

The Latest Dirt

La Porte County Master Gardener Newsletter



FEBRUARY 2025

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2025 MEETING SCHEDULE

Meetings will be held at 6:00 p.m. on
Thursday at the La Porte Main Library
Meeting Room B, unless otherwise noted

February 6	Social Meeting Meet Jesi Davenport, ANR, Purdue Extension Invasive Species in the Backyard, Tom Bosen Head Start Project, Linda Bush
March 6	Business Meeting
April 3	Awards Dinner
May 1	Business Meeting
June 5	Social Meeting
July 3	Business Meeting
August 7	Annual Picnic
September 4	Business Meeting
October 2	Social Meeting
November 6	Business Meeting Elections
December 4	Holiday Dinner Party

NEXT BOARD MEETING

February 10th - 6:00 p.m.
Classroom at the Library Exchange

"THE LATEST DIRT" is published monthly.
The next deadline is February 20, 2025

www.lpmastergardener.org



PURDUE EXTENSION
MASTER GARDENER PROGRAM

Welcome Jesi Davenport Our new ANR Educator



Hello, I'm Jesi Davenport and I am so excited to be launching **Jesi's Corner** in your monthly newsletter. I would like to take this month to introduce myself so you can learn a little bit more about me.

I am the Agriculture & Natural Resources educator for Purdue University Extension in La Porte County, Indiana. In 2018 I received a bachelor's degree in Agricultural Education from Purdue University and I previously worked as a high school agriculture teacher and FFA advisor for 6 years.

I currently help run my husband's grain and specialty crop operation. I have a 2-year-old named Brooks who is absolutely feral but in all the right ways. I currently reside in Plymouth, IN. Future editions of Jesi's Corner will include helpful information and resources from the Extension Office.

February 24-28, 2025 Invasive Species Awareness Week

Governor Eric Holcomb has proclaimed February 24th to 28th as **2025 Invasive Species Awareness Week in Indiana**. An invasive species is any plant or animal that has spread or been introduced into a new area where they are, or could, cause harm to the environment, economy, or human, animal, or plant health.

A major new United Nations-backed [report](#) has found that invasive species cost the world at least \$423 billion every year as they drive plant and animal extinctions, threaten food security, and exacerbate environmental catastrophes worldwide.

Now more than ever, our lands and waters need a nationwide campaign to spread awareness about invasive species. Participate in national events to raise awareness and identify solutions to invasive species issues at local, state, tribal, regional, and national scales. Locate an invasive species event in your state or county and plan your own event using the [NISAW Toolkit](#) - where and when it works for you!

Here are 9 ways you can help to raise awareness:

1. Learn about invasive species, especially those found in your local region. Your local and the [National Invasive Species Information Center](#) are both trusted resources.
2. Clean your hiking boots, waders, boats and trailers, off-road vehicles, and other gear to stop invasive species from hitching a ride to a new location. Learn more at [PlayCleanGo.org](#)
3. Avoid dumping aquariums or live bait into waterways. Learn more at [Habitattitude.org](#)
4. Don't move firewood - instead, buy it where you'll burn it, or gather on site when permitted. Learn more at [DontMoveFirewood.org](#) and [Hungry Pests](#).
5. Use forage, hay, mulch and soil that are [certified as "weed free."](#)
6. Plant only non-invasive plants in your garden and remove any known invaders.
7. Report new or expanded invasive species outbreaks to authorities. Here is a [state-by-state list of contacts](#)
8. Volunteer to help remove invasive species from public lands and natural areas.
9. Ask your political representatives at the state, local and national level to support invasive species control efforts.

For more information go to this Purdue link:

</events/2025/02/national-invasive-species-awareness-week1.html>

ASSOCIATION NEWS

Hello everyone! January was a very busy month at the LPCMGA and the next few months promise to be busy as well. I wanted to take a little time to share what's taken place as well as what's to come.

At the January meeting, Carol handed off her gavel to me and I acknowledged her hard work and the legacy that all of you have created in this organization. I'm honored to work with you. Each of our board members talked about their roles and the ways that they hope to contribute to the association. We played "two truths and a weed" so we got to see into each person's life a bit. I was almost brought to tears listening to Estelle talk about never having met her father because he was killed in WWII. Others talked about the plants they inherited and how they're still thriving decades after receiving them. While we share a passion for plants, we all have unique and remarkable stories and gifts to share. It was lovely. Thanks so much to Maria for leading this part of the meeting.

Twenty-five members attended the meeting, which was terrific, but I want to personally reach out to those of you who haven't attended meetings in recent months. The strength of the organization rests with all of its members so we need to understand what's keeping you away. We will be reaching out soon to better understand how we can once again get all of us back together.

At the January meeting I indicated that I would share the data from Jesi Davenport's visit in November. She used a tool called "Now, How, Wow" which addressed several areas such as projects, education, membership, community, etc. While the data we collected made sense, the data set was only ten people and that's just not enough to represent the membership. I asked Jesi if we can collect more data from you all and then we will present a more thorough report at a future meeting. We may do a survey and see if collecting data that way will be possible. I know we have varying degrees of comfort with technology so we will learn as we go.

What I've observed personally and seen in the data is a strong desire to get out with the public and live up to our purpose. Everyone is excited about projects but it's not always clear what the projects entail or the specific ways that members can contribute. Our goal is to be as deliberate and clear as possible so that everyone has an opportunity to be actively involved.

February Meeting Highlights:

I hope you'll attend the February meeting. Jesi Davenport from the Extension Office will join us to explain her role, Tom Boesen is going to do a presentation "Invasive Species in the Backyard", Melinda Bush from Head Start will talk to us about potentially working together on a project, Carol will give us an update on the garden show, and we will have another fun activity.

Thanks so much to everyone who has worked on the garden show, the newsletter, the social media posts and meeting prep. It takes a village and I'm so glad to be a member of this one.

FEBRUARY MEETING – LOCATION CHANGE

PLEASE NOTE: The February social meeting will be at the Extension Office NOT the La Porte County Library. Please mark that in your calendars. See you on February 6th!

Master Gardener Facebook Page

Amy Cooper has done a terrific job with our new Facebook page. For those of you who are not aware of this, our old Facebook page was hacked last year, and we have not been able to access or delete it. Amy has done a terrific job creating a new page for us and is working non-stop posting information on our upcoming Garden Show. If you are a Facebook user, please follow us and share with your family and friends. Each of us plays an important role in sharing our purpose with others. Thanks so much.

<https://www.facebook.com/share/19USSUBBHx/?mibextid=wwXIfr>

2025 Garden Show Update -March 29, 2025By: Carol Nolan, Co-chairperson

We are making great headway with the 2025 Garden Show. The show will run from 8:00 a.m. until 4:00 p.m. As always, we still need volunteers. Please reach out to Kathleen Fox and let her know your availability. Kathleen may be reached by email at **kathleenfox52@gmail.com**.

Lisa Johnson has done a great job collecting donations from many local businesses, but we can always use more. Please reach out to Lisa via email if you are able to donate, Lisa may be reached by email at **lisanneflowers@gmail.com**.

Three speakers have been secured for the show. Our keynote speakers are Steve Sass and Amanda Smith. Their presentation will be on **"Trees and Shrubs through an Ecological Lens."** We also will be featuring Debbie Rea from Proven Winners. Her topic will be **"Edible Flowers-They're Incredible."** Our third speaker is our own Master Gardener, Marcy Dailey, speaking about **"A Harvest of Herbs."** Everyone will find our speakers to be informative, entertaining, and very educational. This will allow you to get early education hours if you attend the presentations.

We will have raffle baskets as always. If you would like to help us fill and wrap the baskets, volunteers are needed for **Thursday, March 20 from 11:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.** We will be filling the baskets at the extension office. Please let us know if you can help.

Of course, we are bringing back the scavenger hunt for the visiting children as well as other child-related crafts and activities.

The committee has worked long and hard to make this as exciting and educational as our other garden shows have been. Please be sure to sign up to volunteer, and while there, enjoy the many vendors that will be highlighting their wares for your perusal and purchase.

2025 Garden Show Book SaleBy: Carol Nolan

For those wishing to donate gently used gardening books to the March 29, 2025 Garden Show, please bring your books to the Extension office and leave on the small table in the Hot Line Office.

The final day to drop off is February 14, 2025. Space is limited in this office, so please drop off during these dates only. Hours of drop off are 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. which are the hours of the Extension Office. Any questions, please email me at: **cnolan1420@gmail.com**. Thanks for your help.



La Porte Master Gardener Association
Business Meeting Minutes

January 9, 2025

La Porte County Public Library Main Branch – Room B

Social hour began at 6:00 p.m.

Carol Nolan called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

There were 25 members in attendance. The entire board was present except Joan Kintzele.

Carol introduced the 2025 president, Vicki Znavor by handing over “the gavel.” Vicki, in turn, presented Carol with a lovely bouquet of flowers as a thank you for her work as president the last two years. Carol also welcomed and introduced new member Katie Mitschelen.

Vicki asked each board member to briefly introduce themselves and their responsibility on the board.

Vicki-acknowledged the 100s of years of experience within the association and is excited about growing the organization and building on the camaraderie that’s obvious in the organization.

Tom Bosen, VP, said he’s excited about leading the education and speakers’ bureau.

Maria Frau, said she is the corresponding secretary, and is responsible for emailing communications to all association members.

Theresa Dzoga-Borg explained that she is the recording secretary and is responsible for taking minutes at all general and board meetings.

Susie Kieffer said she is the treasurer and is responsible for filing taxes, paying insurance, keeping track of association checkbooks and budgeting.

Carol Nolan explained that she is now the Immediate Past President. This is the first time in a long time for this position and that she is here to support the president and other board members.

Janet Davis, is on the Education Committee. She’s excited about the education committee to help and work with each other. So many opportunities to help each other and help with backyard edible gardens.

2025 EXECUTIVE BOARD

PRESIDENT	VICKI. ZNAVOR
VICE PRESIDENT	TOM BOESEN
CORRESPONDING SECRETARY	MARIA FRAU
RECORDING SECRETARY	THERESA DZOGA-BORG*
TREASURER	SUSAN KIEFFER*
EDUCATION COMMITTEE/ SPEAKERS BUREAU	JANET DAVIS* JOAN KINTZELE KAREN SARVER

PAST PRESIDENT CAROL NOLAN

*INDICATES MEMBER IS FILLING ANOTHER PERSON’S TERM, OR EXTENDED THEIR TERM WITH THE APPROVAL OF THE BOARD

2025 PROJECT COORDINATORS

Friendship Botanic Gardens

Rima Binder _____ 219-878-8128
_____ rimabinder@comcast.net

Garden Hotline

Extension Office _____ 219-324-9407

Garden Show

Theresa Dzoga-Borg _____ 773-960-5848
_____ dzozo@yahoo.com

Ann Klosinski _____ 219-872-8367
_____ annak47@comcast.net

Carol Nolan _____ 331-903-0091
_____ cnolan41@yahoo.com

Karen Sarver _____ 219-921-9704
_____ ksarver@csinet.net

La Porte Builders Assn. Home Expo

Donna Pouzar _____ 219-363-2960
_____ pouzdlp@icloud.com

Pioneer Land School Tours

Linda Hough _____ 219-324-0424
_____ ljhough614@gmail.com

Pioneer Heritage Garden

Connie Shei _____ 219-362-4866
_____ jshei@comcast.net

Sunflower Fair

Linda Hough _____ 219-324-0424
_____ ljhough614@gmail.com

Karen Sarver is also on the Education Speaker committee. She asked the membership for help for a speaking engagement at the Knights of Columbus, on March 17, at Queen of All Saints Church. Topic is about starting a garden. Tom Bosen said he will take the lead; Vicki Znavor Maria Frau, Theresa Dzoga-Borg, Janet Davies, and Joan Kintzele volunteered to help.

Secretary's Report: Theresa Dzoga-Borg read the minutes from the November General Meeting. Minutes were approved.

Secretary Maria Frau took the floor by introducing an Ice Breaker feature to the membership. Each member was asked to share "Two truths and a Weed" about their gardening. All members participated and shared fun stories.

George Sarver mentioned he is a Bonsai expert and Vicki suggested that perhaps George give a Bonsai presentation at a general meeting.

A member asked that perhaps we can have a meeting at Estelle Pawlowski's place, after hearing Estelle's talk about her numerous gardens and pond.

Treasurer's Report: Susie Kieffer presented financial reports for October and November and mentioned totes were purchased for the canopy.

Garden Show Update: Carol Nolan, Ann Klosinski & Kathleen Fox reported. Three speakers have been confirmed. Eunice Conway started placing ads. Brochure information will be passed on to Karren Coplan for printing. Ann is working with vendors and has sent messages to 100-150 vendors.

Volunteers are needed so please reach out to Kathleen Fox.

Email questions to Karen Sarver, Lisa Johnson, or Theresa Dzoga-Borg.

Members can drop off books for the book sale at the extension office between 1/10/2025-2/14/2025.

Seed catalogs are needed for the seed table.

Maria will send an email blast to all members requesting donations.

Reminders:

- Dues are due by January 31, 2025
- Members must log 2024 education & volunteer hours immediately
- Speaker needed for Knights of Columbus
- Vicki Znavor - There was some discussion about having meetings at the Extension office rather than the library.

Tom Boesen will take the lead for the Knights of Columbus speaking engagement (see above)

Meeting was adjourned by Vicki Znavor at 7:43 p.m.

The draft minutes of the January 9th general business meeting are included for your review. Members are welcome to provide corrections to Vicki Znavor and Theresa Dzoga-Borg in advance of the February meeting when a motion to approve the minutes will be requested.

The purpose of the LPMGA, a non-profit organization, is to share knowledge while providing leadership and service in educational gardening activities within the community in partnership with the LaPorte County Extension Office, Purdue University, and the Indiana Master Gardener Association and to abide by the Purdue Extension Master Gardener Program guidelines.

Getting To Know Our Members

By: Vicki Znavor, President

At our last business meeting we met our newest association member, Katie Mitschelen and our longest serving association member, Marcy Dailey, and thought we'd highlight them in this issue. Learning more about and connecting with each other is important and we hope that you enjoy reading about these remarkable women.

Marcy Dailey

Tell us something about yourself: I am a lover of plants, primitive antiques, books, plant-based living, Mother Earth, and all of God's works. (I'm basically a lover!)

How long have you been a member of the LPCMGA? As of this year, my membership in the association celebrates 29 years.

What inspired you to join? I can still remember the day when Walt Sell invited me to participate in the premier class of Master Gardener training for La Porte County and I responded, "I would love to!" Prior to this, La Porte County residents were required to attend classes in neighboring counties. I'd developed an affection for herb plants and old-fashioned flowers and had been reading, studying and experimenting in my home gardens. This opportunity seemed the perfect way to not only expand my knowledge but also share that knowledge with others.

When did you start gardening and what's a favorite garden memory or experience you can share? I like to say, I was a late bloomer! Although my mother and grandparents were gardeners, as a child my experience was limited to picking ripe strawberries from our small patch and dipping fresh rhubarb stalks into cups of sugar to eat (and pucker) as we played in the yard. My gardening interest didn't take root until I was married, had two children, had filled our remodeled farmhouse with primitive antiques and then turned to the outside to see how I might incorporate my love of antiques into planning gardens and selecting plants. I learned that herbs are considered antiques of the plant world, and my interest rapidly grew into a passion. (Some might call it an obsession!)

What have you learned from gardening that can be applied in all areas of life? "To know it, you have to grow it." You can read all about a plant, learn to recognize it in photos and gardens, memorize its botanic name etc., but to truly know it, GROW IT. In life, don't just read about something you want to learn but instead EXPERIENCE it! Another saying is, "The more I know, the more I know, there's so much more to know!" My belief is that no one can ever or should expect to ever actually "master" gardening. We can, however, always remain open and willing to learn all we can by digging in and getting our hands dirty.

Do you have a favorite local garden that you enjoy visiting? After volunteering for several years through my membership in the Herb Society of America, I would suggest Fernwood Botanic Garden in Niles, Michigan as a favorite. I'm also so happy with the work that has been done to bring Friendship Botanic Gardens in Michigan City back to its former glory and it's right in our backyard. Dr. Doug Tallamy encourages us to create a Homegrown National Park in our own backyards thus supporting wildlife and pollinators, sequestering carbon, and managing water. Indeed, I believe, as stewards of the earth, it is not only our responsibility, but also our privilege.

What advice would you have for a new gardener? Don't be afraid to make mistakes; we learn by doing. Rob Proctor, one of my favorite authors who I have had the honor and pleasure of hearing speak several times once stated, "The best gardeners *kill* the most plants." Only by trying and experimenting do we learn what we're capable of achieving. Besides, I always say, "What's a dead plant but compost, and compost is a good thing!"



Katie Mitschelen

Tell us something about yourself: I am a children's book author. I love Indiana and wrote a four-book series on the different geographic regions in our state. Also, I've played clarinet with the La Porte City Band for thirty years!

How long have you been a member of the LPCMGA? I joined the LPCMGA this year.

What inspired you to join? I just finished the Master Gardener class in November 2024 and wanted to connect with the Master Gardeners in my county so I could continue to learn more.

When did you start gardening and what's a favorite garden memory or experience you can share? I was raised in the country, and it seemed everyone I knew gardened. My parents grew vegetables, which inspired me to start my own vegetable garden when my husband and I bought our first house. Through the years, we've added fruit to our beautiful backyard landscape.

A funny garden memory is the first time I ever planted potatoes. My dad told me to make sure I 'hilled the plants up' as they grew, which I thought meant COVER them with dirt! A few days later he came to look at my potato plants. All he saw were mounds of dirt in the garden – no plants anywhere! He helped me unbury them, and I've since learned how to grow potatoes.

What have you learned from gardening that can be applied in all areas of life? Pay attention to what is growing in the garden and don't let the weeds get out of hand. Just like in life, pay attention to what is most important in life and if there is a problem, tackle it right away before it roots too deeply.

Do you have a favorite local garden that you enjoy visiting? I love visiting the Friendship Botanic Gardens in Michigan City.

What advice would you have for a new gardener? Do not plant morning glories along your garden fence... twenty years later, I'm still trying to get rid of them!



VOLUNTEER.

Builders Association of La Porte County's Home and Lifestyle Expo

By: Donna Pouzar, Project Coordinator

The Builders Association of La Porte County's 30th Annual Home and Lifestyle Expo will be at the Blue Chip Casino Hotel Event Center located in Michigan City, IN. The dates for this event are Saturday, March 1st from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. and Sunday, March 2nd from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

Once again, we have been asked to participate in this event. There will be two 2-hour shifts Saturday morning : 9:00-11:00 a.m. and 11:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m. There will be one 3-hour shift Saturday afternoon from 1:00-4:00 p.m. On Sunday, March 2, there will be three 2-hour shifts: 9:00-11:00 a.m.; 11:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m. and 1:00-3:00 p.m. There are three slots per shift and Master Gardeners will answer gardening questions from attendees and promote our 2025 Garden Show. Sign-up sheets will be available at the February meeting. This is a great time to start getting your volunteer hours early and to work with and get to know other members. You can work as many shifts as you like. If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to contact me.

STANDING COMMITTEE**COORDINATORS**

History Book _____ Donna Pouzar
 Hospitality _____ Eunice Conway
 Librarian _____ Linda Hough
 Newsletter _____ Donna Pouzar
 Speakers Bureau _ See Executive Board

Purdue Extension Office __ 324-9407

Jesi Davenport _ jfurness@purdue.edu

Sue Salisbury __ salisbk@purdue.edu

The Latest Dirt is published monthly. The deadline for submission is the 20th 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.

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. Provide your phone number and/or e-mail address.

Ads will be limited to space available.

Information must be submitted by the 20th of the month to:

pouzdlp@icloud.com

PURDUE UNIVERSITY IS AN EQUAL
 OPPORTUNITY/EQUAL ACCESS/AFFIRMATIVE
 ACTION INSTITUTION

FEBRUARY GARDEN

HOME (Indoor plants and activities)

- Check water levels in cut flowers daily.
- Check stored produce and flower bulbs for rot, shriveling, or excess moisture. Discard any damaged items.
- Most houseplants require less water in the winter because growth is slow or stopped. Check the soil for dryness before watering.
- Move houseplants to brighter windows, but don't place plants in drafty places or against cold windowpanes.
- Potted spring-flowering bulbs forced into early blooming can make good gifts for a sweetheart. Keep these plants in a bright, cool location for longer-lasting blooms. Forced bulbs make poor garden flowers, and you should discard them as blooms fade.
- Evergreens, except pines and spruce, can be trimmed now for a fresh supply of holiday greenery.

GARDEN (Flowers, vegetables, and small fruits)

- Order seeds before it's too late for this year's planting.
- Sketch your garden plans. Remember to include plants to replace or replant crops that you will harvest in spring or early summer.
- Prepare or repair lawn and garden tools for the upcoming season.
- Start seeds indoors for cool-season vegetables so they will be ready to transplant to the garden early in the season. You should start broccoli, cauliflower, and cabbage seeds five to seven weeks prior to transplanting.
- Test leftover garden seed for germination. Place 10 seeds between moist paper toweling or cover with a thin layer of soil. Keep seeds warm and moist. If fewer than six seeds germinate, then purchase fresh seed.

YARD (Lawns, woody ornamentals, and fruits)

- Choose appropriate plant species and cultivars, and begin drawing your landscape plans.
- Cut branches of forsythia, pussy willow, crabapple, quince, honeysuckle, and other early spring-flowering plants to force them into bloom indoors. Place the branches in warm water, and set them in a cool location.
- Check mulches, rodent shields, salt/wind screens, and other winter plant protections to make sure they are still in place.
- Prune landscape plants (except early spring bloomers that should be pruned after flowers fade). Birches, maples, dogwoods, and other heavy sap bleeders can be pruned in early summer to avoid the sap flow, although bleeding is not harmful to the tree.
- Delay pruning fruit plants until you can assess winter injury.