

February 2021

Garden Beet

MASTER GARDENER ASSOCIATION OF TIPPECANOE COUNTY



The Latest Spin from D&J

Dee Dee and Jan

We can't wait for winter to be over. We are already receiving seed catalogs and anxiously anticipating SPRING! As gardeners, we know the thrill of planting our flowers and vegetables for all to enjoy.

We hope everyone enjoyed learning about the history of the Wea Plains presented by Tom Swinford, Assistant Division Director of the Indiana Department of Natural Resources at the January 5 monthly Zoom meeting.

It is great to hear that the COVID-19 vaccine is beginning to be distributed in Tippecanoe County. Hopefully, this pandemic will soon be under control.

The Garden Expo is on our schedule for May 2021. Winter is a good time to

start seedlings for the plant sale and to search for items for the garden shed. Watch for a Garden Expo Zoom planning meeting in February.

We know someone out there is contemplating being a Chair for the Display and Idea Gardens. Mickey Penrod has done a fantastic job the last several years and is stepping down. However, she is willing to train someone on this project, including the irrigation system. If you aren't comfortable being a Chair, find a friend to Co-Chair with you. It's nice to have someone to discuss things with and to split the work. If interested, contact Mickey Penrod.

Even though, volunteer hours were not required for 2020, please post your hours as soon as possible if you're eli-

gible for an award as the Master Gardener Award Ceremony will be handled at the March Zoom meeting.

Our next Zoom meeting is scheduled for February 2. Lenny Farlee from Purdue University, Department of Forestry and Natural Resources, will speak on Hardwood Tree Regeneration. This topic should be very interesting.

Hope to see you all online at our February meeting.



Jan and Dee Dee

Treasurer's Report

Income for the month of December was from dues, community garden funds, a donation, and interest for a total of \$3,649. Expense for the month was the annual payment for the extension gardens security monitoring for a total of \$513. There were restricted fund additions for the community gardens, dues, and the donation as income giving a balance in the fund of \$23,663. The total of unrestricted funds available is \$16,376 as of December 31.

For reimbursement you can mail your requests to my home address which is 3801 South River Road in West Lafayette, IN 47906 or you can drop them in the black mail box outside the extension office outer door. If you have any changes to your membership details please send them to me at pmillerathome@comcast.net.

Pat Miller, Treasurer

Programs

February 2 • 6:30 p.m. • Zoom
Hardwood Tree Regeneration
Lenny Farlee

Lenny is the Sustaining Hardwood Extension Specialist in the Department of Forestry and Natural Resources at Purdue University.

March 2 • 6:30 p.m. • Zoom
Dividing Perennials
Rosie Lerner

Rosie is the retired Extension Consumer Horticulture Specialist at Purdue University.

For more information on upcoming events, contact Maralee Hayworth at mhaywort@purdue.edu.

**And don't think the garden loses its ecstasy in winter.
It's quiet, but the roots are down their riotous.**

~ Rumi

Please submit items for the *Garden Beet* to MGATCGardenBeet@gmail.com by the 15th of the month for the next month's issue.

Items to be emailed to the membership should be sent to Dee Dee Long at deedee1mg@gmail.com.

<http://www.tippecanoeasterngardener.org>

<https://www.purdue.edu/hla/sites/master-gardener/>



MGATC Meeting: January 5, 2021, 6:30 p.m., Virtual

At 6:30 p.m. Karen Mitchell welcomed everyone to the meeting. She announced that the Bi-State Garden Conference would be happening online this year. She will send an email to all members with more information.

Karen then asked Mickey Penrod to introduce the speaker. Tom Swinford, Assistant Division Director of the Indiana Department of Natural Resources, gave a presentation on the Wea Plains. There is a lot of history in this large grassland. Tom thoroughly covered both the history and the physical char-

acteristics of the area. He also mentioned that he and his colleagues have been very busy over the past year, as the pandemic that shut down many other places, made public lands in Indiana more popular than ever.

About 48 master gardeners signed on to the Zoom meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 7:55 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,
Jim Jeray, Recording Secretary

February, when the days of winter seem endless and no amount of wistful recollecting can bring back any air of summer

~ Shirley Jackson

MGATC Board: January 14, 2021, 4 p.m., Virtual

Jan Sadler called the meeting to order at 4:05 p.m. Attending were Pat Miller, Dee Dee Long, Jan Sadler, Mickey Penrod, Nancy Cope, Maralee Hayworth, Jim Jeray, Jolaine Roberts, Kathy Cox, and Karen Mitchell.

The December Board meeting minutes were approved as posted in the *Garden Beet* except that "bylaws" was misspelled.

Pat Miller delivered the Treasurer's report. Since the beginning of the month, we received \$87.97 in additional member dues. (The fee from Square for credit card payments explains the odd numbers in these dues amounts.) There were no additional expenses. Those are the only changes to the monthly Treasurer's report as it appears in this month's *Garden Beet*.

Membership: As of this meeting 124 membership forms for 2021 have been received. Pat Miller will finalize the member list and forward it for inclusion in the Green Book and for posting online.

Green Book: The Board reviewed the first 15 pages of the Green Book to help Pat make accurate changes for the 2021 edition. One notable decision was that the Awards Meeting on March 2 will be held virtually at 6:30.

Speaker Remuneration: For various reasons, including a reluctance to give a home address for mailing a thank you card, some speakers have suggested that their gift be used as a donation either to the MGATC or to another organization. Maralee asked for guidance on how to handle these cases. For external donations the Vice President should work with the Treasurer to ensure it is properly done.

Expo: As time marches on, the Board is feeling uneasy about the amount of preparation completed for the planned Garden Expo on May 8. Dee Dee will contact Cheryl McCool to help her restart the planning meetings. Karen will send a save-the-date reminder to select vendors also advising them of possible rain dates.



Grilled Radicchio with Cheese

(Serves 8)

2 heads radicchio, trimmed and quartered, leaving stem ends intact
1/4 cup olive oil
4 cloves garlic, minced
1/3 cup white balsamic vinegar
1/4 teaspoon salt
1/4 teaspoon ground black pepper
1/2 cup crumbled blue cheese or feta (2 oz.)

Place radicchio in a large resealable bag set in a shallow dish. For marinade: In a small bowl whisk together vinegar, oil, garlic, salt, and black pepper. Pour over radicchio. Seal bag, turning to coat. Chill 1 to 2 hours. Drain, reserving marinade.

Grill radicchio on the rack of a covered grill (or use a grill pan) directly over medium heat 8 to 10 minutes, turning occasionally until each side is lightly charred. Turn wedges cut sides up; sprinkle with cheese. Grill 2 to 3 minutes more or until cheese is softened. Drizzle with reserved marinade. Serves 8. 123 calories per serving.

~Better Homes and Gardens

Bylaws: Jan is working with Lynn Layden to form a committee to review and update the MGATC bylaws. There is already a brief list of changes. Board members reviewed the current bylaws and will send additional comments and suggestions to Jan.

With no further business the meeting adjourned at 5:19 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Jim Jeray, Recording Secretary

Gadget

(continued from back)

The process is simple:

- 1) Label each plastic bag and also write seed name on dry paper towel.
- 2) Dampen a piece of paper towel (moist but not dripping wet).
- 3) Put 10 seeds on moist paper towel, fold to enclose seeds, slide into bag and seal.
- 4) Check after 3 or 4 days to make sure the paper towel is still damp.
- 5) Check for germination after the usual number of days needed to start each kind of seed. If nothing happens during that time, maybe give them an extra week before deciding the seeds are not viable.

Why 10 seeds? If you start with 10 seeds and eight germinate, it's easy to calculate. That's an 80% germination rate.

On the cucumber seeds shown below, you can see little white roots growing out of the seeds after only four days. Out of 10 cucumber seeds, six germinated for a 60% germination rate. Not bad for five year-old seed, and it lets us know we don't have to order new seed this year. A very low germination rate might not be worthwhile, or you can decide to sow a greater number of seeds to compensate.



These germination test seeds have to be sacrificed because it's much too early to start growing cucumber seedlings. However, some gardeners routinely pre-germinate seeds this same way every spring. The little seeds with their very fragile root can be carefully moved, and gently transplanted into cell packs or pots at the proper depth for growing on.

While we're warm gardening indoors, outdoors is another story. During icy weather in February, sodium chloride deicing salt may keep you from slipping on sidewalks and driveways, but can harm your landscape. Damage on plants may show up soon after exposure or many months later. A Purdue Landscape Report recommends: "when possible, use alternatives to sodium products, such as calcium chloride or calcium magnesium acetate (CMA). Use alternatives, such as clean cat litter, sand, or sawdust, to help improve traction on ice." Read the complete report at: <https://www.purduelandscape.com/article/deicing-salts-helpful-for-people-but-not-landscape-plants/>.

For more info on salt damage as well as salt-tolerant plants, see Purdue Extension bulletin ID-412-W. <http://www.extension.purdue.edu/extmedia/ID/ID-412-W.pdf>

February TO-DO List:

- ▲ Check your seed inventory.
- ▲ Do germination tests or check online for seed viability lists. Purdue University Extension has a life expectancy list of some vegetable and flower seeds at: <https://www.purdue.edu/hla/sites/yardandgarden/storing-leftover-garden-seed/>. Iowa State Extension has a longer list of vegetable seeds average life expectancy at: <https://hortnews.extension.iastate.edu/1999/4-2-1999/veggielife.html>.
- ▲ Enjoy all your new garden catalogues. Make crazy long "want" lists of vegetable and flower seeds and plants - you have plenty of winter-time left to regain your sanity.
- ▲ If you're forcing hardy bulbs like tulips and hyacinths in pots, check periodically to see if they need water - they should be slightly moist but not wet to avoid rot.
- ▲ Houseplants need more light and humidity, but reduced water during winter. Check houseplants for insect pests. Some insecticidal soap is safe for use indoors.

- ▲ Start slow-to-germinate seeds like peppers and celeriac mid to late February in a very warm spot and grow under lights (fluorescent or LED). A few perennials need to be started 10-12 weeks before last average frost date in our area - April 25.
- ▲ Plan what you'd like to grow for the Master Gardener Garden Expo plant sale.
- ▲ Keep bird feeders filled with seeds and suet cakes.
- ▲ If you notice damage to trees and shrubs from foraging animals, apply (or reapply) repellents and consider deer fencing for next year.
- ▲ For more tips on houseplants, yard and garden see, Purdue University Extension Consumer Horticulture's February Garden Calendar <https://www.purdue.edu/hla/sites/yardandgarden/february-garden-calendar/>.
- ▲ Stay warm and safe. Spring will happen...only 84 days until last frost date and only 97 days until the Garden Expo plant sale, outdoors on May 8 (rain dates May 15, 22, or 29).

Crispy Roasted Potatoes with Thyme

(Serves 6-8)

- 4 lb. (2 kg.) Yukon Gold potatoes
- 8 Tbs. (1 stick) (4 oz./125 g.) unsalted butter, melted
- 1 Tbs. chopped fresh thyme
- 1 Tbs. kosher salt

Preheat an oven to 375°F (190°C). Using a sharp knife or a mandoline, thinly slice the potatoes.

Brush the bottom of a large fry pan with 2 Tbs. of the melted butter. Arrange the potato slices vertically but at a slight angle in a circular pattern in the dish, filling it completely. Pour the remaining 6 Tbs. (3 fl. oz./90 ml.) melted butter over the potatoes and sprinkle with the thyme and salt. Note: can substitute sage or rosemary for thyme.

Roast until the top edges of the potatoes are crispy, about 1 hour. Let stand for 10 minutes before serving.

~williams-sonoma.com

Great Gadgets and Tools

By Kathryn Reeves and Mike Hathaway

We've started planning our 2021 garden, talking about what we grew last year (winners and losers), checking seed starting supplies, and drooling over seed catalogues.

Buying seeds is the best kind of retail therapy. But before we go crazy ordering way too many new seeds, we consider our stash of old seeds. Some seeds like onions are best purchased new every year. Tomato seeds sometimes last for a decade. If you have old seeds, it's a good idea to do seed germination tests - and the sooner the better, so you have time to order replacements if necessary.

We're getting early results from our germination tests on fairly old cucumber, melon, and cantaloupe seeds. And it's a fun bit of indoor winter gardening.

Tools and materials needed: paper towels, plastic sandwich bags, marker pen, scissors, and seeds. Clean hands and clean water help prevent mold. We used blue shop towels (heavy duty paper type) because they're a bit thicker, easier to handle, and may hold moisture better. Regular white paper towels work just fine too. Cut paper towels into half or quarter sheets.



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