

Garden Thyme

January 2021

<https://extension.purdue.edu/porter>

Volume 7, Issue 1

Notes from Nikky

By Nicole "Nikky" Witkowski
Purdue Extension Educator,
Agriculture &
Natural Resources

Notes
from
Nikky



Purdue Extension Master Gardener Training Program will be offered again this winter and spring. It will be virtual like in the fall. It will start on March 3 and go until June 2, 2021, from 12:30 p.m. to 3:30 p.m., Central time. Please let anyone know that may be interested. Call 219-465-3555 for more information and to sign up.

I am looking forward to a brighter 2021 as I am sure many of you are as well. There are some new and different Master Gardener projects coming to my attention that I think are great opportunities to move forward. More details coming. I love how we have learned to work in varied ways together. If you are in need of anything, please feel free to reach out to me, and I will do what I can to make sure you stay as active as possible with the Purdue Extension Master Gardener Program. See pages 8-10 for additional ways to engage!

2021 Perennial Plant of the Year

The Perennial Plant Association is promoting *Calamintha nepeta* subsp. *Nepeta* as the 2021 Perennial Plant of the Year. Like a cloud of confetti, tiny white flowers (sometimes touched with pale blue) appear from early summer to fall on this plant. Undemanding and dependable, it provides the perfect foil for other summer bloomers and foliage. This full-sun perennial has a low mounding or bushy habit, ideal for the front of the border, rock gardens and more. While durable and pest free, *Calamintha nepeta* subsp. *nepeta* also checks two important boxes for gardeners: bees and other pollinators work the flowers throughout the summer and the aromatic foliage is deer-resistant. Learn more about the 2021 Perennial Plant of the Year at www.perennialplant.org/page/2021PPOY



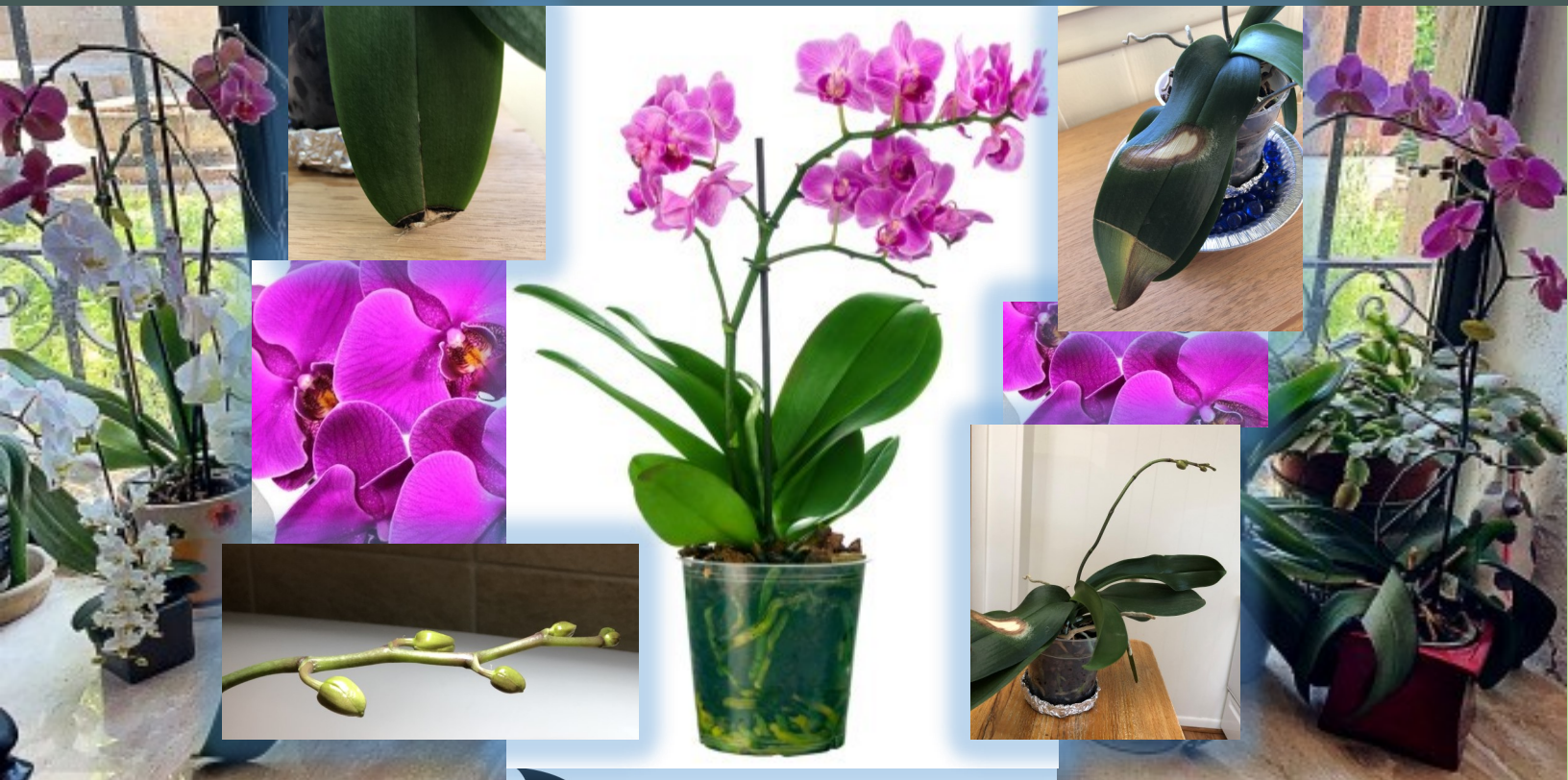
IN THIS ISSUE

Notes from Nikky, 2021 PPOY	1
My Plant; My Project—Orchids	2
Welcome to my Garden—Growing Exotics	3–4
Meet a Master Gardener	5
In Honor; In Memorial	6
How to—Amaryllis	7
Plugs for Master Gardeners	8
Extension Connection	9
Education and Fun	10

Garden Thyme

January 2021

Volume 7, Issue 1



Orchid Tale

By Suzanna Tudor
PCMG Class of 2002

Last December, I spied some beautiful, blooming orchids for sale at Home Depot for only \$5! Yes, can you imagine? I bought two, one for me and one for my sister-in-law.

Growing orchids has always intimidated me, but their blooms I can't resist. They are peculiar looking plants with long stem-like, gnarly growths, reaching for the sky from their base. These are actually their roots.

The purple blooms on my orchid were lovely all through December and into January until they began to fade. I had no idea how to care for this strange creature. I heard you do not want to over water, but it must need some liquid. It's tropical! Putting an ice cube on top of growing material is bad advice.



I began researching. After it bloomed, I cut off the stem to about an inch. Later research revealed, I should have left some for possible new flower spikes. Live and learn.

During the summer I placed it outside, shaded by an overgrown Kalanchoe. They do not like direct sun, as one of the exposed leaves was sunburned. However, orchids are not so frail as I envisioned. Sunburned and lacking proper care, my purple beauty began growing another leaf and later sprouted a flower spike! Ahhh, the tenacity of life!

Intrigued, I learned I have a Phalaenopsis orchid, one of the easier varieties of orchids to grow. I don't think orchid growing is so difficult after all. I'm going to give it a try. If you'd like to go on an orchid-growing journey with me, I recommend this link:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mHDoyH0tRYc>

Welcome
to my
Garden

Growing Exotics

By Jean Starr

Over the past 50 some years, my plant fascinations have included everything from conifers to coneflowers, American natives to glamorous colonizers. These days, I'm looking on Etsy for macramé

hangers, and slogging through online options for LED lights so I can grow as many strange and beautiful plants as I can.

My latest infatuation began around five years ago when I stumbled upon the winter-blooming Lachenalia, a cute little Hyacinth relative from the southwestern Cape province of South Africa. The more I learned about this region with the Mediterranean climate, the more I wanted to grow its native plants, the majority of which grow from a fleshy root system (bulbs, corms, rhizomes, etc.; collectively called geophytes). I've had some luck in summer with Agapanthus and Eucomis hybrids. Success has proved more elusive for winter-growing treasures.

The *Velthemia bracteata* I planted in January had two blooms in April, one in May, and began to bloom again in October. One of the coolest things about *Velthemia* is that it takes a very long time—more than a month—from spike to open blossom, even longer if grown indoors.

The *Oxalis* weren't as cooperative. In late May I planted four different species in one pot indoors and forgot about it. (The key, as it turns out.) They woke up in early October, and I set the pot under the brightest lights, on top of a heat mat and watered it for the first time.

Two main keys to success with these geophytes is patience and drainage. Many, like *Velthemia*, prefer to have their tops above the soil line. I water the bulbs in like a city kid at a garden center—very lightly without soaking. They aren't watered again until they sprout.

There are so many unusual plants available these days, there's no excuse not to give some a try. If nothing else, they make great company during a pandemic.

Best resource: The Color Encyclopedia of Cape Bulbs by John Manning, Peter Goldblatt and Dee Snijman

Sources: Telos Rare Bulbs and Brent and Becky's Bulbs

Continued on next page

Garden Thyme

January 2021

Volume 7, Issue 1

Growing Exotics, continued



Albuca spiralis grows easily from a bulb, its corkscrew leaves overshadowing its pale blooms.



Lachenalia 'African Beauty' is an easy winter bloomer.



This *Veltheimia* flower stays in bloom as long as eight weeks. This year, the same bulbs bloomed twice.



Clivia nobilis has orange, drooping flowers that bloom in winter.



This African Oxalis took more than six months to bloom.

Editor's note: I added Agapanthus and Eucomis photos, Jean's summer plant ventures.

The African Lily, *Agapanthus 'Galaxy Blue'*



Eucomis, aka Pineapple Lily, as tip of spike has lime green rosette, resembling those of pineapples.

Meet a Master Gardener

By Suzanna Tudor, PCMG Class of 2002



Sherrie Dobrowski
PCMG Class of 2018

Sherrie Dobrowski and her husband, Thomas, live in Jackson Township on their own “little acre.” She is part owner of Construction Field Services and wears the accounting and office management hats in their business.

Sherrie became interested in gardening when she bought her first home 25 years ago. Becoming a Master Gardener was always a goal of hers, but she didn’t think she had the time. However, she says that now with all the kids grown (three sons, one daughter and three grandchildren) she did have the time and money to pursue her wishes.

Sherrie states she enjoys meeting people with the same interests and learning things from them, people like Dolly Foster. Foster presented a winter seed sowing*

workshop at the LaPorte Master Gardeners which Sherrie attended. “It was great, and there is so much about it on the internet. I had never heard of it before, and I love it. It’s so much easier than trying to start seeds indoors and figuring out the frost dates. I started hollyhocks and calendulas. I didn’t want to do a whole lot since it was my first time.”

According to Sherrie, identifying plants and diseases is the most helpful information gleaned from her Master Gardener training.

*Winter seed sowing tips by PCMG Beverly Thevenin can also be viewed here:

<https://www.pcgarden.info/cg-winter-seed-sowing-article/>



An additional heartwarming pet story surfaced in writing this article. The very next day after her beloved pet cat, Taffy, passed away, a gray and white tiger appeared on Taffy’s grave-stone. Sherrie named her Socks.



Friends have joined Socks: Patch, a black cat with white chest, and Morris, similar to the orange cat on the tv commercial.



Socks “guarding” Sherrie’s first attempt at winter seed sowing.



In Honor

Rosie Lerner, Purdue Consumer Horticulture Extension Specialist in the Department of Horticulture and Landscape Architecture has retired as of 12/31/20 after 37 years.

Rosie is a native of Illinois and earned an Associate of Applied Science Degree from North Dakota State University in flower shop and greenhouse management, a Bachelor of Science Degree from Iowa State University in horticulture, production and business management option, and a Master of Science Degree from The Ohio State University in horticulture.

Rosie trained the first Master Gardeners for the Purdue Master Gardener Program in Tippecanoe County in 1988. She has presented regularly at our MG classes, particularly on gardens and vegetables, walked with us and identified the trees and plants at Taltree (now Gabis), developed the monthly guide to lawn and garden care, hosted trips to England, authored several publications--her handouts are used regularly at the AAMG booth—and the list goes on.

Thank you, Rosie for sharing your many talents and enjoy your retirement.

Resource: <https://www.purdue.edu/hla/sites/master-gardener/rosie-lerner-retires-from-purdue-university-after-37-years-of-service/>
#:~:text=On%20December%2031%2C%202020%2C%20Rosie,after%2037%20years%20of%20service.&text=Rosie%20teaching%20Tippecanoe%20County%20Master,1988%20training%20on%20Purdue's%20campus.



Fred Whitford, Rosie Lerner, and John Orick at the Gardening Show

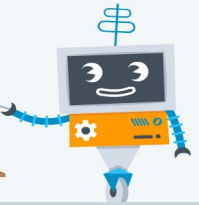
In Memory

On behalf of all PCMG members, we want to express our sincere condolences to our fellow gardeners, Rudy Kunshek on the passing of his wife, Barb; Judy Engle on the loss of her husband, Gary; and Janet Magnuson on the passing of her husband, Neil. Our thoughts and prayers are with you, and may many happy memories warm your hearts in the days ahead.

Garden Thyme

January 2021

Volume 7, Issue 1



Amaryllis—Now What Do I Do?

By Suzanna Tudor, PCMG Class of 2002

Many have planted or enjoyed Amaryllis (*Hippeastrum*) as gifts for Christmas. I've seen posts this year—awesome. The first one I saw was Mary Simons' Best of Show in the 2007 Show's houseplant contest. But, how do you care for Amaryllis after that fabulous bloom wilts? Heave it? No, as gardeners we want to get it to rebloom, right? So below are steps to do that:

1. Cut fading flower stalk off, 1-2 inches above the bulb, being careful of foliage as they feed the bulb for next year.
2. Place in sunny location or under a grow light, water and fertilize every 3-4 weeks with water-soluble houseplant fertilizer.
3. May or June, take out when frost free. No direct sun at first, gradually moving to more sunny spots. (Eastern location worked for me). Continue to water and fertilize until July.
4. Mid-September, bring inside before frost and place in sunny location. Cease feeding and reduce watering to once a week.
5. In October, stop watering. This is when the plant must go dormant. Place in a cool, dark area 50-55 degrees for two months, minimum.
6. After at least two months, begin watering and place pot with bulb (you may want to repot) in sunny location. If everything went well, green shoots and then a fat flower bud will emerge.
7. After blooming, repeat at step 1.

Typically, Amaryllis of the Amaryllidaceae family, bloom in spring. Christmas blooming bulbs are grown in greenhouses. The above schedule instills nature's rhythm.

References: <https://hortnews.extension.iastate.edu/2009/1-7/amaryllis.html>
<https://www.southernliving.com/garden/grumpy-gardener/amaryllis-after>

Suzanna Tudor's mother's Amaryllis grown in east window, fourth year with 4 blooms



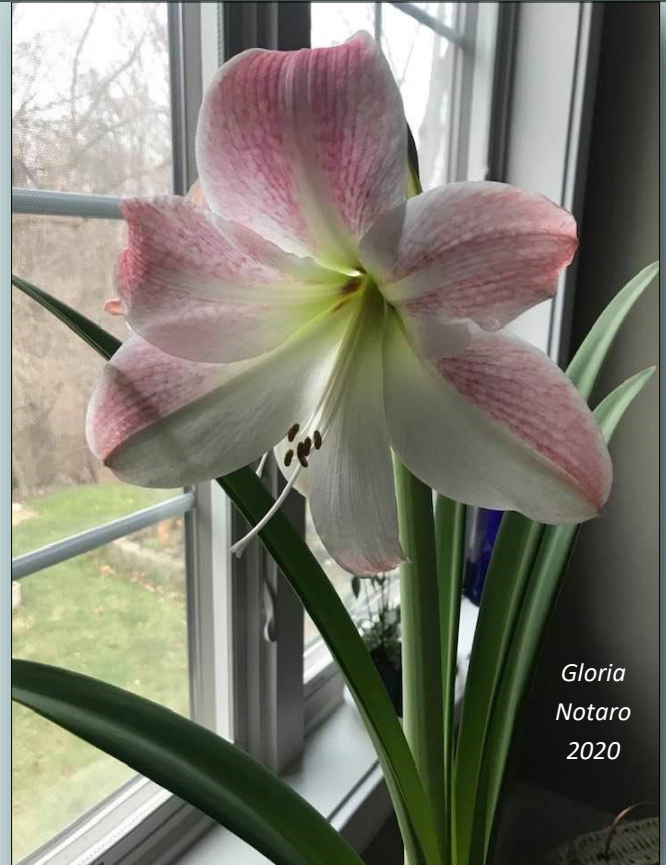
Photo credit @ Suzanna Tudor

Mary Simon's Best of Show 2007



Page 7

Photo credit @ Gloria Notaro, Mary Simon



Gloria Notaro
2020



Flower bud
March
2020

Garden Thyme

January 2021

Volume 7, Issue 1



Plugs

By Suzanna Tudor, PCMG
Class of 2002

Video Plug:

To get tips on watering, feeding, pest/disease and general care of houseplants, you will want to view the 2018 Gardening Show Education

Video, "Houseplants," presented by Chuck Roth, Jr. who is owner of Chesterton Feed & Garden. To "water" your interest here are Chuck's top picks to filter and purify the air in your home:

1. Superstar: Lucky Bamboo, *Dracaena sanderiana*
2. Peace Lily, *Spathiphyllum*, best for filtering and has fragrant bloom
3. Ponytail Palm, *Beaucarnea recurvata*
4. Aloe Vera, also can be used for medicinal purposes
5. Weeping Fig, *Ficus benjamina*
6. Chrysanthemum, snip off blooms and keep foliage for filtering
7. Staghorn Fern, *Platycerium bifurcatum*, also conversation piece as grown anywhere
8. Snake Plant, *Sansevieria*
9. Spider Plant, *Chlorophytum comosum*

Facebook group Plug:

There's a new Facebook group, **NWI Plant Swap**, that MGs may want to join if you have plants to share or trade. Fertilizer, pots, soil, or even chicken eggs have been traded on this site for plants. Help in caring for plants happens here as well. (Profiteering is not welcome.) Plant swap events are hosted, and the funds donated back to the community. This site began in May, 2020 and now has over a thousand members and growing. Here's a note from Sarah Wagner, NWI Plant Swap Creator and Co-Administrator:

"Hi everyone! Plant people are so caring and generous; it inspires me everyday to be more giving and empathic. It's truly a gift to see so many people spreading joy or gifting plants. I truly believe that any type of plant (rare or common) should be accessible to anyone. ... I am a huge advocate for mental health, and many people (including myself) use caring for plants as a relaxation or coping technique for anxiety or depression. It's an amazing thing what plants can do for a person!"

Best Indoor Plants That Purify The Air Around You



Spider Plant
(*Chlorophytum comosum*)

Golden Pothos
(*Epipremnum pinnatum*)



Chrysanthemum
(*Chrysanthemum indicum*)

Peace Lily
(*Spathiphyllum*)



Chinese evergreen
(*Dieffenbachia seguine*)

Areca Palm
(*Dypsis lutescens*)



Aloe vera
(*Aloe barbadensis mill*)

Gerbera Daisy
(*Gerbera Jamesonii*)



English Ivy
(*Hedera helix*)



Snake Plant
(*Sansevieria laurentii*)



Rhapsis Palm
(*Rhapsis excelsa*)



Lucky Bamboo
(*Dracaena sanderiana*)



Weeping Fig
(*Ficus benjamina*)



Staghorn Fern
(*Platycerium bifurcatum*)

EXTENSION CONNECTION

New Home Gardening Program - Get Growing With Purdue Extension

<https://puext.in/GetGrowingInfo>

We are excited to announce this new program aimed at the home gardening audience.

This program will be a virtual, live webinar series scheduled for Tuesday mornings, 9:30 – Noon ET, January 12 to February 23, 2021. The target audience is adults that want to learn more about gardening, but not ready to commit to the intensity of the Purdue Extension Master Gardener Program. Registration Fee is \$45 for the 7-week series.

Registration deadline is January 5, 2021, 11:59 p.m. (ET).

January 12 - How Plants Grow

January 19 - What's Pestering Your Garden

January 26 - Woody Landscape Plants

February 2 - Vegetable Gardens

February 9 - Flower Gardens

February 16 – Lawns

February 23 - Fruit Gardens

Purdue Extension Master Gardeners attending? Currently active Purdue Extension Master Gardeners that would like to enroll in this as a refresher for continuing education hours are welcome to do so through Cvent, but note that the content is not as deep as the Purdue EMG Basic Training that they received.

For information and a link to register, visit: <https://puext.in/GetGrowingInfo>

Questions about the program? Contact getgrowing@purdue.edu.

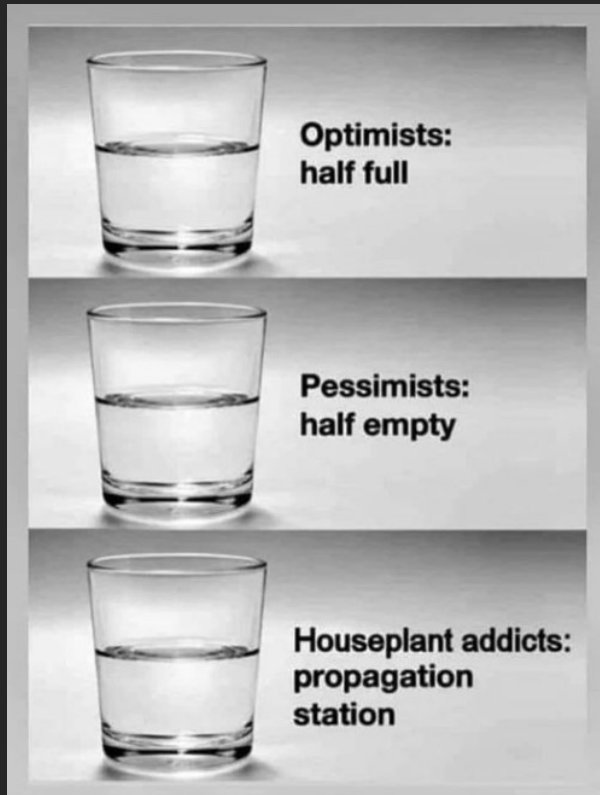
Get Growing with Purdue Extension Team

Rosie Lerner, John Orick, Nikky Witkowski, Gina Anderson, Richard Beckort, Justin Curley, Steve Mayer, John Woodmansee, and Phil Woolery.

Garden Thyme

January 2021

Volume 7, Issue 1



View the video lecture series the Hoosier Hillside Master Gardeners have put together. The videos can be found on the Purdue Extension – Orange County YouTube channel and can count as education hours. (bit.ly/hhmglecture)

EDUCATION OPPORTUNITIES

Purdue Extension Master Gardener Training this fall was virtual and you can view the lectures. Use the link below and the password EMGvol2020 to see the videos for two education hours. <https://www.purdue.edu/hla/sites/>

The Purdue website has added a link to numerous on-line education opportunities:

<https://www.purdue.edu/hla/sites/master-gardener/education-hours-opportunities/>

Monthly PCMGA meetings typically held on the 2nd Wednesday of the month, often include an educational topic after the business meeting. These can be logged as educational hours, as well as, educational videos of former Garden Show seminars found at pcgarden.info on the Member Pages.

Garden Thyme

is a publication of the Indiana
Porter County Master Gardeners Association
www.pcgarden.info

Newsletter Team

Suzanna Tudor, Editor
Wilma Willard, Designer

Earn volunteer credit for contributing to the newsletter;
contact the Extension Office for more information.
219-465-3555

Equal Opportunity Statement It is the policy of the Purdue University Cooperative Extension Service that all persons have equal opportunity and access to its educational programs, services, activities, and facilities without regard to race, religion, color, sex, age, national origin or ancestry, marital status, parental status, sexual orientation, disability or status as a veteran. Purdue University is an Affirmative Action institution. This material may be available in alternative formats.