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**Greetings**

Welcome to our first newsletter specifically for our Chickasaw County Master Gardeners. We hope that this helps to keep us and other Master Gardeners "in-touch" with each other.

Our goal is to have this quarterly publication bring you the information that you can use. So let us know what you want. Send us clippings, local club news, stories about your garden or interesting notes about how your volunteer hours are going.

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**First Advanced Master Gardener Class To Be Offered This Summer**

Join us July 11 and 12, 2008 on the campus of Iowa State University for two action-packed, fun-filled, educational days as the Iowa Master Gardener Program hosts the first Summer Session.

and registration details. Or you can visit the Iowa Master Gardener website <http://mastergardener.hort.iastate.edu/> or contact

James Romer at (515) 294-2336 email [jromer@iastate.edu](mailto:jromer@iastate.edu).

**Trip To Pacific Northwest Scheduled**

This intensive 2-day event will feature a hands-on approach with plant examples to study and identify. Investigate plant diseases, take a tree scavenger hunt on campus and learn how to maximize your volunteer service as a Master Gardener. The program will be held rain or shine.

Iowa Arboretum along with Bob Oliver and Northwest Iowa Transportation invite you to share the excitement of an exclusive tour of the Pacific Northwest. Participants will travel by plane to Vancouver, B.C. then by catamaran ferry to Victoria, B.C. as well as Seattle, Washington.

journey through the Rocky Mountains to Glacier National Park. Tours, private gardens, shopping, wonderful accommodations and spectacular dining are all part of the fantastic itinerary. Seating is limited.

The trip is scheduled for July 7th through July 16, 2008

For more information call Bob Oliver at 515/776-1700.

Check with the Chickasaw County Extension Office at 641/394-2174 for more program information

In Seattle they will board the Empire Builder train for an unbelievable

**Haynes Is New Head Of Master Gardeners In Iowa**



Dr. Haynes conducts research primarily in horticultural pedagogy and human issues in horticulture. She has published research on youth programming at a public garden and perceptions of volunteers at a public garden. Currently she is surveying parents of children participating in the Growing in the Garden program cre-

ated for K-3 children. Other research projects include: the perceptions/expectations of students from a study abroad course in horticulture and surveying the businesses in horticulture to determine the value of the ornamental horticulture industry in Iowa.

Haynes— continued on page 3

## Pink In The Garden

By Ann Marie VanDerZanden, Associate Professor of Horticulture, Iowa State University

Pink is my favorite color. I like it in just about every form, and I particularly delight in how it looks in my garden. If you decide to add pink to your garden, you can choose from flowers that are the softest pastel pink to the deepest bright fuchsia, and every shade in between.

Unlike other colors such as purple, red and yellow, which can be seen in a plant's leaves, stems and fruit, as well as its flowers, pink is most commonly found just in flowers. Even so, there are number of plant choices in the pink palette including trees, shrubs and perennials. To help guide your pink plant selection, I have compiled a short list of great choices for our growing conditions here in the Midwest.

### Trees

Eastern redbud (*Cercis canadensis*) has bright deep pink flowers early in the spring before the leaves emerge. There are also a number of crabapples (*Malus*) that have pink buds and or flowers including Adam's crabap-

ple, Camelot crabapple, and Pink Princess crabapple.

### Shrubs

Lilacs including 'Miss Kim' (*Syringa patula* 'Miss Kim') and the Preston lilac (*Syringa x prestoniae*) cultivars 'Minuet,' 'James MacFarlane' and 'Miss Canada' all provide a range of pink flowers during late spring.

### Perennials

Spring blooming creeping phlox or moss phlox (*Phlox subulata*) creates a much welcomed splash of color first thing in the spring. Later in the spring the unique pink tinged flowers of *Astrantia major* 'Rosea' or 'Rosensymphonie,' greater masterwort, will provide an interesting bloom well into July.

Throughout the summer pink can be added to the garden by using Croftway Pink monarda (*Monarda didyma* 'Croftway Pink') and a variety of astilbes including *Astilbe x arendsii* 'Bressingham Beauty' *Astilbe x arendsii* 'Cattleya' and *Astilbe* 'Jump & Jive.' Eva Culm garden phlox (*Phlox paniculata*) has clear pink blooms with a dark pink middle which can create a striking show when

used in masses. And obviously, no discussion of pink in the landscape is complete with out considering the diverse group of pinks (*Dianthus*). Cultivars such as 'Pink Jewel,' 'Monica Wyatt,' 'Houndspool Ruby,' 'Bovey Belle' and 'Becky Robinson' will provide summer long color. The 2006 Perennial Plant of the Year, as selected by the Perennial Plant As-

"Unlike other colors such as purple, red and yellow, which can be seen in a plant's leaves, stems and fruit, as well as its flowers, pink is most commonly found just in flowers."

ers choose 'Circus Circus,' 'Fancy Nancy,' 'Pink Spritzer,' 'She's My Star' or 'The Fawn.' And if you want a deep pink flower select 'Bestman,' 'Cincinnati,' 'Raspberry Charm' or 'Rose Gnome.' If you can't decide which is your favorite shade of pink, choose 'Raspberry Clown' or 'Raspberry Splash' since these two cultivars have all three colors in a single flower. In the autumn garden, pink generally takes on a deep rich tone. Fall-blooming asters and chrysanthemums and the unique pinkish hue foliage of ornamental kale



*Paeonia broteroi*

This peony displays a traditional dark pink flower.

sociation was Firewitch cheddar pink (*Dianthus gratianopolitanus* 'Feuerhexe') and is certainly worth considering for your garden.

I think peonies (*Paeonia*) are the best example of a plant that provides the full spectrum of pink hues in the landscape. There are a number of peony cultivars to choose from that have flowers in different shades of pink and I have listed just a few here. For light pink flowers consider 'Heart Throb,' 'Angel Face,' 'Bessie,' 'Bric a Brac' and 'Serene Pastel.' If you prefer medium pink flow-

## Clothing

From denim shirts to T-shirts, there is a host of clothing available to Iowa Master Gardeners. Each of the items has the Master Gardener emblem and is available in a variety of sizes and colors.

Besides the clothing options there are also Master Gardener flower pot shaped coffee mugs and pullover aprons.

For a complete listing of products and an order form contact the Extension office at 641-394-2174

## Dr. Grow-It-All Provides Tips for a Great Lawn

James Romer, Horticulturist, Iowa State University Extension

Spring is a great time of year to visit or revisit some essentials to having and maintaining a healthy lawn. Many gardeners spend considerable time and money to produce a healthy, attractive lawn. Proper mowing and frequency are important aspects of lawn maintenance. In fact, many turfgrass problems can be traced back to improper mowing.

Mowing height and frequency are the most important aspects of mowing a lawn. Bluegrass lawns should be maintained at 2 1/2 to three inches in the spring and fall months. Set the mower blade to a height of three to 3 1/2 inches during sum-

mer. Mowing frequency is based on the growth rate of the turfgrass. Generally, never remove more than one-third of the total leaf surface at any one mowing. In the spring, it may be necessary to mow every four to five days, possibly only once every one to two weeks in summer, and more frequently in the fall. Irrigation, fertilization practices and weather conditions dictate mowing frequency.

Mowing grass that has grown too tall is hard on the mower and harmful to the grass. It weakens the turfgrass, allowing weeds to move into the lawn. It may take several weeks for the grass to recover from a severe mowing. Another problem when mowing a tall lawn is the large amount of

clippings. Excessive amounts of clippings are unsightly, tend to smother the turfgrass and create an environment that favors disease development. Grass clippings should be bagged or raked, removed and/or composted when mowing grass that has grown too tall.

When the turfgrass is mowed properly, the clippings do not have to be removed. The small clippings will filter down into the turf and decompose quickly, returning essential plant nutrients to the soil. Lawn clippings do not significantly contribute to thatch development.

Mow the lawn with a sharp blade. Sharpen the mower blade each spring. Thereafter, inspect the blade frequently and sharpen as needed. A dull blade tears the ends of the grass blades. The damaged tissue dries out, giving the turf surface a

whitish appearance. Also, the torn leaf tissue loses greater amounts of water and increases the possibility of disease problems.

Alternate your mow-

"Mowing grass that has grown too tall is hard on the mower and harmful to the grass. It weakens the turfgrass, allowing weeds to move into the lawn."

## Volunteer Workdays At Iowa Arboretum

Iowa Arboretum will host Volunteer Workdays on Thursday, April 24 and Friday, April 25; beginning at 9 a.m.

Helping with preparations for the Green Tie Affair and Spring Plant Sale offers volunteers various jobs on the grounds, in the greenhouse and setting up for the auction in the Hughes Center.

Come for one or both days and stay as long as your schedule allows. Refreshments will be provided for the morning break, bring a sack lunch if you plan to stay into the afternoon.

*Iowa Arboretum is located 2 miles west and 2 miles south of Luther in Boone County*

## Haynes con't.

Dr. Haynes' teaching responsibilities are Home Horticulture (Hort 121); Herbaceous Ornamentals (Hort 330), and Educating Youth Through Horticulture (Hort/AgEdS 282). She also periodically teaches International Travel in Horticulture (Hort 496). Dr. Haynes serves as undergraduate advisor for the

Public Garden Management option in Horticulture.

Dr. Haynes has outreach responsibilities in consumer/urban horticulture. She coordinates the Herbaceous Perennial Saturday symposium, the ISU Home Demonstration Gardens Field Days, and a website called Yard and Garden Online ([www.yardandgarden.extension.iastate.edu](http://www.yardandgarden.extension.iastate.edu)) to educate

diverse audiences about plants and gardening practices. Recently, Dr. Haynes helped plan and regularly contributes to Gardening in the Zone videos for television produced by Iowa State University Extension and Iowa Gardening magazine. Dr. Haynes recently became Professor-in-charge of the Iowa Master Gardener Program.

## Chickasaw County Master Gardeners

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We are on the Web

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## University Extension

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### *Fabric "Pots"- Recycling An Old Idea*



By Bob Hauer- Back in the 80's the hot new thing with tree nurseries was an in-ground fabric bag for growing trees. I remember a demonstration at ISU where the root system of a bag-grown tree was compared to a tree-spaded root system. The tree grown in the bag had a much denser root system. Root control bags were the

wave of the future. I tried a few - but that's another story.

Fast forward 25 years and we find that similar fabric bags are being sold as above-ground containers for flowers and vegetables. One of the advantages of this type of container is that the roots are "air pruned" as they hit the edge of the fabric container. As the tip of the root grows through the fabric, it dries out and dies. Since the tip is dead, the rootlets closer to the crown begin to grow more vigorously. As a result, you end up with a more fibrous root system and no circling roots! Another advantage is that it all but eliminates

over-watering. Since excess water can drain out from the sides of the container as well as the bottom, drainage is improved. Evaporation from the sides also cools the soil, reducing high-temperature injury to the roots that is common with black plastic pots.

Of course, this means that the container may need to be watered more frequently. But the bottom of these containers is also made of fabric. (The ones I got originally had plastic bottoms.) The fabric bottom means that the soil in the container can take up water from soil below through capillary action - providing the container is

placed on the soil. Another disadvantage to these bags is that they are unattractive - no, ugly. You can put trailing plants in to cover the sides. You can even cut slits in the side of the bag and plant like you would a strawberry barrel. But until it's hidden...

Texas A&M did a study comparing fabric pots vs. black plastic containers. The bottom line was that roses grew bigger in the fabric pots. [www.treebag.com/RoseShrubArticle.pdf](http://www.treebag.com/RoseShrubArticle.pdf) will get you to the study. More information about the containers- size, cost and ordering info is at <http://smartpots.com/>

Since I have a few old containers that I didn't use 25 years ago, I plan to try it this year. I'll let you know how it works.