

# Green Thumb

## The Newsletter for the Polk County Master Gardeners

June 2009

**IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY**  
University Extension

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**ISU Polk County Extension, 1625 Adventureland Drive, Altoona**  
**Phone is 957-5760.**

[Visit the website](#)

### **Eddie's Ready!**

First of all I would like to say a few words about the Plant Sale. Kathy Gocke did a wonderful job of organizing the sale and everything went like clock work. We had a very successful sale and we are looking forward to a bigger and better sale next year.

I would like to remind everyone of all the volunteer and education hours that are available. All of the gardens always need volunteers and they also have education opportunities. We have to have six hours of volunteer work and six hours of continuing education to be certified each year. Please don't forget to turn in your hours.

I attended a public meeting on May 19th that explained the restructuring of the ISU Extension Service. This is being done because of very serious budget constraints at Iowa State University. It is unclear at this time how this will affect our Master Gardener program. I am sure we will be kept informed of the progress of the restructuring process. *Eddie Cox, PCMG Steering Committee Chair*

Check out the Polk County Master Gardeners On [Facebook](#)

And we're on [Twitter](#), too!

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

### **June 2009**

Eddie's Ready!

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Upcoming Events!

Over the summer, we are continuing with our Tuesday and Saturday morning work sessions. We start at about 8:30, and are done by 11:00 or so, before the Show House gets too hot. There will be less to do, but we do need regular workers, so if you have a free morning, come on down.

Our next change-over is "Tropical Summer", open on June 13th, and running until September. There are some beautiful displays being planned. We hope you all get a chance to see them!

The next planning meeting is on Monday, June 15th, at 6:30, at the Show House. We will be starting to plan the four 2010 change-overs: in January, April, July, and October. There are opportunities for anyone who wishes to be involved in the Show House, even if you haven't been before. We welcome new faces, so please come! Contact Mary with any questions: [mhwphoto@mchsi.com](mailto:mhwphoto@mchsi.com), or 556-3684. *Mary Howell-Williams, Project Leader*

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### Botanical Center Grounds News

Busy, busy, busy, I think that is the word that describes most Master Gardeners this time of year and so it goes at the BC. Well; the rest of the Butterfly Garden has been dismantled, retrofitted, and replanted. The 6 - 140 pound, bowl like urns have been mounted on the Blue Wave garden wall to discourage the roller bladers from using it for roller blading on. We have filled them with soil and planted them and, if I say so myself, they look great. The two new Blue Obelisk have been set in place in the Blue Wave garden beds and ready for the Blue Clematis 'H.F. Young' to be planted in them which I now have and hopefully will get planted soon. Several other plants have been added to various gardens but there is more to do yet, like the 40 some new Buck Roses we are adding to our collection that are needing planted. Then there is always lots of weeding to do, so if you don't have anything else to do, contact me and we will find things for you to do in your spare time. See you at the Botanical Center where a little help means so much. E-mail [hostahunter@msn.com](mailto:hostahunter@msn.com) or call 967-3394. *Melvin Visser Botanical Center Outside Coordinator*

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### 2009 Polk County Master Gardener Bus Tour Update

Two Day Trip to Decorah: There are still four spots left on the bus for our trip to Decorah! If you want to join us, please get your registration form and money sent in as soon as possible.

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 will also visit 2 spectacular private gardens and a new public garden in the Clear Lake area.

The registration form is on the Polk County MG website. We must have your registration and payment to reserve your spot on the bus!

Questions? Call Jeri McGinnis at 515-276-2598 (home) or 515-314-1326 (cell) or e-mail her at: [jsmcginnis@netins.net](mailto:jsmcginnis@netins.net).

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### Discovery Garden News

Things are going well at the Discovery Garden. With the cold weather, planting days had to be postponed, but finally came and almost everything at the garden is now planted and waiting for some nice warm sunshine with just the right amount of rain.

Work will begin very soon on the new pond, so watch your emails as we will need lots of help. There will also be other opportunities for volunteer hours with the weeding, mulching, painting, deadheading and general maintenance to be done in the next few months.

Remember to get your education hours in by attending one of our scheduled educational talks. Susan Appleget Hurst will be speaking on "Tops in Pots" on June 16 beginning at 7:00 pm and Jennifer Welch will be speaking on Wise Water Ways on June 23 beginning at 7:00 pm. Both are excellent speakers and we are looking forward to using our new educational area for the talks.

Thanks to all who have helped in the past month and we hope to see many of you at one of our scheduled Wednesday night work nights and helping on our special projects.

Till next month, *Shelley Lande, Discovery Garden Co-Chair*

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### Plant Sale Footnotes

Eddie told you what a great turnout we had for the plant sale. Thanks to the Eddie Cox & the whole greenhouse and Kathy Gocke & the entire plant sale crew. All the plants looked great and

sold very well. It helped too that the weather cooperated that weekend. This is our major fundraiser and was very successful. *Mary Farlow*

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AND A GREAT BIG THANK YOU!!!!

I would like to thank the very generous Master Gardeners who donated Perennials, Houseplants, and Bulbs/Corms/Tubers to the Plant Sale last month. We had an incredible variety of items in over 150 individual pots. I would also like to thank the Mystery Master Gardener who donated several lovely containers planted with a variety of perennials. They were a big hit. I would have liked to send out proper thank you notes, but I somehow always miss some of the donations coming in.

Without your donations, our plant sale would not be the same.

Thank you again, and please consider donating next spring. *Melissa Holst*

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### Farmers Market News

We kicked off our first month at the Downtown Farmer's Market and nearly blew away. It was a chilly breezy morning and it took all of us to hold our tent down. Eventually we gave up and went without our cover. This month we focused on vegetable gardening. It was a hot topic on a cold morning with lots of new gardeners hoping to offset the costs of food by growing their own vegetables.

We had many questions about rhubarb and asparagus in the spring. Everyone also was very concerned about the cold temperatures that weekend and it's affect on their plants.

We'd like to thank the hearty Master Gardeners who literally held the fort down through the cold temperatures. We'll be back downtown on June 20th so please stop by and say hello! We've got a new sign that you won't want to miss. *Aaron and Sarah, Project Leaders*

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### Demonstration Garden News

You can tell from the extra fencing which has popped up around the Demonstration Garden that planting has neared completion. Though we are generous folks, we don't want to share our plants with the rabbits just yet.

So far we have been lucky with the rain, but if you are looking for some hours or just want to help out with scheduling the waterers, please let me know ([margaretspikes@wellsfargo.com](mailto:margaretspikes@wellsfargo.com)). This task won't last all summer, but is an important component to making our garden green and beautiful during the summer. We are also looking for helpers with the raspberries, plant identification and plant labeling. In addition, we have a few areas in which people have expressed interest but would like to add to areas-bulb/corm bed, roses and possible rain garden.

June 18 starts our first class, Growing Grapes & Making Wine in Iowa. All our classes start at 7 p.m. on Thursdays. Be sure to bring your lawn chair, bug spray and your gardening friends. We will not have a class on Thursday, July 2 since most people will be gearing up for the holiday.

Our long term planning activities are also beginning to take shape. A wood chip path has begun through about half the garden. That will continue to be a focus of some of the work nights (Mondays and Thursdays at 6:30 p.m.). Also, a white picket fence to carry through the small cottage look (think yellow shed with white trim) will be added in June to surround the new vegetable garden.

We also are using the old vegetable garden to work with the Valerius families and other volunteers to provide fresh vegetables to the Urbandale Food Pantry this summer.

Hope to see you at the garden. Please contact Margaret Spikes at 557-8029 (w) or 984-9064 (h) or by emailing any questions to

[margaretspikes@wellsfargo.com](mailto:margaretspikes@wellsfargo.com). *Margaret Spikes, Project Co-chair*

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### Enabling Garden News

Planting, watering, and weeding are the garden tasks we have been working on the last few weeks. Vegetables are in the ground, hundreds of annuals are in, with many more to be planted, our small children's garden is being planned and planted with the help of several youngsters, our

AAS garden is halfway planted, various containers are planted, and a few of our Master Gardeners are already finished with their areas, yet there is much more to be done! We have many open areas that need planted and weeded, and a little bit of tender loving care, if you can spare an hour or two we would love to have your help! All of you are very gifted gardeners! We would truly appreciate any time you can share with us to make the Enabling Garden flourish this growing season!

One of the obstacles we will face this season is the widening of the Prairie Heritage Trail pathway. The entire bike path will be torn out and replaced with a new 10-foot wide asphalt path. It will be great when finished, but until then, traveling to the Enabling Garden will be literally, "off the beaten path".....Therefore, please keep that in mind when you visit the Enabling Garden. We may just have to call it, "The Garden" until construction is finished. Completion depends on the weather, and we are hoping it may be finished in a couple of months.

A couple of weeks ago, the students from Centennial Elementary Special Needs class included the Enabling Garden on their field trip. The students and teachers planted the raised bed on the south side of the garden with beautiful bright pink and purple petunias. Please come and take a look. Thanks to Ruth and Lauri for helping out with the students!

Thank you to Bill and Judy Goshorn for sharing their knowledge with citizens and braving the chilly elements of the morning. Bill and Judy go above and beyond the call of volunteering and we are very fortunate to have them in our organization!

Thank you to all of the faithful Master Gardener volunteers who have shared their time with us so far and in the past. All of you are very extraordinary Master Gardeners who have countless projects going on this time of the year. I can't say it enough, "thank you" again for all the time and effort you have shared with us thus far!

We encourage and invite new Master Gardener Interns to come to the Enabling Garden on June 2nd and take a look around and stay awhile to help us out and get a feel of what it is like to garden with us! Please think about joining us.

Our June demonstration will start @ 10:00am on Saturday, June 6th. Join us to listen to Master Gardener Melissa Holst as she talks about "Creating Containers" Our work nights continue every Tuesday evening anytime after 5pm.

Any comments, thoughts, or questions please email, [Paula peaceinthegarden@aol.com](mailto:Paula_peaceinthegarden@aol.com) OR [Christine cbbark1989@aol.com](mailto:Christine_cbbark1989@aol.com) OR call [Paul Wilkens ~ 515-480-0120](tel:515-480-0120)

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**The Garden and Bake Garage Sale** is June 6, 8:00 to 2:30. Hopefully you have checked your garden treasurers and have some to donate to our sale (anything to do with gardening or could be used as garden art). I will be at the site in Ankeny around 6 am for people to drop off their PRE-PRICED treasures. Remember we will be looking for bake goods also. If you you have any questions, or are interested in helping (I need lots of volunteers), please contact me. Kathy Gocke - email [Gocke@aol.com](mailto:Gocke@aol.com) or my home 967-3832, cell 720-8881. Hope to see you all there.

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Someone called the Extension office and is willing to donate a large quantity of canning jars for our sale but would prefer not to have to deliver them. Would anyone be willing to pick the jars up on the west side of Des Moines sometime this week and bring them to the sale site on Saturday morning? Call Mary at 957-5761 for contact information so you can arrange a time with the donor.

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### Fall Master Gardener Classes

We will be sending letters and application forms soon to people who have expressed an interest in the series of Master Gardener classes starting in early September. If you have friends, family, or co-workers who have expressed an interest in participating, please have them call Mary at the Extension Office (957-5761) as soon as possible.

### Garden Tour News

Word of mouth is the best publicity - you can help make this year's garden tour the best one yet! Be sure to tell your friends where to buy their garden tour tickets (see below).

**Read a good blog lately?**

MG Carol Nading was featured in a wonderful article in the DM Register. She is also writing a blog on the DM Register website about preparing her garden for the Garden Tour. You can find it by going to [www.dmregister.com](http://www.dmregister.com), click on "blogs" in the light-blue band near the top of the home page, then click on "search people"- it's in bold brown type. Then you can type "Carol Nading" in the search box. You have to hunt a little, but it's worth it! Be sure to post a comment for Carol while you're there!

**Volunteer Opportunity!**

Volunteers are needed to prepare the tour gardens. If you need volunteer hours, this is your chance. Email Maureen Hardisty [gomo409@hotmail.com](mailto:gomo409@hotmail.com) for more information.

The Polk County Master Gardener Tour "**Extraordinary Gardens by Ordinary People**" is Saturday, June 20 -- rain or shine. Be sure to tell everyone you know that this tour is a must-see.

The tour will feature eight gardens in the Ankeny and Saylorville area. The gardens will be open for viewing between 9 a.m. and 4 p.m. Advanced tickets are required. Purchase your tickets at all Polk County Earl Mays, Goode Greenhouse, Herndon's Des Moines Seed & Nursery, and the Woodsmith Store. You may also order tickets by calling the Extension Office at 957-5761. Each ticket costs \$10 and includes a map, driving directions, and descriptions of each of the gardens.

There will also be garden demonstrations during the tour including: Garden Photography, Water Features, and Outdoor Entertaining.

*Michelle Walke, Garden Tour Co-chair.*

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**Bits & Bytes**

**Need Compost?** This note came this week from stable owner Sally Pray.

I have a giant pile of composted horse manure. The majority of the pile is several months old that will make wonderful organic fertilizer. I am hoping the Master Gardeners can use it. The address is: Stillwater Stables, 8580 NE 86th Ave. Bondurant, IA 50035

The pile is on the west side of the barn. Please bring your own containers and shovels. You are welcome to come between the hours of 8am and 7pm to take as much as you please.

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**Interested in showing off your design talents?**

Evening Star Federated Garden Club is having a Container Garden Challenge as a part of the Johnston Green Days celebration. The timeline allows you to deliver your enter before the PCMG Garden Tour starts and pick it up after the tour is over.

Container gardening is the hot item in gardening again this year. Share your design by entering the Evening Star Garden Club Container Gardening Challenge. There is no entry fee. Judges will determine the best designs and awards will be given to the winners.

Questions call 270-0963 or email [cersgarden@aol.com](mailto:cersgarden@aol.com).

**Timeline**

- \* June 18 midnight: Entry deadline
- \* June 20 8:30-9:30 am: Entries must be delivered to the Johnston Historical Barn
- \* June 20 noon: Winners and awards will be announced. Containers on display 12-4 pm.
- \* June 20 4-5 pm: Containers may be picked up.

**Rules**

- \* Container may hold only living plants.
- \* Container may be any size, shape or color.
- \* Container may hold a single plant or multiples.
- \* Multiply entries per person are welcome.

How to enter: Send your name, address, phone number, email address and number of container entries to Liz Sullivan, 6821 NW 93rd St, Johnston, Iowa 50131 or email [lizsull78@msn.com](mailto:lizsull78@msn.com)

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Master Gardener Ruth O'Connor and her husband Larry played a big part in the **Willowbrook Kindergarten Literacy Garden 2008-2009** You can see a reivew of the project by clicking on

this link: <http://photopeach.com/album/9wgpi2>

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**MG Helpline** - We are not offering this at the ISU Extension office this summer on Mondays. However, you may call 515-957-5762 and leave a message and the research, etc. will be done and a return call will be made. For assistance, please call the ISU Hortline at 515-294-3108 weekdays, between 10 am & noon and from 1 to 4:30.

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### Directory Updates:

Dee Tingle has gotten rid of her land line and only has cell phone - 669-4745.

Kathy Winter has a new home phone number - 515-537-8978

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### Upcoming MG Events!

June 6, **Garden Garage Sale and Bake Sale** Corner of 1st & Delaware, Ankeny 8 to 2

June 6, 10:00 **Creating Containers** Melissa Holst at the Enabling Garden

June 13, 11:30am - 4pm - **Garden Tour "Pre-Tour"**

June 15, 6:30 pm **Show House** planning meeting

June 16, 7:00 pm **Tops in Pots** - Susan Appleget-Hurst at the Discovery Garden

June 18, 7:00 pm **Growing Grapes & Making Wine** - Stan Olson at Demo Garden.

June 20, 9am to 4 pm: **Polk County Master Gardener Tour**

June 23, 7:00 pm **Rainscaping Iowa** - Jennifer Welch, Urban Conservationist at the Discovery Garden

June 25, 7:00 pm **Rainscaping Iowa** - Jennifer Welch, Urban Conservationist at the Demonstration Garden

July 7, 7:00 pm **Garden Art from Junk** - Marilyn Moon, Betty Lemke, Carol & Mel Visser at the Discovery Garden

July 9, 7:00 pm **Mom Said to Eat Your Veggies** - Dale Millis & Mark White at the Demonstration Garden

July 11, 10:00 am **Shade Plants** - Mel & Carol Visser at the Enabling Garden

July 16, 7:00 pm **All About Bees** - Matt Pering at the Demonstration Garden

July 18, 10:00 am **Children in the Garden** - PCMGs at the Enabling Garden

July 21, 7:00 pm **Worm Composting** - Diana Ronk at the Discovery Garden

July 23, 7:00 pm **Pruning Trees & Shrubs** - Doug Gage at the Demonstarion Garden

August 1& 2 **Polk County MG Bus Tour** visits northeast Iowa

### Recurring MG Calendar!

**Farmers' Market** booth every third Saturday, May to October

**Monday** evenings until fall clean-up **Demonstration Garden** work nights

**Tuesday** evenings until fall clean-up **Enabling Garden** work nights

**Tuesday** mornings **Botanical Center Gardeners Show House** work sessions

**Tuesday** mornings and **Tuesday** evenings **Botanical Center Grounds** work sessions

**Wednesday** evenings until fall clean-up **Discovery Garden** work nights

**Wednesday** evenings **Botanical Center Grounds** work session

**Friday** morning **Botanical Center Grounds** work sessions

**Saturday** mornings **Botanical Center Gardeners Show House** work sessions



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