



April 2007

# Hoosier Organic Gardener

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for Indy?

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### 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.

## Worms in the Green Apple But no holes in the board

By Rosie Bishop



Realizing that this is an Indiana newsletter, I again bring a New York perspective. Not long ago billboards promoting our Indiana capitol city proclaimed, "MOVE OVER NEW YORK, APPLE IS OUR MIDDLE NAME." The two very different areas have a lot in common regarding greening and gardening.

During the past two months in Manhattan assisting our grandson's recovery and rehab after surgery, I took walks with our composting granddog, often to the nearby park and environmental center. At the center this time I was pleased to have found a beautiful "Greenmap," a colorful 11x17 foldout titled "Worms in the Green Apple: Compost Map of Manhattan." Included are many of the 200 identified community gardens in NYC, the "whats," "hows," and "how-tos" of composting, online resources and a "Rotline" for information on making and using compost. The legend includes school composting sites, public composting, worm bins, greenmarkets, rooftop garden, native plants, solar energy and great views—ideas to consider for our IOGA website. I have requested samples for our next meeting.

Having spent several fascinating hours back in Indiana researching the website and finding only one Greenmap in the state (Muncie), I am excited about possibilities for our IOGA group to consider. The website, [www.greenmap.org](http://www.greenmap.org), offers unique regional projects from around the world. I urge you to visit the site and to consider the following three paragraphs as they could relate to our IOGA mission:

"Each local Green Map group spends time:

- planning and setting goals
- researching their town's eco-resources
- promoting the project and developing support
- designing and publishing their Green Map

"Six to ten months is a reasonable time estimate for completing your Green Map. Map teams can be just a few people or quite large. Each

group determines how its Green Map will look, its format and how it will be funded. The team owns the Green Map they have created, which they can sell or distribute however they decide.

"Quite often, the map's initial concept evolves as it takes shape, so flexibility is important. Many Green Maps are conceived as not-for-profit educational projects; others are seen as ECONOMIC development projects, with sales funding later editions and other urban sustainability work."

As I glanced over the map and reflected on Nature's wondrous decomposition system where awe meets WOW, Chilo, my black Chihuahua-terrier companion scraped away a pile of leaves, made his deposit of waste and scratched back soil and leaves on top. He modeled the best of recycling practice and layering before I read him a word! I did clean up his mess like a responsible urban citizen. But I thought of the woods and meadows where that natural process has ever sustained Earth and its flora and fauna. And how wise we are to extend composting in our communities. These words are printed on the NY map and captured my sentiments:

*My whole life had been spent waiting for an epiphany, a manifestation of God's presence, the kind of transcendent, magical experience that lets you see your place in the big picture. And that is what I had with my first compost heap.*

Bette Midler,

with the New York Restoration Project

See more from Rosie on Page 9



*Above:* About three years ago, Gayle and Kathy began constructing “high tunnels” to extend the growing season.

*Right.* Kathy Ambler stands among the rows of fresh greens ready for harvest in mid-January.

*Left:* Yeager Farms offers a variety of specialty vegetables for Asian and Indian cuisine including greens, herbs, eggplants, and okra, as well as edible varieties of gourd.



## **Yeager Farms**

Fairland, Shelby County

Gayle Swant and Kathy Ambler hosted our January meeting.

**For more info on their produce, contact Kathy Ambler at [yeagerfarms@comcast.net](mailto:yeagerfarms@comcast.net) or 317.363.5418.**

*Above:* The log home is surrounded by wildlife friendly native plantings.

*Right:* Even with snow and cold temps, the high tunnels protect the crops without additional heat.



# The Compost Chronicles

## Diary of a Start-Up Organic Farmer

by Maria Smietana

One of the things we've accepted in the three or so years we've been farming is that everything starts out small and gets bigger, and it's not just the veggies. If we're lucky, it's not the weeds, either, but weeds are a topic for another time.

Plot size, or what the pros refer to as "area under cultivation," seems to be the first thing to creep upward, often with no realization on the part of the farmer of what is happening. But we had a hint of recollection in early March. With the last vestiges of the February blizzard still on the ground, we were already outside, intending only to till under the dry remnants of last year's crops. But then greed sets in. "Just go on a few more feet," I cajole Steadfast Spouse as he spins the tines of the new rototiller into the cold early-spring soil of the largest tomato patch. (You guessed it—equipment grows too. The puny tillers that Steadfast Spouse used to haul in from the tool rental places have been replaced with a big red monster with its own garage space and a credit card payment attached to it.)

"We really need to go a few rows further south, especially if you can take that scrawny little hawthorn tree down," I holler over the clatter of the machine. So this is how a modest kitchen garden, in just a few seasons, turns into multiple patches that measure thousands of square feet, and suddenly we're casting greedy eyes on the neighbor's unused pastures across the lane. Never mind that the neighbors haven't indicated any desire to sell, and our bank account hasn't indicated any ability to buy. But let's face it, if finances were a serious consideration, nobody in their right mind would be an organic farmer.



When plot size increases, fencing seems to follow. Suddenly, the sheer size of the muddy plot stretching out before our eyes invokes a sense of protectiveness and ownership like nothing we've felt before. Where once the local wildlife were cute little fellow dwellers on our country homestead, they're now furry marauders that must be kept out for fear that they may eat half our year's livelihood. So we start buying up fencing like firemen at a water sale. Home center managers all across the metro area probably have store security tailing us after our fifth trip in for 8-foot T-posts. "Yeah, George? Manager 21 here," you can just see them whispering into their cell phone-walkie talkie-stun gun tazers. "It's the two nuts in the beat-up Ford with the Boone County plates again. Yup, caught 'em in aisle 14, third time this week. Keep an eye on 'em wouldja? I think they might be fencing off their own country. Ya think we oughta alert Homeland Security?"

Fortunately, some things don't need fencing to grow and thrive. My worm colony, which got off to a rather inauspicious start nearly a year ago, survived the winter in a cool corner of the garage, and now has more new members than bikers at a Harley convention. It's probably a sign that

I'm spending too much time by myself, but I love plunging my hand into the cool wet compost and pulling out a scoop of the fine plump wigglers to show off to anyone unfortunate enough to be visiting, along with unsolicited lessons on various aspects of vermiculture. It occurred to me that this is how people get labeled as eccentric.

But I know I've found kindred spirits at the organic farmer's market where my cautious request for permission to sell the wiggly commodity was met with unbridled enthusiasm. Fortunately, one of the many "worm how-to" manuals that appeared in my Christmas stocking had a chapter on optimal marketing and packaging. I also learned how to separate my mature breeders (they grow rings) from the bait stock, and get them to start a whole new tribe in their own bin. If only beans and tomatoes were so easy to cultivate! Now, if I could only find a way to stamp the farm logo onto the tiny rear ends of those worms before I sell them far and wide, I'd really be on to something.

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*Maria Smietana is a regular vendor at Traders Point Farmers Market where she sells home-baked bread and organically grown vegetables. She gardens in Zionsville, IN and is treasurer of IOGA..*

**G**reen lacewings are predatory insects found in various habitats. The common green lacewing (*Chrysoperla carnea*) occurs throughout North America, while other species are more restricted in distribution.

The light green adult has long, slender antennae, golden eyes, and large, veined, gauze-like wings that are 1/2 to 1/3 inch long. It is a slow-flying, nocturnal insect that feeds on nectar and pollen. They are often attracted to lights at night, so you may see them sitting on your house or garage door if you leave the lights on for a while. The female lacewing lays eggs

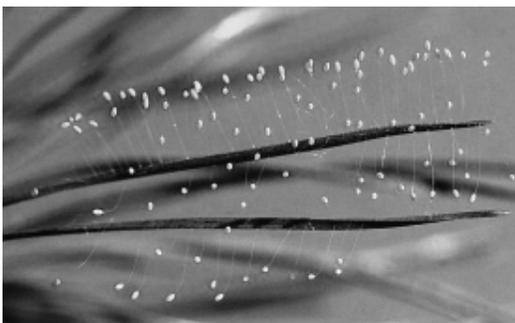
usually in groups on leaves, each egg held away from the leaf surface on the end of a slender stalk. A female can lay up to 300 eggs over a period of 3-4 weeks.

The larva, commonly called an aphidlion, resembles a green-gray alligator with mouthparts like pincers. An aphidlion seizes and punctures its prey with long, sickle-shaped jaws, injects paralyzing venom, and sucks out the body fluids. After feeding and growing to 1/2 inch in length during a 2-3 week period, the larva spins a spherical, white silken cocoon in which it pupates. The adult emerges in about 5 days through a round hole that it cuts in the top of the cocoon. It overwinters as a pupa within its cocoon or as an adult, depending on the species.

An aphidlion is a voracious feeder and can consume up to 200 aphids or other prey per week. In addition to aphids, it will eat mites, insect eggs, thrips, mealybugs, immature whiteflies and small caterpillars. Aphidlions will also consume each other if no other prey are available.

Green lacewings are available from many commercial suppliers. Green lacewings are usually sold as eggs, but also may be sent as larvae or adults. Eggs are sent in a packing material (rice hulls along with moth eggs for food so the larvae will be less likely to eat each other) to cushion and separate the emerging larvae during shipment. The lacewings should be released as soon as they begin to hatch.

Releases are made by sprinkling the contents of the container onto infested



Green Lacewing eggs on pine needles

The newly hatched larvae will be very tiny (about the same size as the eggs) so you may have difficulty seeing them. The released aphidlions will travel a considerable distance, up to 100 feet, in search of prey. Releasing larvae

## The Green Lacewing



by Damian Sherling



Green Lacewing Larva, "Aphidlion"



early in the morning or late in the day when it is cooler, or on a cloudy day, increases the chances they will survive.

The predatory larvae feed for 2-3 weeks before they become adults. The adults must have a source of nectar, pollen or honeydew to feed on in the general vicinity of the pest area to stimulate egg laying, or they will leave. Providing an adequate food supply and suitable adult habitat can contribute to lacewings remaining and reproducing in your backyard. Additional releases can provide a continuous supply of larvae if adults do not stay and reproduce.

The number of lacewings needed for effective control depends on the pest population and climatic conditions. For control of moderate aphid infestations in home gardens, 5-10 lacewing eggs per plant or 1,000 eggs per 200 square feet are recommended. Two or three successive releases made at two-week intervals are better than a single release. Suppliers usually make recommendations based on specific situations. These insects are extremely effective under certain conditions, especially in protected or enclosed areas such as a greenhouse, but they may fail to survive and provide control if conditions are not favorable.

*Damian has his MS in Entomology, and enjoys his backyard garden where he teaches his three young daughters about the wonderful world of insects.*

Photo Credits: Jim Kalisch, Dept. of Entomology, University of Nebraska-Lincoln

Beneficial Beesties

## Thanks from Linda:

I want to extend my heartfelt appreciation to everyone who represented the IOGA at this year's Flower and Patio Show! It is a unique opportunity to reach people with varying levels of gardening knowledge and expertise. Efforts like yours are important to help us spread the word about more earth-healthy and natural gardening practices in Indiana. Thanks! Linda



Maria Smietana	Lynel Duffy
Marilyn Spurgeon	Kathy Massari
Karen Jameson	Lynn Jenkins
Ann Leatherman	D' Aine Greene
Marsha Alexander	Rosie Bishop
George & Betsy Wilson	Rosie Oaks

And thanks back to Linda for organizing the efforts!

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### Your tax dollars at work for Earth and You!

ATTRA is the National Sustainable Agriculture Information Service, funded by USDA. It is a source for the latest in sustainable agriculture and organic farming news, publications, events and funding opportunities. Information provided on organics: soil and fertilizer pest control, growing vegetables, flowers, fruits, herbs, livestock, marketing, certification and more. Available at 1-800-346-9140, online or by print subscription.

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## Treasurer's Report—1st Quarter 2007

**Opening Balance January 01, 2007**      **\$2111.96**

### Income

Dues '07	\$384.00
Donations with Dues	\$4.00
Correction to Q4 '06 Report	\$60.00
<u>Bank Interest—Dec-Feb</u>	<u>\$7.36</u>

**Total**      **\$455.36**

### Expenses

January 07 Newsletter	\$221.08
Conservation Day Registration	\$125.00
January Mtg.-Host Gratuity	\$50.00
Earth Day Booth Fee	\$51.00
Orchard in Bloom Booth Fee	\$137.00
2007 Liability Insurance	\$162.00
Misc. Printing/Postage	\$45.16
Printing-Gardening with Nature	\$31.48
Bank Service Charges—Dec-Feb	\$00.00

New Checks      \$23.10

**Total**      **\$845.82**

**Closing Balance March 26, 2007**      **\$1721.50**

*Respectfully submitted by Maria Smietana, Treasurer*

## IOGA Meeting Minutes

January 20,2007

Attendance: about 22 people.

Gathered at 11:00 at Yeager Farms for pitch-in lunch, business meeting, and tour.

Seminar wrap-up from October Gardening Naturally seminar. We ended about \$1300 in the red, but there was money in the treasury to cover expenses. Discussion about options in the future that might improve the seminar and make it more cost effective.

Gift wrapping as fund raiser was a success with almost \$300 earned in donations.

Jan.23 Conservation Day at the Statehouse

April 21<sup>st</sup> – Annual Plant Auction

April 28<sup>th</sup> – Earth Day

Web Development Committee: Need to do more to maintain the site. We have lots of hits. Need to have a group with ideas about what more we can do to develop site, several suggestions. Need to develop committee to work on this. Asked for volunteers.

Dues Increase: Due to increasing costs need to raise due to \$10.00 single, \$12.00 family.

Approved by voice vote with no opposed.

Possible sponsorship of book tour for the 100 Mile Diet. Ann gave quick overview of the concept of the 100 Mile Diet. There was interest in assisting to Sponsor. Lynn Jenkins will follow-up.

Indiana Living Green magazine: Launching Earth Day.

Web site IndianaLivingGreen.com. Can get subscription on line. Free through Marsh Stores.

Respectfully submitted,

Ann Leatherman

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The Central Indiana Land Trust Inc. (CILTI) is proud to announce a historic coming together of environmental representatives and fine art organizations to celebrate an art show entitled "Preserving Nature." Some of the state's finest landscape artists have been chosen to render scenes from 14 of CILTI's scenic nature preserves. These paintings will be presented to the public on Saturday, April 14, 2007. Renowned environmental author, Bill McKibben will deliver the keynote address. McKibben is the author of the bestselling book, *The End of Nature* and has been a regular contributor to the *Orion* magazine. He is an advocate for local economic sustainability and the reduction of global warming.

The program will begin at 4:30 p.m. on April 14th in the Artsgarden at Circle Centre Mall, downtown Indianapolis. This will be a unique opportunity for the art and environmental communities to become familiar with one another and realize the common bond we share with this important issue. Tickets will be available at the door for \$10.00 each. For more information, please visit [www.cilti.org](http://www.cilti.org) or contact us at 317-631-5263.

# The 100 Mile Diet: My Personal Journal

by Ann Leatherman

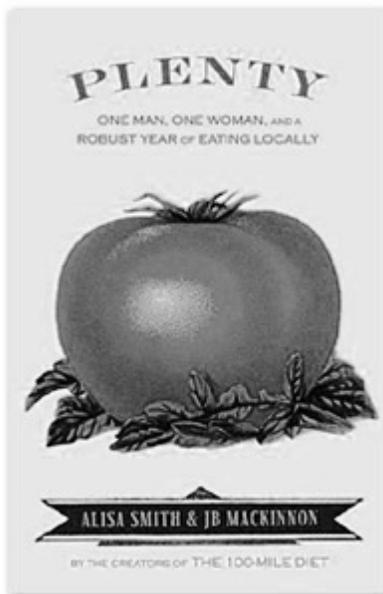
*The 100-mile Diet is a movement of eating foods grown or raised only within 100 miles of your home. One couple, James Mackinnon and Alisa Smith, ate only food raised or grown within a 100-mile radius of their British Columbia home for a year. Their story is on their Web site (<http://100milediet.org>), and in a book, *Plenty: One Man, One Woman, and a Raucous Year of Eating Locally* available on at local independent bookstores. The following is Ann Leatherman's second part of her considering the concept.*

I have completed my food inventory. Tea, seafood and citrus fruit will be my big issues. I have always believed in eating seasonally. I ascribe to the belief that it is not only cost effective, but also probably healthier for my Northern European genes and body. However, my idea of seasonal is seasonal within the United States. Could I do without these items?

I have started to investigate resources. Believe it or not, there are resources out there within or almost within our 100-mile limit for most regular foods that can be found in Indiana. Not all would be organic, but some are. In season, vegetables and fruit are readily available, and organic is available for most things. I even found two producers and millers for organic whole-wheat flour and for oats and oat flour within the mileage limit who sell retail over the internet. Summer fruit like blueberries would be a bit far, since the best are in northern Indiana up closer to South Bend, but I feel that I could fudge a

bit. It was a bit discouraging this past week at the Traders Point market not to find any vegetable vendors, not even the person with salad greens was there.

Even with local sources for food, some other issues have surfaced. I can find wheat, oats and the occasional other grain, but no retailers who bake bread for me to buy with local flour. I would have to do the bulk of my own bread baking, and make my own noodles. These would need to be substituted for rice, which is not grown in this part of the country. A regular source of fresh



vegetables and fruit would present limitations in the winter. The best would be to preserve vegetables and fruit from my garden and others in the summer, and to stock up on the stored root vegetables to get through the winter. All these are possible, but the time factor would be prohibitive. Unfortunately, free time is a valuable commodity for me. This could be a major drawback.

It doesn't look good for living on the 100-mile diet full time. My conclusions will be in the next installment.

*Ann Leatherman is a long time IOGA member who composts in Indianapolis.*

(Continued from Page 1)

## More from Rosie:

I want to express my gratitude for an IOGA board that IS wormy :-) but solid, not holey—more like “holy.” In my absence they have kept up so much of the work on Seminar, Conservation Day and Flower and Patio Show with grace and enthusiasm. I haven't worried because each is a team member who digs in to do what is needed and more. Thanks to Linda, Maria, Suzanne and Lynn.



## COMPOST SONGS FOR KIDS

Ask your librarian or search the web for Tom Chapin's songs: “Brown Gold,” “R-E-C-Y-C-L-E,” “Good Garbage”

## Ask us...!



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**IOGA  
Auction!  
Sat. April 21  
11 to 2**

## Annual Auction and Sale

**10:30** Setup; early arrival is appreciated if you are bringing items for the auction.

**11:30** Q&A, getting acquainted, meeting and pitch-in lunch. Bring your favorite dish to share, along with your own beverage, plate and eating utensils.

**12:30** Auction begins



IOGA's annual auction & sale is a fun and easy way to start your spring planting season! It's a great opportunity for gardeners to share their excess or to add to their collections. If you have extra perennial starts, seedlings or other garden-related items for the auction, please bring them. If not, then come prepared to take home what you don't already have. If you are unable to attend the auction, but would like to donate plants or other items, please contact Linda Rosier, 317-417-6898 or [webdiva@gardeningnaturally.org](mailto:webdiva@gardeningnaturally.org).

All proceeds will be used to fund IOGA programs.

### **Directions:**

Located southeast of downtown Indy. Take I465 to I74 East. Take exit 96 (Post Rd). Turn right (south) on Post, then right on Northeastern until it ends at Franklin Rd. Turn left. Library is about 1/2 mile on the right, just past the railroad tracks.

Franklin Road Branch Library  
5550 S. Franklin Road, Indpls.



**We hope you plan to come!**

Hoosier Organic Gardener  
Lynn Jenkins, editor  
1730 S. 950 E.  
Zionsville IN 46077



**JOIN US!  
IOGA Meeting  
Sat. April 21**