

New, Garden-based Science Clubs in 2009

By Janet Toering and Linda Naeve

The challenge presented by the 3% club growth goal resulted in some successful outcomes related to the 4-H Connecting Learning and Living (CLL) program. Below are brief success stories from three new garden-based clubs. Although three clubs don't appreciably add to the desired club growth, they are examples of what is being done around the state. While travelling throughout Iowa we often hear of many more groups and organizations that are using the 4-H CLL lessons and activities but haven't reported their use of the materials or officially formed clubs.



Story County. Mary Wilkins, Story County Youth Coordinator, worked with two Master Gardeners who were interested in becoming volunteer leaders of a new 4-H garden club, they later called "Roots and Shoots". In late winter, Mary coordinated "Growing in the Garden" training for potential volunteer club leaders and educators. She and the volunteer leaders promoted the Roots and Shoots club at various community events. They received nearly \$500 from local garden groups to support the project. Eight new club members planted their garden in late May near the Extension 4-H Building on campus where they meet twice a month.

Dickinson County. After participating in CLL training, Dickinson County Youth Coordinator, Christina Ostovic, started a Clover Kids Garden Club at a local nature center. Together with the 15 members and their parents she planted a large garden complete with vegetables and a sunflower house. Christina reports that the interest in gardening has "sprouted and grown" from that project and that she has been asked to organize a local community garden project in Spirit Lake.



Worth County. We got excited about the potential for a new club in Northwood after Dennis Johnson, Worth County Extension Education Director, talked to us at the CYC conference this spring and shared his enthusiasm over a new opportunity in his community. A local sixth grader developed an idea and received a \$2,000 grant to support a garden for fellow sixth graders in her school. Dennis consulted with us about the garden design and construction. With the help of fairgrounds staff and local master gardeners, they build a garden in the middle of the fairgrounds, near the 4-H building, in the shape of "4 H" containing 21, five-foot square, green raised beds. On May 15, with the cooperation of their teachers and master gardeners, 27 sixth graders participated in the project and formed a club. Over half of the students were already enrolled in 4-H, resulting in the recruitment of about 10 new 4-Hers. Linda Naeve judged their gardens during the Worth County fair on June 24. The exhibitors - all first time exhibitors in horticulture -

were proud of what they grew and many are planning to continue gardening at home in the future. The 4-H garden at the fairgrounds will be used by sixth graders next year, sprouting a new crop of gardeners and potential 4-Hers!