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Pam's Garden

July IOGA Meeting in Bloomington

David Colby, Anderson Woods

No Rain, No Watering, Great Tomatoes!

IOGA MISSION:

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

Whew! I can't believe I'm saying this, but I'm glad that Summer is over! Fall has always been one of my favorite seasons, but I've never been happy to see summer go. I know that I didn't spend as much time outside as I normally would have and the plants did suffer. The heat and drought were just too much to bear.

I think that for me, the hardest hit were the beans. I planted several rows of *limas*, *cannellini*, *black-eyed peas* and *green beans*. This was going to be my year of the bean, remember? Nada. Not one bean to show for it. Of the few seeds that germinated, the plants didn't flower. And we all know that no flower = no bean.

One of the highlights of my summer was going to Bloomington in July for IOGA's most recent meeting. Several members, including myself, took advantage of the location and visited Bloomington's famed farmer's market prior to the meeting. What a treat! Bloomington has dedicated a permanent paved space for their market complete with structures to provide shade and nice, wide aisles for easy ambling.

The produce is amazing. Several (15-20ish?) vendors offer organic goods, which look every bit as beautiful as the "conventional" items. Several musicians, adequately spaced so that no one is competing for the sound waves, are scattered throughout the large market area. And everywhere you look, you see an array of colors from the variety of fruits, vegetables, and flowers on display. The vendors and visitors are colorful as well, sporting baskets and bags filled with goodies, along with contented smiles. It's a wonderful vibe.

The IOGA meeting itself was enjoyable, despite the heat. The Bryan Park shelter kept us shielded from the sun and the location was beautiful. The variety and quality of the food for the pitch-in was outstanding, as usual. Kayte Young from Mother Hubbard's Cupboard who taught us about canning was very interesting and knowledgeable. Now if we just had enough produce to can!

During the meeting, we received some great input from our members for some ideas that we would love to be able to implement. Ideas include providing a mentor program to teach people about gardening organically, offering an intro to organic gardening class and lessons on how to use what you grow, and starting a food-sharing program. We also received some fund-raising ideas such as collecting our wonderful recipes into a cookbook to sell. We also need to update our booth display, improve our website, and utilize Facebook more.

These are all fantastic ideas and we would love to implement them all! But to do that, we need your help. If you are interested in heading-up or participating in any of these activities or have some other ideas, please let me, or any of the board members know. A list of the board members and their contact information is located within the newsletter.

I hope to see you all at our October meeting at Fruit Loop Acres in downtown Indy. It promises to be another fun and interesting day!

Happy and Healthy Gardening! - Lynne



Lynne Sullivan
IOGA President

Pam Sims' Garden

Pam Sims lives on two acres north of Noblesville. The yard has a nice sunny place for a garden and a wonderful woods with a creek at the back. Pam is a long-time gardener and raises strawberries, tomatoes, kale, chard, beans, squash, and cucumbers. She, along with most gardeners this year, had no green beans. (At the July IOGA meeting in Bloomington, those who attended the huge Bloomington Farmers' Market saw NO green beans among all the vendors --- too hot for the flowers to develop into beans!)

Pam had great strawberries and had a much bigger crop than previously since using organic fertilizer made especially for strawberries. She fertilizes in the early spring and then again after the bearing season is over. She did have to install a chicken wire fence this year due to something (chipmunks??) eating the berries. The drought may be responsible for animals eating more berries, etc. as they search for water.

Pam planted her winter squash and cucumbers on tomato cages so they did not sprawl across the garden and take up so much space. A great idea for conserving space in any garden! Pam saves seeds and she puts them in plastic bags in the freezer to keep them as fresh as possible. Between the rows in her garden, Pam mulches with shredded leaves. A good idea since the leaves will biodegrade and enrich the soil at the end of the season.

With chipmunks being a big problem for a lot of gardeners, Pam and her husband have come up with the perfect chipmunk trap! (See photo below). They took this dramatic approach to chipmunk control after the chipmunks dug tunnels under their sidewalk, causing them to excavate and then to rebuild the sidewalk. An expensive problem! They use a bucket about 1.5 feet high and fill it 2/3 full with water. They then take a 1.5 foot long board (about 3 inches wide) and pound a nail about an inch from the end, leaving the nail to protrude out the back side of the board. When the board is set against the bucket, the protruding nail prevents the board from slipping. They sprinkle sunflower seeds on the water and the chipmunk walks up the board and jumps in to get the seeds and ends up drowning. They have caught many chipmunks this way, so this a guaranteed method of chipmunk control!



IOGA Member Pam Sims



A Simple Chipmunk Trap (If You Don't Mind Drowning Them)

What Beautiful Swiss Chard!



Great Kale!



Tomatoes
in Cages



Note the
Leaf Mulch!



Asparagus, Herbs, and Flowers (Good for
Beneficial Insects)



Winter Squash Climbing Up Tomato
Cages

The July 21, 2012 meeting of IOGA took place at Bryan Park in Bloomington with 28 members and visitors in attendance. Following a delicious pitch-in luncheon, President Lynne Sullivan began the meeting by asking the members what they like about IOGA and if they had any ideas for improving the organization.

Some of the ideas that followed included bartering and swapping produce with other members, and volunteering with a group or a school to teach them more about organic gardening. Posting a daily tip on our Facebook page was mentioned. Other ideas included having booths at events like Earth Day; giving a class in mid-winter so members can learn techniques of organic gardening in the off-season; learning more about starting plants from seeds; and providing the recipes for the tasty dishes we bring to the pitch-ins.

Next was the Questions & Answer session, which produced lots of useful information. Straw makes a good mulch and can be purchased at garden centers for about \$5/bale. Some were interested in how to get rid of ants in the kitchen. Terro, purchased at hardware stores, can be put on a tiny piece of cardboard. It will draw the ants initially, but then they will be seen no more. Cinnamon, vinegar, and boric acid are also useful in getting rid of ants. It was noted that if a snake or hawk comes to your yard, chipmunks usually stay away.

In this drought year, plants grown directly from seed sown in the ground seem to be doing better than little sets, which have to establish a root system in dry soil. Mumsey's Magic Mix is great for starting green peppers. Care must be taken with using vegetative mulch since it can draw slugs. Some members have noticed tomatoes and squash growing out of their compost heaps.

The Business meeting followed Q & A. Lynne introduced the officers and told what each did. Hats and T-shirts are still for sale. The Indy Veg Fest, sponsored by the Vegetarian Society, will be on August 25 at the Harrison Center. Lynne and Margaret Smith and perhaps others will attend to manage our booth. The 38th Street Branch Library

has invited us to come back on Sept. 15 to teach a two-hour class that will focus on fall plantings and fall garden preparation. Lynne has volunteered to do this.

Our speaker for the day was Kayte Young, from Mother Hubbard's Cupboard, who provided a canning demonstration. She said a hot water bath system could be used for any high acid fruit, jams and jellies. To be safe it is important to follow a recipe. With tomatoes it is important to add a small amount of vinegar or lemon juice. Otherwise it is best to pressure can them. Any vegetable that includes vinegar (salsa, relish, etc.) can be canned since the vinegar in the recipe protects against botulism and bacteria. The foods are heated to boiling, and then sealed with no oxygen. Most bacteria cannot live without oxygen, but botulism bacteria can. You can't get botulism from jams or pickles, but a non-acid food like green beans must either be prepared in a pressure cooker or pickled.

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Speaker Kayte Young from Mother Hubbards Cupboard

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Kayte then told us the basics of the canning process. First the jars must be washed in soap and water and then sterilized in the dishwasher or in the boiling water bath. The jars and outer lids can be used over and over, but the inner lid can only be used once. After the jars are sterile, they can be filled with the fruit or vegetables, but a space of about one-half inch should be left at the top. Then the lid and liner can be screwed on loosely, and the jars are boiled for ten minutes, a process that should push out all of the air left at the top. Then the jars should be allowed to cool completely before being moved.

All of the tools needed for canning can be purchased as a set. Kmart has a good supply of canning materials.

There is concern about BPA (Bisphenol A) in the cans of commercially canned goods. There is also some concern about BPA on traditional canning lids. However, since there is usually a bit of "head space" between the contents and the lid, it is not likely that the contents will come in contact with the lid itself. Canning lids without BPA are available and are definitely preferred, but they are more expensive and more difficult to use.

The group had lots of questions for Kayte. She showed us some of her favorite books on canning, which included the following: *The Joy of Pickling*, *Putting Food By*, *Stocking Up*, and *Preserving the Fruits of the Earth*.

- Margaret Smith, Secretary



Some of Kayte's Canning Paraphernalia

Mumsey's Magic Mix

Mumsey is a frequent poster on the forums at Organicgardening.com. She uses the Magic Mix when planting tomatoes, peppers, and eggplants. The recipe for Mumsey's Magic Mix is the following:

- 1 handful bonemeal
- 1 handful cornmeal
- 1/2 handful powdered milk
- 1/4 handful epsom salts

Bone meal is a source of phosphorous which is good for root development and bountiful blossoms. Cornmeal is supposed to act as an anti-fungal agent. Powdered milk ups the calcium content of the soil which helps with blossom end rot. Bone meal also contains calcium. Epsom salts add magnesium which makes for sturdy stems.

When planting tomatoes, peppers, or eggplants, mix the recipe above in with dirt for each plant.

Mumsey also recommends adding this mix 6 weeks after planting as a side dressing although she usually leaves out the bone meal since it takes so long for it to be useful to the plants. She recommends fish emulsion as it is more readily available for the plant to use once the plant is already established.

Mumsey cautions that dogs like to dig up the mix because of the bone meal. (The editors used this mix this year with our tomatoes and had problems with moles zeroing in on several plants, again most likely because of the bone meal.)

(Editors' Note: This is the same formula that IOGA member Jane Gareri has been using when she plants her tomato plants and has been recommending for several years.)

Just Label It!

GMO Food

(Editors Note: IOGA member David Colby and his wife Judy founded Anderson Woods, a private, not-for-profit social service organization providing Camp experience and Residential services to persons with mental and/or physical disabilities. They have a large organic garden.)



Well, our 35 years of providing a camp experience for “special needs” individuals came to a conclusion July 26, 2012. It will all start over next year. Camp originated as a rather small group of people who slept in tents along a quiet creek. Then one year the quiet creek raged out of its banks and the little inconspicuous “camp” had to be relocated to higher ground and more substantial quarters constructed for a more formally operated camp.

Today, on 175 acres of wooded hills along the Anderson River in Perry County Indiana, we have four wooden dormitory buildings, a Dining Hall and restrooms with outdoor showers (hot and cold, of course). We operate for eight weeks in June and July of each year. The first four for children and the last four for adults. We have a Camp Director, eight Counselors and many volunteers who make the camp work. We welcome campers of all ages and disabilities, with Autism and Down’s syndrome being most prevalent. This year the age range was 5 to 72. Campers come from all over Indiana as well as adjoining states. A typical week of child campers would be 20 and perhaps 30 with adult campers

Starting in February we start our Organic Garden with tilling and some fertilization. Actually organic gardening is the only way we know to garden , having done it that way for over 60 years. We try to time our crops to coordinate with menu needs of the camp kitchen. We did pretty well this year with an abundance of lettuce, spinach, beans, peas, carrots, potatoes, cabbage, broccoli, squash and tomatoes. Corn comes in a little late and the new asparagus bed is expected to produce next year. Potatoes, peas, greens, cabbage, and root crops can be planted in March. Additionally we have many berry plants and fruit trees which are meeting with varying degrees of success. Fortunately we have ample water supplies but that means running hoses, sprinklers and soakers. We also have a small greenhouse which provides us with greens throughout the off season. It also allows us to start organic seed for the starter plants of tomatoes, broccoli, cabbage, onion, lettuce, chard and varieties of squash.



Part of David’s Organic Garden

Our garden furnishes all of the vegetables for staff, campers and guests. This is a tall order for a garden of about 1/3 acre. In June we serve 35 meals 3 times a day from Sunday evening to Thursday lunch. In July that increases to 48 persons per meal for the final 4 weeks.

We are supported by camp fees, donations and the United Way of Perry County of Indiana. Those interested in learning more on Anderson Woods Inc. can go to our website andersonwoods.org or call Judy Colby at 270 957 0260. Inquiries about staff, becoming a camper or volunteering one’s services or resources are always welcome. Anderson Woods Inc. is a not for profit 501 C (3) Corporation. -

IOGA Member David Colby and his wife Judy reside in Bristow, Indiana in south eastern Indiana

Editors' Corner

Dry Gardening

We must be doing something right with our soil. From the first part of May to the first part of August, we had basically no rain and very hot weather. And, WE DID NOT WATER OUR TOMATO PLANTS! Our tomato plants grew with little hint of drought and have produced abundantly. The only problem we had is some *Blossom End Rot* on some of the first tomatoes, in particular on the *Polish Linguisa* (an elongated tomato) and the *Green Zebra* varieties.

Soil Preparation: Our main garden is split into two halves. Each half is approximately 35x100 ft. For several years we have been placing our garden on alternate halves,

planting our garden on one half while dumping leaves and growing a cover crop on the other half. The soil is slightly more alkaline (higher PH) than we would like, so each year we have been adding to the garden half a 50 lb bag of Fertrell Cottonseed Meal (6-1-1) that lowers the PH of the soil slightly while providing some fertilization. This year we also added a 50 lb bag of Fertrell Super 3-2-3 fertilizer.



Tomato Plants August 3 after 3 Months of "No Rain" (1.98") and NO WATERING!



Claudia Standing in Red Clover Cover Crop Last Spring in Our Garden

Cover Crop: This last year we had a very lush cover crop of red clover that over wintered (See photo). We cut the clover in the middle of April and disked the crop into the soil. The clover provides organic material and some nitrogen to the soil.

Tomatoes: We had 64 heirloom tomato plants of various varieties spaced in a grid 4 feet apart in cages (See photo above). We grew most of the plants from seeds saved from last year and planted the seedlings the first part of May. The seedlings were somewhat leggy, so we used a post-hole digger and planted the roots down about 10" deep. In the bottom of each hole we mixed into the dirt a small amount of Fertrell Super 3-2-3 fertilizer with an appropriate amount of Mumsey's Magic Mix (without the cornmeal). Once the seedlings were established, we began covering the area around the tomato plants with 2-3" of commercial compost from Greencycle.

Subsoiler: In previous years we have had a a problem of standing water (not this year) that we thought might be caused by hardpan. A couple of years ago we purchased a subsoiler tool for our tractor and have been using it to break up any hardpan in our garden.

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LETTERS:

Iron X



I read the (July) newsletter article on Weed Woes. I can relate.

I did find a product called IronX that I really like (for killing dandelions). I got it from *Gardens Alive* in Lawrenceburg IN. It is a liquid made with iron. It has to be applied with at least 48 hours of dry weather afterward. Then a 2nd application is required, also with another 48 hour dry window. I have mixed it up in spray bottles & used in small applications.

Susan Knose

(Editors' Note: Also check out a similar product, *Ortho Elements*.)

KinderCare

I just wanted to share some information.

First of all, I am sorry that I was unable to attend this past meeting as I am sure I would have enjoyed it.

Two weeks ago, my son Zachary(8) and I went to KinderCare on the west side to talk with some munchkins about organic foods and gardening. We had a fabulous experience! It was a fairly small group of children, which actually made it a bit more intimate and we were able to discuss many facets of the subject. We brought some examples of organic foods, cracked open eggs; one from the store and one fresh off the farm to see the differences. They compared zucchini, squash and cucumbers store bought and out of our garden as well. I emphasized the importance of organics and also planting their own gardens; even if it was on their apartment patios in a box. We had a ball!

Just wanted to let you all know since I was unable to share at the meeting!

Best regards,

Lindsey Wall

Lindsey,

That is SO neat that you went and that you had such a great time! I'm sure the kids were impressed! That was a great idea to compare store eggs vs. organic eggs as I know there's a huge difference. Thanks very much for doing that. Our mission is to educate others and you certainly did that!

We had a great meeting in Bloomington and the Bloomington farm market was wonderful! If you've never been, we would strongly encourage you to go. Probably more than 50 booths, 4 or 5 groups of musicians, and hundreds of people. Lots of peaches and tomatoes and everything else too. Really fun!

Again, thanks for volunteering. Hope to see you in the fall.

Claudia

Hot Weather

It has been a difficult gardening season for everyone. We have rancher friends who live south of Tulsa Oklahoma who have been especially hit hard. It not only affects the crop production but it really does affect the psyche, especially my friend Laura who is a quadriplegic. On one of our hottest days here at home I checked the weather report of Laura's hometown and it was 15 degrees hotter there. Thus, I felt I had no right to complain.

We had beautiful kale, lettuce, onions, and beets early in the season. As the dry days continued and no rain in sight we began to dread what was coming.

At the start of the drought we decided that it would be prudent of us to start watering about half of our garden. We have not watered our gardens in the past so this was a new experience for us. Armed with a newly purchased weeper hose we selected the lucky plants and watered for few hours off and on during the late day. After about 3 weeks of that we were growing concerned about our well running dry. Figuring it was better to supplement our shelves of canned goods with 'store bought' beans and tomato juice than to drive a new well we ceased our watering routine.

Fortunately we have been able to harvest a few pickings of green beans and tomatoes. Unlike previous years where I could work most of the day and pressure can up 21 or 28 quarts of tomato juice, this year if we harvest a dishpan full it is a good day. I want to save every tomato I am able to, so, I cull, wash, and cut up the precious few tomatoes we harvest and bag them up for the freezer to add to the other days' gleanings until I have enough to cook them down and process them. Each year I try to can about 100 quarts of tomatoes (in various forms) and will be lucky to get 40 or 50 this year. We've shared our harvest with family and friends through the years but this year not so much so.

Some of the plants don't look too bad but they are stressed. Their fruit just falls off the weakened vines when Larry harvests them.

We recently took an inventory of last years canned beans and tomatoes and if this year's harvest continues to be a bust we still will be OK. It makes me appreciate the good year we had last year and glad that we worked to put up what we did. The 2-year stocking up is a good idea just for seasons like this.

The sweet corn was a disaster. We harvested 2 grocery bags of corn from eight 60' long rows. The corn started to tassel on 3' tall stalks. We had about a dozen decent ears but the rest have been pitiful, scrawny nubs.

Trying to be optimistic we will work to put out some Fall garden if we can.

We hope to hear better stories from the rest of the IOGA'ers.

*Larry and Brenda Johnson
Connersville*

Drought Benefits

For me, the drought has had many advantages along with trying challenges.

One of the benefits of the drought is

Climate Change--wake up!

Rosie Bishop

Labeling of genetically modified foods is required in more than 40 countries, but not in the United States. Polls have consistently shown that more than 90 percent of respondents want foods that contain genetically modified organisms to be labeled. Some states have tired of waiting for the FDA to label genetically modified foods. The November 6 ballot initiative in California would force "genetically modified" labeling and prevent manufacturers from labeling genetically modified foods as "natural." Vermont's legislature is considering a bill to require that genetically modified foods sold in the state be labeled. Monsanto has reportedly said that if Vermont passes the bill, the company will sue the state. For more information go to www.justlabelit.org.

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Dwight Boone, an IOGA member and retired farmer, says that breaking up the hardpan permits crops to do well during hot, dry seasons because roots can then penetrate soil layers deeper to reach moisture and nutrients. Also, the moisture that was trapped below the hardpan can now readily percolate up to the surface. And, having a layer of compost (or mulch) on top of the soil reduces evaporation and keeps the available soil moisture in the soil.

So, we think the main reasons that we are able to grow tomatoes without watering are 1) we add lots of organic material to our soil, 2) we add a layer of compost to the top of our soil each growing season, and 3) we breakup any hardpan that might exist. Organic material and the layer of compost are probably the primary reasons.

Though we had a worrisome dry spell here in Southern Indiana, we then started getting rains and the area is lush and verdant (mid August).

A 1300 gallon fiberglass tank filled from the garage roof runoff, helped us through the dry spell (See photo). After buying this property I was overjoyed to find the concrete slab outside the back door wasn't a patio, but a cistern top. Up to the height it leaks, it will hold 1200 cu ft (that is about 8600 gallon) so even when I forget to turn the garden hose off and drain the tank, I can refill from the cistern.



Now, That is Some Rain Barrel Paul! A 1300 Gallon Tank Being Filled by Garage Roof Runoff. (Also, You Must Have One Big Garage.)

We have a second garden plot not yet watered by a rain barrel. The 275 gal. caged plastic tanks in the background of the photo will play a part in that.

Annie introduced me to Dripworks (www.dripworks.com/). They have hose timers from wind-up models to battery powered programmable models for when you're going to be away for awhile. A wind-up timer saved our larger plot, with corn, melons and sweet potatoes.

Otherwise, mulch, mulch, mulch! -

Paul and Annie Matzek are IOGA members living in Elizabeth and Brownsburg, Indiana.

Directions from the North (on I-65 S): At exit 111, take ramp right for I-65 S / I-70 W toward Michigan St. / Ohio St. / Fletcher Ave. Go 0.5 miles and take ramp right toward New York St. / Michigan St. Continue straight on N Davidson St. 0.5 miles to E New York St. Turn left (east) onto E New York St and go 1.0 miles to N Hamilton Ave. Turn left (north) onto N Hamilton Ave. and go 460 ft. to 341 N. Hamilton Ave. on the right. Park on street.

Directions from the East (on I-70 W): At exit 85, take ramp right toward Rural St. / Keystone Ave. Turn left (south) and go 1.6 miles on N Rural St. to E Michigan St. Turn right (west) onto E Michigan St. and go 0.5 miles to N. Hamilton Ave. Turn left (south) onto N. Hamilton Ave. and go 0.1 mile to 341 N. Hamilton Ave. on the left. Park on street.

Directions from the South & West (on I-65 N / I-70 W): At exit 111, take ramp right and follow signs for Washington St. (0.2 mile). Turn right (east) onto US-40 / E Washington St. and go 0.9 miles to N Hamilton Ave. Turn left (north) onto N Hamilton Ave. and go 0.3 miles to 341 N. Hamilton Ave. on the right. Park on street.

Ask us...!

President – Lynne Sullivan
(317) 574-1921
sagaemoo@yahoo.com



VP/Programs – Beth Englert
(317) 459-5030
BethEnglert82@gmail.com

Secretary – Margaret Smith
(317) 283-3146
margaret.smith803@gmail.com

Treasurer – Ron Clark
(317) 769-6566
ronaldrayc@gmail.com

Editors – Claudia and Ron Clark
(317) 769-6566
ronaldrayc@gmail.com

Treasurer's Report

3rd Quarter 2012

Opening Balance July 1, 2012 \$ 2956.59

Income	
Membership Dues	\$ 64.00
<u>T Shirt & Hat Sales</u>	<u>\$ 10.00</u>
Total	\$ 74.00

Expenses	
Newsletter (Stamps)	\$ 18.00
Hosting Gratuity	\$ 50.00
<u>Shelter Rental</u>	<u>\$ 60.00</u>
Total	\$ 128.00

Closing Balance Sep. 30, 2012 \$ 2902.59

Respectfully submitted by Ron Clark, Treasurer

Todd Butler, Fishers, IN 46038
Oliver Wojtyna & Amie May, Cicero, IN 46034
Kelly & Scott Henderson, Indianapolis, IN 46205

Welkom

Mark your calendar

I O G A generally meets quarterly on the third Saturday of the month. Mark your calendar for upcoming meetings.

October 20, 2012
January 19, 2013
April 20, 2013
(Plant Auction)
July 20, 2013



Dues are \$10.00 per individual member, and \$12.00 for a dual membership (same address, one newsletter).

To join, please send your annual dues to:

Please include ALL of the following information:

I prefer my newsletter to be ___ emailed ___ mailed.



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