



# Horticulture Happenings

An Iowa State University Extension Newsletter for Mid-Iowa Gardeners

July 2006 Vol. 3, No. 3

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*The picture above shows just one of the many beautiful landscape scenes that may be viewed in the yard of Humboldt County Master Gardeners LeRoy and Jan Jorgensen.*

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**Helping you become your best.**

*Extension programs are available to all without regard to race, color, national origin, religion, sex, age, or disability.*

## Fair Time is Here!



Welcome to  
Hardin County!!

I am happy to announce that we have added Hardin County and the Greenbelt Master Gardeners to the Mid-Iowa Horticulture group. This addition brings our number of counties now to five, along with Hamilton, Humboldt, Webster, and Wright counties.

We are also excited to be offering the Iowa Master Gardener training once again in our area. Training will begin in September. Why not consider joining this fun group of gardeners and learn some valuable information at the same time?

State Fair time is just around the corner, and as our counties are finishing up their county fairs in July, 4-H and FFA members are focusing their efforts now on the Iowa State Fair which runs from

August 10 thru 20 this year.

Personally, I love the State Fair – with so much to see (and eat!) or even just people watching, a great time can be had by all. Sometimes I think that we don't stop to realize what a great gem of a State Fair we have right here in our own backyards.

I do hope to try my luck at entering some roses again this year, but the competition at the state show can be fierce. (After all, those rose exhibitors living in Zone 5 really have an unfair advantage over we more northern growers - with their first bloom time occurring a week or two before we even have a bud – and anyway – doesn't this make for a great excuse !?!)

The only bad thing about the State Fair is that once it is over, it means that summer is almost over as well.

Hope to see you at the fair!  
Yvonne Nilles, ISUE Horticulturalist

## Mid-Iowa Master Gardeners to meet in Fort Dodge

The Mid-Iowa Master Gardeners will meet Tuesday, August 8, at the Wright Co. Extension Office, 210 1<sup>st</sup> St. SW, in Clarion at 6:00 p.m. to carpool to tour local gardens.

The gardens of Maxine Larson, Clarion; Mary Hawley, Belmond, and the Children's Garden, plus the Methodist Church Biblical Garden will among those toured.



## MID-IOWA AREA HORTICULTURE EVENTS CALENDAR

- Jul 17-18....FGCI Judges Symposium  
Design & Miniature Hort  
Workshops-Marshalltown, IA
- Aug 2....Demo Garden Field Day  
Hort Station, Gilbert - 6:30 pm
- Aug 3....Fort Dodge Area Gardeners  
Webster Co. Ext. Off. - 7pm
- Aug 5....Ft. Dodge Fed Garden Club  
Flower Show at the FD Mall
- Aug 7...Tree Steward Reunion  
Johnston, IA 9 am – 4 pm
- Aug 8....Mid-Iowa Master Gardeners  
Wright Co. Extension. - 6 pm  
(Meet to car pool for tour)
- Aug 12-13..Rose Show, IA State Fair
- Aug 15....Fort Dodge Fed Garden Club  
Izaak Walton, 1 pm. *Collage  
Door Hanging* by Sela Bryhne
- Aug 19-20..Dahlia Show, IA State Fair
- Aug 23...Town & Country Garden Club  
"Getting Ready for Fall", by  
Carol Main, 1pm WC Depot
- Apr 26...FGCI Landscape/Garden  
Study Refresher, Johnston
- Aug 31...ISU Football vs.Toledo, 7 pm

For further details on these events,  
call 515-832-9597

### Please submit your events to:

Horticulture Happenings  
311 Bank Street  
Webster City, IA 50595-2303

Phone: 515-832-9597

Fax: 515-832-9599

Or

E-mail: [ynilles@iastate.edu](mailto:ynilles@iastate.edu)

## Horticulture Questions Recently Asked

### What is Neem Oil?

When Doyle Darnall of Humboldt wondered what "Neem" was, when he was reading the ingredient label on a garden product, Jacquie Glaspie had an idea, but wanted to do a little more research about it.

"Neem oil comes from the Neem tree in India. It is pressed from the fruits and seeds of it. It is non-toxic to birds and mammals as well as a lot of beneficial insects like lady bugs and bees. It controls black spot, powdery mildew, anthracnose and rust. People in India use the oil in cosmetics, for skin diseases and rheumatism." – Answered by Master Gardener Jacquie Glaspie, Thor



### What is the difference between a black raspberry and a blackberry?

Rhonda Olson of Webster County had her question answered by viewing this online slide show:

<http://www.hort.purdue.edu/ext/selector/fruits/blackberry1.htm>

Rhonda writes:

*"Thank you very much. I now know that my husband was right and I have to tell him so. But as always the knowledge is always more important. I really appreciate your help."*

## RECIPE CORNER



Too much salsa? – try this soup recipe from Master Gardener Lorrie Bacon of Humboldt. She says everyone who has tried this recipe has liked it!

### Tomato Soup

1 peck tomatoes (or 12 ½ lbs.)  
1 bunch celery, leaves and all  
2 onions

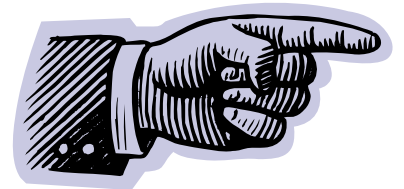
Put this through the food chopper,  
then boil and strain.

Mix:

1 cup flour  
1 cup sugar  
1 cup butter  
2 Tablespoons salt

Mix all together and boil 20 minutes.  
Seal very hot in sterilized jars.

## We Need You!



Articles of interest,

Photos,

Tips & Ideas...



Please submit YOUR article  
for the next issue of  
Horticulture Happenings



ALL submissions will be  
considered!

## Meet a Master Gardener...



Wright County Master Gardener Barb Ainger lives in Eagle Grove, Iowa.

### Barb Ainger

Our featured Mid-Iowa Master Gardener for the month of July is Wright County Master Gardener Barb Ainger of Eagle Grove, IA.

Barb completed her Iowa Master Gardener training in 2002 and has worked each year since performing many hours of volunteer service at the Wright County District Junior Fair as the Superintendent of the Open Class Horticulture Division.

Among her volunteer activities as a certified Iowa Master Gardener, Barb also uses her horticulture skills to maintain her own flowerbeds and gardens, and many times she has received the Horticulture Award of Excellence and also many Awards of Merit for her efforts at the fair.

***Thank you Barb, for all your many hours of volunteer service!***

## Mid-Iowa Master Gardener Humboldt County Garden Tour is a hit...



Jan and LeRoy Jorgensen welcomed visitors to their many beautiful gardens located at their home at 1908 W River Drive in Humboldt on July 11.

Visitors enjoyed treats prepared by the Jorgensen's at the end of the tour. Jan also shared her wonderful salsa recipe which utilizes some of the garlic that LeRoy has grown. (See p. 5)



Humboldt County Master Gardener Doyle Darnall, at right, educated tour visitors to his garden at 409 8<sup>th</sup> St. South in Humboldt, on his specialty - fruit culture.

Be sure to ask Doyle's wife about the story about Doyle and her disappearing gold raspberries!

# Become an Iowa Master Gardener!

By James Romer

What is a Master Gardener? How does a Master Gardener differ from other gardeners? How can I receive more information about the program?

Master Gardeners are individuals who have an interest in horticulture, have taken the Master Gardener training offered by the extension service and share their time and expertise with other gardeners. It is the acquisition of knowledge, the skill in gardening and giving back to the community that distinguishes a Master Gardener from other gardeners.

The purpose of the Iowa Master Gardener Program is to provide unbiased, scientific-based horticultural information to the citizens of Iowa through the volunteer efforts of Master Gardeners. Master Gardeners are residents of a community who take an active interest in horticulture. They receive training in horticulture through the ISU Extension. In return for their training, Master Gardeners volunteer in extension horticulture programs and projects, which enhance the community.

The first Master Gardener Program was initiated in Washington State in 1972. In response to overwhelming requests for horticulture information, the idea of trading specialized training in horticulture for a commitment to spend a specified number of hours doing volunteer outreach work for extension was formed. The Iowa Master Gardener program was piloted in Scott County in 1979. To date, more than 7,500 Iowans have been trained in the program.

The requirements to become a Master Gardener include a \$108 fee to cover the cost of educational materials and a commitment to do 40 hours of extension service. Individuals receive instruction in a wide range of horticulture and related areas: houseplants, herbaceous ornamentals, turfgrass, vegetables, woody landscape plants, plant propagation, fruits, soils, wildlife management, pesticide safety, integrated pest management, plant pathology, entomology and garden design.

Training is offered in locations listed below throughout the state in the fall and winter months. The training sessions last for three hours and are usually held twice a week. The instructors are state and local extension specialists as well as knowledgeable, local gardeners. After completion of the training program, individuals become Master Gardener Interns. They are promoted to the title of Master Gardener upon completion of their 40-hour service commitment. Master Gardeners can remain active members in following years by attending six or more hours of in-service education and contributing six or more hours of community service.

Master Gardeners provide many services to ISU Extension and their communities. They use their knowledge, talents and skills on various projects and activities, such as answering horticultural questions and phone calls at their local county ISU Extension office, sponsoring lawn and garden shows, developing educational displays and giving horticultural presentations. Master Gardeners also assist with youth gardening programs, help manage farmers' markets and community gardens, plant demonstration and city beautification gardens, assist at public gardens, conduct horticulture therapy programs at nursing homes, write newspaper columns, participate in radio call-in programs and assist with the coordination and management of the local Master Gardener program.

Besides the educational and community service aspect of the Master Gardener program, gardeners get to know others with similar interests. They share their gardening experiences and, occasionally, their plants. If you are interested in becoming an Iowa Master Gardener, contact your local county extension office for more information. Fall semester training starts in September in the Mid-Iowa area.

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The Perennial Plant Association (PPA) has just announced the 2007 Perennial Plant of the Year--

## 2007 Perennial Plant of the Year— *Nepeta faassenii* 'Walker's Low'

### Description

Named for the English garden, Walker's Low, the gray-green, aromatic foliage gives way to a plethora of soft lavender-blue flowers which are produced over a long period in early through midsummer. Although its stems are 2-3 feet long, the plant's arching habit brings the height down to 18 to 24 inches if it is not staked. When Nepeta's stems are broken, they release an aroma into the air that tends to attract cats, thus its common name, Catmint. It is hardy in zones 3-8.

### Landscape Uses

A wonderfully long-blooming perennial; 'Walker's Low' provides a beautiful show of color nearly all summer. Use it in flower borders, as a tall edging, or in herb gardens. This plant can really take the heat! Hot summer temperatures and low moisture amounts don't bother Nepeta. Be sure to clip a few blooms to bring indoors--they are useful as filler flowers in bouquets. Butterflies and hummingbirds are attracted to their sweet nectar, but the mint scented foliage will keep deer and rabbits at arm's length.



### Culture

Nepeta is easy to grow in full sun and ordinary, well-drained soil. Shearing the plant back in the springtime will promote a more compact growth habit. In addition, cutting plants back by half after they finish blooming the first time tends to stimulate rebloom.

### Homeowner Growing & Maintenance Tips

Nepetas are easy to grow perennials that provide a beautiful show of color all summer long. They prefer to be planted in full sun and ordinary, well drained soil. Shearing the plant back in the springtime will promote more compact growth. In addition, cutting plants back by half after their first bloom tends to stimulate a second bloom cycle. – *the Perennial Plant Association*

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### **From the kitchen of Jan Jorgensen – Salsa**

22 c. tomatoes: peeled and chunked  
½ c. corn starch  
8 c. white onions: diced small  
3 green bell peppers: diced small  
5 garlic cloves: minced  
8 jalapeno peppers: minced – wear gloves  
4 T. chili powder  
5 T. salt  
2 ½ c. white vinegar  
4 tsp. cayenne pepper

Cook all but the corn starch over medium heat for 20 minutes. Add corn starch to some of the juice (to prevent lumps) and then with the rest and heat another 20 minutes. Put in hot canning jars or freezer bags. Makes 8 - 9 quarts.

*If freezing – add extra corn starch to make it thicker when thawed. Jan usually lets the juice cool a bit before adding to the corn starch.*



Not on the *Horticulture Happenings*  
mailing list?

Contact Yvonne Nilles at [ynilles@iastate.edu](mailto:ynilles@iastate.edu)  
or  
call 515-832-9597  
to have your name added to our mailing list.