

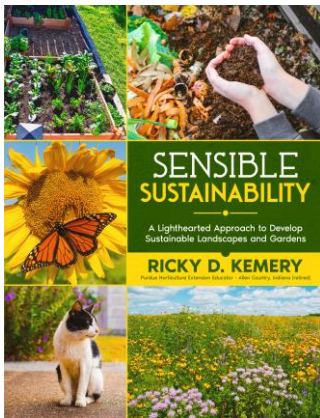
Ricky's Gardening Tips and Tricks and Home Horticulture

November 2022 Issue

Written and compiled by Ricky D. Kemery, Allen County Extension Educator Retired, phone: 260 - 431-6893

Ricky's Gardening Tips and Tricks and Home Horticulture is an online newsletter designed to provide citizens of Allen County and northeastern Indiana with up-to-date information about Horticulture and home issues, written in a lighthearted style! To subscribe, send an email to kemeryr7@frontier.com.

My Book Sensible Sustainability is Finished! My daughter Jessica



persuaded me to write a book about gardening. After a lot of work, I finished the project.

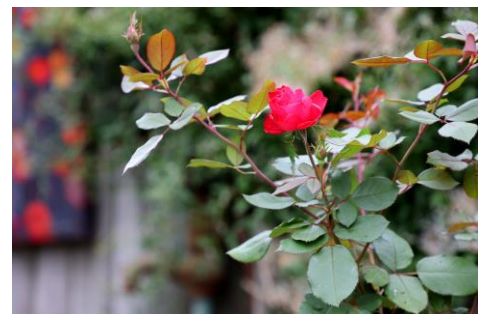
This book compiles articles written for my online newsletter, Home Horticulture, newspaper articles, and materials used to teach citizens and volunteers since my retirement after 23 years spent as a Horticulture Educator in Allen County, Indiana. Much of the information presented is appropriate for gardeners interested in sustainable gardening everywhere. I included useful tips and tricks I have learned over the years — correct misinformation from social media — and answer common questions I still receive. I also try to

find humor and joy (with the help of my cat, Hoggles) in how we all interact in this crazy mixed-up world. This book is now available on Amazon for purchase for \$14.99 and also as a downloadable e-book for \$9.99. Subscribers to this newsletter will recognize some articles, but I have also written and amended new material for this book.

[Sensible Sustainability: A Lighthearted Approach to Develop Sustainable Landscapes and Gardens: Kemery, Ricky D.: 9798362418366: Amazon.com: Books](https://www.amazon.com/dp/9798362418366)

Rest The Roses

This seemed to be a great year for landscape roses. Nearly Wild and Knockout Roses were spectacular – flowering into late fall. My new Oso Easy roses are still flowering – even after the snow and cold temperatures. This is a time to leave the roses alone – don't prune or cut them back because we want the roses to head



into dormancy. Pruning or cutting back will send a signal to the roses to keep growing and doing so will make them more vulnerable to winter kill. So resist the urge to fiddle faddle with roses in the landscape.

Evening Primrose

Common Evening Primrose (*Oenothera biennis*) is a native wildflower that sometimes can become an invasive and temperamental weed. It is also a biennial, so one will usually need to wait until its second year until its fragrant, four-petaled flowers bloom.



Evening primrose self-seeds, so it's possible it could take over your garden if left alone. Still, its pretty, lemon-scented yellow flowers can lure many gardeners with their beauty. It is a great plant if one likes to have late afternoon dinner parties or gatherings. The plant's blooms open in the late afternoon and evening and close throughout the day, attracting a different set of nighttime pollinators, such as moths and bats. Everyone wants a bat at their dinner party.

While it blooms and grows best during late summer, evening primrose actually prefers to be cool rather than warm. The plant needs to get established with roots and foliage during the cooler early months of spring to flower well come summer. Too much heat early on in its life can cause the plant to become leggy or resemble a weed in appearance. Since it is a biennial, it is best to leave established plantings alone so it can drop seed each year to go through its two-year cycle. Simply remove any first year rosettes that try and spread.

- ***Oenothera odorata* ‘Sulphurea’**: A delicate yellow flower that gives off a beguiling perfume scent at night. Its growth height is up to 24 inches (60 cm).
- ***Oenothera tetragona* ‘Summer Solstice’**: A large-flowered evening primrose plant whose deep yellow flowers spring from red buds. The growth height is 24-36 inches (60-80 cm).
- ***Oenothera speciosa* ‘Siskiyou’**: A magnificent ground cover evening primrose with pink flowers and enormous vigor. The growth height is 8-12 inches (20-30 cm).
- ***Oenothera speciosa* ‘Alba’**: A white flowering variety with prostrate shoots and long flowering period from June to September. The height of growth is 10 inches (30 cm).
- ***Oenothera rosea***: Dense clusters of delicate pink flowers adorn the 10 inches (25 cm) tall evening primrose until October. This variety is ideal for containers.

Evening Primrose 'Tina James' *Oenothera glazioviana* This is one of my all-time favorite evening primroses. It can flower the first year, and it is uncanny how quickly its flowers open at dusk. It can be a real conversation piece in a garden when conversation is lacking at your

party. It is a large-flowered, (4") pure yellow evening primrose with a trick up its sleeve. Weedy looking during the day (it is best to site it with shorter flowers in front to hide its awkwardness), it sheds its coarse look when it bursts into bloom in the evening hours, as the flowers pop open from tightly furled buds in under a minute. The star of many a nighttime garden party, evening primrose attracts both revelers and night-flying pollinators. Sow this biennial two years in succession for a yearly show. Offered by Select Seeds

It is important not to confuse evening primrose with *Primula*'s - grown as annuals in our area and also as a houseplant. *Primula*'s are notoriously fussy – preferring cool temperatures and rich soil to thrive.



Woolly Bears

The woolly bear is a common and well-known caterpillar. There are 8 or more species in the U.S. that could legitimately be called woolly bears because of the dense, bristly hair that covers their bodies. Woolly bears are the caterpillar stage of medium sized moths known as tiger moths.

The best-known woolly bear is called the banded woolly bear. It is black at both ends and reddish-brown in the middle. The adult is called the Isabella moth. The banded woolly bear is found throughout the U.S., Mexico and southern Canada. There are 2 generations of caterpillars each year (May and August) The second generation is the one noticed in late fall when the woolly bears are crossing the roads, usually in great haste as if they have someplace special to go. In fact they are only scurrying to find a sheltered location under dead plant debris, etc. where they will spend the winter as a larva. In the spring they will feed briefly before changing into a cocoon and eventually a moth. Eggs laid by the female moths start the cycle over again.

The adult moth of the banded woolly bear has white wings with scattered black spots. It is best not to handle a woolly bear caterpillar without gloves, as some folks can develop severe rashes after handling them.

The banded woolly bear is the species mentioned in winter-prediction folklore that claims the **longer the black** at the ends of the body, the more severe will be the coming winter. As you might expect, science has debunked this legend by showing the amount of black varies with the age of the caterpillar and the moisture levels in the area where it developed.



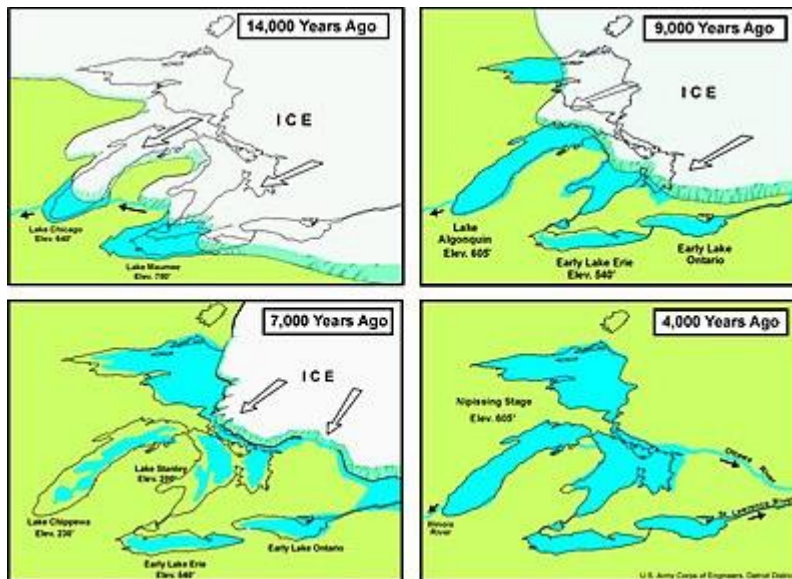
This doesn't stop the good folks of Vermilion, Ohio (west of Cleveland) from holding an annual "Woolly Bear Festival" -- claimed to be the largest one-day festival in Ohio. Festivities include a

parade, woolly bear races and an "official" analysis of the woolly bears and forecast for the coming winter.

Lake Maumee is the first of a series of glacial lakes which occupied the Erie basin. It was preceded by a few small, disconnected lakes which lay between the ice margin and the southern divide of Erie basin. The name Lake Maumee was first applied in 1888 by G. R. Dryer of the Indiana Geological Survey in an official report on the geology of Allen County, Indiana.

As the glaciers retreated to the northeast, they left large debris deposits called moraines running at right angles to its line of retreat. One of these, was left at the site of present-day Fort Wayne, Indiana where it acted as a dam that held back the waters of the lake. When the water was at its highest point, about 800 feet above sea level it left ridges that later became the routes of trails and highways. During this stage, the waters of the lake, possibly in response to an advance of the ice front at the lake's eastern end, overtopped a "sag" in the Fort Wayne Moraine. This caused a catastrophic drainage of the lake known as the Maumee Torrent that scoured a one- to two-mile-wide outlet running southwest to the Wabash River near what is now Fox Island county park

Ultimately, the receding lake involved the reversal of drainage in what is now northeastern Indiana and northwestern Ohio by capturing streams that formerly drained into the Wabash. The Black Swamp that once occupied much of the land between Sandusky Ohio, and New haven, Indiana was a remnant of the bed of Glacial Lake Maumee.



Poppies and The Great War Condensed

from: Armistice Day - by Sarah Pruitt

8.5 million soldiers died of battlefield injuries or disease during World War 1. Across northern France and Flanders (northern Belgium), the brutal clashes between Allied and Axis soldiers tore up fields and forests. But in the warm early spring of 1915, bright red flowers began peeking through the battle-scarred

land. These flowers were *Papaver rhoeas*, known as the Flanders poppy, corn poppy, red poppy and corn rose.

At the time, poppies were considered a weed of fields and waste areas. Lieutenant Colonel John McCrae, who served as a brigade surgeon for an Allied artillery unit, spotted a cluster of poppies that spring, shortly after the Second Battle of Ypres. McCrae tended to the wounded and got a firsthand look at the carnage of that clash, in which the Germans unleashed lethal chlorine gas for the first time in the war. Some 87,000 Allied soldiers were killed, wounded or went missing in the battle (as well as 37,000 on the German side); a friend of McCrae's, Lieutenant Alexis Helmer, was among the dead.

Struck by the sight of bright red blooms on broken ground, McCrae wrote a poem, "In Flanders Field," in which he channeled the voice of the fallen soldiers buried under those hardy poppies. Published in Punch magazine in late 1915, the poem would be used at countless memorial ceremonies, and became one of the most famous 10 works of art to emerge from the Great War. Its fame had spread far and wide by the time McCrae himself died, from pneumonia and meningitis, in January 1918.

Across the Atlantic, a woman named Moina Michael read "In Flanders Field" in the pages of Ladies' Home Journal that November. As a remembrance of the sacrifices of Flanders Field, Michael vowed to always wear a red poppy. After the war ended, she returned to the university town of Athens, Georgia, and came up with the idea of making and selling red silk poppies to raise money to support returning veterans. In mid-1920's, she managed to get Georgia's branch of the American Legion, a veteran's group, to adopt the poppy as its symbol. Soon after that, the National American Legion voted to use the poppy as the official U.S. national emblem of remembrance.

Today, nearly a century after World War I ended, millions of people in the United Kingdom, Canada, France, Belgium, Australia and New Zealand don the red flowers every November 11 (known as Remembrance Day or Armistice Day) to commemorate the anniversary of the 1918 armistice. In the United States, the tradition has developed a little differently. Americans don't typically wear poppies on November 11 (Veterans Day), which honors all living veterans. Instead, they wear the symbolic red flower that was once a common weed on Memorial Day—the last Monday in May—to commemorate the sacrifice of so many men and women who have given their lives fighting for their country.

"In Flanders Fields" by John McCrae

*In Flanders fields the poppies blow
Between the crosses, row on row,
That mark our place; and
in the sky The larks, still bravely singing,
fly Scarce heard amid the guns below.
We are the Dead.
Short days ago We lived,
felt dawn, saw sunset glow,
Loved and were loved,
and now we lie
In Flanders fields.
Take up our quarrel with the foe:
To you from failing hands we throw
The torch;
be yours to hold it high.
If ye break faith with us who die
We shall not sleep,
though
poppies grow
In Flanders fields.*



Barr Street Market circa 1957

Farmer's Markets – Connecting the Community

Have you ever visited a farmer's market? To me, it's like a garage sale with vegetables.

The number of Farmer's Markets has been steadily increasing in the United States since the late 1980's.

Consumers are becoming more aware of the health and cost benefits of locally grown organic produce offered at many farm markets. . Vegetables shipped under conditions that are not regulated. The likelihood of encountering pesticide residues on crops shipped into the United States is far greater than produce grown in this country. Concerns over E-coli and other outbreaks are also making many consumers skittish of prepackaged vegetables.

Farm markets can offer heirloom varieties that one can't find easily at traditional stores. Many heirloom varieties of tomatoes, for instance, are thinner skinned, and don't ship well. Research has shown that many heirloom varieties of vegetables can be more than 40% more nutritious than many hybrid varieties of vegetables.

Many farmers' markets now have partnered with USDA programs such as WIC and the Senior Farmer's Market Nutrition program to provide low-income citizens with increased access to nutritious foods.

I think one of the greatest benefits that farmer's markets offer to urban areas is bringing people together. The atmosphere of a farm market can be described in an understated way as "friendly" where neighbors and fellow citizens of all cultures and backgrounds interact in positive ways towards a common goal of living in a healthy community. Often times, farmers markets can bring citizens to downtown areas and neighborhoods seldom visited before the market existed.

Fort Wayne is no stranger to Farm markets. In 1837 Sam Hanna donated land for a city hall and a central farm market in Fort Wayne. The market was in operation for 120 years, and during its heyday, was open day and night, six days a week. This market was eventually named the Barr street market. Huge stone arches supporting two large pavilions were erected. Even during the great Depression, the market flourished. But during the 1950's the market declined, and the pavilions were torn down. . By 1958, the market disappeared to make room for parking.

The revised Barr street market is once again a very popular market in central fort Wayne. The South side market has also been an institution on Oxford street for decades. Farm markets are being re-discovered and new markets like the West main street market are popular. Small market stands are appearing as they once did, long ago on the sides of highways and streets in small towns. I think this is wonderful. Try sampling several ears of locally grown sweet corn and I think you'll agree. There is nothing better than fresh healthy locally grown produce.

Poinsettia Purchasing and Care



I love the legend of the Poinsettia plant - which grows wild in the hills of Mexico and Central America.

According to legend, a little girl from a very poor Mexican family had no gift to leave at her church for Christmas day. She picked leaves from the poinsettia plant and set them in a vase by the altar. On Christmas day, everyone was astonished to see the plant's leaves turn a brilliant red- representing Christ's blood.

As it turns out the “leaves” of the poinsettia plant are not leaves at all - but rather flower structures called bracts. The true flowers of poinsettia are small and insignificant. Poinsettia is referred to as a short-day plant because the plant needs several weeks of long nights of uninterrupted darkness in order for the plant bracts to turn red. In Mexico, this works out so the poinsettia plant bracts usually color around Christmas time. Keep in mind that in Mexico the poinsettia is a rangy shrub that grows in the mountain foothills. It took years of breeding programs (primarily from a grower called Paul Ecke Farms) to produce hybrids that were smaller and produced bracts with brilliant colors.

Nowadays, poinsettias are grown in huge greenhouse operations that cover acres and acres of space. The plants are grown using the highest technology – such as ebb and flow systems where the plants are grown in huge tubs where water containing nutrients floods the tubs periodically. Plant hormones are used to produce the multi branched shorter plants that consumers want. In more temperate regions of the world, daylength is manipulated using mechanized cloth “curtains” that cover the plants- in effect shorting the day and increasing the nighttime hours- simulating the natural daylength progression that occurs in Mexico. This way greenhouse growing can time exactly when the bracts will turn so poinsettias are available for the holidays.

Thousands of plants are grown in huge operations. This is how a grocery can sell poinsettias for 6 – \$10.00 apiece – and still make a profit.

In Fort Wayne, there are still a few places that sell specialty poinsettias that are like trees or have unusual colors. You have to ask around. Bill Davis - formally of Sandpoint Greenhouse was an absolute master at growing poinsettias. Youngs Greenhouse and Broadview still grow poinsettias from scratch at their operations. Just ask around.

Many folks think poinsettias are poisonous, and yet as it turns out, poinsettias are not poisonous at all. It is true that some folks can react to the white latex sap that poinsettias have. Poinsettias belong to the Euphorbia family, and folks are sometimes sensitive to the sap and develop a rash.

Poinsettia Care

Make sure you have a protective bag (paper) or sleeve for your plants. Temperatures below 45 degrees can injure or kill poinsettias.

Place your poinsettia in a sunny window. Remember the plants come from Mexico and love the sun. Many times, I have observed suffering poinsettias in office environments doing poorly in low light areas.

Take the foil surrounding the container off the plants after they are placed. Not removing the foil inhibits drainage, and poinsettias can often develop root rot if the foil is not removed.

Allow the soil to begin to dry out between watering, but never allow the plant to dry out completely. Poinsettias can wilt beyond repair in a short time if left unattended.

The plants received a boost of fertilizer in the greenhouse, so don't worry about applying fertilizer to the plants unless you keep them for extended periods.

Try to use a gallon jug filled with distilled water with a ¼ strength fertilizer solution mixed in to water the plants. Poinsettia bracts can scorch and tip burn if softened water is used.

Some frugal folks will keep their poinsettias and try to get the bracts to turn for next year's holiday season. I don't completely understand why folks want to "save" a plant that cost \$3.00, but this is a subject best discussed in another issue.

Teaching Again

Recently I was asked by Purdue Fort Wayne to teach Horticulture 101 this coming spring. Hort 101 was/is an elective entry-level class for several majors. I took the class long ago circa 1987 with about 12 other students at IPFW (as it was then called). Dr. James Tolbolski (we called him DR T.) taught the class. He was a wonderful instructor with a gift for explaining the different aspects of Horticulture in a way easy to understand. I later worked with Dr. T on his research with Pin Oak trees and worked on a research project of my own looking a genetic differences of Red Maples. It was a wonderful time in my life. I remember spending time in a small room located in Ketler Hall called the Niche – a place for students - many biology majors - to hang out in between classes or study. I met many wonderful students there. I was a different world than what I was used to.

Later on, after I had moved to Purdue University at West Lafayette, Indiana, I was asked to be a teaching assistant for Horticulture 101 by Dr. Ed. Ashworth, who was the instructor for the class and would later be the head of the Horticulture Department at Purdue. This course at Purdue was very similar to the course taught in Fort Wayne.

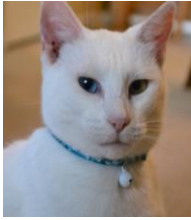
Several years later, when I was a graduate student at Purdue, I was asked by the head of the Horticulture Department, Bruno Moser, to teach beginning Horticulture at Vincennes University.

I took the semester off and taught 105 students in two sections of the course. I had about 2 ½ week notice to prepare lesson plans and materials.

The nice thing was I drove brand new Pontiac Grand Prix's back and forth from Lafayette to Vincennes each week and stayed at area motels for free.

It was an extremely challenging and rewarding experience. It was wonderful to teach.

Now I am back to teach Hort 101 (helped by Advanced Master Gardener and friend Penny Alles) in a new innovative way. Some things in life do come around full circle.



Hoggles – Demented Cat Logic

To my caregiver : *I expect to be given compensation (in cans of premium cat food) for my role in the success of your new book. You would be nothing if not for my insights highlighted in the book – and you know it.*

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