

Owen County Garden Club January 2014 Newsletter



A Note from Mother Nature...

It's not *my* fault, you know. This whole *cycle* thing wasn't really my idea. I just try to take the seasons in stride, like everything else. Goodness knows that I get the blame for a good many things of which I'm not necessarily in control—too much rain, too little rain; a little too cool in the shade, a little too hot in the sun; a little too windy, if only there were a breeze...I hear it *all*. There's just no pleasing everyone, so I change things up as often as I can so everyone gets a little variety.

Perhaps you can distract yourselves—or take comfort, or whatever—from these nice things people have written. And remember, if you're not happy with the current season, there's always another one right around the corner.

To be interested in the changing seasons is a happier state of mind than to be hopelessly in love with spring.

—George Santayana, philosopher, poet,

Anyone who thinks gardening begins in the spring and ends in the fall is missing the best part of the whole year; for gardening begins in January with the dream.

—Josephine Nuese, author of *The Country Garden* (1987)

Happy 2014 Gardening!

M.N.

Be sure to welcome and get acquainted with our club's newest members:

Maxine Barnes
Nan Girk

Shirley Kinney
Joan Staubach

Owen County Garden Club Officers for 2013–2014:

Julie Coffin, President
829-2493
julie_coffin@att.net

Angie Fender, Vice-President
829-2679
afender@dulingins.com

Karen Crosby, Secretary
829-5681
karen.crosby@hylant.com

Nancy Knapp, Treasurer
829-2128
nnknapp@aol.com



Coffee & Catalogs—Thursday, February 20 9:30 A.M., Owen County Heritage & Culture Center (110 E. Market Street)

Picture this: It's a cold winter day. You're sipping hot coffee or tea, eating something homemade, and getting inspired by a whole *mess* of seed catalogs. All of this can be yours if you come to the Coffee Shoppe inside the old Carnegie Library on Thursday, February 20.

Oh, and bring your seed catalogs! Maybe you have some catalogs that others have

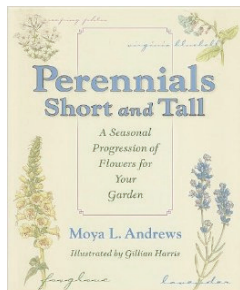
never seen. Maybe others have some that *you've* never seen. I even have some from last year (oh, you know you haven't recycled yours yet, either), and I'll bring those to share, too. This is just about hanging out together and seeking a little sanity in the midst of the cold, bleak winter. The Coffee Shoppe's offerings are yummy and reasonably priced. *Stop by!*



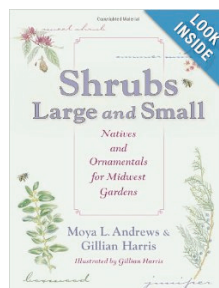
Planning to attend? Please give Julie a call or drop her an e-mail by around Monday, February 17. Even an approximate head count will help the Coffee Shoppe prepare for us.

Educational Meeting—Sunday, March 9 3:00 P.M., Spencer Presbyterian Church's Cornerstone Hall (Hall is *behind* church, whose address is 154 N. Main Street)

Moya Andrews, host of the WTIU radio program *Focus on Flowers*, will be our guest speaker. Australian-born Andrews is a well-known gardening personality in Bloomington, where she has lived since 1971. A retired professor of the Speech and Hearing Sciences Department at Indiana University, Andrews has published two books with Quarry Books, an imprint of IU Press.



Perennials Short and Tall: A Seasonal Progression of Flowers for Your Garden focuses on keeping a yard in bloom. The author profiles 25 varieties of flowers in the order in which each comes to bloom throughout the spring, summer, and autumn.



Shrubs Large and Small: Natives and Ornamentals for Midwest Gardens addresses how to use shrubs in combination with perennial plantings. The book highlights the variety of color, size, shape, and texture that shrubs offer, as well as the benefits of shelter and food for wildlife.

This meeting is free and open to the public. Refreshments will be served.

General Meeting—Monday, April 14 6:00 P.M., Home of Karen Crosby

Just think—It will be *spring* when we have this meeting! We'll have dirt under our fingernails, and all will be right with the world. Bring something for a pitch-in supper, please. The club will take care of table service. On the agenda:

- Nail down details for upcoming May plant sale
- Get serious about all aspects of June Garden Tour
- Tackle the Fair theme and plan our display for July

Each of these activities is important, but the Garden Tour, especially, will require extra effort from many club members to make sure that we engineer a lovely event, as we have in the past. Attending this meeting and being in on the planning will be your first solid step in that direction. We'll need everyone's help!

The Crosby home is at 962 Clark Road. Head north from town *about* 5 miles up Rocky Hill Road. Turn left on Clark Road. Proceed a scant mile to driveway on left. Our bright yellow Garden Club signs will guide you.



Plant Sale—Saturday, May 3 Owen County Farmers' Market 9 A.M. – 1 P.M. (*note new hours*)

The plant sale is the Garden Club's only regular source of income during the year. Historically, we have cleared \$500 and more. In the past few years, however, our profits have dropped closer to \$400. I think our competition has something to do with that. To help our booth stand out from the crowd this year, we're going to put an emphasis on INDIANA NATIVES. Gardeners are really coming to understand the value of native plants for hardiness, overall ease of care, and the benefits to local wildlife. Now, that does NOT mean that we don't want those iris, hosta, and daylilies you're going to separate. Bring those, too! But we'll separate the natives and the "others" in our booth and tailor our sales pitches accordingly. (See pages 5 and 6 for more on native perennials.)

Please think ahead all during the month of April.... You could be potting something up every time you're out in the garden. Just keep the pots watered (you don't need me to tell you this) and the plants will be well established and looking great by the time May 3rd comes around. On the day of the sale, labels are important! *You*

wouldn't want to buy an unlabeled, unidentified plant, would you? Give it a name, indicate sun or shade, maybe tell how tall it gets, what color flower, etc. Information is *good*. Write your info on popsicle sticks, plastic knives, or slats from a window blind, or print the labels on sticky address labels.

No pots? Give a shout-out. Other club members are sure to have a surplus.

Bad back? Give a shout-out. If you have plants that you'd like to donate and you just can't do the digging, we'll find a volunteer or two and send them your way.

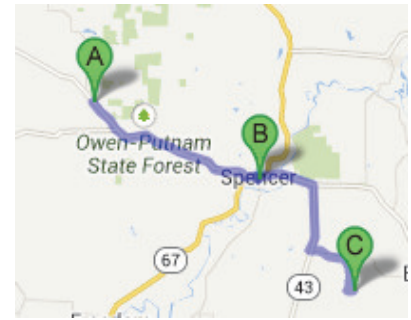
On the day of the sale, bring your plants at 8 a.m., or as early as possible, to the sale site. If possible, plan to stay and help price them. And it's always fun to stay and be a "clerk" at the booth, too. All volunteers welcome—feel free to come and go throughout the morning. If you can't deliver your plants that morning, give Julie a call and plan to drop them at her house during the week before the sale.

For questions about plant sale details, contact the sale coordinator, Jo Ann Ligon, at 829-4300

Owen County Garden Tour—Sunday, June 29 1:00–5:00 P.M., rain or shine

Here are our 2014 host sites so far, going from west to east:

- Mark and Nancy Snapp, west Hwy. 46, just past Vandalia (a rural home with both vegetable garden and lovely perennial plantings)
- The Owen County Courthouse (many native plants that the Garden Club helped put in several years ago; we'll want to add labels...)
- Teresa Campbell, Franklin Road off of Hwy. 43 (this is she of "Teresa's Daylilies" fame; hoping to catch her gardens at their *peak*)



We need a fourth site! And it needs to be a site that fits reasonably, location-wise, with the 15-mile stretch of the first three. Is *your* garden ready for a tour this year? It's okay to raise your hand and say so. Really! Or, are you aware of a non-Club member whose garden would make a great addition to our tour? Let me know.

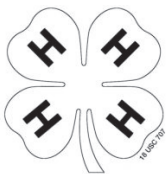
Beyond that, think about how you will want to help. Here are the categories of volunteers we will need both before and during the event:

- Manual labor at each site (maybe a crew of at least 3) the week before the event to help hosts with those final tidying-up tasks
- Site coordinator for each site to make sure that the host site has everything it needs on that day (table/chair/change for ticket sales, a

parking plan, Garden Club signs posted, etc.)

- Site co-hosts to help coordinator, sell tickets, direct people, direct traffic, answer questions (these seem to work best in two-hour shifts; there should be two co-hosts on duty at each site throughout the tour)
- Refreshment servers (at whatever site ends up to be the refreshment site)
- Bakers of goodies to be served at refreshment site
- Mixer-uppers of beverages to be served at refreshment site (tea? lemonade?)

More details on all to come. Come to the April meeting and help us finish figuring everything out. Also at that meeting, sign up for just the volunteer spot you want.



Owen County Fair—July 5–12

We have the Fair dates, but we don't yet have the theme for the Open Class building on which to build our display idea. Stay tuned! We'll also have to come up with a clever twist on the flower contest that the Club always sponsors on the Tuesday of Fair week.

The Fair will come hot on the heels of our Garden Tour, so we'll have to use our time well in April and May to get ahead. But look, here's another opportunity for a bulleted list! Volunteer opportunities for Fair week:

- Be on the display committee (we'll launch this at the April meeting)
- Help put up the display (probably on the afternoon of July 5th)
- Open Class flower-checker-inners (3–4 to cover the morning)
- Judge helpers (2) to move flowers around, fill out paperwork, etc., as judge judges
- Open Class building monitors (I'm sure we'll be asked to fill out an 8- or 10-hour shift, as before)

Think how warm it will be in July. Won't that be nice?

Ongoing Club Details and Business

—T-shirts

Many members have ordered T-shirts, which have a nice wheelbarrow and flower design and “Owen County Garden Club” embroidered on them. It’s nice to wear them at our “public”

events and, generally, to spread awareness of our club. They cost \$16 or so. Always direct T-shirt questions to Sue Ciresi, 829-2731.

———Urns/Pots

At the January meeting, we agreed to spend some Club money to put pansies in the urns/pots around town. We’ll be watching the weather to see how soon we can put them in. I’m hoping around April 1st, give or take, so they will look pretty all through April when the pots are normally empty.

For summer plantings, each Pot Master should aim to have flowers in the pots by Mother’s Day,

which is May 11. Plan to include *something* RED in your plantings, partly for town-wide continuity and partly for good drive-by impact. Pot Masters are also responsible for watering throughout the summer. Buddy up with a nearby Pot Master (or two) and trade off. Do whatever you need to do. Always direct urn/pot questions to the Pot Queen, Faye Ure, 828-0565

—————Triangle

Pre-season clean-up on Saturday, April 26. Stay tuned for a start time in e-mail, based on how the morning light is acting. We’ll clear out all the dead perennials, rake up the winter accumulation of trash and leaves, and generally spruce up. And then, the crew can convene to Julie’s house for the second annual Triangle Crew Breakfast.

We’ll also lay out plans for the Triangle for the rest of the year. Given some probably-disruptive INDOT work in 2015, it seems to make sense to maintain the status quo this year until we know for sure what will happen next year. Always direct Triangle questions to Julie Coffin, 829-2493.

What’s All the Fuss About Native Plants?

A native, or indigenous, species is one that occurs or grows in a particular region, ecosystem, or habitat without direct or indirect human actions. Species native to North America are generally recognized as those occurring on the continent prior to European settlement. With thanks to *An Introduction to Using Native Plants in Restoration Projects: Why Use Native Plants?* (www.nps.gov), here are the advantages of planting native plants:

- Add beauty to the landscape and preserve our natural heritage
- Provide food and habitat for native wildlife
- Serve as an important genetic resource for future food crops and other plant-derived products
- Help slow down the spread of fire by staying greener longer
- Decrease the amount of water needed for landscape maintenance
- Require very little long-term maintenance if they are properly planted and established
- Produce long root systems to hold soil in place
- Protect water quality by controlling soil erosion and moderating floods and droughts

Does anyone need any *more* reasons? Get thee to a plant store or seed catalog that sells “native” or “heirloom” varieties—whether they be trees, bushes, shrubs, berries, perennials, or annuals—and plant, plant, plant.

To increase the positive impact you have on local wildlife, stick to truly native varieties, not hybrids, and feel great about what’s growing in your yard. Some evidence suggests that hybrids, though the flowers look beautiful to us, do not provide the quantity or quality of nectar that the bees need.

Here are just a few Indiana natives (in very small type):

Shrubs Native to Indiana

Serviceberry, *Amelanchier*
New Jersey tea, *Ceanothus*
Spicebush, *Lindera benzoin*
Ninebark, *Physocarpus opulifolius*
Sumac, *Rhus*
Elderberry, *Sambucus canadensis*
Gray dogwood, *Cornus racemosa*
Silky dogwood, *Cornus amomum*
Virginia sweetspire, *Itea virginica*
Winterberry holly, *Ilex verticillata*
Buttonbush, *Cephalanthus*
Coralberries, *Symphoricarpos*
Viburnums, *Viburnum* (most spp.)

Grasses and Ferns Native to Indiana

Switch grass, *Panicum virgatum*
Indian grass, *Sorghastrum nutans*

Little bluestem, *Schizachyrium scoparium*

Big bluestem, *Andropogon gerardii*

Northern sea oats, *Chasmanthium latifolium*

Common ladyfern, *Athyrium filix-femina*

Crested woodfern, *Dryopteris cristata*

Flowering Trees and Perennial Plants

Native to Indiana

Redbud, *Cercis canadensis*

Lilac, *Syringa vulgaris*

Dogwood, *Cornus* spp.

Catmint, *Nepeta mussinii*

Bee balm, *Monarda fistulosa*

Phlox, *Phlox pilosa*

Purple coneflower, *Echinacea purpurea*

Summer sweet, *Clethra*

Liatris or gayfeather, *Liatris spicata*

Goldenrod, *Solidago* spp.

Bluebeard, *Caryopteris*

Aster, *Aster* spp.

Butterfly weed, *Asclepias tuberosa*

Blue vervain, *Verbena hastata*

Common milkweed, *Asclepias syriaca*

Tall bellflower, *Campanulastrum americanum*

Virginia bluebells, *Mertensia virginica*

Columbine, *Aquilegia canadensis*

Jack-in-the-pulpit, *Arisaema triphyllum*

Cranesbill or spotted geranium,

Geranium maculatum

Obedient plant, *Physostegia virginiana*

Black-eyed Susan, *Rudbeckia hirta*

White yarrow, *Achillea millifolium*

Joe pye-weed, *Eupatorium fistulosa*

Yellow loosestrife, *Lysimachia punctata*

Or, see these (and other) sources for more comprehensive lists:

www.wildflower.org [search at site for "Indiana"]

www.inpaws.org [In Native Plant & Wildflower Soc.]

www.indianawildlife.org

www.plantnative.org

Or, visit the Owen County Public Library, of course.

**Owen County Garden Club
is part of the
Purdue Extension Service**

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Visit us on the Web at
<http://birdsbybent.com/gardenclub>