

Indian Creek Newsletter

March 2018

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

Contact us by email at indiancreeknews@hotmail.com



Gardening Tips

by Helen Leake

It won't be long until we will be planting our containers. We are seeing a lot more large containers that takes a lot of potting soil. We have suggested placing cans, rocks, etc. in the bottom to fill up the space so you don't need so much soil. Now they make reusable, recycled plastic mesh that gives better drainer and better air circulation. You can cut it to any size..

On the large containers, you do not need to replace all of the soil every year, the bottom half, probably has not been used by the roots and has settled and gotten packed by water passing thru. You can empty the soil out into a wheel barrow or other container, and mix the soil up and use it again. Another way would be to remove the top few inches of soil, empty the rest into a box, add fresh soil, mix it up and reuse.

There are a lot of potting soil and potting mixes to choose from. Flip the bag over and read the list of ingredients. A good potting mix should hold water, air, and nutrients for the roots to absorb, and still drain well.

True potting soil includes soil from the ground, plus other things. It will be heavier and stay wet longer.

Peat moss has great water and air holding and is slow to break down. Its fine texture allows the seed and tiny roots to stay in contact with the moisture. One drawback is that once it dries out, it is difficult to rewet.

Coir is the fibers and pith waste from coconut processing. It has the same water and air properties as peat, but absorbs water more quickly. It is substituted for peat often and sometimes you can see the fibers.

Composted bark or wood product is aged lumber and paper-waste that is partly broken down. it dries out faster than peat and coir, but increases air space. As the bark breaks down it uses nitrogen, so you want to fertilize during the growing season.

They might include mushroom soil, compost material, food and yard waste, which can all organic matter and fertilizer.

Sometimes potting mix will contain perlite or vermiculite to increase its movement and prevent compaction. The perlite looks like little white stones and the vermiculite looks like shiny silver flakes.

if you use perlite or vermiculite to start plants, either dampen it or wear goggles and a dust mask. it can be dusty and aggravate your lungs. It is OK if it is already mixed into the potting mix. The little white or green balls in the soil are not bug eggs, they are just fertilizer prills.

Don't reuse potting mix that was used to grow tomatoes. It could spread blight to the new crop.

Most of our houseplants have been resting during the shorter daylight hours of winter.. Some of them have already woke up and are starting to start some new growth. Now is the time to start fertilizing them and checking for new growth. You can cut back the geraniums, impatiens, and mandavila, so they can send up new shoots and make a bushier plant. Place the clippings in potting soil water and cover with a plastic bag, makes a greenhouse effect, and you might have more plants.

We have been told to make our home air tight to save energy heating it. We are also using more synthetic items such as carpet, upholstery, and other plastics that our inside air is sometimes not as healthy as the air outside.

Research has shown that having live houseplants increases oxygen in our homes. They take in carbon dioxide that we breathe out, and let out oxygen that we breathe in. That is why grandma always talked to her plants. Plants also clean the air of toxic volatile organic compounds, such as benzene and formaldehyde. While some functions stop in darkness for most plants, others make the same trade at night. Place aloe vera, orchids, and snake plant in your bedroom.

Plants also release moisture into the air. Studies have also shown presence of plants reduce stress level and makes us more productive.

One of the best air cleaner and easy to grow in the Mother-in-law plant. Most homes in Europe grow it. It doesn't take much space and likes low maintenance. Just water it a couple times a month, place it anywhere in the corner. The pretty light green pothos tolerates all kinds of conditions. It can be a desk top plant or a hanging plant. The philodendron is another easy to grow plant and if the plant isn't doing well in one area, it might do great in another spot.

The artificial plants might be attractive and less work, but they don't have the health benefits of live plants.

The snow is gone for a while and finally some sunshine and Spring is on its way. Time to do some things outside. Water the evergreens, if the ground isn't frozen.

When the temperature gets above 40 degrees, and no chance of freezing within 24 hours, you can apply dormant oil spray on your ornamental and fruit trees before they leaf out. Be sure to cover all of the branches to break the insect cycle, so you won't need to use so many pesticides later.

It is not too late to prune the fruit trees and grapes. Grapes produce on new wood. Fruit trees produce better when they are more open in the center and the sun can get thru. Don't forget to sterilize the pruners after each cut, so you don't spread any disease that might be present.

If you haven't cleaned and sharpen your garden tools, now is a good time to do it on a warm sunny day outside. Also sharpen the mower blades, change the oil, and clean the air filter. Also check the garden tiller. Plastic onion bags make a good scrubber.

Prune the red-twig dogwoods in early spring for more colorful stems.

If the handles on the hoe or rakes are hard on your hands, you can slip some foam insulation for pipes over them.

When planning your vegetable and flower garden, don't forget to check the mature width and height of the plants. Be sure the larger plants won't crowd out the smaller, shorter plants. If you have some plants that don't like the afternoon hot sun, you could arrange them so they could use the protection of the larger plants.

Light Pollution

We have been trying to reduce the water pollution and air pollution for years. We want to leave the earth a better place for our children, grandchildren, and great grandchildren. One thing we can do is that if it is going to rain within the next 24 hours, do not apply any chemicals to your lawn. The leaves need time to absorb it. As for the air pollution, be careful what you burn and how many chemicals you spray into the air.

Research has added light pollution to our list. In the last few years, light pollution has increased about 2 percent a year. The biological impact from artificial light is significant. It can interfere with people's sleep, which can affect their health. It can disrupt the migration and reproduction of birds, fish and amphibians. Also it is harder to see the stars.

Scientists are finding out that artificial lights at night interfere with the ability of plants to produce seeds and for nocturnal pollinators to gather food. Ecologist Eva Knopp used night vision goggles to record visits of more than 300 different insect species to flowers of 60 plant species in dark meadows. They also discovered that plants exposed to the lights produced fewer fruits than their unlit counterparts. Some did not produce any fruit. Insect visits to plants declined over 60 percent.

Many times we have talked about plants {trees down to annuals} go by the day light hours to grow and when to close down for the winter. Birds migrating in the fall and spring use the stars as their map and they have problems seeing the stars over a large city. People that have flowers near the solar lights have said they don't bloom as good and sometimes not at all. Soybeans planted near street lights in urban area, the soybeans close to the poles stay green, while the soybeans farther out ripen.

We do need light to see where we are going and to help protect our property. Try not to overdo the use of extra light at night.

Helen J. Leake

Towanda Busy Bees

Towanda Busy Bees will meet on Tuesday, March 20th at 6:30 pm in the board room at the Towanda Community Building.

HCE March News

The Towanda Unit of Home and Community Education will meet on Monday, Mar 12, 7:00 p.m. at the Towanda Community Building. The lesson, "Making your Dollars Stretch" will be given by Valerie Dotson. Valerie will also give the lesson from February "Fish Facts". The Fact Find on the Lexington and Sundowners units will be given by Cindy Kelley. Information about this meeting or Towanda HCE, contact Robin, 815-579-1650.

Many other March activities are planned. There will be a Super Saturday held at Pontiac Bible Church in Pontiac on March 10 from 8:30 a.m. to 12 noon. The lessons to be presented are "5 Ingredient Fix" given by Kathleen Emery, "Fairy Gardens" given by Sandy Knight of Livingston County, and "Living With a Hearing Loss" presented by Jacob Marlow of AccuQuest Hearing Centers, Bloomington. **Trolley tours at the Pontiac town hall are on the agenda at 10 a.m. with lunch after that on your own- 309-824-2784 for more info/RSVP by Mar 7.** Other programs and workshops to consider: Mar. 12, 1-4 p.m., Shelf Liner Wreath

Workshop, McLean County Extension office, 1615 Commerce Parkway, Bloomington, call Lynda by Mar 7, 309-532-1961 for RSVP, fee, supplies information; Mar. 19, 9 a.m. – 3 p.m., Community Service Day, making eyeglass cases for developing nations and hats, scarves and mittens for local children or your own project, Farm Bureau Auditorium, Karen- 309-826-9559. All meetings are open to the public. Call phone number listed for more information.

Legion News

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

Celebrate St Patrick's Day at the Legion. There will be a dinner on Saturday March 17th. Dinner will include corned beef, cabbage, carrots, new potatoes, rye bread, dessert and drink for \$10. Dinner will be served from 4:30pm to 7:30pm.

All dinners are open to the public. Carry outs are available. Thank you for your continued support of the Legion and our Veterans.

Towanda Library

March 2018 Library News

Preschool Story Hour every Wednesday @ 10:30: Enjoy stories, crafts, and pre-literacy activities such as finger plays, singing, educational games, and acting-out stories. Younger siblings welcome in play areas or on a lap!

Bulldog Book Club on March 7 & 21 @ 2:30: Each "Late Start" Wednesday of the school year youth in 4th & 5th grade discuss the Caudill nominated books. Sessions are now led by Amy Oberts. Discussion of "Wild Robot" and "Book Scavenger" on March 7th.

LEGO Builders Club on March 19 @ 2:30: Third Monday of each month during the school year. Youth in 3rd, 4th, and 5th grade take on literacy-based LEGO challenges taught by April Fisher. Pre-register today at the library!

Tuesday Tunes on March 20: This group meets at 2:30 on the 4th Tuesday of each month during the school year with the exception of March and May. Kindergarten, First, and Second graders sing, dance, play musical instruments, and enjoy other toe-tapping activities taught by Developing Melodies. Pre-register today at library!

Crochet/Knit/Fibers Group: Every Tuesday @ 5:00 to 6:30. New members are always welcome. Questions are cheerfully answered.

Towanda Reads Adult Book Discussions: The group meets on April 10th to discuss "The Life We Bury" by Allen Eskens. Join the book discussion whenever a title interests you. Newcomers are always welcome! The group meets the second Tuesday of even-numbered months. Future selections are on the library website.

Appy Hours @ the Library each Tuesday from 5:00 to 6:00: Bring your e-readers or other electronic devices and your questions to "Appy Hour". Enjoy a one-on-one session to learn about the library's online resources – such as Worldbook Encyclopedia Online and/or Tumblebooks animated books for young children.

Learn how to borrow free e-books from our library. You may even request a short demonstration of how to use the library's online catalog, RSACat, to order materials from our library and the 200 surrounding libraries.

Weather-Related Closings: This library typically closes on days that McLean Unit #5 schools declare a snow day closing. There may be exceptions. Check the library's Facebook page and website for closing posts.

See all library news at: www.towandalibrary.org and on the library Facebook page

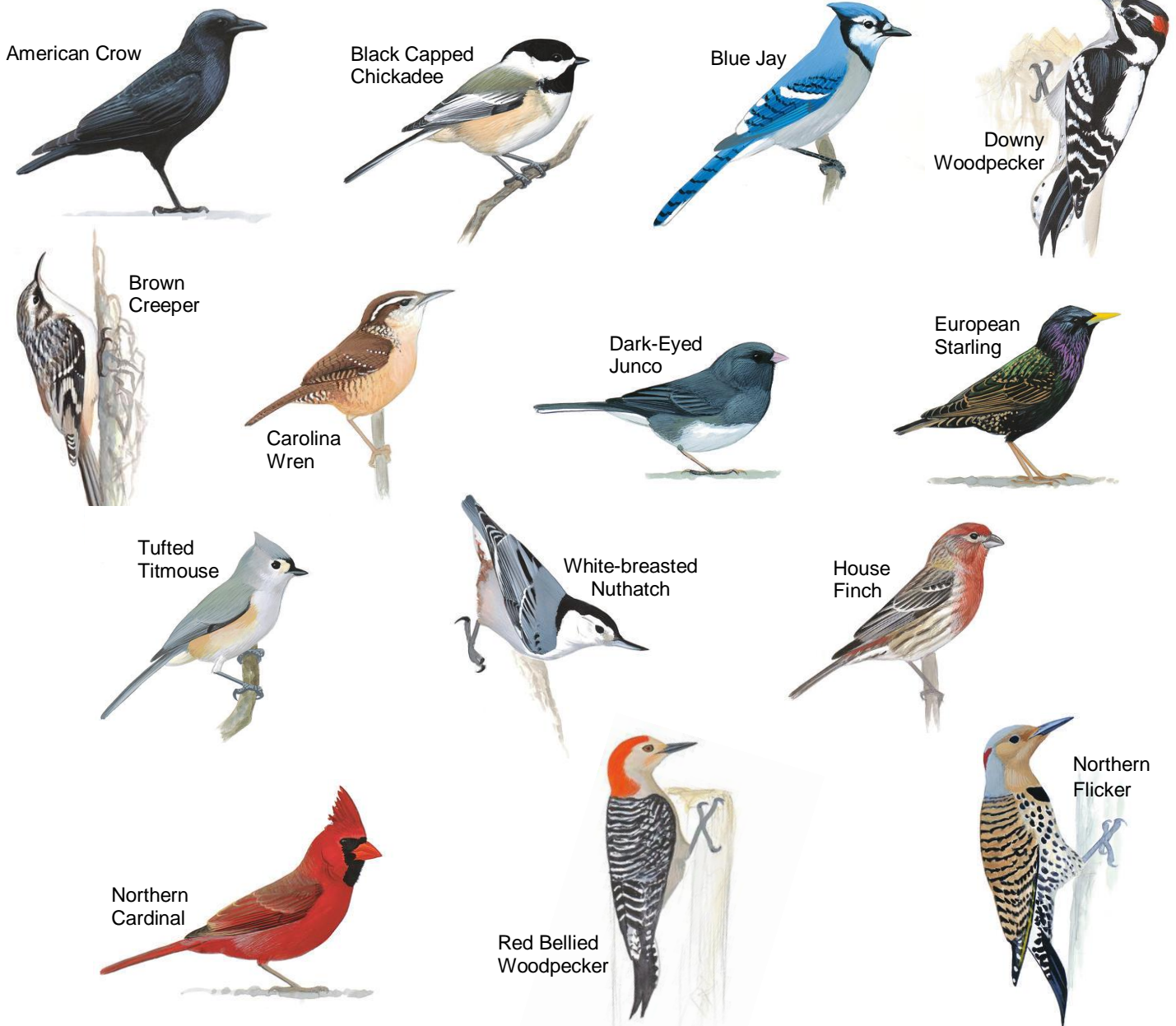
Birds of Indian Creek Contest Winner

Carolina Wren - 3
 Red Tail Hawk - 2
 White Breasted Nuthatch - 5
 Black Capped Chickadee - 7
 Tufted Titmouse - 3
 Bluejays - 3
 Cardinals - 5

Downy Woodpeckers - 4
 Hairy Woodpecker - 8
 Common flicker - 2
 English sparrow - 10
 House Finch - 10
 European Starlings - 26
 Crow - 5

These findings are based on what I see around my feeder and backyard in Dec/Jan. Other birds I almost included that are migratory but seen in early Dec: Slate colored Junco and Rose Breasted Grosbeak

Greg Beneze / 11 Eastwood



NOTE: At this time of year, all of the birds are wintering, not migrating. So they are either year-round residents (as species, not necessarily individuals) or wintering only (so will go back to breed further north and winter is the only time to see them). The latter is what makes winter birding so interesting as it is the only time you can see them here before they leave again.

Angelo Capparella - Associate Professor of Vertebrate Zoology in the School of Biological Sciences at ISU

Calendar

General Calendar Items:

Saturday, March 17 – St. Patrick's Day

Tuesday, March 20 – Election Day – remember to vote

Unit 5

1) **Kindergarten registration is Tuesday, March 13, 2018.** Children reaching the age of 5 on or before September 1, 2018, will be eligible for enrollment in kindergarten. Parents should bring a certified birth certificate, current immunization and health records and proof of residency. Students entering kindergarten must turn in a current physical, vision, dental exam and immunization records. Students will be excluded from school without physical and immunizations by first day of school.

Call Towanda School 309.557.4426 or the Unit 5 District Office 309-.557.4400 or go to www.unit5.org to find out about proof of residency or how to register.

2) **Late Starts - Wed.Mar.7 and Wed.Mar.21**

3) **Spring Break** – The last day of school before Spring Break will be **Friday, March 23**. School will resume **Tuesday, April 3**.

Garage Sales

The Annual Spring Towanda Area **Garage Sales will be held Thu. May 3-Sun. May 6**. Detailed information will be in next month's newsletter. The spring sales are held each year at the beginning of the Illinois Route 66 Red Carpet Corridor Festival which are Saturday-Sunday May 5 & 6, 2018. Look for information and updates about the Festival on the Red Carpet website www.il66redcarpetcorridor.org/ in the near future.

CLASSIFIED

Businesses:

Pampered Chef features Cooking Shows, Catalog Parties, Freezer Meal Workshops, Bridal Shows & 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:

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".

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).

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.

Are you 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.

Lauren and Myles Smith will provide child care and pet care - call 728-2930

Justin Schwamberger, 17 years old, is available for helping with lawn care, snow removal, and help around the home. Call 728-2857.