

# The Latest Dirt

La Porte County Master Gardener Newsletter



AUGUST 2024

## INSIDE THIS ISSUE

ASSOCIATION NEWS	2
AUGUST PICNIC	2
VISIT TO STANTEC NURSERY	2
PIONEER GARDEN UPDATE	3
JULY MEETING MINUTES	4
MEET NEW ANR EDUCATOR	4
FIRE ANTS ON THE MOVE ARTICLE	5
AUGUST GARDEN CALENDAR	6
FALL PERENNIAL FOR SALE	7

## 2024 MEETING SCHEDULE

Meetings will be held at 6:00 p.m. (DST) on  
Thursday at La Porte Main Library  
Meeting Room B

August 1	Annual Picnic Red Mill Park
September 5	Business Meeting
October 3	Workshop
November 7	Business Meeting Elections
December 5	Holiday Party

## NEXT BOARD MEETING

August 12th - 6:30 p.m.  
Classroom at the Library Exchange

"THE LATEST DIRT" is published monthly.  
The next deadline is August 20, 2024

[www.lpmastergardener.org](http://www.lpmastergardener.org)



PURDUE EXTENSION  
MASTER GARDENER PROGRAM

## Be a BeeSpotter, Save the Species

By: Steve Zolvinski



To paraphrase Joyce Kilmer, have you ever seen a poem as lovely as a bee? And honeybees and bumble bees make the world a lovelier place by pollinating plants that give our homesteads aesthetic appeal and fruits and vegetables to

our dietary regimen. But bee populations are on the decline due to habitat loss, chemical use and climate change. Become a citizen-scientist to save the day!

Come to the rescue with a click of a button on your smart phone or camera. BeeSpotter is a project coordinated through the University of Illinois that enlists the public to document the extent of species in the family Apidae throughout the Midwest. Just step out the door and start shooting images of honeybees or bumble bees that frequent your gardening spots. You can upload your images to the BeeSpotter website (<https://beespotter.org/>) to contribute to the scientific enterprise.

The BeeSpotter web portal gives information on spotting, identifying and taking images of honeybees and bumble bees. Proper identification is important to distinguish bees from look-alike species. You will need to register at the site in order to upload your finds. The site includes data collected on species finds and maps of locations.

Citizen-scientist participants might also make history. It was thought the bumble bee *Bombus affinis* was likely extinct in Illinois, until a Peoria participant documented its presence in 2008. That is an example of the power of citizens uniting with the scientific community to locate these nimble species. BeeSpotter was started in 2007 and is currently collecting spottings from Indiana, Illinois, Ohio and Missouri.

Source: BeeSpotter.org (<https://beespotter.org/topics/photos/>)

## ASSOCIATION NEWS

### AUGUST 1, 2024 ANNUAL PICNIC

Just a quick reminder the picnic is Thursday, August 1, 2024 at Red Mill Park in Smith Hall. Bring your auction items and be ready to bid, bid, bid. Remember, the funds from the auction support our April awards banquet and August Picnic. Bring your wallet and get ready to spend!

### Seed Saver Alert!

Attention to our valued members! Mary Davis has announced she will not continue as our Seed Saver project coordinator after 2024. We need a volunteer to step up and shadow her for the remainder of this year to learn all you can and take over for her in 2025.

Please give this much thought and dig deep into your heart – **Seed Savers is something that we cannot lose.** It is vital to our community and to our association. Without this, heirloom and other seeds would not be able to continue. **WE NEED YOUR HELP.** Thank you all.

### Our visit to Stantec Nursery Open House, Walkerton, IN

By: Carol Nolan, President



Friday, July 19, 2024, dawned sunny and warm. It was the perfect day to explore Stantec Nursery, located in Walkerton, Indiana. Eight La Porte County Master Gardeners found their way there for tours of the facility and seminars and a catered lunch.

The day started at 9:30 EDT and ended at 2:30. There were five seminars to choose from: Cultural Resources; Lick Run Daylighting Overview; Enhancing your Project for Bird Habitat;

Establishing Vegetation on Solar Site, and Native area maintenance.

Stantec not only has a nursery in Walkerton, but other locations in the Midwest which do consulting on native landscape restoration and other environmental issues. The seminars were not only enlightening but easy to understand and follow. The attendees were all anxious to ask questions and learn more.

The catered lunch was tasty as well. Those from our association in attendance as shown above were Donna Pouzar, Tom Boesen, Kitty Knoll, Kathleen Fox, Marcy Dailey, Susie Kieffer, Carol Nolan and Cindy Pagels.



Susie Kieffer with Chris White whose presentation dealt with Native Area Maintenance



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## Pioneer Garden at the LaPorte County Fairgrounds

By: Mary Davis

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We had a successful showing of the Pioneer Garden again this year at the La Porte County Fairgrounds from July 6<sup>th</sup> through the 13<sup>th</sup>. The garden was plentiful and well-tended, and the weather was sunny but a bit hot at times. About 450 people toured the Pioneer Garden led by Master Gardener volunteers dressed in pioneer garb throughout the week, most visiting earlier in the week when the weather was a bit cooler.

We sold 140 seed packets, four garden picture notecards, and seven Pioneer Garden booklets with updated information about what's growing in the garden. New this year, we offered some Toothache plants for sale that I started earlier this spring to gauge the level of interest in purchasing live plants; we sold ten plants to eager gardeners. All totaled, we made \$150 and change. And nearly all the dried gourds that we had collected were distributed to visitors for free.

Thanks to the many volunteers who worked tirelessly this spring to plant and groom the garden each week and who volunteered during fair week to meet visitors to the garden and answer questions.



Photos by Mary Davis

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**Master Gardener Association  
Business Meeting Minutes - July 11, 2024**

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The meeting was called to order at 6:30 p.m. by President Carol Nolan. Those in attendance were Karren Coplen, Ann Klosinski, Eunice Conway, Steve Zolvinski, Mary Davis, Geri Lamb, Georgette, Behanna, Lisa Johnson, Deb Sarver, Kathleen Fox, Cindy Pagels, Susan Kieffer, Marcy Dailey, Karen Sarver, George Sarver.

Old business discussed, included: We discussed the final numbers from the Garden Show held in March. Total income came to \$10,103 and total expenses amounted to \$4,092.51 leaving a net income of \$6,010.49. It was agreed this was the most successful show to date. \* At the end of our last meeting it was mentioned people should think about our Hot Line and how to move forward after this season. We do not have three days of volunteers, and honestly, the phone line is not busy. We will consider going to 2 days next season, which will mean we have to rework the cards we distribute, but there is no cost to that. We will also find ways to better advertise this aspect of our association. \* Also discussed was the August picnic and auction that is held. We had sign-up sheets for desserts and side dishes.

**New Business:** The board approved opening a CD to earn more interest than received by keeping it in a standard savings account.

\* We discussed the newsletter, *The Latest Dirt*. We need our members to step up and supply articles, pictures, etc. We need them to take ownership of the newsletter, as it is our newsletter. It was agreed to continue with the newsletter through this year monthly and review next year and determine if we would prefer to go every two months.

\* Extended an invitation to all members to join master gardeners from Kalamazoo Michigan at Friendship Gardens.

\* Mary Davis announced she will not continue as the Seed Saver project lead after 2024. We are looking for someone to join her through the remainder of this year to pick up as much of her expertise as possible. Seed Saver is a very important aspect of our work with the community. Seeds are sold at the Heritage Garden and passed out at our Garden Show. We cannot let this project drop.

\* A reminder was given that our new ANR begins August 1, 2024. Let us all welcome her warmly.

These minutes were created by Carol Nolan, as the recording secretary was not at the meeting. Information may be missing, and for that I apologize.

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

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**Welcome Jesi Davenport!!**

By: Purdue Extension Office

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Jesi is our new ANR Educator. She will start working for Purdue Extension La Porte County on August 1st.

Jesi was formerly the La Porte High School department head of the agriculture program and also in charge of the FFA program. She received her degree from Purdue in Ag Education. She is married, lives in Plymouth, and has an adorable little boy.

Please welcome Jesi to our 'family.'

## GARDENING ARTICLES

### Fire Ants on the Move?

By: Steve Zolvinski



La Porte County property owners expressed concern about finding people-biting Fire Ants, *Solenopsis invicta*, on their land, at the July 17, 2024, Coffee & Climate meeting of the Soil & Water Conservation District.

The report was surprising given that Fire Ants, an invasive species from South America, are common in the Deep South, most notably in Texas since the 1950s. It was suggested that movement of southern-grown nursery stock may have brought them north.

Officially, the U.S. Animal and Plant Inspection Service (APHIS) documents Tennessee as the northernmost range, with none reported in the Midwest. States with an active presence ranged mostly from Texas to Florida, in addition to northward to Arkansas, Oklahoma, Virginia and Tennessee. APHIS warns interstate truckers to inspect loads as Fire Ants may hitch rides on loads of baled hay, straw, nursery stock, sod, loose soil or soil-caked equipment.

Milder winter weather due to climate change may also be improving the habitats of Fire Ants in northern areas. Penn State's College of Earth & Mineral Sciences reports Fire Ants do not live in soils affected by hard freezes. As winters become less harsh and soils less affected, the Fire Ant range has reached Washington, D.C. and may possibly march further north.

**What to look for:** Texas A&M describes fire ants as “medium-sized red and black covered ants that build mounds of soft soil.” Mounds are no taller than 18 inches and may be harder to detect in colder, drier areas. They are aggressive when disturbed, will swarm up a person's leg and sting! Symptoms of swelling, itching and redness are most common symptoms. However, victims should seek immediate medical attention for more severe reactions. It is estimated that about 1 percent of the population have allergic reactions.

**What to do:** While the extent of any infestation is unknown in La Porte County, it may be wise to be on the lookout for Fire Ants in your daily gardening activities. Get a positive identification by e-mailing an image to the Purdue Plant & Pest Diagnostic Lab: <https://ag.purdue.edu/departments/btny/ppdl/>. Also, you can read up on the ant at Texas A&M's Texas Imported Fire Ant Research web site: <https://fireant.tamu.edu/manage/faq/>

Source: Stephen Ausmus, USDA (<http://www.ars.usda.gov/is/graphics/photos/dec04/k11622-1.htm>)



## AUGUST GARDEN CALENDAR

### HOME (Indoor plants and activities)

- Take cuttings from annual garden plants such as impatiens, coleus, geraniums and wax begonias to overwinter indoors. Root the cuttings in media such as moist vermiculite, perlite, peat moss or potting soil, rather than water.
- Order spring-flowering bulbs for fall planting.
- Cut flowers from the garden to bring a little color indoors, or dry for everlasting arrangements.

### GARDEN (Flowers, vegetables, and small fruits)

- Keep the garden well-watered during dry weather and free of weeds, insects and disease.
- Complete fall garden planting by direct-seeding carrots, beets, kohlrabi, kale and snap beans early this month. Lettuce, spinach, radishes and green onions can be planted later in August and early September. Don't forget to thin seedlings to appropriate spacing as needed.
- Harvest onions after the tops yellow and fall, then cure them in a warm, dry, well-ventilated area. The necks should be free of moisture when fully cured in about a week's time.
- Harvest potatoes after the tops yellow and die. Potatoes also need to be cured before storage.
- Pick beans, tomatoes, peppers and squash often to encourage further production.
- Harvest watermelon when several factors indicate ripeness: the underside ground spot turns from whitish to creamy yellow; the tendril closest to the melon turns brown and shrivels; the rind loses its gloss and appears dull; and the melon produces a dull thud, rather than a ringing sound when thumped.
- Harvest sweet corn when kernels are plump and ooze a milky juice when punctured with your fingernail. If the liquid is watery, you're too early; if the kernels are doughy, you're too late.
- Keep faded flowers pinched off bedding plants to promote further flowering and improve plant appearance.

### 2024 EXECUTIVE BOARD

PRESIDENT	CAROL NOLAN
VICE PRESIDENT	KATHLEEN FOX
CORRESPONDING SECRETARY	ANN KLOSINSKI
RECORDING SECRETARY	THERESA DEZOBO-BORG
TREASURER	SUSAN KIEFFER
EDUCATION COMMITTEE	JOAN KINTZELE
	GEORGETTE BEHENNA
	KAREN SARVER

### 2024 PROJECT COORDINATORS

#### Farmers' Market-Michigan City

Kitty Knoll \_\_\_\_\_ 219-575-1731  
 \_\_\_\_\_ rknollandson@comcast.net

#### Friendship Botanic Gardens

Rima Binder \_\_\_\_\_ 219-878-8128  
 \_\_\_\_\_ rimabinder@comcast.net

#### Garden Hotline

Extension Office \_\_\_\_\_ 219-324-9407

#### Garden Show

Ann Klosinski \_\_\_\_\_ 219-872-8367  
 \_\_\_\_\_ annak47@comcast.net

#### La Porte Builders Assn. Home Expo

Donna Pouzar \_\_\_\_\_ 219-363-2960  
 \_\_\_\_\_ pouzdlp@icloud.com

#### Pax Center

Carol Nolan \_\_\_\_\_ 331-903-0091  
 \_\_\_\_\_ cnolan41@yahoo.com  
 Karren Coplen \_\_\_\_\_ 219-390-4118  
 \_\_\_\_\_ karenc@comcast.net

#### Pioneer Land School Tours

Linda Hough \_\_\_\_\_ 219-324-0424  
 \_\_\_\_\_ ljhough614@gmail.com

#### Pioneer Heritage Garden

Connie Shei \_\_\_\_\_ 219-362-4866  
 \_\_\_\_\_ jshei@comcast.net

#### Seed Savers

Mary Davis \_\_\_\_\_ 219-877-5339  
 \_\_\_\_\_ mdavis9757@gmail.com

#### Sunflower Fair

Linda Hough \_\_\_\_\_ 219-324-0424  
 \_\_\_\_\_ ljhough614@gmail.com

### YARD (Lawns, woody ornamentals, and fruits)

- Check trees and shrubs that have been planted in recent years for girdling damage by guy wires, burlap or twine.
- Don't fertilize woody plants now. It stimulates late growth that will not have time to harden off properly before winter.
- Hand-prune and destroy bagworms, fall webworms and tent caterpillars.
- Pears are best ripened off the tree, so do not wait for the fruit to turn yellowish on the tree. Harvest pears when color of fruit changes — usually from a dark green to a lighter green — and when the fruit is easily twisted and removed from the spur.
- Prune out and destroy the raspberry and blackberry canes that bore fruits this year. They will not produce fruit again next year, but they may harbor insect and disease organisms.
- If the weather turns dry, keep newly established plants well-watered. New plants should receive 1-1.5 inches of water every 7 to 10 days.
- Begin seeding new lawns or bare spots in established lawns from mid-August through mid-September.

### FALL BLOOMING PERENNIALS

Looking for some beautiful fall-blooming perennials that are drought resistant ?

Check out "Clara Curtis," a beautiful salmon-pink flowering chrysanthemum that blooms late September, early October. Tolerates full sun and dry soil and grows about 16" tall and is a slow spreader. Deer may nibble on, but it's not known to be a deer favorite. If you are interested in having some in your garden, I have several nice clumps for sale. Email me at: [pouzdlp@icloud.com](mailto:pouzdlp@icloud.com).



#### STANDING COMMITTEE

##### COORDINATORS

History Book \_\_\_\_\_ Donna Pouzar  
 Hospitality \_\_\_\_\_ Eunice Conway  
 Librarian \_\_\_\_\_ Linda Hough  
 Newsletter \_\_\_\_\_ Donna Pouzar  
 Speakers Bureau \_ See Executive Board  
 Sunshine \_\_\_\_\_ Julie Goetz

**Purdue Extension Office** \_\_ 324-9407

Jesi Davenport ANR Educator

Sue Salisbury \_\_ [salisbk@purdue.edu](mailto:salisbk@purdue.edu)

*The Latest Dirt* is published monthly. The deadline for submission is the 20<sup>th</sup> of each month. Our mission is to publish articles and events of interest to other Master Gardeners and the community. Articles about personal experiences, suggestions on gardening books, catalogs, helpful websites, tips and tricks, book reviews, seminars you've attended are welcomed.

Submission requirements: Articles should be no longer than a page and can include photos. References must be included. Latin names of plants should be italicized. We do not accept articles pertaining to medicinal information. Master Gardeners will get volunteer hours for time spent working on an article.

**Have a garden item for sale or trade?**  
**Buy, Sell, Trade at the**  
*Trading Shed*

**Place your free ad in The Latest Dirt.**

Tools, tillers, mowers, plants - anything garden related. Keep ads brief and provide your phone number and/or e-mail address.

Ads will be limited to space available.

Send ads, photos, events or articles by the 20<sup>th</sup> of the month to:

**[pouzdlp@icloud.com](mailto:pouzdlp@icloud.com)**

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