



“A fallen leaf is nothing more than a summer’s wave goodbye.”

Author Unknown

FALL 2022 NEWSLETTER

This quarter’s newsletter is jam-packed with useful and interesting information about the Monarch 911 project, planting spring-flowering bulbs, upcoming events, and more. Enjoy!

Thank you to this quarter’s contributors! If you have a special gardening project, interest or learned a new skill — please share it with us. Submit your article (and photos if you have them) in Word format for the Winter Newsletter by January 1, 2023 to Theresa Roush.





GREEN THUMB PRESENTS MONARCH 911

Submitted by Bruce Matter

Over 90 people were present for MONARCH 911 at the Greenfield Library on September 24. I believe that may be a record attendance for a Green Thumb presentation. Our speakers, Kirsten Carlson and Helen Steussy, M.D., did not disappoint with their presentations.



Kirsten spoke on the plight of the Monarch and all the challenges it must overcome to survive in this ever changing world. Without our help, the Monarch Butterfly will cease to exist. She entertained many questions after her presentation. There was a short break before Helen Steussy started her program. During that intermission the worlds largest Monarch fluttered by the library windows. What a treat!



Helen didn't do a repeat on the Monarch but focused on the other butterflies and pollinators. She promoted native plants as a avenue to increase the numbers of all pollinators. She also brought a Monarch in a cage that emerged from the chrysalis the day before. Helen also mentioned that we are coming up on the age of mass extinction of many pollinators and insects. Every time we lose a species, no matter how small, a bolt falls off the jet putting us closer to crashing. If we want to keep the jet flying, we need to find the balance between progress and nature.

We had a lot of booths sent up promoting the Monarch, native plants, and other pollinators. At the Monarch booth we passed out over 200 packages of milkweed and butterfly garden seeds. Yes, the famous wheel of fortune even made a return visit. The refreshments were tasty since there was none left by the time I got back there.





A special thanks to Hancock Soil and Water and the Library for helping sponsor the event. Also in attendance was Floral Compass and the ever grumpy, Bill McKnight. Of course many thanks to Vicki Snarr for putting on another great Green Thumb.

Green Thumb is now over but free milkweed and butterfly garden seeds are still available at the Extension Office. They are free to everyone, pass the word.



Public Health

Department of Entomology

CHIGGERS

Timothy J. Gibb, Purdue Extension Entomologist

CHIGGER IMPORTANCE/BIOLOGY

A chigger is a tiny parasitic mite, scarcely visible to the human eye. It attacks people, birds, reptiles, and other animals, causing red welts and severe itching.

Chiggers prefer mild climates and are therefore more numerous in Southern Indiana than in the northern part of the state. They are most likely to be encountered in briar patches, uncut grass, and weeds, but may also infest well-kept shrubbery and lawns.

Chiggers hatch from eggs. The newly hatched larvae then crawl about over vegetation, waiting for an animal or human on which to feed. Chiggers usually remain on the host for 2-4 days and then drop off to become nymphs and later adult mites. Only the larvae are parasites of people and other vertebrates.

On people, chiggers usually feed where clothing fits tightly against the body, such as around the ankles, waist, and arm pits. They feed by piercing the skin and injecting a fluid that dissolves the nearby tissue so it can be sucked up for food. This is what causes the red welts and severe itching. These irritations may not show up until several

hours or even a day later, thus making it hard to tell when or where exposure took place. Injury is largely a matter of intense itching and irritation, and some people seem more susceptible than others. Chiggers in the U.S. are not known to transmit disease, although secondary infections may occur as a result of scratching.

CHIGGER CONTROL

Insecticides for Infested Areas

Recreational areas, such as lawns, parks, campgrounds, and golf courses, can be treated with such insecticides as diazinon - sprays, granulars, dusts; carbaryl (Sevin) - sprays, and malathion - sprays, dusts. Retreatment may be necessary after 2-3 weeks. Treat the grass, shrubbery, and other vegetation with which people may come in contact. Do not treat areas where livestock feed or graze. Keep children and pets off treated area until dry. Follow label directions, and always observe label precautions when using these or any other insecticides.

Repellents

Insect repellents will prevent chigger bites. Among the best are those containing diethyl toluamide (DEET) and permethrin. Apply the repellent to clothing around the ankles, waist and arms.

Treatment After Exposure

Repellents are useful in preventing chigger bites. Bathing in hot, soapy water as soon as possible after exposure will reduce the number of bites. Once welts appear, little can be done, although local anesthetics (as prescribed by a physician) may lessen the irritation and itching.



Chigger *Eutrombicula alfreddug* (Oudemans)

READ AND FOLLOW ALL LABEL INSTRUCTIONS. THIS INCLUDES DIRECTIONS FOR USE, PRECAUTIONARY STATEMENTS (HAZARDS TO HUMANS, DOMESTIC ANIMALS, AND ENDANGERED SPECIES), ENVIRONMENTAL HAZARDS, RATES OF APPLICATION, NUMBER OF APPLICATIONS, REENTRY INTERVALS, HARVEST RESTRICTIONS, STORAGE AND DISPOSAL, AND ANY SPECIFIC WARNINGS AND/OR PRECAUTIONS FOR SAFE HANDLING OF THE PESTICIDE.

April 2018

It is the policy of the Purdue University Cooperative Extension Service that all persons have equal opportunity and access to its educational programs, services, activities, and facilities without regard to race, religion, color, sex, age, national origin or ancestry, marital status, parental status, sexual orientation, disability or status as a veteran. Purdue University is an Affirmative Action Institution. This material may be available in alternative formats.

This work is supported in part by Extension Implementation Grant 2017-70006-27140/IND011460G4-1013877 from the USDA National Institute of Food and Agriculture.

The Country Vintage Market is November 5, 2022, 9 AM to 3 PM. at the Hancock County Fairgrounds (across Park Avenue from the Extension Office). Admission and parking are free.

Originally known as the Hancock County Extension Home-maker's Bazaar, the event has been held annually in November for more than 20 years. A few years ago an April event was added, at which we plan to be a vendor, depending on

our success at this event. The average attendance is well over 1200 shoppers at each of these events, and they have recently added food trucks.

Manning the booth gives the Master Gardeners yet another opportunity to interact with the public to get our name and mission out there. We plan to sell handcrafted items, such as gourds and dried flowers, and garden items such as fall-and Christmas-themed flower arrangements and wreaths, birdhouses, and garden-related decorations. We welcome additional ideas and have a great time "garden crafting." Selling such items will help fund the various educational activities conducted by the Association. The Homemakers are giving us a 50% discount on the cost of the booth. We also plan to have Purdue-approved brochures relative to the season available to the public. The websites of the Association and Purdue Extension will also be displayed.

If you're interested in joining us, the next meeting is October 12th at Lynn's house. Practice set-up will be at Teresa's house on November 3rd, and set up is November 4th at the Hancock County Fairgrounds. Feel free to contact Teresa at 317-441-9944 with any questions.



FALL GARDENING: TIME TO PLANT FLOWERING BULBS

Submitted by Elaine Whitfield

It's that time of the year when our gardens are showing signs of decline in preparation for a long winter rest. I think the same thing is happening to me but that's a story to tell my healthcare provider. As Master Gardeners we know Fall is a good time to plant perennials but it's also the perfect time to plant Spring-blooming bulbs. After a long winter without much color in the landscape, the flowers blooming from those Fall-planted bulbs are a welcome sight. It is an article of human faith that we plant those bulbs in anticipation that we will still be around several months later to enjoy the blossoms.

I have planted bulbs for many years and I try to add a few new ones each year. In what passes for my garden beds, I have Daffodil (my favorite), Crocus, Hyacinth, Scilla, Tulips and Allium varieties. Some are very early bloomers such as the Snow Crocus. For species like Daffodils and Tulips, there are early, mid and late season varieties so you can extend the blooming season. There are also varieties of Crocus that bloom in the Fall. Bulbs are merely little storage units of plant material (leaves, stems and flowers are tucked inside) that get their clues from the weather as to when to make an appearance.

I've had Snow Crocus bloom on a sunny day as the snow is melting around them (hence their common name). In

warmer winters, Crocus and some early daffodils will bloom in late February. In colder winters, they may not show up until early to mid March.



For those who have never planted Spring (or Fall blooming) bulbs, it's not difficult and doesn't require special tools, unless you really want to go out and buy them. Choosing which bulbs to plant is the hard part. There are so many I want to try and so little space left. To plant bulbs, you need a good spade or hand trowel that has a blade longer than 6 inches. You also can use a bulb planter which has a barrel-like shape with a handle on top. With the bulb planter, you will push it into the ground, lift out, drop a single bulb in the hole and then fill the hole with the soil in the planter.

Points to remember:

Spring blooming Bulbs will be available in garden centers starting in mid summer. Catalogs may offer them starting in late winter or early spring but will not ship them until close to the appropriate planting time.

When shopping the garden centers, try to buy the largest bulbs offered of that species. The smaller ones may be less mature and may not produce a flower for two or three more years.

Store the bulbs in a dry environment until ready to plant. Dampness may cause them to rot. Most bulbs prefer a sunny or dappled shade location.

Drainage is important. Choose a site that does not have standing water after a rain. Bulbs will rot if exposed to water for extended periods.

They should have some fertilizer at planting. Bone meal is a good one for bulbs and can be purchased wherever bulbs are sold.

Resist the urge to mow or cut back dying foliage after bloom time. The leaves are a means by which the bulb builds up reserves for the following season. Plant bulbs among perennials that will be filling in as the bulb flower and leaves are dying back. If naturalized into your lawn (crocus or scilla, for instance) avoid mowing for at least two weeks after foliage has died back.

Procedure for planting:

1. Dig hole at least 3 times the depth of the height of the bulb. For example, if the bulb is 2 inches tall, dig a hole 6 inches deep. Width is not that important if planting a single bulb in a hole.
2. For planting a mass of bulbs, dig a hole the correct depth and wide enough to space the bulbs 2 to 4 inches apart.
3. Apply bulb fertilizer. Follow recommendations on the fertilizer bag or box.
4. Back fill the hole and lightly water if the conditions are dry.

For Fall blooming Bulbs, plant in late summer; the above procedure is the same. Spring blooming Bulbs can be planted in late September through most of November in Central Indiana.

Pests:

The flowers and leaves of Spring and Fall blooming Bulbs are seldom bothered by garden pests. However, many rodents (squirrels, mice, voles) find the bulbs tasty. To prevent theft by rodent, small bulbs such as crocus can be planted in fine mesh plastic or metal cages. Larger bulbs can be wrapped in chicken wire and planted.

Note: Daffodil bulbs are poisonous so most pests avoid them. If you are new to planting bulbs, start with them so as not to become discouraged with your efforts.

One of the advantages of Spring flowering bulbs is once you plant them, they reward you with blooms each Spring with virtually no other work to keep them blooming each year. If you haven't been a Spring bulb gardener in the past, maybe it's time to give it a try.



Daffodil planting at the Hancock County Purdue Extension Office



Fall blooming "Saffron" Crocus

HOLIDAY WREATHS

Monday, October 24, 2022 at 6:30 PM

New Castle Public Library

376 S 15th Street, New Castle, IN 47362

Hancock County Master Gardeners Rosemary Hill and Connie Dickinson share how to make holiday wreaths with dried flowers and evergreens from around the yard. Registration requested; use this link:

<https://nchcpl.librarycalendar.com/event/seed-library-holiday-wreaths>



WINTER SOWING

Monday, October 26, 2022 at 6:30 PM

Online

Join meeting online by clicking this link:

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/89270499315>

Please call the Purdue Extension Hancock County Office at (317) 462-1113 with questions.



URBAN SOIL HEALTH PROGRAM

Improving soil health on Indiana's urban and community small-scale agricultural land.

FREE site visit & assistance

Urban Soil Health Specialists are here to help. One Specialist is located in each region of Indiana.

SITE VISIT

Soil health starts with you. It starts where you grow food. It starts with how you grow food.

Let us come to you.

We visit your operation. We talk through your resource concerns and about conservation practices you can use to improve soil health where you grow.



TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

It takes ongoing commitment to improve soil health. It's a journey, and it will take time to figure out the practices that work best in your production context.

We're here on that journey. We follow-up with you after the site visit to provide additional recommendations and assistance to implement new conservation practices.

Urban Soil Health Specialists coordinate, advise, and assist locally-led Soil Health Working Groups to advance soil health with urban and small-scale producers. We work with local, state, and federal entities to integrate soil health education and assistance for urban and small farms into local-level planning and conservation work.

Contact us to schedule a site visit.

<https://tinyurl.com/urbansoilhealth>
info@urbansoilhealth.org



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Dealing with leaves

Submitted by Kacy Skomp

Fall is quickly approaching, and with it come all the fall gardening tasks. Did you know that mowing should be one of those tasks?

I remember raking leaves as a kid, and we would bag them up for the trash to take away. It was not exactly a kid's favorite chore - who wants to push around all those leaves, then carry them all the way to the road? "Surely," I thought, "there is a better way!"

According to research, mowing is the answer!

If you have just a few leaves, you can feel free to ignore them. I'd recommend enjoying a hot chocolate or a cup of tea, since you don't have to do any leaf work.

If you have quite a few leaves (about 50% of your grass covered), it's time to pull out the mower. Purdue's turf grass science researchers say that "mulching leaves with a mower is much easier and less time consuming than raking, blowing, and/or vacuuming the leaves like we have done in the past." Plus, it keeps bulky bags of leaves out of the landfill and provides much-needed nutrients to your soil. It's recommended that you mow before the layer of leaves is too thick and while the leaves are dry.

If you have a thick layer of leaves, rake up about half of them to prevent matting and smothering in the lawn. Once you remove some of the leaves, mulch the area with your mower. Your raked leaves can then be used as mulch in other areas or composted.

For more information refer to these resources:

<https://turf.purdue.edu/what-to-do-with-all-those-falling-leaves/>

<https://hort.extension.wisc.edu/2021/10/08/leave-the-leaves-to-rake-or-not-to-rake/>

<https://turf.umn.edu/news/good-question-do-you-really-need-rake-all-those-leaves>



MONARCH 911 PROJECT

<https://hancockmga.com/monarch911>



WHY A MONARCH GARDEN?

Monarch butterflies migrate across the continent, providing the invaluable service of pollinating flowers. Thanks to monarchs and other pollinators, we can enjoy an abundance of flowers, fruits, and vegetables.

Unfortunately, the loss of monarch habitats has greatly reduced their numbers. We have the privilege and responsibility to restore these habitats in Hancock County. We can do this by planting gardens where monarch butterflies can hatch and live safely.



WHAT TO PLANT

Milkweed

Did you know Monarch Butterflies lay eggs on only one kind of plant? Without milkweed in a garden, there will be no Monarch caterpillars!

There are many types of milkweed, but these are native to our area of the country:

- Common milkweed
- Swamp milkweed
- Butterfly milkweed
- Poke milkweed



Nectar Plants

Monarch larvae eat only milkweed, but adults enjoy nectar from many kinds of plants. They need nectar through the spring, summer, and fall, so try to choose a variety of plants that bloom throughout the growing season. Here are a few ideas of plants they will love:

- Spring Beauty (early)
- Purple prairie clover (early)
- Leadplant (early)
- Coneflowers (mid)
- Liatris (mid)
- Bee Balm (mid)
- Black-eyed Susan (mid)
- New England Aster (late)
- Blue mistflower (late)
- Stiff or Showy Goldenrod (late)

PLANTING TIPS

Container Garden

Anyone can provide a home for monarchs, no matter how much space is available! Remember to provide adequate drainage and use potting soil when gardening in containers

- Start with one or two large pots (16-20") containing one milkweed plant each. If you're starting with seeds, use several seeds per pot.
- Add any number of pots with nectar plants nearby. These don't have to be directly next to the milkweed, but should be easily visible, so the butterflies know where to go.



Traditional Garden



- Monarchs can't use milkweed if they don't know it's there! Plant milkweed in a perimeter around your garden, so they can see it easily.
- Plant your monarch garden in an area that won't be affected by pesticides.
- If you're planting common milkweed, be sure the plants have room to spread.

LEARN MORE!

Excited about creating safe homes for Monarch Butterflies? These are our favorite resources:

Monarch 911

- <https://hancockmga.com/monarch911>

The Monarch Joint Venture:

- <https://www.monarchjointventure.org>

Monarch Nectar Guides:

- <https://xerces.org/monarchs/monarch-nectar-plant-guides>

Monarch Waystation Program:

- <https://www.monarchwatch.org/waystations>

Monarch Butterfly Conservation:

- <https://www.xerces.org/monarchs>

Gardening for Wildlife:

- <https://www.nwf.org/Garden-for-Wildlife/Wildlife/Attracting-Butterflies>



Pretty sure my neighbor is a genius...



HANCOCK COUNTY MASTER GARDENERS

FACEBOOK

<https://www.facebook.com/hancockmga>

WEBSITE

<https://hancockmga.com/>

MONTHLY MEETING

4th Wednesday of the month in-person (at 792 E. Park Ave, Greenfield, IN) or Zoom
(email to register: meier_lynn@yahoo.com).

MASTER GARDENER TRAINING

<https://hancockmga.com/become-a-master-gardener/>