

IOGA



Hoosier Organic Gardener

October, 2015

Indiana Organic Gardeners Association

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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.

President's Message

This is the time of year when the days begin to shorten and the seasons shift. The cicadas hum and the crickets sing. The corn stalks rustle in the breezes that seem to rise up from the Earth itself. Change is in the air.

IOGA is set for a change too. Our election of IOGA board members will take place at the October meeting and after six years as President, I am stepping aside to let others take the helm. I have truly enjoyed the role and have met so many wonderful people as a result of this group. I plan to stay involved and will continue to support our mission. I am confident that the new board will bring renewed energy and new ideas to the organization.

Doug Rohde has agreed to run for the President position. Doug is a long-time IOGA member and a dedicated organic gardener. His involvement with other groups such as the Central Indiana Beekeepers Association and the Hamilton County Master Gardeners will bring a great perspective to our group.

Margaret Smith has agreed to run for Vice-President. Margaret has been IOGA's loyal Secretary for the past several years. She has done an excellent job capturing so much of the information that has been shared during meetings over the years so that it can be disseminated to our members in the quarterly newsletters.

Ron Clark has agreed to stay on as Treasurer, diligently maintaining IOGA's membership list and serving as the group's collection agent when annual dues are due. Ron also serves as the newsletter co-editor with his wife Claudia. They work to ensure that helpful and interesting information is provided to members. Both he and Claudia contribute greatly to this organization. I personally appreciate their efforts to help keep IOGA going in a positive direction and am glad they will continue to be active in the group.

New board members will be elected at the October meeting and will be seated at the January 2016 meeting. While the board works on behalf of IOGA in an "official" capacity, each and every one of the members of IOGA can contribute in their own way to the success of the group and our mission. I encourage everyone to do what he or she can to get involved and make a difference. This is your group.

Happy and Healthy Gardening!

Lynne



Lynne Sullivan
IOGA President

July IOGA Meeting

The summer meeting of the Indiana Organic Gardeners Association took place at the lovely home and gardens of Ron and Claudia Clark. The meeting started at 12:20 PM after the delicious pitch-in luncheon.

Introductions and comments were next, with twenty-three members and three visitors in attendance. Members said that generally their tomatoes, broccoli, kale, Swiss chard, and cucumbers were doing well, despite all of the rain this summer. Others said they had had great luck with raised beds, which also avoid the problem of standing water.

Questions & Answers followed the Introductions. Claudia wondered about an old rose which had not produced roses in previous years and only one rose this year. In her pruning she may have cut below the grafting point. Nancy Otten said that you can cut off a section of the plant, wet it, and then put it in a rooting powder to get a new rose plant. Many of the older roses only bloom in the spring.

Paul Matzek asked about a tree on their property that is dropping small, round, green balls filled with seeds. Some thought it might be a type of pear. Of note, if a pear tree produces a large crop, it may not be able to set buds for the next year. So during a year of heavy production, some of the pears should



IOGA Members Paul Gaston and Paula Boone Enjoying the Pitch-in Lunch

be picked early so that the tree can set buds for the next year.

As for tomatoes, some varieties are doing well, but others, such as Early Girl, did not. If roots of tomato plants are in water too long, the plants will die because oxygen is cut off. Claudia said yellow spotted lower leaves are a sign of fungus. These leaves should be cut off and put in the trash, not on the compost heap. Neem oil or other organic fungicide can be used to prevent this problem, but treatment must start early on.

Don Watson had planted okra from seed, but with no luck. Someone else recommended growing Indian okra, which grows quite long but does not get woody or stiff.

Another recommended plant is Malabar spinach, which has large, dark green leaves with no bitter taste. A climbing spinach with an edible, succulent stem, it can grow throughout the summer. Heidi Watson would like to buy some Chinese praying mantis. Egg cases can be purchased on line. The females grow quite large and can be aggressive even toward birds.

Lynne Sullivan then reminded us that even if we use an herbicide or pesticide labeled organic, it is still use to kill things; so the directions must be followed carefully. For example, neem oil should be used only in the day time and never near flowers



Judi Donahue, Margaret Smith, and Lynne Sullivan During Q&A and Business Meeting

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because it will kill bees, which do seem to be decreasing in number.

Plants bought from “big box” stores like Walmart have probably been treated with neonicotinoids. Bees pollinating such plants will absorb the neonicotinoids. The neonicotinoids can also stay in the soil for years. It is best to buy untreated seeds from suppliers such as Seed Savers Exchange, Johnny’s Selected Seeds, and Urban Farmer, or, even better, use your own seeds collected from your own garden.

It is important to read labels on plants and seedlings carefully. The word “natural” is meaningless, but plants and produce labeled with the USDA organic stamp are safe. Stores like Kroger are continually increasing their organic offerings. When we buy organic, we are voting with our dollars. Doug Rhode said he would write an article on labeling for the newsletter.

The business meeting was next, and the main topic was the October election of officers. Ron has agreed to continue as Treasurer, and Margaret has said that she will be Secretary again. However, Lynne has decided, after six years, to step down as President, and we will also need a new Vice-President. Claudia, Anne Matzek, and Doug agreed to be on the slating committee to nominate these officers. The President writes for the newsletter, leads the meetings, and coordinates the organization’s activities. The Vice-President plans the programs for the meetings, with suggestions from the membership. Also, David Englert is our Volunteer Coordinator. While this is not a board position, it is important because we are asked to participate in many events.

For our program today Ron and Claudia gave us a tour of their impressive gardens. First we saw the raspberries, which produced extremely well this year. The blackberries were plentiful too, but so difficult to pick (thorns). The birds “help” to plant more raspberries by eating the berries and then pooping out the seeds. A walnut tree nearby did not seem to bother the raspberries, but walnut trees will definitely affect tomato and pepper plants.

In the spring garden we saw squash, broccoli, kale, beans, and pepper plants. The Packman broccoli

just keeps producing throughout the season. Ron uses Bt (*Bacillus thuringiensis*) to keep the worms out of it. Unfortunately rabbits had gotten in through a hole in the fence and decimated the bean crop. Kale had been grown from seed and transplanted into the garden. The pepper plants were not thriving, probably a result of too much rain. We noticed few weeds in their gardens. They put down a thick layer of compost and use GreenCycle for compost.

The Clarks rotate their main garden among three different areas on a three year basis. In each area leaves are added one fall, then an alfalfa and clover cover crop is grown the next two years. A hayfield was beyond one garden. Zionsville drops leaves on their gardens and fields every fall.

About 100 okra plants were growing along the fence of the main garden. They grow 16 types of tomatoes. A number of tomato plants had yellowed leaves because of too much rain and lack of sun, plus some Septoria Leaf Spot fungus. Three years ago, the drought year with lots of sunny days, the tomatoes thrived in the same garden area.

Ron places boards next to the squash plants where the squash bugs will hide under and can be



A Walk Over to the Gardens

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destroyed when the boards are turned over. He also suggests pouring water on the base stems of the plants. In a few minutes the bugs will come up to the tops of the leaves to dry off where they can easily be picked off. He has not seen as many squash bugs this year though. They probably drowned with all the rain.

At the end of the day all agreed that our day at the Clark's home and gardens had been a most enjoyable and educational experience.

- Margaret Smith, Secretary



Squash Plants. (Note: Boards under plants for squash bugs)



Part of 100 Okra Plants



Looking Over the Early, Spring Garden. Note the deer fence.

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**50 Tomato Plants Consisting of 16 Different Varieties.
(Note: Water logged soil from excessive rain caused stunted tomato plants and killed many of the pepper plants shown in the foreground. After the rains stopped and adding nitrogen (corn gluten) to the soil, the remaining pepper plants made an amazing recovery)**



Celery Plant Obtained at the IOGA Plant Auction from Annie Matzek

More Pictures of the Clark Garden



Edamame (Soybean) Plants. (Warning: Processing Edamame is Very Labor Intensive.)

Sweet Potatoes

by Paul Matzek

Last year's (2014) big experiment was sweet potatoes. We purchased, via mail order, an assortment of four plants each of Beauregard, Centennial, O'henry, Georgia Jet, and Vardamin. On its arrival the package demanded "OPEN IMMEDIATELY". As mail order sweet potato plants do, they looked shriveled and dead. Since we had been having a series of very cool nights, Annie put them in a jar of water and set them on the plant table with the other starts.



Sweet Potatoes

May 18th, about a week later, I could stand it no more, so I broadforked the beds allotted for sweet potatoes, then tilled them. I raked the dirt into two rows of hills in the two beds, staggering them from side to side to give the roots the most room. Sweet potato tubers need to be able to push the soil aside as they expand, and planting them in hills or ridges allows them that freedom.

After hilling, I planted by the method we used as a child, that is, plunging my hand into the middle of each hill to excavate a hole about 3 inches in diameter and 5 inches deep. Then filling each hole with water, which quickly soaked away, leaving a hole half filled with mud. The plants, having had the benefit of a week of water and sunshine, had recovered and looked wonderful. I again

plunged my hand into each hole, pulled enough mud aside to insert a plant, and tucked the mud around the roots, then covered up to the leaves with the dry dirt. Along with the twenty purchased plants, I planted four slips Annie had grown from potatoes left from our last year's crop (probably Beauregards).

At the time of planting, we still had about 10 lb. of sweet potatoes from last fall, even with giving a fair amount to friends and family. Our previous crop went bad by early spring, and we learned they have to be stored above 55 degrees F, or they will deteriorate and turn dark inside.

Sweets seem to have no local enemies, except maybe slugs eating some holes in the leaves. They're pretty trouble-free if mulched, requiring only a little weeding. They don't even seem to need watering unless it gets really dry. Too much moisture can cause the tubers to grow too fast and split. Those splits do heal, however, and the potato is quite usable.

At harvest we segregated according to variety and, after a little drying, weighed the piles.

Beauregard- 24 3/4 lb. Hands down the winner. Produced large smooth red tubers.

Centennial- 13 3/4 lb. Orange, smaller tubers, bigger than grocery store size.

Georgia Jet- 14 1/4 Lb. Red, more roundish, some larger than grocery store

O'henry- 14 1/4 Lb This is a gold potato and, like white firetrucks, just ain't right. Gets large dark mottling on the tuber which doesn't affect quality. It is a dryer potato.

Vardamin- 16 1/4 Lb. Orange, longer skinnier tubers, few big ones.

Home grown, probably Beauregards. 16 3/4 Lb. Some real biggies, some grocery store size.

All plants, of course had smaller tubers which are time consuming to peel. I find the easiest way to use them is to scrub them clean, cook or roast, then run them through a food mill to separate the skins and strings, leaving delicious mashed potatoes.

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

LETTERS:



Saving Tomato Seeds

July 7, 2015

I have one of your black cherry tomato plants that we got at the IOGA plant auction and it is doing fabulous. We've harvested around 30 so far and they are very good.

My question is how do I save the seeds to start my own next year. I don't have any idea at all about how to do it. If you wouldn't mind sharing with me, I'd appreciate it.

Thanks, Jane Herbst

Your tomato plants sounds great! Glad you like the black cherry tomatoes. For saving seeds,

- 1) Put seeds in glass of water for 2 or 3 days and a scum will form
- 2) Pour seeds into strainer (screen type with small holes) and push seeds with flesh against screen so some of the flesh comes off. Run water through sieve and push some more on the seeds so as much of the flesh comes off as possible.
- 3) Dump seeds (will still have some flesh on them) on waxed paper and leave for several days until fully dry.
- 4) Store in paper envelope at room temperature (no plastic - it holds moisture). If you want, you can break seeds apart as they tend to dry in a flat clump.

Claudia

Another Seed Co. with Organic Seeds

June 30, 2015

Botanical Interests also has some organic seeds listed in their catalog. Some heirloom and some not. *Judy Houser*

Mother Earth News Fair

August 6, 2015

My husband and I attended the Mother Earth News Fair in Pennsylvania, only about a 5 1/2 hour drive from Greenfield, straight down I-70. It was held at a ski resort so the grounds were spacious and beautiful. Our experience was great. There were vendors of all type, simple gardening to full scale log splitting, greenhouses, butchering supplies and fashion items such as purses/jewelry.



The fair follows the lead of the magazine, honing in on self-sufficiency, living off the grid and saving money. What was amazing was the scope of classes available (free with admission). You could spend all three days attending classes every hour or two. It was difficult to decide which classes to attend. The food courts were loaded with great food as well. Even though it rained on one of the days, this did not hamper our activities.

We will definitely go back. Check their website or magazine for the dates and locations as they do several per year in various places.

Susan Erwin-Simons

Election of IOGA Officers

New IOGA officers will be elected at the October meeting. The nominating committee announces the following slate:

President: Doug Rohde

Vice President/Program Director: Margaret Smith

Secretary: Kathleen Krueger

Treasurer: Ron Clark*

*incumbent

According to the IOGA by-laws, the membership present (at the October meeting) shall elect the officers (by simple majority) from the nominees selected by the nominating committee or from the floor. Elected officers will take office at the January meeting. The officers shall hold office for two consecutive years.



A Climbing Melon. Richard Evans sent this photo of a large Arava Melon. He got the plant from a local nursery. To his surprise it took off up his fence. He says it is green inside, sweet and juicy.

Upcoming IOGA Meeting October 17



If you are interested in raised-bed gardening, the October IOGA meeting gives you the opportunity to see how Larry and LaVella Bills do raised-bed gardening. The Bills live in an old farm house on less than an acre of land in rural Tipton 29 miles north of Indianapolis. Their garden includes 26 raised beds. Here is a summer view showing part of the Bills' 26 raised-beds.

Treasurer's Report

3rd Quarter 2015

Opening Balance July 1, 2015 \$ 5406.87

Income

Membership Dues \$ 12.00

Total \$ 12.00

Expenses

Newsletter (Stamps) \$ 14.70

Total \$ 14.70

Closing Balance Sept. 30, 2015 \$ 5404.17

Respectfully submitted by Ron Clark, Treasurer

Ask us...!

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UPCOMING MEETINGS

Mark your calendar

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

October 17, 2015
January 16, 2016
April 16, 2016
(Plant Auction)
July 16, 2016



New IOGA Members

Nancy Otten & Dwight Lamb , Indianapolis, IN 46202

Welkom

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:

Please include ALL of the following information:

I prefer my newsletter to be emailed mailed.

IOGA
7282 E 550 S
Whitestown, IN 46075

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



**IOGA
Meeting
Sat. Oct. 17
11:00 am**

**October Meeting at the Home of Larry and LaVella Bills
7159 W 200 N
Tipton, IN 46072 ([Map](#))**

11:00 Arrive and Welcome Guests
11:15—12:00 Great Pitch-in Lunch
12:00— 1:00 Introductions & Gardening Q&A
1:00— 1:15 Business Meeting and Election
1:15— Raised-bed Gardening & Garden Tour

Meeting: The October meeting will be held at the residence of Larry and LaVella Bills in Tipton County 29 miles north of Indianapolis. Following our regular meeting Larry and Lavella will discuss their approach to raised-bed gardening. A tour of the Bills' garden with 26 raised-beds will follow.

Pitch-in lunch: Bring a favorite dish filled with food ("home-made" and/or "organic" appreciated) to share and your plate, fork, and drink.

Directions: From north I-465 in Indianapolis take Exit 31 north onto US-31 N. Meridian St.. Go 29 miles north on US-31 and turn left (west) onto C.R. 200 N in Tipton county. Go west 1.1 miles to your destination on the south side of the road. Look for an IOGA sign. (For precise directions and time of travel from your home, click the word "**Map**" above, then "**Directions**" in the upper left part of the web page, enter your home address, and click "**Get Directions**".)

Everyone welcome! Questions, or if lost, call Lynne Sullivan cell phone (317) 313-0693.

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. Oct. 17**