
Garden Variety News

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

Web site: www.mcmastergardeners.org



“Helping Others Grow”

NEXT MEETING

Next Meeting

Thursday, March 2 – 6:00pm
County Administration Building.



THIRD ANNUAL SPRING GARDEN FEST

The Morgan County Master Gardener Association is hosting the Third Annual Spring Garden Fest on Saturday, April 8 from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. in the 4-H Building at the Morgan County Fairgrounds in Martinsville. The Master Gardeners will be selling pansies, giving away 100 each of redbud and dogwood seedlings, providing free soil testing, and we will have a Garden Shed booth with good used garden items and nice plant starts for sale. Local vendors will have booths with items for sale and information about services that they offer. We hope that this year’s show will be as successful as in previous years, but we will need everyone to help by volunteering and telling their friends and neighbors about the show. Please plan to attend the March meeting to sign up for a work shift or call Ann Hume for more information at 317-831-9009.

GARDEN SHED ITEMS NEEDED

Please bring items for the Garden Shed booth to the March meeting or to the Spring Garden Fest set-up on Friday evening 5-7 p.m. or Saturday morning before 8 a.m. We will be selling “garage sale” type items that pertain to gardening at our Garden Shed booth during the Spring Garden Fest. Items should be clean, in usable condition, and clearly marked

with the price. Bundles of gardening magazines, used gardening books, planters, plant stakes, decorative items, drift wood, tools, bird supplies and such are all good items to donate. Broken clay pots that are bagged in small amounts for use as drainage shards in containers are also good ideas.

Empty plastic pots in various sizes will be available from Trena Trusty at the March meeting. These can be used to pot up starts of perennials from your garden to sell at the Garden Shed. Please limit your selections to plants that will not be invasive and have good garden. Strawberries, herbs, rhubarb, annual seeds and seedlings are also welcome donations. If you have questions about Garden Shed items please call Trena Trusty at 317-996-2746.

400 Pots of Pansies

The pansies are growing at the Goodwill Greenhouse! We have dropped our order to only 400 pots with five plants



We will also have a few ovals to sell. The assortment of colors will be about the same as before with pure mixed colors, mixed colors with faces, Tapestry, yellow, blues, Monet Mix, burgundy and a nice assortment of violas. Pre-orders can be taken by contacting Peg McGuire at the greenhouse, 317-524-4302. You can start picking up your orders in late March. We will be discussing the price at our March meeting, but it will be either \$3.50 or \$3.75 per pot.



Tulip Time Bus Trip

We have a fantastic trip planned for this spring! A two-day excursion to Michigan on May 11 and 12 that includes Tabor Hill Winery, Fernwood Botanical Garden, the Tulip Festival in Holland, and the Fredrick Meijer Gardens and Sculpture Park which will be having it’s annual

plant sale. We can take up to 47 people on this trip, You do not have to be a Master Gardener to go with us. Please review the enclosed brochure and reservation form for complete details.

WELLSPRING CENTER BENEFIT AUCTION

The Wellspring Center has been kind enough to “share” the 4-H building with us for the Spring Garden Fest. They will be having their Annual Benefit Ball that evening and set up will begin right after the Garden Fest is over at 2 p.m. They raise much of their funding through this event and you can help them by donating items suitable for the silent auction to be held that evening. You can also make plans to attend and bid on items that have been donated by businesses and individuals from throughout Morgan County. For information on tickets and donations for the Wellspring Center Benefit Ball contact Jennifer Blankenship 342-6661 ext. 303.

OTHER GARDEN SHOWS OF INTEREST

Indianapolis Flower and Patio Show March 11-19
www.hsishows.com/Indiana_flower_patio
Spring Bulb Show at Garfield Park in Indy April 8-14
www.garfieldgardenconservatory.org
Cincinnati Flower Show April 22-30
www.cincyflowershow.com
Orchard in Bloom at Holliday Park in Indy April 27-30
www.orchardinbloom.org
Madison in Bloom May 13-14 and 20-21
www.jcohs.org

SOME GOOD WEBSITES TO VISIT

www.inla1.org – the website of the Indiana Nursery and Landscape Organization has great info and links to other great sites.

EAST MIDDLE SCHOOL COURTYARD GARDEN PROJECT

The sod will be removed from a 2100 square foot courtyard area at East Middle School in Martinsville this March to make way for a new garden. Staff member Doug Reynolds who completed Master Gardener training a few years ago is spearheading the project. He has already gotten quite a few materials donated and has established a Tree Huggers Club that meets regularly after school with 16-20 kids who are ready to garden. Trena Trusty has drawn up some

landscape plans for the space. They include shade beds, a bird feeding area, hummingbird plants, pergolas for growing gourds and other climbers, a decaying log and lots of perennials. There are a number of people who can help put this all together starting in April, but if you are interested in helping to get volunteer hours or in donating some plants, please contact Trena for more information at 317-996-2746.

All-America Selections New Flowers and Vegetables for 2006

This year brought a bumper crop of 11 new All-America Selections (AAS) garden flowers and vegetables judged to be superior based on their performance in test gardens all over the country.

Dianthus 'Supra Purple' was selected for its early and prolific blooming and improved heat tolerance. The 1.5-inch, fringed, purple blooms literally cover the 12-inch plants. 'Supra Purple' also makes excellent cut flowers and performs best in full sun.

Diascia integerrima 'Diamonte Coral Rose' was selected for early flowering, branching habit and long bloom season. This relatively unknown plant reaches just 8-10 inches tall with a 18-inch spreading habit, making it ideal for container gardening or as an edging plant. *Diascia* is related to snapdragons but is much larger in flower. The 1-inch blooms continue opening all season in full sun.

Nicotiana 'Perfume Deep Purple' was selected for the delicately fragrant, deep purple blooms. The single, 2-inch star-shaped flowers are produced on plants reaching 20 inches tall with a spread of 15-18 inches. This plant performs best in full sun but also adapts to part shade.

Salvia farinacea 'Evolution' was chosen for the 6-7 -inch flower spikes that are distinctly violet, rather than the traditional blue. 'Evolution' is a medium-height annual reaching 16-24 inches tall.

Viola cornuta 'Skippy XL Red-Gold' won over the judges on its flower size, color and continuous bloom. The large, 1.5-inch, round flowers are ruby red with violet-red shading below the golden-yellow face containing penciling or whiskers. 'Skippy XL Red-Gold' promises heat tolerance combined with winter hardiness in protected locations. The compact habit reaches about 6 inches tall, spreading about 8 inches.

Zinnia 'Zowie ! Yellow Flame' was selected for its unique bicolor pattern. The 3-4-inch semi-double bloom contains a scarlet/rose center with yellow petal edges, reminiscent of a yellow flame. Expect flowering plants in about 8-10 weeks from sowing seed. Plants will reach 24-29 inches tall, spreading 26-27 inches in full sun.

Ornamental Pepper 'Black Pearl' produces shiny, pearl-like, black peppers against a striking backdrop of black foliage when grown in full sun. The vigorous, compact plants reach just 18 inches tall and are quite heat tolerant. The peppers turn red as they mature and are edible, if you like fiery hot!

In the vegetable department, Carrot 'Purple Haze' is the first purple imperator-type carrot, reaching 10-12 inches long and tapering to a point. The purple beauty is only skin deep -- the sliced, raw roots reveal a bright-orange center and cooking will dissolve the purple color. 'Purple Haze' can be harvested in about 70 days from sowing seed.

Cilantro 'Delfino' is an improved selection with decorative fern-like foliage, ready to harvest in about 4-5 weeks from seed. Mature plants reach about 20 inches tall when grown in full sun. 'Delfino' can also be grown for its flavorful seed, known as coriander.

'Carmen' is an improved Italian-type sweet pepper selected for early production of the distinctive horn-shaped peppers with wide shoulders, tapering to a smooth point. An excellent choice for container gardening, the upright plant reaches only 28 inches tall. Expect ripe peppers about 75 days from transplanting. Chile Pepper 'Mariachi' was chosen for superior fruit size, early production, high yield and mildly hot flavor (500 to 600 Scoville heat units). The colorful fruit ripen from yellow to red, and flavor can become more pungent when plants are under heat or drought stress. 'Mariachi' produces an abundance of 3-4 inch peppers beginning about 65-68 days from transplanting.

AAS winners are selected from many new cultivars, based on performance in the garden as well as in the greenhouse. Although no plant offers a guarantee of success in an individual garden, AAS winners have proven themselves worthy over a broad range of growing conditions. Try these new selections alongside your old standbys so you'll have a means of comparison. AAS winners should be available through local garden centers and mail-order catalogs next spring. For more information about these and previous years' winners, point your Web browser to:

<http://www.all-americaelections.org/>.

Firewitch Dianthus Named 2006 Perennial of the Year

The Perennial Plant Association has selected *Dianthus gratianopolitanus* Firewitch' (Feuerhexe') as its 2006 Perennial Plant of the Year. Also known as a cheddar pink, the perennial dianthus is an excellent choice for use as an edging plant, as a rock garden specimen, to soften retaining walls, and in container gardens.

Firewitch' has hot pink flowers that bloom profusely in mid to late spring, with some repeat bloom in summer and fall if you deadhead faded blooms. As an added bonus, the flowers have a spicy clove-like fragrance. The bluish-gray evergreen foliage forms solid mats, making it an excellent ground cover, even when not in bloom. Plants reach only 3-4 inches tall, though the blooming stems add a few more inches.

Dianthus performs best in full sun, though light shade is helpful in particularly hot locations. The plant is rather adaptable, but well-drained soil is a must. Plants are hardy in USDA zones 3 to 9. Plants are easy to propagate by division or by stem cuttings taken just before or immediately after flowering.

This particular selection of Dianthus was introduced by a German nursery in 1957 as Fererhexe' but was mostly Unknown in the United States until the late 1980s, when a Connecticut nursery (Sunny Border) took up its cultivation. Commonly sold now as Firewitch' in the United States, you can find it in many local garden centers and mail-order catalogs, wherever perennials are sold.

Members of the Perennial Plant Association, generally professional plant growers, select one perennial each year to educate the gardening public and to promote planting of perennial flowers. For more information, visit the association's Web site at <http://www.perennialplant.org>.

New Garden Vegetables for 2006

Perhaps the only thing gardeners enjoy more than tending their crops is making plans for the coming growing season. Garden catalogs fill the mailbox, and online seed houses come alive with tempting photos of luscious ripe harvests. This is a perfect time to plan the spring garden!

Carrot 'Purple Haze' will surely jazz up your salad with long dark-purple roots with bright-orange centers.

2006 All-America Selection, 70 days. (Harris, Johnny's, Jung) Cauliflower 'Cheddar' is aptly named for the orange (yes, orange!) rather than white heads that deepen in color when cooked. No need to tie up

the leaves! 68 days.

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/>

Purdue Landscape and Nursery Thesaurus

<http://bluestem.hort.purdue.edu/plant/>