

Indian Creek Newsletter

December, 2016

On the web at <http://www.indiancreeksubdivision.org>

Contact us by email at indiancreeknews@hotmail.com

Towanda HCE

The Towanda HCE group will meet on Monday, Dec 12, 6pm at the Towanda Community Building for their Christmas Party Pot luck. Bring a dish to share. Meat, drink, table service will be provided. If you wish to participate bring a \$10 gift exchange which is on the theme of "Make it; Bake it; Sew it; Grow it" or you may make a donation to the Brotherhood Tree. Hostess committee: Bev Hornickel, Sandy Whalen, Robin Peason, Clara Lehan. Please RSVP to Clara, 309-728-2374 or jclehan@yahoo.com by Saturday, Dec 10. Come for a festive time!

Our next meeting will be Monday, Jan 9, 7pm when Cindy Kelley will present a program on "Super Foods" and also a Fact Find on Prebiotics, Probiotics, & Symbiotics. More information about Towanda Home and Community Education: Cindy Kelley, 309-824-4797 or ckek71@frontier.com.

Gardening Tips

by Helen Leake



When it is cold outside we put a coat on. You have taken your house plants inside so they don't get too cold. When you purchase a plant you need to protect it from the cold from the time it leaves the store until you get it home. Just a couple minutes of cold could damage or kill your plant. Do not just place it in a plastic bag and head out the door. You can place it in a reuseable bag and cover the top. I have purchased a towel and wrapped the plant. Also be sure the car is warm and do not make any more stops on the way home.

The Christmas cactus" that we buy blooming in the stores now, is really a Thanksgiving cactus. There is a Christmas cactus. The plants look almost alike, except the Thanksgiving cactus has a point on its leave-stem, while the Christmas cactus is more round. Both plants are treated the

same. Keep the soil moist while they are blooming, and after the flowers drop, you can let the top of the soil dry a little.

Don't be surprised if the flowers and buds fall off soon after you get it home. They don't like to be moved while in bloom. Continue to treat it like a house plant. After the danger of frost, you can place the plant outside, and let them rest. They will bloom again next year, sometime before Thanksgiving.

The Mandevilla is a tropical vine that doesn't usually bloom in your home during the winter. It might bloom in a greenhouse if it is warm enough, has enough humidity and enough light. You can cut it back 1/3, water it sparingly and keep it in a bright light and let it rest during the winter.

In mid-February, when the day light hours get longer, water it well and fertilize it for its spring growth. Put it outside after the danger of frost has past.

If you placed your Amaryllis outdoors for the summer, it is time to start it growing again. Remove all of the dried foliage and plant it in fresh soil. Now do the same as if you are starting a new bulb. It likes to be crowded in the pot, so just have the pot a little wider than the bulb. Leave the top 1/3 of the bulb uncovered. Hold it over the sink and water it well, letting excess water drain from the bottom.

Place the plant into a warm, lighted area, but not in direct sunlight. Keep the soil moist, but not too wet, the roots are growing. When you see signs of growth, move the plant to brighter light and water regularly. Turn the pot 1/4 turn every time you water so the stem will not lean toward the light. It is surprising how fast the flower stem will grow.

When the bud shows color, move it out of direct light and to a cooler place so the flowers will last longer. Remove the spent flower when it dries so it doesn't take away from the beauty of the plant. When all of the flowers are done, cut the stem off and treat the leaves as a house plant.

Now that we have brought our house plants inside, they will take some time to adjust to the lower level of light, the big change in humidity and the lack of wind. Don't be surprised if they drop some of their outdoor leaves, they will soon grow some indoor leaves. You might have to move them from one spot to another to adjust to the light. I like to turn the container a quarter turn every time I water, so the plant doesn't lean toward the light. Also don't place them too close to an outside door that could give some blasts of cold air or too close to a heating register that could dry them out too fast.

We see products in the stores to put on the leaves to make them shine. Plants breathe through their leaves, that product could block the pores and give them a stuffy nose or completely stop it up. If the plant is to have shiny leaves, it will, if it is healthy. Simply wipe the dust off with a water-dampened cloth, or if a small plant place it in the sink and wash it off. Plants collect dust, just like the tables do.

While your garden problems are fresh in your mind, now is a good time to make a list of what needs to be done next spring or summer. Maybe a shrub or perennial would do better in a different spot. Maybe a shrub needs to be pruned back after it finishes blooming. Maybe you just want to look for a plant for a certain spot. Make a list or draw a picture of where you might want to move it.

Winter is on the way and we can do some things now to help the trees and shrubs survive. We keep saying to be sure the trees and shrubs are well hydrated before the ground freezes. In late fall and winter, plants still exhale and release moisture. Once the ground freezes, the roots cannot draw moisture from it. Also the cold winter winds pull the moisture out of the evergreen needles and the broad leaf shrubs, such as Azaleas, boxwood, and hollies. Water them about one inch a week until the ground freezes, then apply mulch to help hold the moisture in.

For the broad leaf shrubs, it might help to wrap them with burlap, or a plastic shield, to protect them from the winter winds. If you are thinking about planting some broad leaf trees and shrubs, consider placing them in a place protected from the winter winds.

If you have evergreen trees and shrubs near a street or road where the snowplow can throw snow on them, you could put up a plastic shield to protect them from the salty slush. Place the posts before the ground freezes would make it easier.

Unless your perennials have a disease, leave the faded growth in place and clean it up in the spring. The stems will collect leaves and snow, protecting the roots and crown from the winter cold.

As we make out our Christmas shopping list, there are always some that we have no idea what to purchase. They are always making more tools that are easier for people, that it is harder to garden than it used to be. The bench that you can sit on or turn it over and you can kneel on it, is really handy. If it hurts your knees when you kneel, place a folded bath towel on it. Use the legs when you try to stand up. The broad fork is being shown a lot now. It is a wide fork that is used to break new ground and aerate beds. It has long handles, so you can push it into the soil, and move it back and forth to loosen the soil and then move over a little and aerate more

They have a lot of new tools. Instead of the trowel handle coming straight out, it is curved and is much easier on your wrist. There is a leaf rake with a knob half way down the handle which is easier to use. The extending handles in the loppers make it easier to reach the higher branch without a ladder, but you also don't need to bend over so much to cut off a weed. Check out the garden center for other handy tools.

The people in the Nursing home can always enjoy the Norfolk Island pine. There are usually some that are already decorated and they are small so they don't take a lot of space and don't need a lot of care.

The Amaryllis kit is good also. You can plant it or help them. It is amazing how fast it grows and the flowers are very attractive. The Paper Whites are also attractive and interesting to watch them grow.

Helen J. Leake

Rt. 66 Tree Planting





During the week of November 7, more than 90 trees and shrubs were planted along the Historic Route 66 Trail. Twenty volunteers from Towanda, Bloomington, and Normal planted, staked, mulched, and watered the donations from several sources. Friends of the Constitution Trail donated 33 trees and arranged for 20 more from IDOT. Sunburst Nursery, Growing Grounds, Casey's Garden Shop, and the Town of Normal also made significant contributions. The Town of Normal lent equipment for digging holes, and Kicks Bar and Grill contributed lunch.

A big THANK YOU is due to those donors and hard-working volunteers who made it all possible.

Spaces along the trail are still available for memorial trees, or currently planted trees can be adopted as memorials. Contact Carol Myers (728-2749 or 533-0412) for more information.

Please consider making a contribution to support our Route 66 Parkway. Towanda, IL Route 66 Parkway is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization. Your contribution is tax-deductible to the extent allowed by law. The federal government encourages your generosity by allowing you to deduct your gift on your income tax return, if you itemize.

Checks can be written to the Towanda, IL Route 66 Parkway and sent to Fred Walk, 10 Bent Tree Lane, Towanda, IL 61776. Please call 309-830-2188 for additional information

Ecology Action Center

PRESS RELEASE

For immediate release

November 15, 2016

Contact: Peter Murpy, MREA Phone: 414-988-7963

Solar Bloomington-Normal Shines and Surpasses Goals, Lowers Solar Costs Mclean County, IL, 11/15/16 - The Midwest Renewable Energy Association (MREA) in partnership with The Ecology Action Center (EAC) of Normal, have surpassed their goal of 250 kW solar for home, business and

farm installation in McLean County through their Solar Group Buy Program. Meeting this benchmark gave participants an additional discount of 3% on top of the already discounted group solar base cost, making solar even more accessible and affordable for residents through the power of volume purchasing. The program ended on October 31 with 434 kW committed on 32 homes and businesses in McLean County. Notably, two local businesses, Professional Self Storage/Foundry LLC (123 kW) and 121 N. Main Street LLC (75 kW), will be building the largest two arrays. The largest solar array was a collaboration between Professional Self Storage and the tenants of the Foundry project (a development by Workbench Collaborative), including new and existing businesses in the community - Green Top Grocery, Bloomington Cycle and Fitness, and Gingerbread House. "Green Top has long dreamed of using solar power to help reduce our carbon footprint," said Michael Pennington, Green Top Grocery General Manager. "We wouldn't have been able to realize that dream without the group-buy program and other incentives that helped make it financially feasible for The Foundry LLC to include solar power in our development." Caryn Davis of Bloomington Cycle explained that the solar installation is consistent with their values as a business. "Our business model has always focused on making it easier for our employees (and customers) to ride to work. Solar aligns with our belief that anything you can do to reduce your negative impact on our environment, is the right thing to do." A total of 20 informational Power Hour sessions were held since the program's launch in April, reaching over 230 individuals. Michael Brown, Executive Director of the Ecology Action Center, was happy the Ecology Action Center could help with this program, "As we begin work on a new clean air initiative for Bloomington-Normal, strategies like this are a win-win, helping residents and businesses lower their energy bills while also improving air quality with clean, renewable energy".

Education is the core of the program. MREA, EAC, and StraightUp Solar staff educate participants on all aspects of the solar process, making the entire project easily accessible and cost-effective for participants. Through the program, participants don't have to worry about selecting an installer, applying for state and federal incentives, working with the utility, zoning, or any other task that might otherwise deter an individual from going solar. The Group Buy Program helps participants navigate the easiest and most cost effective route to solar. "MREA and EAC work together to educate those who are interested in going solar," said Peter Murphy, solar program manager at MREA. "The goal is for folks to learn about solar, which can seem daunting at first, and then go into the process with eyes wide open." Together the EAC and MREA have solidified local company StraightUp Solar as the program's installer through a competitive bid process. StraightUp Solar has installed hundreds of solar arrays and has both master electricians and North American Board of Certified Energy Practitioners (NABCEP) certified professionals on staff. MREA is an advocate for having NABCEP-certified installers on all solar projects to ensure systems are completed to the highest standard of quality and safety. StraightUp Solar invited another local small business, Wilcox Electric, to assist with the program's many installations. StraightUp Solar provides interested participants free site assessments, helping customers determine whether rooftop or ground-mounted solar will make sense on their property. Interested participants had until September 30th to formally express interest in the program, with a deadline of October 31st to sign a contract. The Solar Bloomington-Normal Group Buy Program is brought to you by the Midwest Renewable Energy Association (MREA), with support from the U.S. Department of Energy SunShot Initiative. For more information about the Solar Bloomington-Normal group buy, contact MREA's Solar Program Manager, Peter Murphy, at 414-988-

7963, or peterm@midwestrenew.org. The MREA is a nonprofit 501(c)(3) educational organization. Founded in 1990, the MREA promotes renewable energy and sustainable living through education and demonstration. To learn more, call 715-592-6595 or visit www.midwestrenew.org. The Ecology Action Center is a not-for-profit environmental agency with a mission to inspire and assist residents of McLean County in creating, strengthening and preserving a healthy environment. The EAC acts as a central resource for environmental education, information, outreach, and technical assistance in McLean County

Towanda Library

December Library News

Senior Financial Assistance presented by Department on Aging: third Monday of each month from noon to 2:00

Towanda Reads Adult Book Discussions: second Tuesday of even-numbered months @ 5:00. Discussion on December 13 is "The Road to Character" by David Brooks

Tuesday Tunes: first Tuesday of month @ 2:30. LEGO Club: first Wednesday of month @ 2:30.

[Bulldog Book Club: each Late Start Wednesday of the school year @ 2:30. December 14 is Quiz Bowl game, prizes, and holiday celebrating.](#)

Story Hours: every Wednesday @ 10:30 a.m.

Crochet Group: every Tuesday @ 5:00 to 6:30. Read to Dogs: Will return in the spring.

Nomination packets available at library for April 2017 Library Trustee Election. Four trustee positions will be on the ballot. Filing window is December 12 to 19.

Library closed on Christmas Eve and Monday following Christmas Day. Also on New Year's Eve and Monday following New Year's Day.

DVDs are still free-of-charge. The library has more than 2,000 DVDs.

Borrowing from other libraries is free-of-charge. Use the online catalog, RSACat, on the Towanda Library website. Pick up your selections at Towanda Library.

Towanda 4H

The Towanda 4-H Club held its monthly meeting on Tuesday, Nov. 1 at 6:30 p.m. at the Towanda Community Building. Talks and demonstrations for the evening were done by Sarah Kraft on the different between liquid and solid measuring cups, Noah Plassman on different types of knots, Sophie

Clement on how to make a frozen banana treat, Jake Clouse on a mini Lego figure display he took to the fair and Maddie Kraft on how to clip a chickens wing. The next *meeting will be Tuesday, Dec. 6 at 6:00 p.m. at the Towanda Community Building.* This month only Towanda 4-H is inviting the public to the Towanda Community Building at 6:15 p.m. that evening so the 4-Hers can sing Christmas carols during the meeting.

4-H enrollment will be open for returning members through December 1, 2016 and for new members through April 15, 2017. For more information about joining Towanda 4-H, contact Malisa Kraft at 309-825-1235.

Calendar

Unit 5 Winter Break – 1st day NO School is Fri.Dec.23 (1st day of classes Jan.10, 2017).

Towanda Busy Bees



The Towanda Busy Bees 4-H made robots from everyday items like scrub brushes, water bottles and empty soda cans at their November meeting. Look for the club ringing bells at Hy-Vee and drop in some spare change for the Salvation Army on December 20th. The Club will hold an Awards and Recognition Banquet at Avanti's in Bloomington following their Community Service activity. 4-H is open to all youth ages 8-18 by September 1st. Contact Martha Rients for more information [728-2178](tel:728-2178).

Legion News

The Legion will have a breakfast on Sunday December 4th from 8:00 – 11:00. Breakfast includes eggs, sausage, bacon, hash browns, pancakes, French toast, fresh fruit, biscuits and gravy, juice, milk and coffee for \$9.

Bring the kids for Pancakes with Santa at the Towanda American Legion on Saturday December 10th from 8:00 to 10:00. Public invited.

There won't be a dinner this month due to the busy holiday season, but we will see you in 2017. Thank you for your continued support.

Wishing you and your family a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.

CLASSIFIED

Businesses:

Pampered Chef features Cooking Shows, Catalog Parties, Freezer Meal Workshops, Bridal Showers & Fundraisers!
Contact your local Indian Creek consultant for these events.

Annette Hancock

Call Home - 728-2990

Text or call- 309-242-1802

Email - oldcars@frontiernet.net

Website - www.pamperedchef.com/pws/annettehancock

Pinterest Recipes - www.pinterest.com/ahancock0935



For Hire:

Winter is headed our way. When the snow falls, call Avery Hartman to help with snow removal. 728-2093.

Do you need a babysitter? Do you need your house cleaned? Or, just an extra set of hands to help out around the house? Anna Kraft is willing to help! She is a sophomore at NCHS and can be contacted at 728-8088 (home) or (309) 830-7721 (cell).

Pampered Chef features cooking shows, catalog parties, freezer meal workshops, bridal showers & fundraisers! Contact your local Indian Creek consultant for these events.

Need help taking care of your pet while you are away or while you are at work? Call Avery Hartman, 728-2093. I have experience and references.

Justin (16) and Jairon (17) Schwamberger are available to help with yard work or other maintenance jobs. Call 728-2857.

Need help taking care of your pet while your away, call Bailee Harmon at (309) 530-5360. "I love animals and have been volunteering at the Humane Society for almost six months. I would love to help take care of your animals".

Are looking for someone to watch your pets when you are gone or walk them while you are at work? If so, call Sami Hartman (30 Candle Ridge Road). I am responsible and LOVE pets. I have experience and references. My number is 728-2093.