

January 2022

Garden Beet

MASTER GARDENER ASSOCIATION OF TIPPECANOE COUNTY



January Message from the Co-Presidents

Jim and Mickey

Based on the timing of the *Garden Beet*, it seems appropriate to first wish all Master Gardeners Season's Greetings and much good fortune and successful growing in the New Year.

The beginning of an even-numbered year marks the changing of all officers in the MGATC. As your new co-presidents we want the next two years of meetings, gardening, and learning to be the best possible. To that end we want to encourage everyone to feel confident about bringing your ideas and yes, your complaints, to our attention. We want to hear from you. Occasionally in the past we have heard that so-and-so told someone else, who passed it along to another member the

feeling that something wasn't being run right. That doesn't fix things.

As your new co-presidents we are interested in all your ideas to make our association better, to make it run smoothly, to make the meetings more interesting, or whatever is on your mind. We also have a member-at-large position on the board, now held by Kathy Cox. Her primary job is to take feedback from the membership and present it to the board.

Also know that the board meetings are open to anyone who wants to attend. They are held on the second Thursday of every month. For now the meetings are on Zoom, which some people find

more convenient than driving to the extension office. For the near future they will continue on Zoom and any board member will be happy to send you the link to the meeting. Contact either of us if you want to add a subject to the agenda. Otherwise everyone is welcome to sit in.

That's all for now. Again we wish you success in the New Year. Thank you for being an MGATC Master Gardener. We look forward to seeing everyone in the gardens and hopefully, at in-person meetings sometime in the near future.

Jim and Mickey

Great Gadgets and Tools

By Kathryn Reeves and Mike Hathaway

We hope your holidays were peaceful and filled with hope for a wonderful new year. This month we're involved with indoor gardening activities to help keep our spirits high. We're looking forward to the return of the Master Gardener Garden Expo and plant sale - and planning for it.

Cuttings of some perennial plants taken in September and October are now well rooted and potted up. Until they can go outside in spring, we just need to keep them thriving

under lights in the garage where the winter temperature runs 15 to 25 degrees cooler than in the house. Those ornamental perennials are growing right next to 4" pots of lettuce, arugula, and baby bok choy for salads all winter.

We're taking cuttings of houseplants to pot up in spring for the MG Garden Expo plant sale. Fingers crossed that many of the cuttings will root successfully inside the house.

(continued on page 5)



Programs

January 4 • 6:30 p.m. • Zoom
MGATCs New Composting System
Pat Williams

February 1 • 6:30 p.m. • Zoom
TBD

For more information on upcoming events, contact Amanda Burge at amanda_personett@yahoo.com

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.tippecanoeastgardener.org>

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



MGATC Board: Dec 7, 2021, 6:30 p.m., Virtual

At 6:30 p.m. Mickey Penrod called the meeting to order. She introduced Roxie Easter. Roxie is director of a small local company but has a strong interest in nature preserves. She and her husband have transformed their yard into a native plant sanctuary where she observes and photographs the many birds that come to visit. Her presentation, "Native Landscaping for Backyard Birds," featured photos of some of the 123 species she has recorded. It was very well received. (This presentation was recorded and Dee Dee Long sent out the link by email.)

Afterward, Mickey said there were a few points of business to cover. Jan Sadler began by reminding everyone to send in their dues for next year and to enter their hours.

Dee Dee Long presented the slate of candidates for office for the next two years and asked for nominations from the floor. With no additions, a motion to accept all nominees carried. The following were then elected by

unanimous vote: Mickey Penrod and Jim Jeray as Co-Presidents, Amanda Burge and Cheryl McCool as Co-Vice Presidents, Debra Rimer as Treasurer, Nancy Cope as Recording Secretary, Jolaine Roberts as Corresponding Secretary, and Kathy Cox as Member-at-Large.

Dee Dee then introduced Dr. Pat Williams, the new ANR Extension Educator. Among his other duties, Pat will support the master gardeners. He gave a summary of his broad and varied background and told how excited he was to get going. He looks forward to meeting everyone.

Katje Armentrout gave an update on the extension office move. It is now scheduled for the middle of January. She hopes to hold some open house tours shortly after the move. The new office is located at 1950 South 18th Street behind the fairgrounds. Our first in-person monthly meeting will not be before March. We are also looking at options for hybrid zoom meet-

ings where those unable to attend in person or not yet comfortable doing so can attend virtually.

The gardens will stay in the current location. The board is in talks with the county commissioners to finalize a lease for the land and 24 parking spaces (including access through the parking lot to the gardens). The county will sell the building and the remainder of the parking area after the move. There will be a few changes as the MGATC takes possession of the land as a tenant of the county and we have a new neighbor. The board will keep everyone informed as these changes go into effect.

About 47 master gardeners signed on to attend the Zoom meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 7:37 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,
Jim Jeray, Recording Secretary

Treasurer's Report

Income for the month of November was from dues, Amazon Smile donation, and interest for a total of \$1,124. Expenses for the month were for the shed move, Garden Expo 2022, speakers, tractor service, the compost project, and the Display & Idea Gardens for a total of \$1,076. There were charges to the Compost Project and the addition of 2022 Dues which changed the restricted funds giving a balance of \$17,373. The total of unrestricted funds available is \$12,945 as of November 30.

DUES: It is now time to renew your membership in the MGATC for 2022. The dues remain the same as 2021 with single membership at \$25, couples membership at \$40, the Green Book is

\$2, and the *Garden Beet* by U.S. mail is \$12. You can renew online using the Square link that has been forwarded to you and sending your membership renewal form by mail to the address below. Or, you can send your membership renewal form and check to the following address:

Pat Miller, MGATC
3801 South River Road
West Lafayette, IN 47906

If you have any changes to your membership details please send them to me at pmillerathome@comcast.net.

Pat Miller

To read a
poem in
January is
as lovely
as to go
for a walk
in June

~Jean-Paul Sartre

MGATC Board: Dec 9, 2021, 4 p.m., Virtual

Dee Dee Long called the meeting to order at 4:01 p.m. Attending were Pat Miller, Dee Dee Long, Jim Jeray, Jan Sadler, Nancy Cope, Mickey Penrod, Kathy Cox, Jolaine Roberts, Debra Rimer, Pat Williams, and Katje Armentrout.

Minutes from the November meeting were approved as published in the *Garden Beet*.

Pat Miller delivered the treasurer's report. Since the end-of-month report, she received \$229.54 in dues and paid out \$83.48 for a tractor shed lockbox and the Expo nursery license, which has been received.

2022 Budget: Pat then reviewed the proposed 2022 budget. The board approved Plan A with a few changes: shifted funds from the Expo and meeting speakers to cover the fairgrounds rent for the Expo and added budget lines for future lease payments. They also approved splitting the cost of tractor maintenance service with the community gardens.

Membership: Dues for 2022 continue to come in with 81 members signed up so far, 53 unknown, and six known not to be returning. Pat will provide names of the 53 to Dee Dee who will split them up for the board to make reminder phone calls. Jolaine suggested a positive approach that she used last year. (The pandemic may still be an issue for some.)

Garden Expo: The contract was signed and the location reserved for April 23. We will have access on Friday from

6 a.m. to 8 p.m. to set up and on Saturday from 6 a.m. to 5 p.m. Pat paid the deposit of \$400, a discounted rate. Katje designed new lawn signs and will order and pay for 25. Cheryl will schedule Expo meetings soon to begin working out the details.

Water Bill: The extension office received a water bill in November and wondered if the water had been turned off. Jim Jeray followed up with Lawn & Shrub the next day. They turned off the water on November 2.

Garden and Parking Lease Agreements: The board met with the county commissioners on December 6. Together they reviewed the formal contracts for the county to lease to MGATC the land for the gardens and some adjacent parking. The county took our feedback and made changes to the contract, which the board approved at this meeting. Katie will arrange for it to be presented at the January 18 commissioners' meeting so that it can be signed and put into effect. Gardener and garden visitor parking will extend along one row from the portable toilet space in the corner to the entrance of the Display & Ideas Garden. We should make signs to designate this as our parking area.

Alumni Members: Jim Jeray recommended the following change to Article II, Section I, Paragraph C of the bylaws: "Alumni Members: Persons who have been approved for Purdue Alumni status by the Extension Master Gardener County Coordinator are, upon payment of dues, eligible for membership in the

MGATC as Alumni Members for as long as they maintain that status." The board approved the wording and will announce the change at the January monthly meeting, then send an email notification before holding a vote at the February monthly meeting.

Extension Move Update: The furniture is now expected on January 17 with the move happening shortly thereafter. Katje will set up a building tour for the board at some point after the move. Our first in-person monthly meeting will not be before March. Again, the new address will be 1950 South 18th Street, behind the fairgrounds.

Community Gardens: Because the MGATC will be in charge of the property, we must make sure community gardeners do nothing to jeopardize our relationship with the county. Katje recommends assembling a subcommittee to deal with managing the gardens. Pat Williams is concerned about liability from the use of chemicals in a non-residential setting. Practices must be reviewed and approved by a garden coordinator possibly with the assistance of sector captains, i.e. master gardeners who rent community garden space or other responsible community gardeners. There should be more meetings to communicate and train gardeners about our rules and standards. Rent money will still be handled by the extension office.

With no further business the meeting adjourned at 5:33 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Jim Jeray, Recording Secretary

I prefer winter and Fall, when you feel the bone structure of the landscape--the loneliness of it, the dead feeling of winter. Something waits beneath it, the whole story doesn't show

Banana Sticky Toffee Pudding

Ingredients:

1/2 cup unsalted butter, at room temperature, divided, plus more for greasing
3/4 cup boiling water
6 ounces pitted dates, chopped (1 cup)
1 teaspoon baking soda
1 1/2 cups all-purpose flour
1 teaspoon baking powder
1/2 teaspoon kosher salt
1 3/4 cups light brown sugar
2 large eggs
2 medium-size overripe bananas, mashed (1 cup)
1/2 cup heavy cream
Unsweetened whipped cream, for serving

Step 1. Preheat oven to 350°. Grease a 9-inch square metal cake pan with butter. In a small heatproof bowl, pour the boiling water over the dates; stir in the baking soda. In a medium bowl, whisk together the flour, baking powder, and salt.

Step 2. In the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with the paddle, beat 1/4 cup of the butter with 3/4 cup of the brown sugar at medium speed until light and fluffy, about 4 minutes. Beat in the eggs, one at a time. At low speed, beat in the flour mixture until just combined. Add the date mixture and bananas, and beat at low speed until just combined.

Step 3. Scrape the batter into the prepared pan, and bake until a toothpick inserted in the center comes out clean, about 30 minutes.

Step 4. Meanwhile, in a small saucepan, combine the heavy cream, the remaining 1/4 cup of butter, and the remaining 1 cup of brown sugar. Bring to a gentle boil over moderate heat, and cook until slightly thickened and deep golden, about 3 minutes. Keep warm.

Step 5. Transfer the pan to a wire rack. Using a skewer or toothpick, poke holes all over the cake. Pour half of the warm sauce over the cake, and let stand until absorbed, about 10 minutes. Serve warm with the remaining sauce and the whipped cream.

~Laura Rege

What's Happening

Wednesdays in the Wild

Our Wednesdays in the Wild planning committee met this week and the following was decided:

Wednesdays in the Wild programs will resume March 2022.

All programs will be outdoors with the number of participants limited, depending on the presenter, and pre-registration with Naturalist Mary Cutler will be required.

Joan Mohr Samuels

Ivy Tech Classes

Sandy Kelly was looking for something to occupy her winter and saw that Ivy Tech is free to anyone over 60. She found some online classes and thought they might be of interest to other Master Gardeners. Check out this web site, <https://ivytech.search.collegescheduler.com/search?term=202130&s=gardening> for more information.



Whose woods these are I think I know.
His house is in the village though;
He will not see me stopping here
To watch his woods fill up with snow.

~ Robert Frost, Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening

Gadgets

(continued from page 1)

Balancing soil moisture and air humidity is key to propagating cuttings. If the potting mix is too wet and not well aerated with extra perlite, the cuttings will rot before they root. If the air is too dry, the leaves will die before roots are formed. Placing a clear plastic bag over a pot of cuttings or putting several pots in a clear plastic storage bin helps maintain humidity at the top. Opening the bag or bin every few days allows fresh air inside. Periodic misting with water helps too.



Some houseplants, like the miniature Boston ferns (*Nephrolepis* 'Mini Russells') in the photo, can be propagated by division. Ferns especially need extra humidity indoors in winter; a shallow saucer filled with pebbles and a bit of water helps. Ferns and other houseplants (except for succulents and cacti) appreciate a light misting of water.

Shown in the photo are two inexpensive spray bottles with adjustable nozzles that produce a fine mist. The small blue bottle was found in the beauty supply aisle in a big box store. The white sprayer came from the garden section of the same store. There are much more beautiful (and expensive) glass and brass options available too.

Trigger spray mechanisms on both luxury and cheap sprayers are the weak link. If your sprayer quits, before throwing it away try turning the whole thing upside down and up again, quickly repeat a few times to prime the pump. When you buy a spray bottle, if possible try to get some

extra trigger spray tops at the same time. If you have empty spray bottles of things like safe insecticidal soap, wash and re-use them as misters.

Spray bottles are also a useful tool for seed sowing. Pre-moisten your potting mix, sow seeds at the recommended depth or surface sow tiny seeds and then spray with water to avoid displacing them. We'll start Winter Seed Sowing this month and continue during the next two or three months. Winter sown plants won't be ready for the Garden Expo and WS seeds may not even be germinated by then, but we'll sow some other seeds indoors so they'll be ready for the plant sale.

BTW, the orange butterfly weed (*Asclepias tuberosa*) we winter sowed last year produced lots of seedpods. If you want some seeds, let us know. These native wildflowers need a minimum 30 days cold stratification.

Garden and seed catalogues are arriving. Do you need more seeds? Of course you do! But before you buy, January is a good time to check your seed supplies and do germination tests. Some seed vendors list the number of seeds per packet, but sometimes they list grams or ounces instead. Buying seed by weight can be confusing. How many seeds are you going to get? If you want to estimate you can use the table at this link:

<https://harvesttotable.com/vegetable-seeds-per-ounce-per/>

We wish you good growing, health, and happiness in 2022.

JANUARY TO-DO LIST

- Take a hike. Indiana State Parks First Day Hike on New Year's Day is scheduled at many parks this year. Enjoy a socially distanced walk through a winter wonderland.

- Keep houseplants watered, but not too wet as their growth slows down in winter. Water when top inch or so of soil is dry.
- Order seeds and check seed starting supplies. Call local garden centers. If big box stores don't have it on the shelf, they may have it in their warehouse - order online for in-store pick-up.
- Wash and disinfect pots, 6-pack cells and plastic flats with soap and hot water, followed by soak in 10% bleach & water solution, air dry.
- Cover perennials with mulch to keep frost-thaw cycles from heaving plants out of the ground. Don't throw away your Christmas tree after the holidays - cut branches are good covering for perennials.
- Mulch with branches and leave plant stalks to provide places for beneficial insects like spiders, beetles, solitary bees, and ladybugs that need brush piles and dead ground cover to overwinter in. Watch for Preying Mantis egg sacs - leave them in place and they'll reward you next spring and summer by devouring insect pests in your garden.
- Keep bird feeders filled. Leave native plants and flower stalks standing - their seeds and berries are most likely to be edible for local wildlife. Decorative seed heads of sunflowers, black-eyed Susan, purple coneflower, and others provide vital food too.
- See more tips from Purdue University Extension Consumer Horticulture at <https://www.purdue.edu/hla/sites/yardandgarden/january-garden-calendar>.
- As winter really sets in, stay indoors and plan your spring and summer garden. Seed catalogs, feet up, and hot cup of coffee - contentment.



**A BIG THANK YOU TO OUR OUTGOING
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