

# Green Thumb

The Newsletter for Polk County Master Gardeners

ISU Polk County Extension, 1625 Adventureland Drive, Altoona, IA 50313

December 2008

## Eddie's Ready!

The Year is winding down and the holiday season will be here soon. 2008 has been a real challenge for gardening, with the ice, wind and all the rain. As strange as it may seem, I had some plants do better this year than ever before. My hosta plants were huge this year. There are a couple of things I would like to touch on before the end of the year. Everyone needs to make sure they have turned in all of their volunteer hours. I believe the deadline is the middle of December. (*yes, Dec. 15. mf*) Also, be thinking about how you will get your volunteer hours this coming year. We have a multitude of things you can get involved in to obtain your hours.

I am sure everyone is aware the ISU Extension office has moved. The address is 1625 Adventureland Drive, Altoona, Iowa. If you have the opportunity, please stop and see this wonderful new facility. (*Open House (with food) is Monday 12-3-08 from 3 to 6 pm. mf*)

I hope everyone had a nice Thanksgiving and I would like to wish everyone a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. *Eddie*

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And the winner is... Thanks to those who helped us choose the name for Eddie's new column. **Kim Brennan, Class of 2006.**

Correction: If you've picked up a copy of the 2009 Polk County Master Gardener Education Program schedule, you'll want to find it and make one correction. The January class in Jan 15, 2009 (not 1/17/08).

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HAPPY HOLIDAYS FROM THE CREW AT THE **DISCOVERY GARDEN**



SEE YOU ALL IN 2009!

DEAN BRAND, CHEREE TILTON, JEAN ROE AND SHELLEY LANDE, CO-CHAIRS

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### **Botanical Center Grounds News**

As we bring to a close a trying year of gardening and tuck everyone in bed for a long winters sleep, might I suggest we take a moment to reflect by saying "Good night Gracie" before moving on to our winter planning for next year. Also as the Christmas season hustle and bustle is rapidly approaching I think it is a good time, to evaluate the amount of our time we are giving as well as the monetary gifts we give. Sometimes it is just easier to reach into our pocket and purchase a gift or give a gift card than take the time to personalize our gift selecting or the giving of some of our time out of our hectic lives. Being the biological parent of 4 and in an extended family with to 2 more, Grandparent of 6 and now the Great Grandparent of 7 and soon to be 8, I know how hectic each stage of life can be with them scattered from Texas to Iowa. So no matter what stage of life you are in, time is precious and should be given wisely. It is the one thing we all start out with the same amount of every day of our lives and while what we do with it, may not be what we would like to be doing with it most of us do find time to do what we really want to do. Which brings me to my point as you decide where to give of your volunteer time this next year keep the outside area at the Botanical center in mind and if you can find a few hours to give us, I can assure you it will be greatly appreciated by me, the other volunteers working there and especially the Staff of the BC.

*Melvin Visser, Project Leader*

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### **Botanical Center Show House News**

By the time you read this, the Show House will be filled with poinsettias and ready for the holidays. Come down and enjoy the decorated topiaries and ivy "trees" that we have placed all over the House. And take a good look at those ivy trees, because NEXT year, we are having a contest, and you all will be invited to participate...

Happy Holidays, everyone, and remember, if you need warmth and green, we are the place to be!

*Mary Howell-Williams, Project Leader*

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### **Garden Tour News**

Save the Date! The 2009 Garden Tour will be held on Saturday, June 20th, 2009.

Planning for the tour went very well this fall, and as we settle in for winter I am very pleased with how much we have accomplished since our 2008 tour ended.

Thanks to a very talented committee, it's going to be another great year!

You all know that the 2009 tour will be in the Ankeny and Polk City area, but you may not know that we have selected the West Des Moines area for our 2010 tour.

So all of you West Des Moines residents, this is your advance notice! Take some time this winter to dream a little, and think about what steps you would need to take to get your garden ready for the garden tour in 2010. Being on the garden tour is a lot of fun, and it's your opportunity to share your garden and show off your creative skills. I've been told by many gardeners who were on previous tours that with all the help they received from eager interns and experienced master gardeners their gardens never looked better than they did the year they participated in the tour. So now is the time to plant the seed in your mind....will your garden be on the 2010 Garden Tour?

One last note, we will select the location for the 2011 tour early next year, so if you have a garden in mind, please let me know so we can be sure to consider your neighborhood.

*Carrie Buzzoni, Garden Tour Co-chair.*

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## **Enabling Garden News**

Now that it's December things have slowed down a bit at the Enabling garden, and I welcome that! The garden still displays many textures, along with different shades of tan, opaque, & light brown. As soon as we get some snow the way we view the garden will partner with the season.

We will have a planning meeting on December 4th at 5:30 at the Extension office and if you wish, you may bring along some seasonal treats to share. Any new interns interested in learning more about the Enabling garden and wanting to meet a committee of very devoted, caring and extraordinary Master Gardeners please join us!

That's about it for now, I wish all of you a very fun and safe Christmas season and hope that this past year for you, was one of joy and happiness in your garden.

*Paula Winslow, Enabling Garden Co-Chair*

*"The best things that can come out of any garden are the gifts for other people." Jamie Jobb*

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## **Greenhouse News**

On December 6th we are having a greenhouse lab for the current MG class. We are doing this for the first time and I hope it is something we can do for each new class. This will give the interns the opportunity to get familiar with the greenhouse.

They will learn what we do and why we do it. This way when they come to the greenhouse in Feb. they will have an idea of what needs to be done. It won't be long before we will start a new growing season. See you in February.

*Eddie Cox, Greenhouse project chair*

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Check it Out!

Mary Howell-Williams and Mary Farlow put their heads and talents together to create this most pleasurable stroll through a photo garden.

<http://www.extension.iastate.edu/polk/info/mastergardener/mg.htm>

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## **You're Invited!**

Clel Ruppert's family wants all the PCMG to know that they are holding a Christmas Open House to honor Clel on Sunday, December 14, from 1 to 4 pm at the home of Clel's daughter and son-in-law, Nancy and Fernando Alves. If you need directions to 9506 Carmel Circle, Johnston, you can reach Nancy at 515-974-6590 or Karen at 515-419-3564.

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## 2009 Spring MG Intern Class

Start earning your hours in January! The 2009 spring class is looking for class coordinators. Flexible schedule, on the spot training, excellent pay (all the treats you can eat) and all offered at our new location in Altoona. If interested, email Virginia Hunnell at [vhunnell@iastate.edu](mailto:vhunnell@iastate.edu). There will be a class coordinator meeting at the ISU extension office on Monday, January 5, 2009 at 5:30 p.m. which should not last longer than an hour.

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## Bits & Bytes

Cathy Blank is working on a Show House display for February using LEGOs (for the child-themed bay). Anyone with LEGOS they no longer need please contact Cathy Blank at: [cathy.s.blank@wellsfargo.com](mailto:cathy.s.blank@wellsfargo.com) or call Mary Howell-Williams at 556-3684

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## ISUE Open House

Please join us to celebrate the new office location of  
ISU Extension, Polk County at an Open House:

Monday, December 1  
3:00 - 6:00 p.m.  
ISU Extension, Polk County  
1625 Adventureland Drive  
Altoona, Iowa 50009

Come discover our new flexible meeting space  
and learn about our programs. Hors d'oeuvres will be served.

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## Save the Dates for the 2009 Polk County MG Bus Tours!

One Day Trip: On May 30th our destination is Kansas City. The highlight of the trip will be a visit to Dave Bird's orchid collection which consists of over 4,000 plants happily growing in a 6,000 square foot cave. As always, our trip will include a stop at a garden center or two, plus more beautiful gardens to visit along the way.

Two Day Trip: The trip many of you have been asking for .... On August 1st and 2nd, we will travel to northeast Iowa to visit Seed Savers Exchange (an organization dedicated to saving and sharing heirloom seeds), Willowglen Perennial Nursery (including their display gardens), and Ion Exchange, Inc. (a native seed and plant nursery).

We'll have more details as we get closer to the date of the trip.

*Lauri Barrick, bus trip publicity*

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Now available at the Extension Office - just in time for holiday giving.  
The 2009 ISU Garden Calendars are even lower priced this year - \$6.00 each!

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