

**IN THIS ISSUE****Rosie Oaks'
Tomatoes****Meadowlark
Organic Farm****Gary Shideler
Lives Off the
Land In Warren
County****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.

**Beulah and Clarence Cobb are Charter
Members of IOGA**

Long time IOGA members, Beulah and Clarence Cobb, are charter members of IOGA!!!! They are real mentors in the world of organic gardening! Beulah was teaching organic gardening classes in the early 1970s when she heard about a new group being formed in Indianapolis. That first organizational meeting of IOGA was in 1970 or 1971 and was held on east 38th Street at what was then a Purdue Extension building. There were lots of meetings in Johnson Co. and on the south side of Indy. Beulah recalls about twenty or thirty people went to that first meeting and everyone was very excited. A real back to the earth movement! Beulah was secretary/treasurer. Beulah was always interested in organic gardening, and she has a background in chemistry and biology. Her mother was a big fan of J. I. Rodale, one of the first advocates of a return to sustainable agriculture and organic farming. So Beulah learned from her mother too! Beulah recalls that the



IOGA Members Beulah and
Clarence Cobb

chemical companies used to advertise that chemical gardening was the easy way to garden – no messy manure to deal with! Early IOGA meetings had forty to fifty people and lots of discussion about how to garden and farm organically. They also visited farms and would call other members to invite them to visit their gardens.

Beulah and Clarence live east of Kokomo, where Beulah was raised. There are many Amish and Mennonite in the area. Beulah and Clarence moved to their present home when Clarence retired. They bought their farm in 1967 and built their charming home of old brick and weathered pine in 1975. The home is full of recycled materials – an old barn provided the timbers for the beams that support the house. The house is framed up like an Amish barn and uses wooden pegs. A mud room and greenhouse are attached that also hold dry firewood for the winter. A smoke house that Clarence built is at the back and he likes to smoke his own ham and bacon from his pigs. The smoking enhances the flavor and dries and preserves the meat. Clarence, as a retired pathologist, loves to do the actual butchering but doesn't do that any longer. But he has the butcher save the head so he can

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make his favorite sausage and head cheese! There is also a well house, and of course a clothes line! The Cobbs are “green” in every part of their lives!

They have 78 acres including eight acres of old growth forest and forty acres that are a tree plantation of 22,000 hardwood and conifers which is checked once a year by the state forestry division. They also have a hayfield and pasture for a few cows. The Cobbs have two compost piles, and are big believers in composting. Their “his and hers” gardens are still going strong, which they say makes for a happy marriage!! Clarence likes neat rows whereas Beulah is more casual, with room for any volunteer plants that come up! Beulah says that that with “his and hers” gardens, they don’t accidentally plant seeds on top of each other’s plantings. Nor do they cultivate through a newly planted row. Clarence grows potatoes, peppers, zucchini, cucumbers, beans, cabbage, broccoli, onions, and garlic. Beulah’s garden includes a white peach tree, ground cherries, herbs, sunflowers, tomatoes, rhubarb, and other vegetables too. Beulah says cucumbers and tomatoes do well together. They have numerous apple trees and grape vines. Clarence makes his own wine!



Beulah’s Garden and the Cobb’s 1870 Log Cabin

Next to the gardens is a wonderful 1870s log cabin, furnished with antiques. They had it moved from another location a few miles away. On the wood floor are strewn stems of tansy, both for fragrance and to keep bugs away. Beulah really thinks “strewing herbs” work.

IOGA is fortunate to have such good mentors in our group! Beulah and Clarence were ahead of their time, and we are all still trying to catch up with them!

Nominating Committee Announces Slate of Officers

The election of officers for the next two years will occur at the IOGA October meeting. The nominating committee has slated the following IOGA members:

President: Lynne Sullivan
Vice President/Programs: Paula Boone
Secretary: Rosie Oaks
Treasurer: Ron Clark

Nominations from the floor will also be accepted at the October meeting.

The nominating committee consisted of IOGA members Claudia Clark, Lynn Jenkins, and Rosie Bishop.

IOGA Member List

In order to improve communications among IOGA members, we would like to provide to each IOGA member with a *list of members*, that includes name, address, phone number, and e-mail address. We have been reluctant to do so because of privacy concerns. Thus, before we provide a *list of members*, we would like to ask that any member that **does not** wish to have his e-mail address and/or his phone number and/or his address listed in a list of members to contact Ron Clark at ronaldrayc@gmail.com or phone 317-769-6566.

The *list of members* will be a paper copy and would probably be mailed as an insert with the IOGA newsletter.

UPCOMING MEETINGS

Mark your calendar

IOGA generally meets quarterly on the third Saturday of the month. Mark your calendar for upcoming meetings.

October 17, 2009
January 16, 2010
April 17, 2010
(Plant Auction)
July 17, 2010



Tomatoes

by Rosie Oaks

When it comes to tomatoes, there are as many ways to grow them as there are gardeners who grow them. Since nowadays there are hundreds of tomato varieties available to both the home gardener and the commercial grower, most anybody can find a way to tuck some tomato plants in the backyard, no matter what the soil type or climate are.



The Many Tomato Varieties that Rosie Grows

Tomatoes are known for not being finicky plants. They can grow in sandy soil as well as in clay, they tolerate a wider pH range than most veggies, and they don't mind heat, drought or rain. All in all they are very easy going and adaptable plants. And maybe this is their greatest appeal.

I started to grow tomatoes twenty years ago. Back then I didn't know much about plants, soil chemistry and the organic world. All I knew was that since I had a tiny piece of land behind my house, I wanted to use it to grow food for myself and my family. Ever since I've been hooked on backyard vegetable gardening, and even if my plant selection has changed every year, tomatoes have always been a staple in my garden.

My first tomato plants were all of the *Early Girl* type. I still grow some *Early Girl*, but in the course of the years I learned to add more varieties, some very exotic heirlooms and other more traditional hybrids. As long as the tomatoes are red and medium to large, I'll grow just about anything.

I start my (many) seedlings indoors at the beginning of April. I use a soilless medium and growing trays, and I sow two seeds per cell. Since I don't own a heating mat, I place the covered trays on top of grow lights, which I keep on for at least 10 hours a day, and wait. I make sure that the soil stays consistently moist by checking it daily and spraying it with a light water mist. Usually, if my timing is right, the first seedlings emerge in 4 to 7 days.

At that point I remove the lid and stop watering from the top.

I position the trays under the grow lights, at about one inch from the light bulbs, and clip a small portable fan to the grow lights' frame to improve air circulation. When the seedlings have one set of true leaves I remove, by cutting, one of the two seedlings if they both sprouted in a single cell. By the time they have two sets of true leaves, the seedlings are ready for transplant in bigger containers; and that is also the time I may occasionally add some very diluted, weak organic fertilizer to their watering routine.

When the weather turns warmer, around the second week of May in my area, I bring my young tomato plants outside. I let them out there, in a semi-shaded area for a couple of hours, then they go back in under the grow lights. Everyday I let them out for longer and longer periods of time, until I finally "release" them and allow them to spend their first night out.

I transplant them in the garden after May 20th, in beds that I had amended in the fall with half-finished compost, shredded leaves and coffee grounds. In the fall I also plant Winter Rye where I plan to grow tomatoes, and the area is lightly tilled a month prior to transplanting.

I dig a hole ten inches deep, add one handful of bone meal, one of kelp, one of cornmeal, one of powdered milk and one-half handful of Epsom salts. I also add two aspirins and one tablespoon of *Sustane*, a special slow release organic fertilizer specific for tomatoes. I remove two sets of leaves from the bottom of the tomato stem, bury the plant deep and insert two toothpicks next to the stem to discourage cutworms.

Since I am essentially a city gardener, and I own two active outdoor cats, I don't have to worry much about critters and large animal pests. Sometime the mourning doves do cause quite a bit of damage to the young transplants, but most of the plants usually make it. I don't prune my tomatoes, and I prefer supporting them with large cages made of steel reinforcing mesh. The cages are five ft. tall and about three ft. wide, a size that insures plenty of growing space for most tomato varieties.

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Speaking of which, when it comes to tomatoes, deciding what kind to grow may be the biggest dilemma.

I am totally faithful only to a couple of varieties, *Polish Linguisa* and *Big Beef*.

Every year I grow my two favorites, along with a few tried and true (but not necessarily by me), and several new varieties: some thirty plants in all. My search for the perfect tomato is ongoing.

I've experimented with Ukrainian heirlooms (both Ukraine and Indiana have similar growing conditions and climates), black tomatoes, white tomatoes, dozens of paste tomatoes and beefsteak types. As I mentioned earlier, I am unconditionally partial to red tomatoes, so even a tasty black kind does not fully satisfy me.

Nevertheless I must admit that *Cherokee Purple* is an excellent tomato, and I fully recommend it.

Another great, not-quite-red salad variety is *Eva Purple Ball*. As for paste, *San Marzano* is far superior to *Roma*, and *Pompeii* is certainly a winner as well.

Linosa tomato, an heirloom smaller than *Roma*, is one of the tastiest. *Amish Paste* is quite popular these days, but I find the sprawly plant a bit difficult to manage.

In the beefsteak category, *Mule Team* is one of the best, and another impressive, rare variety is *Ashleigh*.

Amongst the better known types, *Delicious* and *Brandywine* take the prize.

And then there are the cherry varieties. My absolute favorite is *Black Cherry*, easy to grow and dependable, but *Sweet 100* and *Sweetie* are really good and amazingly productive.

I could go on and on discussing tomato varieties, but I'd rather mention one last thing: unless you are growing hybrids, saving your own tomato seeds is a very simple and natural thing to do. I save mine at the



Rosie's Tomato Patch

end of every growing season, and I treasure them.

The very act of saving seeds is what makes me feel that perhaps I am contributing something to the process as well, that I am somehow showing both my respect and gratitude to Mother Nature by preserving something so essential.

And what can be more essential than a tomato seed...

Rosie Oaks is an IOGA member and devoted tomato grower living on the south side of Indianapolis



Linosa Tomato



Mule Team Tomato



Ashleigh Tomato

July IOGA Meeting

IOGA met Sat. July 18 in southern Indiana at the scenic Yellowwood State Forest. We enjoyed a delicious pitch-in feast while sitting outside the picnic shelter, overlooking Yellowwood lake! Cool and overcast, but perfect fall weather – even if it was in July!!

Twenty-two members and guests got to hear about Paula Boone's planting biodynamically – according to the constellations. She is a firm believer after using this system for two years. It is a system developed in the 1930s by Rudolf Steiner.

We had Q&A about squash vine borers, raising potatoes, small gardens, fences for deer (6 feet tall!!), and heard about the entertaining and interesting book by Barbara Kingsolver, "Animal, Vegetable, and Miracle."

Lynn Jenkins was applauded for her work on the new IOGA website! It looks really nice and is drawing attention to our group! President Fred Soskel announced the nominating committee is composed of Lynn Jenkins, Rosie Bishop, and Claudia Clark. They will present a slate of officers at the October meeting. Lynn Jenkins announced IOGA is now on Facebook and has 83 friends in only two weeks! Treasurer Ron Clark reported that the IOGA treasury contains \$1669.73 at the end of the first quarter.

The group then drove in a caravan to the Meadowlark Farm to hear a delightful and informative talk by Marsha Veldman, owner and farmer. Among the rolling hills of Brown Co., just east of Bloomington, Marsha has farmed 2.5 acres since 1997. The hilly land is beautifully maintained and a large greenhouse built by Marsha and her husband is very interesting. Marsha wanted to produce her own food, wanted to not damage the ecosystem, and wanted to garden sustainably. She uses a lot of manure from a horse barn next door. She uses lots of buckwheat as a green manure crop. The lush areas of buckwheat were impressive. As soon as a crop is finished in her raised beds with grass paths in between, she sows buckwheat. After 5 weeks the buckwheat flowers, and she cuts it before it seeds. She plows it under when she is ready to plant another crop. She limits use of fossil fuel. She does not buy plastic. In an effort to not disrupt the structure of the soil, she only tills the soil lightly and does not go deep. She wants to maintain the healthy soil structure. She does have a lot of clay and to break up the hardpan that results from the clay, she has a broadfork that she got at Johnnie's Seeds that she uses to deeply aerate the soil without damaging the soil structure and to manually break up the hard clay.



Marsha Veldman of
Meadowlark Organic Farm

Marsha has lots of flowers to attract beneficial insects and even has solitary bee and wasp houses to attract pollinators. She has an electric fence that she baits with peanut butter to keep deer away. When planting potatoes, she puts them in mounds then covers them with 18" of straw. The potatoes do come up through the deep straw! She cuts her asparagus to the ground in the fall and puts the cuttings away from the bed to deter insects from over-wintering. She puts aged sawdust on the bed as a cover.

Marsha raises a lot of edamame (edible soy beans) and sells to local restaurants and at the Bloomington farmers' market. She raises *Luscious* Sweet Corn and has had good luck with that variety. She ties her tomatoes to a fence to promote air circulation. She raises a lot of basil and preserves it for winter by freezing it in ice cube trays. She sows lettuce for fall in mid August.

A great day in the hills of Brown County and lots of great gardening information!

We look forward to our next field trip to Seldom Seen Farm in Hendricks Co. (northeast of Danville) on Sat. Oct. 17 at 11:30!!

IOGA July Meeting at Yellowwood State Forest ...



Ron Clark answers a gardening question during Q&A before the pitch-in lunch



New IOGA member Sandy Trimble describes her garden during introductions



Claudia Clark, Kim Ball, and Diane Ball (left) and Jo Betty Ingram, John Englert, Dave Englert, and Dwight Boone (above) listen to Q&A for gardening information



... and the Tour of the Meadowlark Organic Farm



IOGA members enjoy touring Marsha's lovely farm ...



Marsha explains her solitary bee and wasp house to Lynne Sullivan, Bob **Layman, Ken Wallack's mother, and Jo Betty Ingram.** (The house is used to attract pollinators)



... and her greenhouse



Marsha demonstrates to her broadfork which is used to aerate the soil without damaging the soil structure and to break up hardpan soil. Watching are Dave **Englert, Rosie Oaks and Rosie Oaks' son.**



Claudia Clark, Jo Betty Ingram, Jill Heinzen, and Diane Ball (left) listen to Marsha in the greenhouse she built

FOCUS ON OUR MEMBERS

Former IOGA President Gary Shideler Lives Off the Land In Warren County

Gary Shideler became an IOGA member in 1995 and is a past president of IOGA. He moved from Indianapolis to Warren County, north of Terre Haute, in 2001 and let his membership lapse. This year he has rejoined IOGA.

Gary initially purchased 48 acres of land in Warren County in 1991, but now owns more than 200 acres. His property is within three miles of the Wabash River and as a consequence is hilly with many ravines. He has planted more than 48,000 trees on his property!! He says life has been good to him and now he wants to give back and make the world a better place. With this in mind, he planted hardwoods and conifers, taking highly erodible land out of production and instead planting trees. He also has found the government will help with the cost of this reforestation by providing half the cost. One of the interesting hardwoods that he plants is butternut, also called white walnut. He chose Warren County because it is very rural...a county with no Wal-Mart and no fast food! He also pointed out that thirty minutes north are hundreds of wind turbines as that part of Indiana is very windy and Indiana's first wind farm opened last year in Benton County. (editor's note: By year end, Indiana should move past S. Dakota and Wyoming in wind power production.)

Gary is a very hard worker. Results of his hard work are all over his land – he has built dams, built three ponds, is building more dams – all to stop erosion in the ravines around his property. This erosion is a problem nation wide, as it carries good topsoil away from Indiana farm land all the way to the Gulf of Mexico. He works with the Natural Resource Conservation Service in constructing these dams and ponds. He has large earth moving equipment of various types, and he keeps busy – as seen by huge mounds of dirt everywhere! His ponds are stocked and he gets a lot of his food by fishing his own ponds. His favorite is Georgia Giant Bluegill. He has a settling pond in addition to the stocked pond, so dirt can settle out and keep the larger pond clearer. He has bird houses for wood ducks to encourage wildlife. After moving dirt around to form the dams, he plants natural

prairie grasses and cool season grasses. He also hunts, and has lots of venison. He's really living off the land! He also has chickens, so gets lots of eggs.

Gary has a garden too where he uses manure from his chickens, sheep, goats, and a llama. One method of weed control that he uses is a propane burner. He says that you don't have to burn the weeds. Just heat them and they dry up and die. An interesting observation by Gary is that if he plants tomato *seeds* along with tomato *plants*, the plants only bear tomatoes about a week ahead of the plants that come from seeds!

A big problem in Indiana is the invasive Russian Olive. It was used along many roads in Warren County, and now there are acres and acres of solid Russian Olive. Gary not only digs up the Russian Olive on his property, but also does it for others. He has a large root rake that is attached to a dozer that is very effective in getting the Russian Olive out. This again is a government sponsored program, and Gary gets paid for doing some of this work. Gary also discussed the invasive purple loosestrife. Rather than using Roundup (he dislikes using chemicals unless absolutely necessary) he recommends uprooting the loosestrife or putting a black plastic bag over it for awhile in order to kill it.

Gary has made part of his land into a Classified Wildlife area. It is in a trust for 30 years. He has a forest improvement plan to determine if his forest is healthy. One of the interesting trees he has planted is the American Chestnut, which was almost wiped out by disease many years ago. He hopes it can make a comeback. He has bluebird boxes in this area also, to attract more wildlife.

Your editors were impressed with everything Gary is doing to make his land healthier. It certainly keeps him healthy too, with all that exercise! Gary is a good steward of the land, and IOGA can be proud of what he does.

GARY'S GARDEN TIP

“You don't have to plant the whole package of Zucchini seeds”

Ask us...!

President – Fred Soskel
317-254-9607
fsoskel@soskelingram.com

VP/Programs – Paula Boone
317-758-4789
boone@logical123net

Secretary – Ann Leatherman
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plantmom45@aol.com

Treasurer – Ron Clark
317-769-6566
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Editors – Claudia and Ron Clark
317-769-6566
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Treasurer's Report

3rd Quarter 2009

Opening Balance July 1, 2009 **\$1669.73**

Income

Membership Dues \$ 36.00

Total **\$ 36.00**

Expenses

Newsletter \$ 25.60

Website Development \$500.00

Hosting Gratuity \$ 50.00

Total **\$141.59**

Closing Balance Sept. 30, 2009 **\$1130.13**

Respectfully submitted by Ron Clark, Treasurer

New IOGA Members

Sandy Trimble & Mari Walker, Westfield, IN 46074

Jill & David Heinzen, Bloomington, IN 46256

Jess Trimble & Adam Clevenger, Indianapolis, IN 46202

How do I join IOGA?

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:

I O G A
7282 E 550 S
Whitestown, IN 46075

Please include ALL of the following information:

Full Name
2nd Name (if dual membership)
Address
Phone Number
Email Address

IOGA
Meeting
Sat. October 17
11:30 am

Seldom Seen Farm
2525 N 425 E, Danville, IN 46122

11:30 Arrive at the *Seldom Seen Farm*
11:30—12:30 Introductions & Gardening Q&A
12:30— 1:00 Business Meeting & Election of Officers
1:00— 2:00 Great Pitch-in Lunch
(bring food to share plus table service)
2:00 Tour begins

Seldom Seen Farm is owned and operated by John Ferree and Kelly Funk. They are located northeast of Danville, Indiana and southwest of Brownsburg, Indiana. *Seldom Seen Farm* occupies about 15 acres of ground on a 160 acre farm that has been in John's family for some time.

Seldom Seen Farm sells their produce at the Broad Ripple and the Traders Point Creamery Farmers Markets plus directly through a Community Supported Agriculture (CSA).

For the pitch-in lunch, bring a favorite dish filled with food to share and your plate, fork, and drink.

Take I-74 to the Brownsburg exit (Exit 66). Go south on SR 267 1.2 miles to the center of Brownsburg (US-136 and SR 267). Continue south on SR 267 an additional 2.2 miles to CR 350 N which is a "T" road. Turn right (west) on CR 350 N and go 2.8 miles to CR 425 E. Turn left (south) on CR 425 E and go 0.9 miles to 2nd "S" curve and take a left (east) into the driveway of the *Seldom Seen Farm*

Everyone welcome! Questions, call Paula Boone 317-758-4789 or cell phone (if lost) 317-453-9773. Remember to car pool, if possible.

Join us and bring a friend!

Hoosier Organic Gardener
Claudia and Ron Clark, editors
7282 E 550 S
Whitestown, IN 46075



Join us!
IOGA Meeting
Sat. October 17