants in successfully along with other stuff...raised gardens work great, if you don't have one and suffer from a soggy garden consider building raised beds as they really work well.

April was a very cold and rainy Earth Day downtown. The crowd was maybe, maybe 25% of normal. I got there early and it was raining but managed to get everything into a dry tent but it was cold outside as well as inside and off and on, continued to rain.

Thanks Susan and Paul for showing up. We were next to the Eagle Creek nature group so that was interesting as they had an injured Great Horned Owl that was brought along and is now used for talks and viewing. We did have people actually asking about organic gardening.

The following Saturday was our plant sale so this time I was determined that we would have a DRY and WARM location for that since we were no longer utilizing the Zionsville library. Cool Creek Nature Center turned out to be a good place to set up with plenty of room and an interesting place to check out the other things in the Center. A bit of a low IOGA turn out but not too bad. Thanks to Debbie Voelpel for arriving early to help me set up all the chairs and tables and helping to put everything away. On the whole, we did quite well especially with Susan acting as MC, head auctioneer and having fun. I grew far more tomato plants than I ever did as did Susan. I was surprised at all the great plants and the variety of plants that we had for sale, actually we had almost too many and in the end, gave away quite a few tomato plants to Debbie for delivering to several organizations. And thanks to Tammy Shockley for her generous purchasing of a lot of plants, even I went home with quite a few and handed some out to some gardening neighbors. Everybody had a good time. Cool Creek Nature Park staffers said that we are always welcome to come there for our April meeting and plant sale.

Before I forget, a special greetings to two of our long time IOGA members, Paul and Anne Matzek in Kansas and Don and Karen Nelson in Minnesota. May you both be enjoying black, non-clay soil in your gardens!

Coming up is our July meeting. This time at the Teter Organic Farm in Noblesville. (See driving instructions on the last page) As most of you know I'm also a Hamilton County Master Gardener and we also had a very large plant sale in May...known as "the mother of all plant sales" (13,000+ plants). I have a pollinator table that I staff and next to me was two of the Teter Organic Farm guys so we had some good exchanges on native bees, honeybees and organic gardening/farming.

I hope to see all of you that can make it on the 20th of July. I think the Teter Organic Farm will be another very interesting place to see.

Keep IOGA organic!

Doug



Doug Rohde

Charcoal Retort

by Paul Matzek

The ancient Amazonian peoples made biochar to enrich their cultivated soil. Those beds are still fertile to this day. Articles raving about biochar's benefits for soil started appearing perhaps 25 years ago in magazines like *Organic Gardening* and *Mother Earth News*. Later, when I had a wood stove, I started dumping the ashes on a coarse screen to catch the bits of charcoal to scatter on my garden. But that wasn't quite biochar.

Now, since I have available materials, a little more time, and lots of wood to clean up from the neglected woods in the view from our kitchen window, I finally worked up the ambition to make a charcoal kiln, more properly called a retort. It consists of a 55 gallon barrel with a lid fitted with a smoke stack to improve the draft when a fire is burning inside. Holes cut around the base provide air for combustion. Inside rests a cylindrical chamber made from 13 inch steel pipe with a lid gasketed to keep air out. It is fitted with a vent pipe near the top which carries volatile gasses out and down to the base of the fire.



The Assembled Retort with the First Charcoal Produced.

In operation, both the inner chamber and the space between it and the barrel are filled with wood pieces-any kind of scrap or waste as long as it is not contaminated with chemicals. With the lid on the inner chamber, the outer layer of wood is ignited and the barrel lid placed on top. The fire heats the wood in the inner chamber, driving off the volatile chemicals. These gasses could be scrubbed clean of particulate and used to run an internal combustion engine or a heater. In this case the gasses just contribute fuel to the fire.

After the fire burns out and the retort has cooled, the inner chamber is lifted out and emptied. Since it was made of pipe over a quarter inch thick it is quite heavy (that is what I had on hand that was suitable), so I use a block and tackle hung from a convenient tree branch to lift it. Chains attach to pivots at the midpoint on each side of the chamber so it can be tipped to dump the charcoal into my wheel barrow. If well packed, the retort produces about 5 gallon of charcoal per firing.

The charcoal requires inoculation to become biochar. After smushing the charcoal into small pieces with a brick or hammer, I mix two parts charcoal to one part compost (chicken and cow manure plus all the other yard waste) and one part water I allow this slurry to set for a couple of days, then spread it on the garden . The compost introduces beneficial bacteria and other organisms that give the charcoal its soil boosting properties. Beneficial soil organisms reside in the charcoal particles for years and increase soil fertility.

The side benefit is that burning wood releases carbon the trees collected in recent years so it is more or less carbon neutral. But the charcoal formed is nearly pure carbon which will be sequestered in the soil for centuries

Warning: Do not use commercial charcoal unless it is all natural chunk charcoal. Briquettes are made from pulverized charcoal mixed with fillers and binders containing unknown chemicals to hold them together.

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

April IOGA Meeting

The meeting on April 27, 2019 was held at Cool Creek Park Nature Center in Carmel. There were 21 members and three guests who later joined IOGA.

Starting at 10:30, donated plants and other items for the auction were brought in and sorted. Other items included eggs, tools, books and pesticides donated for the auction.

We had a great pitch-in lunch which, as always, included many home-made and organic dishes.

After the lunch at 11:15, we began with introductions while we waited for Holly Faust, naturalist at Cool Creek Park, to give a presentation on “Native Pollinators of Indiana.” Native pollinators include bees, ants, butterflies, moths, beetles and flies. There are over 4,000 native bee species. Holly reported that the park has three honey bee hives and since their introduction the native bee populations had declined. She recommended the book “The Forgotten Pollinators” by Stephen L. Buchmann and Gary Paul Nabhan. Holly passed around a bee house made by Crown Bees (CrownBees.com) to compare with another bee house that was not as good.



Holly Faust Speaking about **Indiana’s Native Pollinators.**

After the pollinator presentation, we started Q&A. Debbie Voepel asked about ants on strawberries and was advised to leave them as they were protecting the flowers. Heidi Watson asked whether to plant wisteria now? Several members advised her to have a very strong structure for the vines

The auction was led by Susan Irwin Simmons and Doug Rhode with assistance from Heidi Watson. The auction included many varieties of tomatoes including unusual ones such as Raspberry Lyanna and Blue Cream Berries, along with some larger sized tomatoes and some more traditional varieties. There were also a lot of perennials and herbs. Bidding got spirited at times. Proceeds from the auction were \$409.30 and another \$25.00 came from the sale of shirts, bags and hats.

Judy Houser
Secretary



Doug Rhode Leading the Business Meeting



Some of the Items for the Auction



Steve Beers



Doug Rphde, Kathy Krueger, and Maria Smietana (right)

Left to Right: Margaret Smith, Rita Kirkendall, Julie Wells, and Kathy Ambler Enjoy Lunch.



Left to Right: Heidi Watson, Doug Rohde and Susan Irwin-Simmons Conduct the Auction.



Margaret Smith and Janet Poore



Suellen Medley (left), Tammy Schockley (right).

LETTERS:



Extra Auction Plants

I just thought I'd let you know the extra plants have been given to the Hamilton County Sheriffs Dept for their garden project with young people and Third Phase Food Pantry and shelter (also in Noblesville) for their residents and community. It makes me feel good to know our extras will bless others! Thanks so much for letting me find good homes for them. Blessings, Debbie Voepel

Waterlogged Vegetable Gardens

by Rosie Lerner

This summer has been a challenging one for many Indiana vegetable gardeners. It started with a prolonged cold, wet spring, was followed by a couple of weeks of intense heat and drought, and then followed by torrential rains!

Gardens that have been in a prolonged saturated condition may present some surprising symptoms, ranging from wilting, yellowing or drooping foliage to blossom-end rot.

When soil is saturated for an extended period, roots are deprived of much-needed oxygen. A damaged root system cannot keep up with the moisture needs of the plant. As the root system becomes compromised, symptoms above the ground may appear similar to those you would expect during drought: wilting of the foliage, blossom drop and blossom-end rot of certain fruits. High temperatures make it even more difficult for the plant to keep up with moisture needs, since plants are constantly losing water as vapor through the leaves.

In addition, lack of oxygen in the soil can lead to buildup of ethylene gas in the roots, causing even further damage. This ethylene can cause leaves and stems to suddenly droop, particularly near the top of the plant.

If waters recede quickly, many crops will make a comeback as soils dry and air returns. It will take some time for new roots to grow. In the meantime, plant damage symptoms are likely to continue, at least for a bit.

When roots are unable to adequately take up water, the mineral nutrients normally contained in that water will not be available to the plant. Deficiency symptoms, such as yellowing foliage, leaf drop and stunting, may progress until the plant has a chance to grow new roots.

Flowering and fruiting should also be affected by damaged root systems. Blossom drop and poor fruit set on remaining blossoms are to be expected when plants are under severe stress. For fruits that have already set but are still developing, blossom-end rot is likely. A physiological disorder common especially to tomatoes, but also zucchini and other summer squash, blossom-end rot begins as a dead area on the blossom end of the fruit opposite the point of stem attachment. In tomatoes, a black, leathery scar appears on the bottom of the fruit, whereas in squash the damage often remains soft, appearing water-soaked. This scarring is caused by a deficiency of calcium in the developing fruit, usually brought on by extreme fluctuations in soil moisture. However, once the damage is there, secondary rot organisms may enter through the damaged tissue and cause a soft rot to develop.

As conditions return to normal, surviving plants should be able to put on new growth. However, heavy rains will have washed away much of the available nitrogen that plants need. Gardeners should supplement crops with a side dressing of fertilizer applied to the soil around the plants and watered in. For a quicker response, try foliar feeding with a water-soluble product. There are many fertilizer formulations available, including both synthetic and organic products. Always read and follow the label directions to avoid plant injury.

B. Rosie Lerner is a member of the Department of Horticulture and Landscape Architecture, College of Agriculture at Purdue University and is the Purdue University Extension Consumer Horticulture Specialist. This article originally appeared in the Yard and Gardening News of the Purdue University Consumer Horticulture Program at Purdue University and is reprinted with permission.

Ask us...!

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Treasurer's Report

2nd Quarter 2019

Opening Balance Apr. 1, 2019 \$ **6121.81**

Income

Membership Dues	\$ 248.00
Donations	\$ 45.00
T-Shirts Sales	\$ 25.00
Auction Receipts	\$ 409.50
Room Rental Refund	\$ 100.00
<u>Amazon Smile</u>	<u>\$ 5.00</u>
Total	\$ 842.50

Expenses

	\$ 0.00
Total	\$ 0.00

Closing Balance Jun. 30, 2019 \$ **6954.31**

Respectfully submitted by Ron Clark, Treasurer

New IOGA Members

Fernando Contreras
Julie Wells, Indianapolis, IN 46217
Holly Faust, Westfield, IN 46074
Becky Parker, Indianapolis, IN 46236



UPCOMING MEETINGS

Mark Your Calendar!

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

July 20, 2019
October 19, 2019
January 18, 2020
April 18, 2020
(Plant Auction)



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
7282 E 550 S
Whitestown, IN 46075



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

IOGA
Meeting
Sat. July 20
11:00 am

July Meeting at Teter Organic Farm
10980 E. 221 St.
Noblesville, IN 46062 ([Map](#))

11:00 Arrive and Welcome Guests
11:15—12:00 Great Pitch-in Lunch
12:00— 1:00 Introductions & Gardening Q&A
1:00— 1:15 Business Meeting
1:15— Farm Tour

Meeting: The July meeting will be a visit to the [Teter Organic Farm](#). The Teter Farm is a 3 acre certified organic farm located in Noblesville, IN. They grow certified organic produce for local food pantries, food banks, and feeding programs, as well as, for a 36-member CSA and the Noblesville Farmer's Market. The Teter Farm is part of the 120 acre Teter Family Retreat which is a ministry of Noblesville First United Methodist Church.

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: From I-465 (Northeast side) take Exit 37 for Interstate 69 N/IN-37 N. Continue onto I-69 for 3.9 miles and take exit 205 for IN-37 N toward Noblesville. Continue onto IN-37 N 9.1 miles and turn left onto E 206th St. Go 0.4 miles and turn right onto Riverwood Ave. Continue on Riverwood Ave. for 1,6 miles to where it curves into 221st St. Go 500 feet on 221st St and turn right into the Teter Family Retreat. (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 "Search Button".**)

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. July 20