



Horticulture Happenings

An Iowa State University Extension Newsletter for Mid-Iowa Gardeners

March 2005 Vol. 2 No. 3

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<http://www.extension.iastate.edu/hamilton/yardgarden.htm>

Think Spring!



The count down is on! Can you believe it--Spring will be arriving this month!

If you have yet to purchase your vegetable seeds for this year, stop by your local extension office and ask for the publication PM-607, "Suggested Vegetable Varieties for the Home Garden". This publication lists those varieties recommended to perform well in Iowa gardens.

And as long as you are thinking about planting your garden, why not think about trying your hand at exhibiting your produce at your local county fair or garden club flower show?

Check on your fair show dates and plan your planting dates accordingly as to harvest in conjunction with the date of your local competition.

Now if you are reading this and thinking, "I don't want to bother with

showing my veggies, I only garden for myself"...you are missing a great opportunity to help educate our non-gardening neighbors and youth.

Unfortunately, many parents today do not have the time to garden. Thus, some children may grow up without ever having experienced working in a garden, never eating fresh produce harvested directly from the garden, and perhaps not even knowing where it is that green beans come from!

We gardeners must take it upon ourselves to help encourage public education of horticulture for youth and adults alike. For it is the children of today who are the gardeners of tomorrow.

If you have some great ideas for how we can promote gardening, please let us know!

Yvonne Nilles
Extension Horticulturalist
Serving Hamilton, Humboldt,
Webster & Wright counties

Mid-Iowa Master Gardeners to meet!!

The Mid-Iowa Master Gardeners will hold their next meeting on Tuesday, March 1, at the Webster County Extension Office, 108 S. 8th Street, in Fort Dodge at 6:45 p.m.

The Webster County Master Gardeners & Interns will host the meeting and provide the evening's program on "Deer & Small Animal Deterrents".



MID-IOWA AREA EVENTS CALENDAR

- Mar 1....Conservation & Habitat WS
Webster Co. Extension Office
11:00 am – 4:45 pm, Public
invited to this free program.
- Mar 1....Mid-Iowa Master Gardeners
Meeting--6:45 pm, at Webster
County Extension Office,
108 S. 8th St., Fort Dodge.
Anyone who has completed
Master Gardener training is
invited to attend.
- Mar 3....Fort Dodge Area Gardeners
Webster Co. Ext. Off. – 7 pm.
- Mar 7...Hamilton Co. 4-H Horticulture
7pm, Hamilton Co. Extension.
- Mar 8....Mid-Iowa Master Gardeners
Volunteer Project Planning
6 pm, Hamilton Co. Extension
- Mar 9...Town & Country Garden Club
Design Workshop, WC Depot.
- Mar 12...Fort Dodge Garden Seminar
ICCC, 9 am – Noon. No
charge, public welcome.
- Mar 15...Fort Dodge Fed Garden Club
Izaak Walton, 1:00 pm.
Program “*Pressed Flower Art*”
by Regina Smith of the
Blanden Art Museum.
- Mar 15&16..Shade Tree Shortcourse
ISU Campus-Scheman Bldg
- Mar 23...Town & Country Garden Club
1pm, the Depot, Webster City.

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

Submit your articles & events to:

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Fort Dodge Area Gardeners to hold 27th Annual Garden Seminar!

The Fort Dodge Area Gardeners will again sponsor a Spring Garden Seminar to be held on Saturday, March 12, 2005 at the Triton Inn, Iowa Central Community College, Fort Dodge. The program begins at 9:00 a.m. and runs until noon.

Featured presentations include: “*Grapes and Wine*”, given by Ken Groning, owner of the Eagle City Winery of Iowa Falls; Yvonne Nilles, Mid-Iowa Extension Horticulturalist, will speak on the “*New Cultivars for 2005*”; and Nancy Beatty, will be sharing information on “*Herbal Remedies*” using medicinal herbs.

There will be of garden exhibits, drawing for door prizes, and free refreshments. There is no charge or pre-registration for this event and the public is invited to attend. See you there!



Have a great St. Paddy's Day,

and...



...a Happy Easter!

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RECIPE CORNER



Leave some of these cookies out for
the Easter Bunny...

Carrot Cookies

1 c. carrots, cooked & mashed
1 c. butter ½ tsp. salt
¾ c. sugar 2 tsp. baking powder
1 egg 1 tsp. vanilla
2 c. flour ½ tsp. lemon juice

Cream together butter & sugar. Add egg and carrots. Combine flour, salt & baking powder. Gradually add to carrot mixture, mix well. Add vanilla & lemon juice. Drop by generous teaspoonfuls into greased cookie sheet. Bake 350° 18-20 min. Frost when cool.

Orange Frosting

1 Tbsp. butter 1 c. powdered sugar
Juice of ½ an orange
2 tsp. grated orange peel

Combine butter & powdered sugar; add juice & grated orange peel. Mix together well. Add additional juice if needed until spreading consistency.

Makes 30 cookies.

Flower of the Month –

Daffodil



March's Flower of the Month is the daffodil. Other common names used include jonquil and narcissus, with the botanical name being *Narcissus*.

The difference between these names may be unclear, as all daffodils are narcissi, but not all daffodils are jonquils. The term “jonquil” is sometimes used incorrectly to describe any yellow daffodil; but these terms are not interchangeable, as the jonquil is actually the term of one of the 13 different classifications of daffodils.

For further information on the daffodil, visit the American Daffodil Society at:
<http://www.daffodilusa.org/>

Meet a Master Gardener...

Josh Mechaelsen



Josh Mechaelsen of Kamrar, is shown demonstrating the proper method to take geranium cuttings at a recent 4-H Horticulture project meeting.

For the month of February, our featured Master Gardener is Hamilton County MG Intern Josh Mechaelsen of Kamrar. Josh and his dad, Dave Mechaelsen completed their ISU Master Gardener training together last fall.

He was the youngest person in Iowa to complete Master Gardener training at the age of 12. Now, at the age of 13, Josh is working to finish his 40 hours of volunteer service, and will soon become the youngest Master Gardener in the state!

Josh, his dad, and younger brother Joe, start their own garden transplants each year in a greenhouse area located in their barn. Josh enjoys exhibiting his horticulture produce at the Hamilton County Fair and has received several purple ribbons.

As a 5-year member of the Kamrar Komets 4-H Cub, Josh been enrolled in the horticulture project area since 4th grade. He is also a member of the Hamilton County 4-H Horticulture Project group and has been active in various horticulture community service projects in Hamilton County, including planting the planters on Main Street in Webster City and assisted in planting a patriotic flowerbed at the Hamilton County Courthouse.

Congratulations Josh! We look forward to watching you continue to “grow” in horticulture.

Volunteer opportunities in Hamilton County...



Master Gardener Interns met with Mornin' Glory coffee shop owners Jack & Susan Buser, center, to discuss a community garden area to be designed next to their building in Webster City.



The All Cultures Equal's Iowa Heritage Garden in Webster City will receive help from Master Gardener Intern volunteers, who will assist in planting the garden this spring.

If you have a community service project and would like Master Gardeners volunteer assistance, please contact your local ISU Extension Office.

Lumpy Lawns

Many Mid-Iowa area residents have noticed "lumps" in their lawn recently.



Lumps, such as this, that appear in the lawn may be of concern to home owners.

These lumps occur as small hills of soil and may arise over an entire

lawn. People finding these lumps are often concerned that they may be the result of a serious pest problem in their lawn.

The rough and bumpy surface created by these lumps may be especially noticeable on well-manicured lawns. These lumps may not be quite as visible in lawn areas of a lesser quality or those not as well maintained. A closer examination may reveal lumps to be present there also, but hidden among the thatch of the lawn.

These lumps are the result of earthworm activity in the yard, and are not considered to be a serious problem.

If the soil is brushed back, you may notice a small hole (about 1/4 inch in diameter) to be present.

This hole is the tunnel of the night crawler that created the lump. As nightcrawlers feed upon thatch and materials in the soil, they leave behind castings. It is these mounds of castings that create lumps in the lawn. The lumps can be seen in the spring when nightcrawlers are first active and again during fall. When weather becomes warmer, nightcrawlers will move deeper into the earth and the lumps will not be visible.

Worms are valuable for aerating the soil. Their tunnels allow air and water movement in the soil, and actually improve the growing conditions.

If you have questions regarding lumps occurring in your lawn, contact your local ISU Extension Office for further information.

Lumps were recently noticed in this lawn following the melting snow.



Spring Cleaning

*Prepared by Barbara Ambruzs
ISU Dept. of Plant Pathology*

Welcome spring! Trees are awakening, bulbs are sprouting, and lawns are beginning to green up. Warmer weather stimulates the growth and development of the plants and flowers we are longing to see. Well guess what! Many disease-causing organisms (pathogens) like the change in season, too. They are waking up from their winter rest...and they are hungry. Some precautions, such as sanitation, balanced fertilization, and preventative

fungicide application can play a major part in plant disease management.

Several pathogens survive the winter by hiding out in leaf litter, thatch, and infected twigs, branches, and trunks. Cleaning up last year's debris can reduce the potential for disease by removing a good portion of those elusive pathogens. It's time to clean up last year's debris if you haven't done so already. Remove dead annuals by pulling up the roots if possible. Cultivate the soil in vegetable gardens to bury remaining debris. This will speed up the decomposition process. Rake up fallen leaves from last year and remove debris from around perennials. Raking can also break up snow mold fungi that possibly grew beneath the snow on lawns this winter.

...Spring cleaning, from p. 4

Environmental and cultural stresses are important factors in the occurrence of many plant diseases. Maintaining healthy, vigorous plants may help keep their defense mechanisms intact and encourage the development of strong healthy root systems that can carry them through stressful situations, such as drought. Balanced fertilization, adequate moisture, core aeration (turf), and other cultural practices are key in keeping plants healthy.



If fungicides and/or bactericides are incorporated in your plant health program, remember they are, in most cases, used for disease prevention. Once plants become infected, chemical treatment will be of little use. Read the label and follow rate and timing instructions. Chemical treatments are most effective when combined with sound cultural practices.

A few diseases to be aware of this spring are fire blight, oak wilt, summer patch, and various conifer diseases.

Fire Blight

Fire blight is a bacterial disease of apple. Pyracantha (fire thorn), cotoneaster, mountain ash, hawthorn, quince, raspberry, and pear are all susceptible to fire blight. If infected branches remain on trees, the bacteria will multiply very rapidly and ooze out of infected branches and trunks when the weather warms up. Insects, birds, and equipment can transfer the bacteria to healthy plants. Prune out existing infected branches, before they begin to ooze, to prevent the spread of the bacteria. Cut at least 10 inches below the margin of healthy and diseased wood. This should be done as soon as possible before temperatures warm up. If it becomes too late in the season, there is a greater possibility that bacteria will be spread by pruning tools.

Several products are available for the management of fire blight, but they must be used in conjunction with good cultural practices, such as pruning and sanitation.

There is resistance to fire blight, so plant selection is important in managing the disease if you are planting new trees.

Oak Wilt

Prevention is the best "cure" for oak wilt. Avoid pruning oaks between April 1 and July 1, when oak trees have a high risk for infection. If pruning is necessary during this

period, promptly treat wounds with a lanolin-based wound treatment compound.

Lawn Diseases

Why think about sick lawns now? Although turf problems usually don't become apparent until summer, some disease-causing fungi become active and infect plants in the spring. In many cases fungi will infect only stressed plants. This is why it is important to maintain plant vigor. Slow release nitrogen fertilizers should be used in the spring. Avoid excess fertilization during summer months. Seventy-five percent of the season's nitrogen should be applied in the fall. Also, it is time to core aerate, which is most effective during the spring or fall rather than the summer.

In an area with a history of summer patch (a fungal disease of Kentucky bluegrass), fungicide use may be an option. Timing is essential for effective control. The first application should be made in the spring when soil temperature is consistently above 65° F at a depth of 2 inches, usually late April or early May.

Evergreens

Winter injury and disease can look similar. Inspect trees carefully for little black pimples on needles, resin flowing from the trunk or branches, or whole branches dying back. If fungicides are included in your disease management program, now is the time to start considering fungicide applications for conifer diseases such as Diplodia (Sphaeropsis) tip blight, Rhizosphaera needle cast, Swiss needle cast, and Dothistroma needle blight. The first application for Diplodia (Sphaeropsis) tip blight should be made at bud swell. Applications for Rhizosphaera needlecast and Swiss needle cast should begin during the last two weeks of May. Dothistroma fungicide applications should begin mid May. The second application for each of these works best if scheduled 4-6 weeks later.

Pine wilt, a disease caused by a complex of organisms, has lately become an important problem in Iowa. Dead pines can harbor organisms involved in this disease. Remove and dispose of any pines diagnosed with pine wilt. Avoid saving this material for firewood, because beetles, one of the major players in this disease, can still emerge from cut logs.

Sample Submission

Samples can be submitted to your county or area extension office or the Iowa State University Plant Disease Clinic, 323 Bessey Hall, Iowa State University, Ames, IA 50011, ((515) 294-0581). There is a \$10.00 diagnostic fee.

-This article originally appeared in the April 6, 2001 issue Horticulture & Home Pest News, pp. 30-31.