



The Hoosier Organic Gardener

A Publication of the Indiana Organic Gardeners Association

December, 2005

Wendell Berry Wisdom *compiled by Rosie Bishop*

From **THE GIFT OF GOOD LAND** Essay titled “Sanitation and the Small Farm,” written 1977:

p. 98 - In the time when my memories begin—the late 1930’s—people in the country did not go around empty-handed as much as they do now. As I remember them from that time, farm people on the way somewhere characteristically had buckets or kettles or baskets in their hands, sometimes sacks on their shoulders.

Those were hard times—not unusual in our agricultural history—and so a lot of fetching and carrying had to do with foraging, searching the fields and woods for nature’s free provisions: greens in the springtime, fruits and berries in the summer, nuts in the fall. There was fishing in warm weather and hunting in cold weather; people did these things for food and for pleasure, not for “sport.” The economies of many households were small and thorough, and people took these seasonal opportunities seriously.

p. 100 - Both the foraging in fields and woods and the small husbandries of household and barn have now been almost entirely replaced by the “consumer economy,” which assumes that it is better to buy whatever one needs than to find it or make it or grow it. Advertisements and other forms of propaganda suggest that people should congratulate themselves on the quantity and variety of their purchases. Shopping, in spite of traffic and crowds is held to be “easy” and “convenient.” Spending money gives one status. And physical exertion for any useful purpose is looked down upon; it is permissible to work hard for “sport” or “recreation,” but to make any practical use of the body is considered beneath dignity.

p. 102 -And, finally, what do we do to our people, our communities, our economy, and our political system when we allow our necessities to be produced by a centralized system of large operators, dependent upon expensive technology and regulated by expensive bureaucracy? The modern food industry is said to be a “miracle of technology.” But it is well to remember that this technology, in addition to so-called miracles, produces economic and political consequences that are not favorable to democracy. . . .

Probably the worst fault of our present system is that it simply eliminates from production the land that is not suitable for, as well as the people who cannot afford, large-scale technology. And it ignores the potential productivity of these “marginal” acres and people.

From **WHAT ARE PEOPLE FOR?** Essay titled “A Practical Harmony,” written 1988:

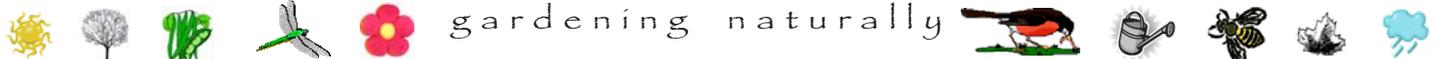
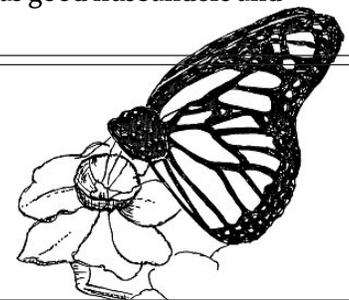
p. 107 - The goal is harmony between the human economy and nature that will preserve both nature and humanity, and this is a traditional goal. The world is now divided between those who adhere to this ancient purpose and those who by intention do not—a division that is of far more portent for the future of the world than any of the presently recognized national or political or economic divisions.

The remarkable thing about this division is its relative newness. The idea that we should obey nature’s laws and live harmniously with her as good husbanders and

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stewards of her gifts is old. And I believe that until fairly recently our destruction of nature were more or less unwitting—the by-products, so to speak, of our ignorance or weakness or depravity. It is our present principled and elaborately rationalized rape and plunder of the natural world that is a new thing under the sun.

From WHAT ARE PEOPLE FOR? Essay also titled, “What are People For?”, written 1985:

p. 124 - Equally important is the question of the sustainability of the urban food supply. The supermarkets are, at present, crammed with food, and the productivity of American agriculture is, at present, enormous. But this is a productivity based on the ruin both of the producers and of the source of production. City people are unworried about this, apparently, only because they do not know anything about farming. People who know about farming, who know what the farmland requires to remain productive, are worried. When topsoil losses exceed the weight of grain harvested fivefold (in Iowa) or twentyfold (in the wheatlands of eastern Washington), there is something to worry about.

From WHAT ARE PEOPLE FOR? Essay titled “The Pleasures of Eating” p. 146, written 1989:

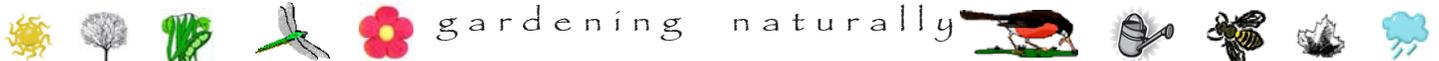
The industrial eater is, in fact, one who does not know that eating is an agricultural act. (p. 146) . . . One will find this obliviousness represented in virgin purity in the advertisements of the food industry, in which food wears as much make-up as the actors. If one gained one’s whole knowledge of food from these ads . . . one would not know that the various edibles were ever living creatures, or that they all come from the soil, or that they were produced by work. The passive American consumer, sitting down to a meal of pre-prepared or fast food, confronts a platter covered with inert, anonymous substances that have been processed, dyed, breaded, sauced, gravied, ground, pulped, strained, blended, prettified, and sanitized beyond resemblance to any part of any creature that ever lived. The products of nature and agriculture have been made, to all appearances, the products of industry. Both eater and eaten are thus in exile from biological reality. **As in any industry, the food industry, the over-riding concern is not quality and health, but volume and price.** (pp. 147-8)

To eat responsibly is to understand and enact, so far as one can, (a) complex relationship (with food). What can one do? Here is a list, probably not definitive:

1. Participate in food production to the extent that you can. If you have a yard or even just a porch box or a pot in a sunny window, grow something to eat in it. Make a little compost of your kitchen scraps and use it for fertilizer. Only by growing some food for yourself can you become acquainted with the beautiful energy cycle that revolves from soil to seed to flower to fruit to food to offal to decay, and around again. You will be fully responsible for any food that you grow for yourself, and you will know all about it. You will appreciate it fully, having known it all its life.

(Berry’s elaboration on each of these is eliminated due to space limitations.)

2. Prepare your own food.
3. Learn the origins of the food you buy.
4. Whenever possible, deal directly with a local farmer, gardener, or orchardist.
5. Learn, in self-defense, as much as you can of the economy and technology of industrial food production.
6. Learn what is involved in the *best* farming and gardening.
7. Learn as much as you can, by direct observation and experience if possible, of the life histories of the food species. (pp. 150-151)



Now a word from our Composter-in-Chief

As we gear up for a new year with a new board and inspiration from Wendell Berry, winter has barely made her appearance. BUT, careful observers will notice increasing daylight creeping toward a new growing season. We need LIGHT for our responsibilities and opportunities in IOGA. The corporate world seems to control more and more of the choices and decisions we make and growing food outside the door seems completely foreign to many of our busy friends. I admit, food is not the primary focus of my de-grassed yarden, but I am moving in that direction. I hope each of you reading this will be prompted to SUPPORT THE LOCAL GROWERS near your home. How about contributing your own experiences for a newsletter column on EATING LOCALLY? I still have pumpkins awaiting attention.

An upcoming opportunity for us to fulfill our mission lies in the **Flower and Patio Show in March.**

OUR GOAL: to educate ourselves and others in the reasons for and methods of environmentally friendly gardening, and to encourage the reduction of chemical dependency in gardens, lawns and farms.

We have been offered booth space that promises even better exposure than our successful first venture there last year. We have a committee working on simple, focused handout materials. We will likely partner with other groups again, in order to help one another and find common ground. (DID YOU KNOW THAT OUR PAST PRESIDENT, VICE-PRESIDENT-ELECT, LINDA ROSIER completed her Master's Degree in Earth Literacy at St. Mary of the Woods with a thesis aka "an integrative project" on that very subject entitled Natual Gardening Network Congratulations, Linda!) That is in the spirit of Wendell Berry's writings on community. YOUR IDEAS AND EFFORTS ARE VITAL! Please, consider how you can be involved. Some lament that the show seems to be a commercial venture quite removed from gardens and growing. Yes, many visitors do want to be entertained and shop. BUT, WE WORK TO BE THE CHANGE WE WISH TO SEE. What other venue could offer such an open field for exposure?

On this 47 degree day winter day. I am going out to plant some bulbs that strayed into a corner of the garage. Local food for Spirit! - *Rosie Bishop*

Like a crocus in snow . . . I stand knee-deep in winter,
holding springtime in my heart.

J.W. Anglund



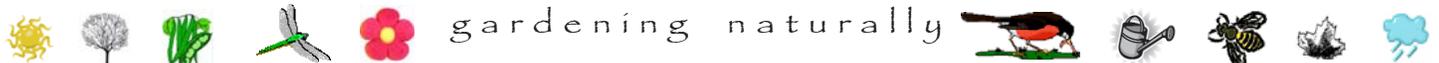
Resources from the web...

Organic Synthetic Additives?

O Brother, Where Artificial Thou? An excerpt from Grist Magazine

What do xanthan gum, an artificial thickener, ammonium bicarbonate, a synthetic leavening agent, and ethylene, a chemical that accelerates the ripening of fruit, have in common? These and other synthetic additives commonly lurk behind that "USDA Organic" stamp of approval you see on the organic products increasingly crowding the shelves of big-box stores and boutique food shops alike. Controversy over the use of these artificial substances in certified-organic products has been simmering within the organics community for at least three years, since the feds put national organic standards into effect in 2002, and now it's finally coming to a boil.

For more visit <http://www.grist.org/news/muck/2005/09/29/organics/index.html>



IOGA Meeting Near Carthage, Indiana on January 21, 2006

LOCALLY GROWN FOODS: LOCATED WHERE LOCAL SEEDS ARE SPROUTING

Let's start the new year at a budding business, two, actually, in beginning stages of development. FIELDS OF AGAPE and COMMUNITY HARVEST MARKETPLACE are taking root from the dreams of Anna Welch and her sister, Jenny. They are alive with exciting possibilities and plans—the women and the businesses. We are invited to see the BEFORE phase, with hopes of visits in the AFTER stages sometime in the future. The location is about 40 miles from Indianapolis. Yes, it IS the January meeting. Yes, there are about 5 miles of county roads to get there. And YES! Anna promises a plan B location, in case of icy roads so KEEP THESE two phone numbers handy:

Anna Welch, 765-914-0944

Rosie Bishop, 317-786-2867

Anna will share plans for the farm and market that include an agritourism project with local artisans and working historic tools, even a historic railroad! Her work with Kay Grimm includes a focus on heirloom seeds and educating children, with a central garden that includes a labyrinth with medicinal herbs.

In October we anticipated the visit of Wendell Berry to several Spirit and Place events and discussed plans for using his work at the January meeting on local growing. Berry is a highly rated author who left his big-city teaching and writing career to return to the farmland of his roots in Henry County, Kentucky. Knowing the land and loving it are two posts on which twine most of Berry's prolific writings. Yes, his writing career flourished with the farm community as a source of content. Hoosiers claim Berry because the closest town to his farm is Madison, Indiana, across the river. Several members who attended his sessions will share their reactions relevant to our group's purpose and goals. Some of you have been reading various of Berry's 41 books of poetry, novels and essays, many available online. All are invited to reflect on his ideas included in quotations beginning on page 1. We hope you will bring your reactions, comments or questions. His major advice to students at the University of Indianapolis who asked what urban people can do is central to our topic:

Find Out Where Your Food Comes From. Why Do We In The Garden Belt Of The U.S. Import Foods From Long Distances That Could Be Grown Nearby? Why Do We Act As If We Were Phoenix?

Ask yourself:

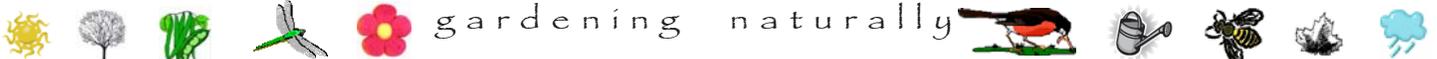
Do you have a farmer's market nearby? Do you talk to the growers about their methods and your membership? What would change in your diet if you HAD to buy locally? seasonally? Could you influence folks to consider a CSA? How can you learn where and how your food is grown?

Gather 11:00 Setup and Q & A

12:00 Eat 12:30 Business, Program

Please bring your own table service and beverage.

See back page for directions.



Members Questions Answered!

Remember back in the June issue when Rosie Bishop posed some questions... now member Mary Kraft offers some answers. If you have a question you'd like to see answered in the newsletter, please contact the new newsletter editor, Lynn Jenkins, at 769-3456 or jenks@iquest.net

1. Regarding horticultural vinegar (20% acidity), Brent Rheinheimer, Proprietor of Good Earth 1 & Associates was a guest speaker at a meeting at the Krafts' home in July 2004. He also donated quite a number of valuable things to our **Gardening...NATURALLY! Seminar 2004**. Other vendors of horticultural vinegar were mentioned, but we might want to think about supporting Brent as thanks for being kind to us! His information follows:
Address: 10643 E. 1000 N., Brownsburg, IN 46112-9634 — e-mail: goodearthone@aol.com —
Office phone: 317-295-0091, Cell phone: 317-294-5091, Fax: 317-295-0207

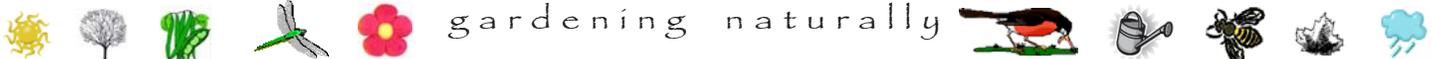
2. The squash borer problem was addressed in the Oct. 2000, issue of the *HOG*. Ron Clark recommended spraying liquid rotenone pyrethrin from Gardens' Alive (Lawrenceburg, IN) on the base *only* of the squash plant every 2 or 3 days, avoiding the leaves and upper stems. Begin as soon as your plants start to grow. I think he said at another time that he then wrapped the main stem up about two inches with aluminum foil. Ask him how it worked at the January meeting!

3. As to compost, if your pile is not "hot" (113° to 158° F), most seeds will germinate (including daisies, strawberries and maple seeds!). If you don't have a long thermometer, stick a long metal rod into the center of the pile. If it feels hot to the touch after a few minutes, your pile is probably hot enough to kill many of seeds if the heat is maintained over several weeks. One shouldn't put seed heads of weeds or bits of roots from such noxious and hardy plants as thistle and garlic mustard in your compost pile. Unless you're an expert (I'm not!) don't include the foliage, stems or roots of any diseased plants. By the way, hot composting has a downside! First, it conserves less nitrogen than cooler methods, because fast bacterial growth needs more nitrogen, so it's then given off into the air as ammonia. Second, Rodale's *Encyclopedia of Organic Gardening* (1992) notes that compost produced at high temps isn't as able to suppress soil-borne diseases as is cooler compost, "since the beneficial bacteria and fungi that attack pathogen can't survive the higher temperatures."

4. Now, on to the question of beneficial "weeds." One of my very favorites, and one that is actually grown on purpose from seed in European gardens, is one that is just hated here in the mid-west: **purslane**. That lovely little crawling succulent is called *verdolaga* in Mexico, *carti-choy* in China, and *pourpier* in France. Those savvy Italians call it *Portulaca*...and well they should, as its Latin name is *Portulaca oleracea*. It is a native of India, but has made its way pretty much around the world by now. There are two varieties. The wild form grows low to about two inches high or so, has greenish purple leaves, and sprawls to about a foot across. The cultivated kind comes from France, is more erect, with larger leaves of a golden yellow. The leaves are thick and fleshy, between 1/2" and 1-1/2" long shaped a bit like the bowl of a little spoon. The stems ooze fluid when squeezed. It reseeds very easily, and the seeds can mature even after you pull it up while in flower, as the plant conserves water so efficiently! Harvest the plant before it flowers for the most tender crop. The leafiest new growth is the tastiest. Some people even freeze it. It has a slightly acid taste because of the very large amount of vitamin C in it (more than an equivalent amount of orange juice). We use the leaves in salads...it adds a lovely tasty tang. Make a dip with it by combining 1 cup of chopped leaves with 1/2 cup of yogurt, a little chopped onion, salt, and a dash of cayenne pepper. You can use the whole plant if you boil it for 5 minutes (serve with butter and a touch of lemon, or serve scalloped with a cream sauce and toasted breadcrumbs). Fry it quickly with bean sprouts in a little sesame oil for a different treat.



The Chinese toss it in their stir-fries often. The leaves and stems can be pickled. Used to thicken stews, soups and Creole dishes it is a good substitute for okra because of its mucilaginous texture.



Indiana Organic Gardeners Association Minutes of the General Membership Meeting October 15, 2005

Hobbit Gardens, an island of herbal delights in a Putnam County sea of corn and soybeans, was the site of our 4th quarter meeting. Our gracious and knowledgeable hostess was Constance Ferry who also treated us to a tour of the gardens, which included tons of herbal information and tidbits of lore. Thirteen IOGA members met to share a meal and information about organic gardening beneath the whispering branches of the numerous mature trees on Constance's property.

The talk was spirited and the suggestions numerous as Q&A began with the question, "How do you grow organic squash, melons and pumpkins successfully?" Here are some ideas for you to try next summer:

- Plant late
- Plant radishes and let them go to flower
- Use dimaceous earth once a week
- Cultivate the soil around the planting area to move (& destroy) insect eggs
- If marigolds haven't worked, try using the African variety
- Trellising helps with fungus and some bugs

Jane Gareri shared her recipe to fight tomato blight and wilt: A handful each of bone meal and cornmeal, ¼ handful of Epsom salts, ½ handful of powdered milk. Mix all together and throw in planting hole.

Using comfrey: let the plants soak in a pail of water for 3-4 days to make fertilizer and jumpstart your compost. Blueberries need acid, well-drained soil. Mulch with small-particle wood products (sawdust). Last, but certainly not least, Mary Kraft reported that IOGA's application to be included in Wild Oats' wooden nickel program has been approved.

President Linda Rosier then called the business portion of the meeting to order. First agenda item was the election of officers for 2006-2007. Elected by unanimous vote were:

Rosie Bishop - President
Suzanne Stevens - Secretary

Linda Rosier - Vice President & Program Chair
Maria Smietana - Treasurer

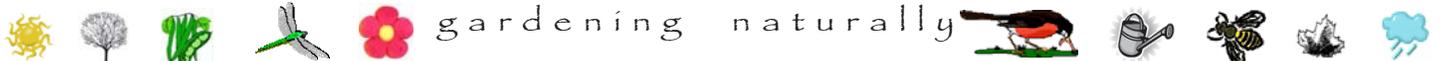
Rosie Bishop described the gift-wrapping program offered by Borders bookstore, through which volunteers from a not-for-profit organization can provide a service to shoppers and keep the tips generated for their organization. Rosie also discussed the 2006 Flower & Patio Show in conjunction with an IOGA seminar.

A general discussion followed concerning IOGA's need for a brochure on "why organic?" and basic tips for the beginner. It was agreed that the Outreach Education Committee would be formed to create this brochure. Hilary Cox, Constance Ferry, Mary Kraft, Marie Smietana, and Suzanne Stevens volunteered to participate in this project.

It was also announced that Wild Oats wants to do something with IOGA at Orchard In Bloom next spring.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted by Emily Roark, Secretary





Treasurer's Report

by Bob Kraft

Opening Balance January 1, 2005

\$ 3794.07

Income

Plant Auction	\$ 298.50
Interest	\$ 30.09
Memberships	\$ 429.00
T Shirt Sale	\$ 30.00
Tote Bag	\$ 10.00
Donation	\$ 7.00

Total Income \$ 804.59

Expenses

Flower & Patio Show	\$ 115.54
Service Charge	\$ 9.72
Newsletter	\$ 283.30
Business Entity Report	\$ 11.00
Web Domain	\$ 52.95
Dues Reminders	\$ 25.46
Liability Insurance	\$ 162.00
Program Expense	\$ 50.00

Total Expense \$ 709.97

Closing Balance December 28, 2005

\$ 3888.69

To join our group, please send your check made out to IOGA to:

Maria Smietana
 7549 S. Retriever Lane
 Zionsville, IN 46077
 317-733-9311 baskets2buy@yahoo.com

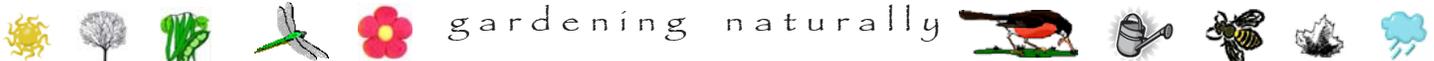


Please include:

Your name(s) _____

Your address _____

Your phone number _____ Your email _____
 Please check one: Single membership (\$6) Dual membership - 1 newsltr to same address (\$8)



gardening naturally

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Visit us at:

www.gardeningenaturally.org

The Hoosier Organic Gardener
5360 East 161st St.
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The mission of the Indiana Organic Gardeners Association is to educate ourselves and others in the reasons for and methods of environmentally friendly gardening and to encourage the reduction of chemical dependency in gardens, lawns, and farms.

January 21st Meeting/Program in Carthage

Please see page 4 for more details. Directions to January Program from Indianapolis:

1. 70 East to Knightstown exit SR 109.
2. Right on SR 109 to Historic US 40 in Knightstown.
3. Left onto US 40 to 1st stoplight.
4. Turn right (south) onto SR 140.
5. SR 140 to Indiana Soldiers and Sailors Children's Home (a beautiful historic campus built in the 1860's). Once you pass the children's home, the road immediately turns into a county road. Go approximately 2.5 miles further south to a stop sign.
6. After stopping, cross CR 900. There are 2 roads ahead of you that angle on either side of a small barn. Take the road that angles left of the barn, which is North Rushville Road. After you angle on North Rushville Road, go about 1/4 mile to 8343 North Rushville Road. The number is on the mailbox, there is a pond by the road, and a log home that sits about 500 feet off of the road, with a big red barn just north of the house.

From Muncie:

1. SR 3 South to US 40.
2. US 40 to Knightstown.
3. 3rd stoplight, pick up directions at 4 above.

