

Garden Variety News

April 2004

A publication of the Morgan County Master Gardeners Association, Inc.

Web site: www.mcmastergardeners.org



“Helping Others Grow”

Next Meeting—Wednesday, May 5, 6:30 p.m., at the Fairgrounds. Tom Ulsas will give a presentation on “Small Woodland Management”.

We will also be doing clean up of the gardens at the fairground so bring your gloves and tools. Refreshments will be provided by Mary Barco and Nancy Manley.

NATIONAL WILDFLOWER WEEK

May 2-8, 2004, has been designated National Wildflower Week. The Garden Club of Indiana, Inc., will be sponsoring “Operation Wildflower Workshop” on Wednesday, May 5, 2004, in the Carr Center at Bradford Woods/Indiana University’s Outdoor Center at 5040 State Road 67 North, Martinsville, Indiana. Detailed directions, maps, and general information are available at www.bradwoods.org.

The workshop is open to any person with the payment of the registration fee of \$25.00, which includes the center usage fee, lunch, and materials.

LUNA MOTH (*Actias luna*)

Contributed By Leslie Thompson

RANGE: From Nova Scotia west to Saskatchewan and south to Florida and Texas.

DESCRIPTION AND LIFE CYCLE: The luna moth is spectacular looking! Adults have a 3 to 4 in. span of pale green wings with transparent eyespots

and a long, sweeping “tail”. Spring broods of southern moths have pink or reddish margins around their wings; northern (and summer) moths have yellow margins. Adults emerge from their cocoons about the time trees are leafing out, and live only a couple of weeks to mate. The eggs that result are large, brown and white and are laid in rows on leaves and twigs of host plants. The newly hatched larvae are extremely tiny. Mature caterpillars are thick, lime green and about 3 inches long with a yellow, lateral stripe and some spots on their sides. They make loose, silken cocoons (they are members of the giant silk moth family) in the leafy litter of the forest floor. Depending on the climate, the adult moths can emerge several weeks later or the following spring. There are one to three generations per year, depending on the length of a region’s warm season.

HABITS: Adult luna moths are fairly common in wooded areas but are often not seen because they fly at night. They are attracted to the sodium vapor lights often used in parking lots, but usually only the male moths fly to any kind of light—the females stay in the woods and release a pheromone that can be detected by male moths miles away. Adults spend their daylight hours perched on the sides of trees or in other cool and shady areas.

DIET: Adults do not feed. Their larvae (caterpillars) eat the leaves of a number of trees, including birch, persimmon and members of the walnut family (black walnuts, butternuts, hickories, etc.). Entomologists eagerly study these creatures because they are able to eat leaves that contain toxic, plant-protecting compounds called quinines. (Juglone, found in walnut trees, is one type of quinone.) “We hope to discover what enzymes these insects use to negate the toxic effects of these quinines,” explains Richard Lindroth, Ph.D., a professor of chemical ecology at the University of Wisconsin.

JUDGMENT: Neutral to nice. They are very pretty-you'll never forget the sight of one! And feeding by their caterpillar stage rarely damages the host trees.

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PINCH THOSE MUMS BACK

Memorial Day and July 4th is the time to pinch back your Mums.

HOSTA SHOW AND PLANT SALE

The Indianapolis Hosta Society will hold a hosta plant sale and show on Saturday, June 12. The event will be held at The Holliday Park Nature Center, 6363 Spring Mill Road, Indianapolis. The location is two blocks west of North Meridian Street at 64th Street. Both events are open to the public. Hours for the plant sale are 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. More than thirty varieties of hostas will be for sale. Cash and checks will be accepted, but not credit cards.

The cut leaf exhibition will be open to the public from 2 until 4 p.m. This is an opportunity to view hundreds of varieties of hosta leaves in many sizes and colors. The show will also include hostas used in floral designs, container-grown hostas, and hostas artistically displayed in handmade troughs and container gardens. Anyone who grows hostas may enter the show. One does not have to be a member of the Indianapolis Hosta Society to enter. For more information, call the show chairman (317) 291-2383.

FAVORITE GARDEN CENTERS/NURSERIES

Do you have a favorite garden center or nursery that you like to frequent? Is the garden center or nursery your favorite destination because of prices, quality of plant material, close to home? I would like to feature these in our next newsletter and need your input. Please email your selection to Debbie Parsons at: hardwarestore@scican.net or mail to Debbie Parsons, 5869 S. Haasetown Rd., Morgantown, IN 46160.

UPCOMING ADVANCED MASTER GARDENER TRAINING

Hancock County Master Gardeners Association

Advanced Master Gardener Training

Saturday, May 1, 2004

Soil Building for Vegetable and Herbs-A Biointensive Approach

Registration Form/Brochure-go to www.hort.purdue.edu/mg/training/adv_training

STATE CONVENTION

Mark your calendar! The Purdue Master Gardener Program Annual Conference will be held in West Lafayette on June 25-26, 2004. More details will follow as they become available.

BUTTERFLIES RETURN TO WHITE RIVER GARDENS

Returning for its sixth season in the Hilbert Conservatory at White River Gardens is the "Butterflies" show. This exhibit will open March 27 and continue through Labor Day. This is a unique experience you shouldn't miss!

VOLUNTEER INFORMATION

- Indiana School for the Blind-Greenhouse. Contact is Elizabeth Garvey.
 - Purdue Extension Office-Answering garden related questions from the public. Contact Chris Parker at 342-1010.
 - Goodwill Greenhouse-Contact Peggy McGuire at PMcGuire@goodwill-indy.org.
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AREA LINKS

Our Website – www.mcmastergardeners.org

Purdue University Master Gardener Program

<http://www.hort.purdue.edu/mg/>

Indiana Museum of Art Garden and Grounds -

<http://www.ima-art.org/imagardens.html>

Indiana Gourd Society -

<http://www.netusa1.net/~twill/index.html>

Indiana Native Plants and Wildflowers Society -

<http://www.inpaws.org/>

White River Gardens –

<http://www.whiterivergardens.com/>

Journalist (Debbie Parsons) can be contacted at hardwarestore@scican.net or 5869 S. Haasetown Rd., Morgantown, IN 46160. Info and/or articles are always welcome.