

# Owen County Garden Club Autumn 2015 Newsletter



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## *A Note from Julie . . .*

The change from summer to fall brings to the fore the passage of time. I have been especially aware of time as some of my family members have hit milestones this year. Isn't it alternately funny and alarming how past events get a little fuzzier and harder to distinguish from each other? But certain events do stand out. The day we moved to Owen County stands out clear as a bell, for example. I think events that mark "the beginning" of something especially stand out.

Twenty years ago, "a beginning" occurred. A woman held a meeting. It was in the Commissioners' Room at the Courthouse (of all places!). But it wasn't a political or even a particularly official meeting. It was the beginning of a garden club. The woman, Kathleen Maupin, is no longer with us, sadly. But the Garden Club, complete with capital letters, is still here, thanks to her beginnings.

I'd like to think that, in addition to carrying on Kathleen's original "mission," we are also making our own beginnings. Perhaps 20 years from now, the Garden Club president will be writing about...the Great Milkweed Repopulation Campaign that was begun in Owen County in 2015. Who knows?

*Happy Beginnings! Happy Growing!*

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Be sure to get acquainted with our newest members who joined us in March and April:

Theresa Simpson  
Sophia French  
Joyce Smidley

Stephanie Barnes  
Eric Dunn  
Hannah Mae Ford

Whenever you have questions or ideas, contact one of your  
Owen County Garden Club Officers for 2015–2016:

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## Pot Arrangements This Winter—Ann Has a Plan!

Ann Henk has lent her ever-creative mind to our town pots. To carry out her lovely plan (see photo for her sample from last winter), we will need to save some things from our gardens. Here is the list, along with a little advice about how and when to save:

- good-sized pine cones
- Canadian thistle (save good-sized stalks; we'll cut to length later)
- pampas grass fronds (cut them before they get too beat up by the weather)
- black gum seed pods
- sedum (stone crop) stems (again, save long stalks; cut before they get too beat up)
- evergreen branches
- twigs (corkscrew willow is best, but could be other attractive options, too; look around)

Stay tuned to hear how and when we will gather to spray paint and do some initial assembly before we actually create the arrangements in the pots (in late November). Questions? Ask Ann: 812-986-2408.



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## Christmas at the Square—Angie Has a Plan! Saturday, December 5, 2–5 P.M.(?); Courthouse

Angie Fender has lent her ever-creative mind to our “gift” for the children at the increasingly popular and well-attended Christmas event in Spencer. Our craft will be small (ornament-sized) grapevine wreaths. We will pre-assemble the wreaths. At the event, then, children will be able to choose a ribbon (a strip of holiday fabric that we have prepared) to tie onto their wreath. So, as you enjoy the autumn weather, keep your eye on grapevines on your property. Probably not-too-thick ones because our little ornaments will be only 3 or 4 inches in diameter, I think. Angie says we'll have to wait for a killing frost before we harvest the vines.

And, once again, stay tuned for how and when we will gather to make the adorable little things and to cut the fabric strips.

For questions about our role in Christmas at the Square, please contact Angie Fender at 812-829-2679.

*[I think ours will be cuter than this.]*



## Save Some Seeds—Julie Has a Plan! Now, and also Early Spring

As your annuals and maybe even some perennials fade in the autumn garden, wander out and save some seeds. Lay them out to dry for a few days. Then stick them in an envelope, label and date them, and tuck them away until February or March. We'll have a workshop and learn how to make seed cards.

What's a seed card? It's a piece of homemade paper (yes, we'll make homemade recycled paper, too!) with seeds embedded in it. Then you can enclose the seed cards in notes to friends and family, plant them

with your adorable grandchildren, or . . . drop a few in your own garden and think about what fun you had making them.

What kinds of seeds work? Smaller, flatter ones are best. Marigolds work, and zinnias--they're bigger but they're flat. Poppy seeds, cockscomb, and love in a mist are good. You get the idea. Bring your seeds along, and we'll see if they work. Making homemade paper and adding seeds is not an exact science, so we can make some things up as we go along!

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## More Trees, Anyone? Start Them from Seed All By Yourself

Wouldn't it be nice to have another <fill in the blank> tree to fill that spot in the yard? Or: That <tree over there> is so nice. I wish we had another one. If these are your thoughts, perhaps the answer is right under your tree (or maybe a neighbor's or a friend's tree). Many trees grow from seed with a minimum of fuss or preparation.

The directions are these: *Collect seeds in autumn when ripe. Plant outdoors immediately.* Well, how hard is that, right? So, put on your Mother Nature hat and set to work with seeds from these trees:

- ash
- European beech
- white or paper birch
- Washington hawthorn
- linden
- maple
- mountain ash
- oak
- poplar
- red bud

And what about evergreens? For many varieties of pine and spruce, the procedure is this: *Collect the cones in the fall before they open. Put them in a paper bag (to catch the seeds) and store them in a cool, dry place until spring. Sow outside in spring.*

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## Plant Profile: Blue False Indigo *Baptisia australis*

This native perennial is not one of the mainstream, everyone-has-it varieties. But the more I see of it, the more I think it should be. Why? Well, first, because it's native, of course. It has a lovely lavender-blue flower (in May/June); they look sort of like sweet pea flowers (and they are, in fact, related to that family). It grows in a good-sized, well-mannered clump (perhaps 3 feet at maturity). It doesn't flop. It grows in conditions from full sun to part shade. It doesn't ask for water. It attracts butterflies. Rabbits don't like it. My personal experience is that the deer don't bother it. It is not a magnet for any particular diseases or insect pests. *And* it tolerates poor soil, including the virtual *brick* in my sunny south gardens. That is a long list of reasons to grow this plant!



At this time of year, the already-dried and dark brown seed pods are showing prominently on the plants. They used to be used for children's rattles. In fact, the plant is also commonly known as rattleweed and rattlebush. The genus name, *Baptisia*, comes from a Greek word that means "to dip." This refers to the fact that people used to use extracts from this plant as a dye substitute for actual indigo.

I covetously cut my dried seed pods and capture the seeds so that I can encourage more of these to grow in desirable locations. I will sow them just as Mother Nature does. I will prepare a spot with minimal effort (i.e., I'll pull a few weeds), and then I'll scatter the seeds and barely brush them in with my fingertips. If they are meant to grow, they will.

**Meeting: October 5, 2015, @ 6 P.M.**  
**Friendly Shelter, McCormick's Creek State Park**

Hot dogs, pitch-in, Community Partners . . . our October meeting is almost here! Last year, we had 56 people in attendance, and that was a great way to end the year. Can we top that?

This will be a special meeting. Please come and celebrate the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Owen County Garden Club!

Note the venue. This is the lovely shelter where the meeting was held last year (NOT the CCC Rec Building, where we had been for a number of years). After you enter the park, take the first road to the left to get to Friendly Shelter.

The club will provide hot dogs and fixings, tableware, and beverages. Please bring a dish to pass to fill out the rest of the meal.

In addition, we will hold our usual auction of garden-related items. Club members always donate so generously to this effort, but to keep the length of the auction under control, I'm going to ask that you bring only one, or *maybe* two items, for the auction.

*Hope to see you right here, at Friendly Shelter, on October 5<sup>th</sup>!*



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