

The Latest Dirt

La Porte County Master Gardener Newsletter



NOVEMBER 2009

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

EXECUTIVE BOARD MBRS. _____	3
PROJECT COORDINATORS _____	3
ANNOUNCEMENTS _____	3
NOVEMBER MEETING _____	4
STANDING COMMITTEE	
COORDINATORS _____	5
CONTRIBUTING EDITORS _____	5
JULY MEETING MINUTES _____	5
SEPTEMBER MEETING MINUTES _____	6
EDUCATION OPPORTUNITIES _____	7
GARDENING ARTICLES _____	9

2009 Meeting Schedule

All meetings are held on Thursdays at
6:00 p.m. (unless noted otherwise) at
The Presbyterian Church
307 Kingsbury Ave, La Porte

November 5 General Meeting
 Election of Officers

NEXT BOARD MEETING

Monday, December 14, 2009

5:30 P.M.

PURDUE EXTENSION
OFFICE



Storing Leftover Garden Seeds

By: B. Rosie Lerner, Extension Consumer Horticulturist
Purdue University

If you didn't use up all of the garden seed you bought this year, much of it can be stored for use in next year's garden, depending on the plant species. Seeds of some plants, such as corn, parsley, onion, viola (pansies), verbena, phlox and salvia, are not very long lived, lasting only 1 or 2 years at best. Other seeds, including beans, carrots, lettuce, peas, radishes, snapdragon, cosmos, sweet William and zinnia will remain viable (capable of germinating) for 3-5 years.

Seeds need to be kept cool, dark and dry so that they retain stored carbohydrates and minimize fungal infection. You can keep the seeds in their original packets to preserve their labeling information. If you transfer the seeds to another container, be sure to label them with at least the plant name and the year the seed was purchased. Either way, be sure the seed is as dry as possible before placing in storage.

One of the more practical methods for storing small quantities is to place leftover seed in sealable jars or other airtight containers and store in a cool, dark area such as the refrigerator (not the freezer). A layer of powdered milk or uncooked rice at the bottom of the container will absorb excess moisture. Use a paper towel to separate the seed from the absorptive material.

These days, many seed packets only have a few seeds to begin with so the germination test may be a moot point! On the other hand, many seeds are pretty pricey, so saving even a few seeds can make a big impact on next year's gardening budget.

The chart on the next page, listing storage life for common garden species, will help you decide which seeds are worth the trouble. However, the conditions that the seeds are stored in dramatically affects how well they will germinate next year, as much, or more so, than their species.

Vegetables*	Expected Storage Life (Yrs)***	Annuals**	Expected Storage Life (Yrs)***
Bean	3	Ageratum	4
Carrot	4	Alyssum	4
Corn, Sweet	3	Aster	1
Cucumber	5	Calendula	5
Kohlrabi	3	Celosia	4
Lettuce	6	Coleus	2
Muskmelon	5	Cosmos	3
Okra	2	Dahlia	2
Onion	1	Dianthus	4
Parsnip	1	Geranium	1
Pea	3	Hibiscus	3
Pepper	2	Hollyhock	2
Pumpkin	4	Impatiens	2
Radish	5	Lobelia	3
Spinach	3	Marigold	2
Squash	4	Nasturtium	5
Tomato	4	Nicotiana	3
Turnip	4	Pansy	1
Watermelon	4	Petunia	2
		Phlox	1
		Poppy	4
		Salvia	1
		Verbena	1
		Vinca	1
		Zinnia	5

* Source: Knott's Handbook for Vegetable Growers

** Source: Hill Gardens of Maine, http://www.hillgardens.com/seed_longevity.htm

*** Assumes seeds are stored under favorable conditions.

These and other gardening stories may be viewed from the online archives of Purdue Gardening News at www.hort.purdue.edu/ext/news_stories.html

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Master Gardeners and Master Gardener interns are reminded to complete the paper forms showing their 2009 volunteer and education hours as soon as possible. The cutoff date will be **November 30, 2009**, for this year. After that date, we are hoping to switch to the new online system of reporting hours (described by Nikky Witkowski at the last Association workshop meeting). Any hours after that date would be credited to the year 2010. Call the office if you need a form.

After being reviewed by the Extension office, a letter will be sent to each Master Gardener and intern asking him or her to confirm the total number of hours reported. These hours will be included in the database used to provide recognition to those achieving notable levels in the Purdue Master Gardener Program to be recognized at the annual Awards meeting.

2009 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

EXECUTIVE BOARD

PRESIDENT	RUSS KLOSINSKI
VICE PRES.	BARBARA DEAN
SECRETARY	ANN KLOSINSKI
TREASURER	SHARON CHOLEWA

BOARD MEMBERS

MARCY DAILEY
 JAN KOSS
 KATHY LEWIS
 LAURELLE MISKOWICZ
 ADI VEENENDAAL
 PAST PRESIDENT

2009 PROJECT COORDINATORS

First Yard Class

Jan Koss _____ 785-4342
 _____ pjkoss@yahoo.com

Habitat for Humanity

Barb Merten _____ 219-878-1337
 _____ barbmerten@cs.com

Luhr Park Field Days

Jayne Sandy _____ 362-9792
 _____ Jayne51@yahoo.com

Pioneer Heritage Garden

Garden Coordinator:

Sharon Cholewa: _____ 324-3637
 _____ stevshar@netnitco.net

Vegetable Beds:

Pat Bogue _____ 609-859-9614
 _____ madgardenerpat@gmail.com

Sharon Cholewa _____ 324-3637
 _____ stevshar@netnitco.net

Herb Beds:

Sacha Burns _____ 219-785-2127

Flower Beds:

Laurelle Miskowicz _____ 325-7377
 _____ miskowicz@comcast.net

2009 Symposium

Nora Akins _____ 219-873-1735
 _____ tarq@comcast.net

Sunflower Fair

Laurelle Miskowicz _____ 326-7377
 _____ miskowicz@comcast.net

Purdue Extension Office _____ 324-9407

Gene Matzat _____ ematzat@purdue.edu

Marcia Wolff _____ mwolff@purdue.edu

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Remaining Master Gardener Classes

By: Gene Matzat

Master Gardeners are welcome to audit any of the remaining Master Gardener classes scheduled below. Please let the Extension office know if you plan to attend so that we can have enough handouts for those attending.

- *Oct. 29 - Fruits - Gene Matzat, Extension Educator-Ag & Natural Resources
- Nov. 5 - Plant Disease/Diagnosis - Gail Ruhl, Purdue Plant & Pest Diagnostic Lab
- Nov. 12 - Insects - Larry Bledsoe, Purdue Entomologist
- Nov. 19 - Woody Ornamentals - Jim Hitz, Taltree
- Dec. 3 - Final Exam (also Invite to join LPCMGA)

Classes are scheduled from 1-4 p.m. CST at the Farm Bureau Insurance office, 1104 S. Boyd Blvd, LaPorte, IN (219-362-6624).

*October 29 - Class will be held at the Small Projects Building at the La Porte County Fairgrounds (across the "street" from the Fair Office & Community Building) for the first 2 hours; we will then visit Garwood Orchards where Brian Garwood will show us their operation.

Gebisa Ejeta Day honors Purdue World Food Prize winner

WEST LAFAYETTE, Ind. - A Purdue University plant breeder and geneticist whose sorghum research won him the 2009 World Food Prize was honored during a daylong celebration Thursday (Oct. 22) on Purdue's West Lafayette campus.

During Gebisa Ejeta Day, the Distinguished Professor of Agronomy spoke on "The Pursuit of Purpose-Driven Science" and Purdue students sponsored activities to raise awareness of world hunger.

"Gebisa has devoted his career to fighting hunger," said Jay Akridge, Purdue's Glenn W. Sample Dean of Agriculture. "It seems appropriate to honor him by engaging the Purdue community in a discussion of the issue and in helping fight hunger in our own community and around the world."

NOVEMBER GENERAL MEETING

Thursday, November 5

The Presbyterian Church

ELECTION OF OFFICERS

6:00 p.m. Refreshments

6:30 p.m. Meeting

Guest Speaker:

Linda Strain

MG Intern

"Spiders and Insects"

Ejeta received the World Food Prize Oct. 15 in Des Moines, Iowa, from the World Food Prize Foundation. The award is considered the Nobel Prize of agriculture. Ejeta was selected as a World Food Prize laureate for his research leading to improved sorghum varieties in his native Ethiopia and other African nations. Sorghum is a major food crop for more than 500 million people on the African continent.

In 1994 eight tons of Ejeta's drought-tolerant and Striga-resistant sorghum seeds were distributed to the African nations of Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Mali, Mozambique, Niger, Rwanda, Senegal, Somalia, Sudan, Tanzania and Zimbabwe. Farmers in those countries reported yields of as much as four times larger than traditional sorghum crops.

For more information about Ejeta and the World Food Prize, visit Purdue's World Food Prize Web page at www.ag.purdue.edu/Pages/WorldFoodPrize.aspx or the sponsoring organization's website at www.worldfoodprize.org.

This is really an amazing story of how basic research with a focus can make a big impact in our world!

Personal note: Gene Matzat was at Purdue when Dr. Ejeta started his graduate work. At 6'8" tall, he was a favorite basketball teammate of Gene's roommate.

Take steps now to help prevent late blight next year

WEST LAFAYETTE, Ind. – "Tomato and potato growers can take steps now and next spring to help prevent the recurrence of late blight in Indiana," said a Purdue University plant pathologist.

"Late blight, a fast-moving and highly destructive disease of tomatoes and potatoes, was found in several Indiana counties this past growing season," said Dan Egel.

"We know it hit tomatoes and growers were aware of the damage, but we are not sure if Indiana potatoes were infected or how many," he said.

Egel is concerned that late blight on potato vines may have gone unnoticed. If the disease affects the tubers, the fungus can overwinter there and spread again next year.

Egel recommends growers take four steps:

- Throw away any potato seed pieces saved from the 2009 crop that were to be used next year.
- Plow under the potato crop and all vines now.
- Rotate tomatoes and potatoes to new ground when planting the 2010 crop.
- Pull volunteer tomatoes and potatoes next year.

"We normally don't worry about volunteer tomatoes and potatoes, but next year growers need to be vigilant and pull any that may come up," Egel said. "They could continue to spread late blight."

For more information about late blight, how it spreads and how to recognize it, visit the Purdue Plant & Pest Diagnostic Lab's website at: <http://www.ppdL.purdue.edu/PPDL/hot09/8-6.html>. There are other pertinent links at this website that show a map of confirmed late blight occurrences in Indiana, Q&As, and a helpful publication of tomato diseases and disorders from Iowa State University.

Standing Committee Coordinators

History Book Articles and Photos	Barb Werner
Hospitality Refreshments	Eunice Conway
Librarian	Carolyn Gardner
Newsletter	Donna Pouzar
Speakers Bureau	Rosie Flitter
Sunshine Bereavement/ Get well wishes	Sue Salach

"The Latest Dirt" Contributing Editors

<i>Herbal Column</i>	Marina Studt
<i>Gardening Articles</i>	Nancy Daube
<i>Extension News</i>	Gene Matzat
Phone:	219-324-9407
E-mail:	ematzat@purdue.edu

Newsletter Staff Volunteers:

Jessica Craig-Wissig

Donna Allen

IF YOU HAVE AN ARTICLE YOU WOULD
LIKE TO SUBMIT TO THE NEWSLETTER,
PLEASE EMAIL TO:

DONNAPOUZAR@COMCAST.NET
EMATZAT@PURDUE.EDU

IF YOU DO NOT HAVE E-MAIL,
PLEASE MAIL ARTICLES TO:

LA PORTE COUNTY
EXTENSION OFFICE
MG NEWSLETTER
2358 N. U.S. 35
LA PORTE, IN 46350

"THE LATEST DIRT"
IS PUBLISHED MONTHLY.
THE NEXT DEADLINE IS:
NOVEMBER 20, 2009

La Porte County Master Gardener Association Meeting Minutes

July 9, 2009

La Porte County Fairgrounds - Pioneer Garden

6:00 P.M. Refreshments

6:30 P.M. Call to Order

Program: "Snippets of Ireland" - Jan Koss

Jan Koss presented the program on her trip to Ireland. The pictures highlighted the beauty of the landscape in the countryside. In the cities there are row houses, markets and a pub on every corner, but not a lot of green space. Cemetery plots are owned by families and burials are one atop another. Sod is burned for fuel. Thank you Jan for sharing your trip and giving us a glimpse of Ireland.

Minutes: Ann Klosinski. The Minutes of the May general meeting were accepted as published in the June "Latest Dirt".

Treasurers Report: Sharon Cholewa

Extension Report: Gene Matzat was not in attendance.

Committee Reports:

- *Pioneer Garden* - Sharon Cholewa needs two volunteers to assemble garden booklets. John Connor needs help to spread mulch in the garden.
- *Sunflower Fair* - Laurelle noted there will not be a plant sale this year at the Master Gardener booth.
- *Fall First Yard Class* - Jan Koss said the class will be held Wednesday September 19th at the Michigan City Public Library. Speakers are needed.
- *Farmers Market* - Dennis Brittain said the sign up sheet for dates thru September was available and that it is best to have three people working at the Question and Answer Table. Frank Zolvinski volunteered to take responsibility for the Master Gardener Q & A table at the July 18th Farmer's Market in La Porte.
- *Habitat for Humanity* - Barb Merten: Nineteen Master Gardeners worked planting the yards at 2 homes this year. She also noted that plants and shrubs are needed.

Tour guides are needed for the Lubeznik Center fundraiser at the Dekker gardens from 1-4 P.M. on the 18th.

Carolyn Gardner has a "holding garden" for keeping plants to be used in the future. It is located at 725 Pine Lake Avenue.

Marina Studt volunteered to organize the plant exchange for our next meeting.

All of the Hot Line slots are filled.

The August meeting will be at Red Mill Park and it will be a "fun" meeting.

Russ Klosinski named the volunteers for the nominating committee for election of officers and board members. They are Nora Akins-Chairperson, Jerry Murphy and Adi Veenendaal.

The meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully Submitted,
Ann Klosinski, Secretary

**La Porte County
Master Gardener Association Meeting
Minutes
September 3, 2009**

La Porte County Fairgrounds - Small Projects Building/Sheriff's Training Room

6:00 P.M. - Refreshments

6:30 P.M. - Call to Order

Program: Keith O'Herrin - Urban Forester for the City of La Porte presented the program on "*What Urban Foresters Do.*"

Seven of every ten trees in La Porte are Maple, the most common being sugar and black maple. The differences between them is hardly detectible. His main responsibility is for the tree lawns, removing diseased trees and planting new ones.

The biggest problem for trees in La Porte is the fungus verticillium wilt. It is especially fatal for maples, all types being equally susceptible. A factor that can make a difference in surviving the disease is the age of the tree. The fungus lives in the soil indefinitely. A 1991 inventory showed there are 17,000 planting sites available - 9,000 had trees planted on them. Some oaks and sweet gums have been planted using grant money.

He said the day-to-day operation of his "department of one" consists of himself, his home, a 1996 truck and a computer. The Park Department helps with planting trees and the removal of trees is done by the Street Department. They also do pruning that is sometimes requested by homeowners. Aside from money issues right now, plans for the future in order of importance are: 1) Develop a computerized inventory including an aerial view with trees, stumps and vacant

sites. 2) Planting new trees and starting a new nursery by the waste water plant. 3) Education, which includes articles in "What's New La Porte". Keith answered numerous questions and was applauded for his interesting presentation.

After the Plant Swap Russ Klosinski auctioned the remaining plants.

Minutes: Ann Klosinski, Secretary. The Minutes of the July 9, 2009 meeting were accepted as presented.

Treasurers Report: Sharon Cholewa. Sharon noted that \$1,312.00 of the treasury balance is Symposium money.

Officers Report:

Barbara Dean announced the speaker for the October 1st, 2009 meeting at the church will be Nikki Witkowski. She will give a presentation on the new web site that can be used for recording volunteer and education hours.

Extension Report: Gene Matzat

Gene reminded the members to check the Purdue web site for workshops. The fall Master Gardener class has 19 people in attendance. Roberto Lopez is a new member of the Extension. His area of interest is Floriculture. Pinney Purdue is holding a Purdue Pumpkin Twilight Meeting and tour on Thursday, September 17th from 6-7:30 P.M. at the Agricultural Center in Wanatah. Participants can see different varieties of pumpkins.

Committee Reports:

Fall First Yard Class: Jan announced the date has been changed to the 19th.

Nominating Committee: Nora Akins reported on the progress of their efforts to put together the slate of candidates for Officers and Board Members.

Sunflower Fair: Laurelle Miskowicz will make phone calls to those who volunteered for the Fair.

Unfinished Business:

Two volunteers are needed for refreshments.

New Business: None

The meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully Submitted,
Ann Klosinski, Secretary

EDUCATION OPPORTUNITIES

Botanical Gardens and Master Gardener Conference Information			
Fernwood Botanical Gardens		LPCMGA is a member of Fernwood Botanical Gardens. Membership card can be signed out at the Extension Office.	
Class Schedule		www.fernwoodbotanical.org/webdata/Calendar/Calendar.htm#jan	
		www.fernwoodbotanical.org/webdata/education/EducatPrograms.html	
Master Gardener Seminars		www.hort.purdue.edu/mg/events.html	
Taltree Arboretum		www.taltree.org/getaway/events/default.asp?cat=all	
ADVANCED MASTER GARDENER TRAINING			
Date	Event/Time/Fee	Description/Fee	Location/Contact
Saturday, Nov. 7	<i>Gardening by the Season</i> 8:00 am to 3:00 pm EDT \$30 (includes breakfast and lunch)	Sponsored by KDP MGs and Pike Co. Garden Club, topics include orchids, pumpkins & other cucurbits, fall garden crafts, and native & invasive plants. More information & registration form at: www.dkpmastergardeners.org (under "Events").	IPL Communications Bldg, Petersburg, IN (off of Hwy 57, just north of town) Contact: Melissa Teague Call (812) 354-5786 or email dkpmastergardeners@yahoo.com
Saturday, March 13, 2010	<i>Michiana Master Gardener Public Seminar</i> featuring Joe Lamp'L of the PBS Program <i>GardenSMART</i>	11 th Annual Public Seminar presented by the Michiana Master Gardeners' Association; more information about the speaker at www.joegardener.com	www.michianamastergardeners.com
Friday-Saturday, June 18-19, 2010	<i>Purdue Master Gardener State Conference</i>	Save the date!	Purdue – West Lafayette Campus
July 1-14, 2010	<i>England and Its Gardens</i>	International study abroad for Purdue Master Gardeners. More information at www.hort.purdue.edu/ext/eaig/	Rosie Lerner, Purdue MG Program State Coordinator, 765-494-1311, rosie@purdue.edu



The Do-It-Right Series

Purdue Extension
Knowledge to Go
1-888-EXT-INFO

The Do-It-Right Consumer Horticulture series will feature a variety of topics to provide in depth training for Extension Educators. Originating from Purdue's West Lafayette Campus, Master Gardeners are also invited to participate in the training locally at the La Porte County Extension office. One hour of education credit is available for each session. All sessions will begin at 11:00 a.m. Central time and will be held in the office's large meeting room. If you are not able to attend a session on the scheduled date, you may still view an archived version of the training at our office; please call ahead to make arrangements.

- Nov. 10, 2009 Do-It-Right: Plant Invasives? (Mike Dana, Purdue Urban Horticulture Specialist)
- Dec. 8, 2009 Do-It-Right: Organic Gardening (Rosie Lerner, Purdue Consumer Horticulture Specialist)
- Jan. 12, 2010 Do-It-Right: Plant & Pest Diagnostic Lab: What was hot in 2009? (Tom Creswell, Director, and Gail Ruhl, Senior Plant Disease Diagnostician)
- Feb. 9, 2010 Do-It-Right: Backyard Pond Weed Management (Carole Lembi, Purdue Aquatic Weed Management Specialist)
- March 9, 2010 Do-It-Right: Diseases & Insect Pests of Evergreens (Gail Ruhl, Senior Plant Disease Diagnostician, P&PDL, and Cliff Sadof, Extension Entomologist)
- April 13, 2010 Do-It-Right: What's Bugging Your Fruits? (Rick Foster, Purdue Extension Entomologist)

GARDENING ARTICLES

Protect Flowering Bulbs During Winter

By: Martha Smith, University of Illinois
Extension Horticulture Educator

“If you want to save those glorious summer flowering bulbs, it is important to have a good winter storage site,” said a University of Illinois Extension horticulture educator.

“Throughout central Illinois, our growing climate withstands winter temperatures of minus 10 to minus 20 degrees Fahrenheit,” said Martha Smith. “This puts us in Zone 5 on the USDA Plant Hardiness Zone Map. (This is the same as our area here in Northern Indiana.) Horticultural plants in our area are able to survive these winter extremes.

“Unfortunately, many of the glorious summer flowering bulbs such as gladiolus, cannas, dahlia and tuberous begonia cannot survive here. In order for us to enjoy their splendor, extra attention and care in the fall is needed. They need to be dug up and stored. Our winter soil temperatures are too cold, and summer flowering bulbs left in the ground won’t survive.”

Among the options for winter storage, a garage attached to your home or a deep cellar will keep the temperatures between 35 to 40 degrees Fahrenheit. This is critical if the bulbs are to survive. At warmer temperatures, the bulbs may begin to sprout or rot. At colder temperatures, they can freeze. Before storing, check all bulbs and discard any diseased or damaged ones.

“Cannas should be cut back within two to three inches of the soil after the first frost,” she said. “Dig the tuberous roots with a spading fork, taking care not to damage the fleshy root system. Place them in a frost-free location, allowing them to dry out. This may take several weeks. Bulbs are sufficiently dried when the stem easily breaks away from the roots. Cannas do not require covering in the winter. Often they are laid upside down in flats of dried peat moss.”

Tuberous begonias should be dug when the leaves turn yellow in the late summer or early fall. Cut tops back to within a couple of inches of the tubers. Dry in a warm location for two to three weeks. Store tubers between two-to-three-inch thick layers of vermiculite, peat moss, sawdust or wood shavings. “Check tubers throughout winter. If shriveling occurs, lightly moisten packing material. If roots appear, move to a cooler, drier location,” said Smith.

After a light frost, dahlias should be cut back to four to six inches above the soil. “Choose a sunny day when the soil is not too wet or too dry,” she said. “Lift the tubers with a long-tined fork. Insert it one foot away from the bush on all

sides, then gently pry up the clump so the tubers will not be ripped off. Shake most of the soil off and leave them in the sun for several hours to dry. Do not allow the tubers to freeze,” she added. “If still damp, you can lay them on screens in a protected area for a day. Leave undivided, packing them carefully in flats, boxes or bushel baskets and cover them with vermiculite, peat moss, sawdust or wood shavings. Check dahlia tubers throughout the winter,” said Smith. “If shriveling occurs, moisten packing material lightly. Do not let tubers completely dry out.”

Gladiolus corms should be dug after the foliage has matured and started turning brown, generally six to eight weeks after flowering. “This gives the plant time to produce food and build a corm for next year.” She said. Lift the corms with a spade or spading fork, taking care not to cut into the corm. Cut the tops one inch above the corms. Remove all dirt from the corm and dry for two to four weeks in a warm (70-80 degrees Fahrenheit) location with good circulation. After curing, remove the old corm (which is beneath the new one) by breaking it off. Place the corms in an onion sack, old nylon panty hose, or similar container with good ventilation. Hang from a wall or ceiling in storage area.

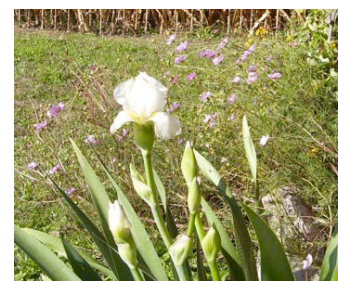
“Don’t confuse these types of bulbs with the spring flowering tulips, daffodils and crocus.” She warned. “These spring bloomers stay in the ground all year. Summer bloomers may need more attention, but you will be rewarded all summer long.”

Printed in *The Farmer’s Exchange* of Sept. 26, 2009.

You think this hasn't been a goofy summer?

Submitted by Barbara Dean

It’s October and I have bearded iris in bloom. Corn in field is ready to be harvested, and Cosmos are still blooming and a white bearded iris is full of buds and beginning to bloom. The poor flowers are as confused as the gardeners are!



Fall a Great Time to Plant Trees, Shrubs

By: Jeff Rugg, University of Illinois Extension
Horticulture Educator

“Investing in landscaping in the fall is not only wise, it improves the environment and impresses the neighbors,” said a University of Illinois Extension horticulture educator.

“The fall is an excellent time to plant trees and shrubs,” said Jeff Rugg. “It is also the time when landscape centers need to make room for new stock.”

As the top of plants go dormant, trees and large shrubs can be dug from the nursery fields. The plants are stored over the winter for planting the following spring and summer. It is more convenient for landscape centers to clear out any unsold stock now to make room for the incoming harvest than to save trees that were dug a year ago.

“This means that any plant that was previously dug up, balled and burlapped or growing in a container is better off in the ground now and not going through another winter out of the ground.” He explained.

“This can lead to some good bargains, if you know what you are looking at. Usually, a plant that is only marked down a little is pretty healthy and should be well worth the investment. If a tree is marked down more than 50 percent, it may be more than half dead. It will take some investigation to determine if the tree is worth any money at all. If the tree has a warranty, that the tree will leaf out in the spring, it may be worth a little money.”

If the tree only has a few leaves, look to see if they are scattered throughout the whole plant. That is much better than leaves only growing on one side of the tree. A tree with a uniform but skimpy canopy may be strengthened back into being a healthy tree with the good care of an experienced gardener.

Determining if the tree has healthy branches after the leaves have fallen off in the fall is not hard.

“First check the stems to see if they have a uniform color and shape,” Rugg explained. “The color will vary between species, but dead branches will be a different color and once you see both kinds on the tree, you can judge how much of the tree is alive. Healthy stems tend

to stay uniformly smooth and plump. Dead or dying branches tend to be wrinkled or shriveled. A gentle scratch should reveal a soft, thin bright green layer of tissue right under the bark.”

“Next, check the buds. Each place that once contained a leaf should have a bud. On some plants the buds are minute, but most plants have large buds. If the buds are plump and uniformly covering the plant, then it should leaf out reasonably well next spring.”

Finally, if you can, check the root system. This is easier in container-grown plants than in ball and burlapped. The roots should be white, not brown. They should be uniformly spread out around the root ball or container. Roots that go around a container many times, will need to be pruned and spread out when planted.

“The plant will still not be a bargain if it will not grow well in the spot you have planned for it,” he said. “Check with your local Certified Nurseryman or Cooperative Extension professional for recommendations for your site.

“Trees are long-term investments. Drive through an older mature neighborhood and you will see old nice trees. They probably did not get there on their own. One of the first outdoor investments each property owner should make is trees, and this time of year is a good one to get a bargain.”

This information provided by Jeff Rugg, a University of Illinois Extension horticulture educator.

Printed in *The Farmer's Exchange* of Sept. 26, 2009.

Fall Gardens Feature Many Colors

By: Ericka Soumare, Elkhart Co. Extension Educator

Fall is finally here and the change in temperature is a reminder that winter will surely follow. But in the meantime, there are many gardening activities that can be done this fall. Keeping up with these chores can help in the transition from season to season and facilitate organization for gardening projects.

October is a time to water indoor plants less frequently and stop fertilizing because they will need to have a resting period to slow growth or stop growth altogether in the winter. Also, plants and trees should be watered well until the ground freezes. This will ensure that they have enough water during the dry winter. Protecting the lawn by removing all large leaves can also help.

November is a good time to make sure that indoor plants are moved to areas that provide the best sun exposure if they start to have leaf drop. This is usually in the south or west facing windows. Tilling the soil in the fall can be helpful in areas that are not susceptible to erosion by helping the soil structure stay intact for possible early spring planting.

Also, strawberries can be protected with winter mulch that should be applied when the plants are dormant and before the temperature drops below 20 degrees.

For more gardening tips for the fall, visit the web at www.hort.purdue.edu/ext.HO-93.pdf. For publications that list tips for other seasons, you can visit Purdue University's Garden Publication web site at www.hort.purdue.edu/ext/gardenpubs.html.

It was printed in *The Farmer's Exchange* of Sept. 26, 2009.

Weeds in Lawn May Be Tackled in Fall

By: Ericka Soumare, Elkhart County Extension Educator

Those dandelions—yes, the ones that amazed us as children now taunt us as they sprout up in the lawn. October is a great time to take action against dandelions and other broadleaf weeds in the lawn.

Control measures can be used to help fight against these weeds, but complete and permanent eradication is not practical or possible. There will be a few weeds in the lawn, but there are practices that can be used to minimize them.

There are also chemicals that can be used to control weeds in the lawn. On the other hand, if a lawn is not taken care of, weeds can thrive more easily.

The seeds of broadleaf weeds such as dandelion and clover are naturally found in the soil and can produce for more than 30 years. This is due to the fact that new plants produce many seeds that are easily spread throughout the yard, or from one yard to the next.

Topsoil and even bags of poor grass can be brought to a new location already containing broadleaf weed seeds. Once these weeds are noticed, practices can be used to help maintain health and vigor in the lawn.

Mowing the lawn at 2.5 to 3.5 inches is a good practice to reduce weeds. Also, fertilizing in a timely manner and proper irrigation will be beneficial to the lawn. If there are a few patches of weeds in the lawn, it is best to spot spray rather than broadcasting spray across the entire lawn.

Broadleaf herbicides that contain 2-4-D, dicamba, and MCPP (mecoprop) are the most effective herbicides for controlling broadleaf weeds. The herbicide should be applied in such a way so that the leaves are wet, but not dripping.

Also, broadleaf herbicides should not be applied to very dry soil. Dry soil will reduce the effectiveness of the herbicide.

Fall is a great time to apply broadleaf herbicides because this time of year is when weeds are beginning to store energy and nutrients before the winter. When an herbicide is added to the soil at this time, it travels into the weed along with the reserves that it is storing from its environment.

The weed usually doesn't stand a chance when this happens. If rain falls within 24 hours after herbicide is applied, it is important to re-apply if there are no favorable results within 10 days.

For more information on broadleaf weeds and their control, visit the web at www.agry.purdue.edu/turf/pubs/ay9.htm. A variety of additional lawn care publications can be found on the web at www.agry.purdue.edu/turf/publicat.htm.

Published in *The Farmer's Exchange* of Oct. 9, 2009.