

Green Thumb

The Newsletter for Polk County Master Gardeners

ISU Polk County Extension, 1625 Adventureland Drive, Altoona, IA 50009

515-957-5760

July 2009

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

Eddie's Ready!

I want to say a few words about the Garage Sale. The sale was a huge success thanks to Kathy Gocke and all of the volunteers who donated merchandise and who helped with the sale. The sale brought in a little over \$800. If you recall the weather that day was not very good. Thanks again Kathy and all the volunteers for a job well done.

How many people followed Carol Nading's blog in the Des Moines Register? It was interesting to learn how Carol went about getting ready for the garden tour. Thank you, Carol, for sharing with all of us. The weather turned out beautiful for the Garden Tour. I understand almost 900 people signed up for the tour. I want to thank all of the Master Gardeners who opened up their gardens for the tour. A special thanks to Mary Howell-Williams and Carrie Buzzoni for organizing the tour, a job very well done.

Please remember to turn in all of your volunteer hours. I hope everyone is having a good summer.

Eddie Cox, PCMG Steering Committee Chair

Fall Master Gardener Classes

We have sent letters and application forms to people who have expressed an interest in the series of Master Gardener classes starting in early September. The deadline for applications is July 24 so 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.

Botanical Center Show House News

We have eight wonderful new bays designed with a "Tropical" theme - very appropriate for the Show House in the summer! Stop by and see them - they will be up until September.

Planning is under way for our 2010 displays - the theme for the entire year will be children's literature. Right now there are plenty of opportunities to get involved. Contact Mary with any questions: 556-3684 or mhwphoto@mchsi.com.

Mary Howell-Williams, Project Leader

Farmers Market News

The June Farmer's Market was a beautiful morning with a large crowd. It was a far cry from the blustery day we had last month. With all the news about the Emerald Ash Borer floating around we focused on that for our topic. Based on the questions and discussions we had, it sounds like there is a lot of misinformation circulating around to the general public. Apparently many local garden centers are selling products to get rid of a pest we don't have in Iowa. Hopefully we were able to help educate those we talked to and spread some correct information. Be sure to stop by our booth next month when we discuss hostas. Hope to see you at the market!

Aaron and Sarah, Project Leaders

Garden Tour News

The numbers are in - 887 tickets were sold this year. That's up from 880 in 2008. Thanks to all who volunteered to host and assisted in the gardens.

Attention all West Des Moines Master Gardeners and MG Interns:

The 2010 tour is in West Des Moines. Now is the time to speak up! Email Garden Tour Chair Carrie Buzzoni (carrie.A.Buzzoni@wellsfargo.com) so she can come and take a quick peek. It's ok if you have weeds! We can visualize what your "tour-ready" garden will look like. Remember, the tour will not be in West Des Moines again for many years, so this is your chance.

Michelle Walke, Garden Tour Committee

Botanical Center Grounds News

I know others have experienced this but this was my first exposure to selfish thievery. I spent most of last week being angry. Upon arriving at the Botanical Center on Tuesday morning (the 23rd), I was informed that poachers had struck over the weekend. About half of the plants that we had just recently planted in the center Butterfly garden were gone. A lot of these plants had been purchased and paid for by Mary B Oothout. When it got too late to renovate the last bed and plant it last year, I took the plants home with me and took care of them until we could plant them this spring. Now someone had taken or destroyed a big part of what was lovingly given to everyone and it made me angry. I was so angry that when others went to see what had been done, I didn't go as I wasn't sure how I would react. However, on Friday when Mary showed up and asked me to go with her to assess the damage, I couldn't tell her no. While a big part of thievery had occurred in the Butterfly garden, all the gardens had plants missing in them. Even the Memorial Garden to Ray Oothout, Mary's late husband, which she maintains on her own had plants and two Boxwood shrubs taken. Finally today, almost a week later, I was able let go of my anger realizing it was really only harming me and doing nothing to those who had taken the plants. I can only take comfort in that sooner or later, it will cost them a lot more than what they took and/or destroyed.

In the meantime, we start over again trying to locate plants to put back together what some selfish person destroyed. We should be weeding and the weeds continue to grow and we continue to pull them but they seem to be growing faster than we are pulling, so any and all help will be greatly appreciated.

These are the things that we are sure are missing. These numbers may be rounded up or down 1 or 2 plants but this is close to what we need. There are some other things missing but no big holes were left or we decided not to replace them at this time:

4 Sedum 'Autumn Joy', 10 Sedum 'Matrona', 10 Echinacea 'Bright Star', 15 Monarda 'Gardenview Scarlet', 10 Liatris 'Floristan Violet', 10 Shasta Daisy 'Becky', 10 Aster novi-belgii 'Alert', 30 Dianthus 'Zing Rose', and 3 Knockout Roses. If you have plants or time to share, thank you and please contact me by E-mail hostahunter@msn.com or call 967-3394.

Another request: we need a new Daisy the Dog

The green roof dog house that we had in the show house for a while has been put on display in the dome. However the ceramic dog that we had with it was returned to it's original home so we are looking for a new one. If anyone has a realistic looking dog made of any moisture resistant kind of material that you would be willing to loan or gift to the Botanical Center please email Elvin Mc Donald emcdonald@botanicalcenter.com or call him at 323-6297 or contact Melvin Visser.

Melvin Visser, Botanical Center Outside Coordinator

Discovery Garden News

Wow - where did June go? Even though we have had to battle with Mother Nature a bit, the Discovery Garden as a whole looks good. Has to be because we have such good volunteers working between the rains to make things just right. We would like to thank the many volunteers who spent numerous hours working on the pond. And, of course, our hats off to Chris Thompson and the crew from Just Add Water in Ankeny for the design and work they put into the pond, along with those who donated so much in materials and financial support to make this such a spectacular display. Hopefully, by the time you receive this, the pond and all of the areas near it will be planted and well on their way to showing off their color and texture for the Iowa State Fair. Watch your emails as we are hoping to have a "coming out" party to help dedicate this new area.

Speaking of the Iowa State Fair, it will be held this year from August 13 - 23. Sign-up will begin July 1 for volunteer shifts to greet and answer the questions of the thousands of visitors we will have this year during the fair. Shifts are 8:00 am - 12 pm, 12 pm - 4 pm, and 4 pm - 8 pm each of the ten days of the fair. Sign up quickly as the shifts fill up fast and this is an excellent opportunity to get your volunteer hours and a free pass to the fair. A fun-filled visit to the fair in exchange for 4 hours of work. Sounds like a good deal to me. To sign up, please contact, Jean Roe, 279-8705 or email, ljroe@ecity.net beginning July 1.

Remember, there are two excellent educational talks scheduled at the Discovery Garden in July. July 7, MGs Mel and Carol Visser, Marilyn Moon, and Betty Lemke will show us how to make garden art from recycled junk and July 21 MG Linda Thomas and some of her slimy friends will be there to discuss and answer questions on worm composting. There will be water provided and some pretty good door prizes afterward and, as always, you are welcome to browse around the garden for a bit before and after the talks.

Hope to see many of you in the coming month. I leave you with this one thought from Beverly Nichols (1898 - 1983), a British new correspondent: "The only 'natural' gardens are those which are covered with weeds and choked with brambles. Learn from nature, by all means, commune with Nature, take Nature for long and earnest walks down the garden path, but DO for heaven's sake keep the blessed creature under control."

Shelley Lande, Discovery Garden Co-Chair

Demonstration Garden News

This gardening season seems to be flying by! It could be, in part, because the garden tour is over. If your garden has not ever been on the tour, you should consider it. The committee does a great job in all of the particulars. I had 773 people in my garden a few weeks ago, but it would not have been possible without all the behind the scene work. The Master Gardeners have a lot of extraordinary volunteers!

That being said, please consider volunteering for helping with the Demonstration Garden Open House. It is coming very soon-on Friday, July 10. You can contact Susan Mahedy-Ridgway (susanmahedy@aol.com) if you can help. We are looking for host/hostesses, people to bake cookies, etc. We have invited Urbandale school officials and city officials, so we'd also like to see a lot of Master Gardeners who haven't seen the Demonstration Garden this year. Check PCMG web page for a link to a printable document to share.

If you are interested in helping out with the final class at the Demonstration Garden, on August 6, we are collecting Garden Tips. Please send me yours or plan on attending and we will collect tips for the audience. Please call Margaret Spikes at 984-9064 or email margaretspikes@wellsfargo.com. Thanks for your ideas!

Margaret Spikes, Project Co-chair

Enabling Garden News

Summer is finally here, as is the heat and humidity! With all of the recent rains we have beautiful gardens, courtesy of Mother Nature, no hose required. This July we are blessed to have two education talks: On Saturday, July 11th, we will be hosting Master Gardeners Mel and Carol Visser, who will be conducting a class on Shade Plants. On Saturday, July 18th, Master Gardener Susan Genalo, will be conducting the Children in the Garden program. Everyone is welcome. All summer talks begin at 10:00AM. Please bring a lawn chair and be prepared to have learn and have fun.

While the month of July is traditionally a busy month for summer activities, we would enjoy your company as we pull a few weeds. Please stop out and visit us at the Enabling Garden. Our work nights are Tuesdays, anytime after 4:00PM, until dark. If you have any questions please contact me at cbbark1989@aol.com (265-1384) or Paula Winslow at peaceinthegarden@aol.com.

Christine Barker, Enabling Garden co-chair

Bus Trip News

Here's a couple of photos from the May 30 trip - a good time was had by ALL despite the heat.



We do have a full bus for our visit to the Decorah area on August 1 and August 2. However, if there any cancellations, we will contact people on the waiting list to fill the openings. In order to get your name on the waiting list, we must have your completed registration form (available on the Polk County MG website) and a check. Please contact Jeri McGinnis with questions at 515-276-2598 (home) or 515-314-1326 (cell) or e-mail her at: jsmcginnis@netins.net.

Bits & Bytes

ISU Master Gardener Survey

The Iowa State University Master Gardener Program is conducting a research study to better understand behavior changes made in gardening practices of those who have taken the Master Gardener Program training. There will be no direct benefit to participants. However, the Master Gardener Program may benefit if behavior changes in gardening practices are noted by survey participants. Future participants may benefit if changes in training are implemented. Link remove from paper GT copies – If you don't have internet access, you're welcome to call Mary and come to the Extension Office to take the on-line only survey. Participation in this survey is voluntary and participants may skip any questions you do not feel comfortable answering. Since the researchers are not contacting the participants directly, participants remain anonymous. A unique code will be assigned to each respondent's data. Responses will be kept on password protected computer files and destroyed after one year's time. If the results are published, participant's identity will continue to remain confidential. Thank you for your assistance, your responses will assist us in determining the value of the Master Gardener Program. Please complete the questionnaire by July 17. Thanks,

James Romer, Iowa Master Gardener Coordinator.

Iowa State Horticultural Society Affiliate meeting

Will be having an Iowa State Horticultural Society Affiliate meeting Thursday July 16th at the Reiman Gardens in Ames, Iowa. The meeting will commence at 9:00 A.M. and will be over by noon. Coffee and rolls will be available at 8:30 A.M. so we can socialize among the different associations. The ISHS is a fraternal organization that helps tie together our common goals and interests among all state/regional horticulture associations. The ISHS Executive Committee would deeply appreciate if one or two representatives from our association to this meeting. The ISHS currently represents 23 horticulture associations in Iowa and our association has one vote. We know this is a busy time for everyone, but we need your input for the ISHS to attain its goals and become a stronger supporter of Iowa Horticulture.

Thanks to many of you, the ISHS had a very successful All Iowa Horticulture Exposition this past April. The ISHS Board is planning on an All Iowa Horticulture Expo II this coming winter. We could use your ideas and participation to make this an even larger event next season. The ISHS affiliates that participated last year were given great exposure by the crowds in attendance; as well as regional radio and television coverage. More details of this meeting will be forthcoming. Thank you for your time and interest,

Gary Twedt, CGCS, ISHS President

P.S. Don't forget to mark your calendars for the All Iowa Horticulture Field Day that Iowa State University Horticulture will be hosting on August 6th at the ISU Research Farm.

Education Opportunity - in addition to the regular PCMG class listed in the calendar section below.

Nan Ripley will be having a hybridizing clinic on Wednesday July 8, 2009 from 8:30 am - 11:30 am. Advance sign-up is requested by email (nrip@iowatelecom.net) so she will have enough hand-outs and equipment on hand for you to take home. Registration Fee \$40.00 which includes pollen kit, hand-outs, and one of Nan's selected daylilies. If you find you are unable to come that day, contact her and she will try and work out something. She is planning on doing another hybridizing clinic later in July. Nan will be spending individual time with each person during the clinic. You will be hybridizing in her garden using her flowers. Feel free to bring any bloom from your garden if you would like information on the bloom or how you would use it in a hybridizing program. Nan wishes you great gardening this summer and abundant blooms everywhere you look. They have made many changes and welcome your visit. Please call Nan (515-382-6269 or Cell phone is 515-460-6269 - use cell during the workshop as she will be in garden most of the day) or email for information and directions to Walkabout Garden, 26391 595 Ave., Nevada, Iowa 50201.

Directions from Des Moines or Ankeny - Interstate 35 North to exit for Cambridge, go Right-East on 210 - past Cambridge - turn left North on S14 go about 8 miles. Look for E57 - you can only turn Left/West. Go 2 miles over rail-road tracks to intersection 595 Ave. Turn left go ¼ mile to white house WITH BLACK SHUTTERS on the right /West side of the road. 26391 - 595 Ave. (If you go to highway 30 you have gone too far) Come back North to E57 now on your right/west and turn go to 595 Ave. turn left/South we are the first house on the right side of the road.

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## Directory Updates

Kim Brennan is now Kim Fankhauser email kfankhauser@desmoinesmetro.com

Neil & Laurie Barrick have a new mailing address: 8130 Hardwicke Drive, Johnston, Iowa 50131

**Address changes?** I'm told that there have been several zip codes for folks who call Windsor Heights home and that those will all change to 50324 on July 1. If we have you in the database as Windsor Heights, that's already been changed. If your directory address is Des Moines but needs to change zip, please let me know ASAP. *Mary Farlow*

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## Upcoming MG Events!

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

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

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

July 12, 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., Dubuque County Master Gardener Tour of Gardens

July 16, 8:30 a.m. Iowa State Horticultural Society Affiliate

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

July 18, 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., Central Iowa Water Garden Club Tour

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

July 21, 7:00 pm Worm Composting - MG Linda Thomas at the Discovery Garden

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

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

August 6, 8:00 a.m. First Annual All-Horticulture Field Day, Iowa State University Horticulture Research Station

August 15, 10:00am Flower Arranging - MG Tina Gosselink at the Enabling Garden

September 8, 7:00 pm Gardening for Butterflies - MGs Melissa Holst & Don Kerr - Discovery Garden

September 12, 10:00 am Plant Pathology, ISU's Dr. Mark Gleason at that Enabling Garden.

## 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 and Tuesday evenings Botanical Center Grounds work sessions

Wednesday mornings Botanical Center Gardeners Show House 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