



# Hoosier Organic Gardener

January, 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

Happy New Year. Hopefully 2021 will be a far better year than last year. I'm not sure where we'll be on Covid-19 by the time you are reading this, so I'm going to go along with our planned January 23, 2021 meeting and, if by meeting time, January looks particular dangerous, we'll get out a cancellation e-mail to all of you prior to the meeting.



Doug Rohde

For those of us who met in October, it went quite well. I had the chairs properly spaced, we all wore masks, and brought our own brown bag lunches. Margaret brought bottles of tea and other snacks, plus we had the Cool Creek naturalist take us on a walk through the native plant meadow after a short lecture in the Center's building. On the walk, he pointed out native plants which we could take seeds from and put in the paper bags that were supplied. There were also seeds on a display table from other native plants which we could choose from. Quite a bit of plant identification went along with the walk so you could leave with a lot of native plant seeds. There were quite a few of you that didn't attend and that was perfectly understandable as it will be for the January meeting. For those of you who will attend, I asked Amanda if she will give us her Monarch Butterfly (and other pollinators) Power Point presentation which I've seen before and it's really great. Amanda is the Cool Creek Nature Center Superintendent of Natural Resources and Education and highly knowledgeable in so many other nature subjects. One of the things we need all of you who plan on attending to do is to give Margaret a RSVP phone call (317-698-0526) so she/we have some idea of how many will attend.

Our plant sale is still scheduled for April 17, 2021 at the Cool Creek Center and with a bit of luck on Covid-19 hopefully we can meet (still a bit carefully) but with a bit more confidence of avoiding Covid and have a fairly normal plant sale complete with our usual great and long overdue home-cooked, great food to enjoy...at least that's the plan. The July meeting is still on schedule to be at an organic farm in Noblesville and we will be in the air-conditioned lodge so if the weather has another 94 degree heat index at least we will be cool before and after our tour. At this moment I'm not sure of the October date or where we are going, but it will be time for our two year officer elections. Ron and I messed up last time on the date so this October will get us back on track.

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This fall I sadly decided to dig up part of my native plant garden and plant my tomatoes in there as it has the most unobstructed sun. My Hickory Nut and White Oak trees are expanding their limbs farther and farther out so I am getting too much overall shade therefore I needed to move my gardens around a bit. My only 4'x8' raised bed is starting to rot out a bit and needed a cleaning out so I removed all the old, somewhat spent soil, deposited it around my backyard bushes and shrubs plus underneath the Oak tree then completely filled up the raised bed with compost on top of which I planted Winter Rye. Looks good so far but this Spring I'll have to be prepared to rebuild the old raised bed wood. I can still use it for plants that handle more shade than sun. Meanwhile, I found a great You Tube video on making raised beds and since I have "critters" in abundance, I'll have to start thinking about making a new raised bed where the tomatoes used to be and it will have to be a bit higher to keep the rabbits out as it will be for radishes, carrots, smaller plants, sort of a kitchen garden, a real rabbit gourmet dining place.

And of course, don't forget that this is dues month so make sure you send in your dues to Larry. We keep the dues low but we still have some bills to pay. Ron was always rather strict on all of us paying our January dues on time as he hated having to email people who didn't pay on time so get them in on time so Larry doesn't have to go through that. We were fairly lax in 2020 just due to what all Covid-19 caused so hopefully this year we can start getting back on track. As a final note.....I haven't heard anything about Earth Day which normally takes place in April. We normally always set up our IOGA table in one of the tents and have fun meeting people and talking organic gardening as well as hawking membership in IOGA. More information on Earth Day later

Keep IOGA organic  
Doug



## *The Old Farmer's Almanac*

While browsing through **The Old Farmer's Almanac's** website, I came across some information on frost dates that I thought might be of interest to IOGA members.

A **Vegetable Planting Calendar** showing the earliest dates to plant vegetables in the spring and the last dates that you can plant for a fall harvest, based on average frost dates for your location, can be found by entering your zip code at *The Old Farmer's Almanac* (<https://www.almanac.com/gardening/planting-calendar>).

The planting tool is personalized by zip code, pulling from a database of thousands of weather station reports, and using the "days until harvest" for the most popular vegetables grown in the home garden. Frost dates are based on 30-year rolling averages, so they are only a guide of what is "typical." Every year can be different. Also, every garden can have what we call "microclimates" (e.g., an area in the dip of a valley or on the slope of a mountain) which differ.

To find the **average date of the last spring frost and first fall frost** for locations across the U.S. and Canada go to (<https://www.almanac.com/gardening/frostdates#states-and-provinces>) and enter your ZIP code to see frost dates for your location (based on the nearest weather station).

Frost dates are calculated based on data from the NOAA National Centers for Environmental Information.

# OCTOBER 2020 IOGA MEETING

The meeting on October 17, 2020 was held at Cool Creek Nature Center in Carmel, Indiana. There were 9 members and 1 guest.

We discussed gardening before eating our brown-bag lunches. Margaret Smith brought drinks and snacks.

President Doug Rohde announced that our next meeting would be January 23, 2021 again at Cool Creek (please note change to 4<sup>th</sup> Saturday). The speaker will be Amanda Smith. The April meeting is still be decided upon, but July should be at Teter Organic Farm (3<sup>rd</sup> try). Doug also stated that we will be holding an election of IOGA officers at the October meeting.

Paul Gaston noted that the Ohio Ecological Food & Farm Assn will hold their annual conference virtually on February 10-15<sup>th</sup>. The theme will be “Our Time: Essential Links for a Strong Food Chain.”

Susan mentioned the Mother Earth News Fair that she attended last year. It is offered as virtual classes this year.

After the lunch, Don Popiela, Cool Creek naturalist, spoke about how to plant wildflower seeds. Some wildflowers have growth inhibitors that naturally decay over time. These seeds are best planted in the spring. Other seeds need stratification by letting them overwinter or putting them into a cold refrigerator. Some seeds need to be scarified or the seed coating cracked before they can germinate. These can be scratched or just scattered outside so that as the soil naturally freezes and expands the coating gets cracked. Some seeds need to be digested in order to germinate or they can be put in an acid such as coke or vinegar.

We then went outside. The Nature Center was having a Community Seed Day. Tables outside displayed sheets describing native plants found at the Center and seeds were available for some of them. If no desired seeds were available on the tables, Dan took us around the Center and gave us seeds from plants so that we could see what they looked like in the fall. We also picked up information sheets on starting wildflower seeds and seed preparation and planting information on various native plants.



Judy Houser  
Secretary



# 4 Easy Organic Ways to Control Pests in Your Garden

By: Chris Sherwood  
dengarden.com

The infiltration of your garden by unwanted pests is something every gardener has to deal with when starting or maintaining a garden. However, just because pests find a way to sneak into your flowers and vegetables, doesn't mean you have to let them set up house. Here are four organic ways to help evict these unwanted garden dwellers.

## Beneficial Predators

One of the best ways to reduce pest pressure on your garden is to introduce predatory insects that help reduce and even eliminate certain pest populations. One of the most well known beneficial insects is the ladybug. Ladybugs prey on many garden foes including aphids, grape rootworm, whiteflies, spider mites, and bean thrips. Other helpful beneficial predators in the garden include praying mantis, syrphid fly, green lacewing, soldier beetles and predatory wasps.

While purchasing beneficial predators is an okay option, creating an environment in your garden that attracts these beneficial insects is even better. Plant pollen-heavy plants like sunflowers and utilize chemical-free gardening techniques to maintain a healthy balance of good bugs in your garden. Inter-planting a wide mix of flowers and herbs throughout your rows or boxes like cosmos, borage, zinnias, sweet alyssum, and nasturtiums can also attract beneficials

## Neem Oil

Neem oil is a gardener's best friend when it comes to organic pest management. Neem oil has been used for over a hundred years and comes from the leaves and seeds of the neem tree. The active component of neem is azadirachtin, which can interrupt pest life cycles at the egg, larvae and adult stages.

Neem works in different ways depending on the age and type of insect. It acts as an antifeedant, or in other words, it impacts a pest's desire to eat the plant making your tender lettuce plants less attractive. It can also work through coating some insects and smothering them. Neem can even disrupt various insect's hormones, preventing pests from reaching maturity and stopping the breeding cycle. As an added benefit, neem oil also works as a natural fungicide with varying effectiveness on powdery mildew, leaf spot, and rust.

## The Barrier Method

One of the most effective ways to prevent pests from taking over your garden is to isolate plants during their most tender stages. Row covers allow you to block out most pests, either allowing them to reach maturation or blocking them out long enough for your plants to grow stronger and less tempting to destructive, hungry insects. Your row covers should be made out of a material that is breathable, durable, and light to allow airflow and proper sun exposure for growth.

Row covers do have some drawbacks to consider. First, the fabric can not only block out pests but can block out beneficial pollinators as well. Keep this in mind when trying to grow fruiting plants, as you'll need to either hand pollinate or remove the row cover after flowers set. Some pests may still get under the row cover, so you'll need to check for signs of plant damage or other activity. When pests like whiteflies and aphids get under your cover, they can multiply much faster without exposure to natural

predators blocked out by the row cover. The added increase in temperature and humidity can also make unchecked populations explode.

Keep in mind that putting the time and investment into row covers has the additional benefit of helping extend your season with protection from frost during the late fall and early spring.

## **Avoid Monoculture With Companions**

There's a lot of debate about just how beneficial companion planting is for helping plants grow stronger and faster, but companion planting mixed with avoiding monoculture in your garden beds and rows can do a lot for pest management and prevention. At the very least, it can assure that if one row of broccoli gets infested with cabbage worms, you'll still have another planting of broccoli somewhere else that hopefully won't be impacted.

Not only should you plant a wide range of different flowers or vegetables throughout your plot versus clumping all the same produce in a row or specific box, but you should also plant mindfully. Plan to plant deterrents around prized plants, such as seeding borage and basil around tomato plants to deter tomato hornworm, or planting a row of garlic or onions around your brassicas to repel cabbage worm and aphids from destroying your cauliflower, kale, and broccoli.

No matter what you do, pests will always find their way to your garden. To make things even more complicated, different gardening zones will have different pests that react in various ways to different control methods. This is why there's no silver bullet method to keeping any garden pest-free. Instead, think of pest management as a battle on multiple fronts. Combine different methods and see what works best for you in your area. Gardening is all about experimentation and learning to work within the individual nature and habitat around you.

*Chris Sherwood is a project manager by day and avid home and garden scholar by night who loves to share his trials and success with others.*



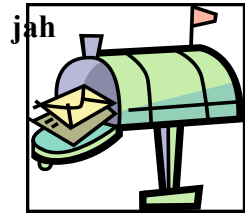
## **Climate Change's Effect on Perennial Plants**

Perennial plants are particularly vulnerable to shifting seasons, especially as it relates to their chilling hour requirements, or the amount of time they need to spend with temperatures between 35°F and 50°F, which prepares them to break their winter dormancy and blossom. If you get too few chilling hours, certain varieties of apples, peaches and grapes simply won't bud. If you accumulate the required chilling hours too early in the year, like what happened in 2012, some fruits may bud before the risk of frost damage has ended. And if you have winter and spring temperatures that fluctuate too much, that can lead to resets in chilling hours required to end dormancy, resulting in erratic blooms, yield loss and reduced fruit quality.

So here in Indiana, where we're already sitting on the boundary of suitability for many fruit varieties, it is expected to become more difficult to produce reliable crops in the future, and farmers may need to shift the varieties being used. And with perennial crops, that's especially challenging since it can take many years to establish a crop and you expect to produce from those plants for many years or decades.

*The Indiana Climate Change Impacts Assessment (IN CCIA).  
Purdue Climate Change Research Center*

# LETTERS:



## A Gourd Too Far

By: Paul Matzek

Late spring, having a bed not taken up by other vegetables, I planted a volunteer watermelon from last years patch at the near end. Then, in the middle, I planted a couple of cantaloupe hills. Since I had room and some birdhouse gourd seeds I had bought several years ago, I planted four of them at the far end of the 32 ft. X 4 ft. bed.

I didn't know how watermelons would transplant but it grew nicely, as did the cantaloupe from seed. Two of the gourd seeds germinated and took off.

The summer progressed. All vines bloomed and set fruit. The gourds, to paraphrase the pink bunny commercials, kept growing, and growing and growing. They took over the entire bed, burying first the cantaloupes, and eventually the watermelon, then spreading into the yard.

From that bed I harvested four cantaloupes, five watermelons, and eighty-six gourds. When I ripped the vines out, they were still setting a few blooms and fruits. One can only imagine the harvest if I had not mowed the ends of the vines off each time I mowed between the beds. I can imagine the harvest if they were edible- about four.

PS: As a follow-up on the **corn ear worms**, I was defeated in the war of the worms. In spite of the almost daily treatment of the silks with BT, there was a worm in nearly every ear. So now I have until late spring to figure out a new strategy. Just a note, I planted the late crop on July 25, and stated harvesting on Oct. 1. The leaves had dried considerably, but there were a lot of good ears,

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



## Raised Bed Gardening

As I think you know, I have moved back home and can only walk with a walker now. I would love to try raised bed gardening but am unable to do that. If there is anyone who could help who could volunteer to help me, I would be very appreciative. If anyone is interested , please give me a call and we could talk about it.

Thanks, Claudia

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## Treasurer's Report 4th Quarter 2020



Opening Balance Sept. 30, 2020      \$6,611.03

### Income

0.00

### Expenses

Newsletter      125.25

Total      125.25

Closing Balance Dec. 31, 2020      \$6,485.78

*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 23, 2021 — Cool Creek Park Nature Center  
April 17, 2021 — Cool Creek Park Nature Center  
July 17, 2021 — Teter Organic Farm



## 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 \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone Number \_\_\_\_\_  
Email Address \_\_\_\_\_

I prefer my newsletter to be \_\_\_\_\_ emailed \_\_\_\_\_ mailed.

IOGA  
Meeting  
Sat. Jan. 23

**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	Amanda Smith, Cool Creek Nature Center Supt. Of Natural Resources and Education

**Meeting:** Amanda Smith, Cool Creek Naturalist, will make a presentation on Monarch butterflies.

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 Cool Creek Park Rd. Continue 06 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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