

Green Thumb

The Newsletter for Polk County Master Gardeners

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

515-957-5760

September 2009

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

Eddie's Ready!

What about this weather! It feels more like October than the first of September. I have received a couple of seed catalogs and I am starting to look at them as it is about time to start picking seeds to order for next year. I am getting excited about starting the process.

The fall Master Gardener class will get underway on the 8th of September. It is always exciting to work with new Master Gardener interns.

I understand they had a very successful bus trip. I would like to thank Jeri McGinnis for giving us some seeds she obtained from Willowglen Nursery while on the Bus trip. The seeds are Jelitto perennial seeds: ALCEA RUGOSA and RUSSIAN HOLLYHOCK. We will grow these plants for the plant sale.

Did everyone get a chance to read the article in the Des Moines Examiner on the Discovery Garden? The article was written by Ann Larson. This was an excellent article. Mary put a link to the article in This & That 8-21-09.

I hope everyone is enjoying the summer. Remember please make sure you turn in your volunteer hours to Mary so she can get them recorded. I would like to take this opportunity to thank Jeanine Baldwin, Jeanine was instrumental in obtaining one of the greenhouses at the Botanical Center for the Master Gardener program. This has meant a great deal to our Greenhouse project.

Eddie Cox, PCMG Steering Committee Chair

Directory Updates

* Tanya Meyer-Dideriksen has a new address:

1143 SE Village View Lane

Ankeny, IA 50021

* Kay Novak has a new email address: kaytrue49@gmail.com

Farmer's Market News

August was another great month for the Master Gardeners at the Downtown Farmer's Market. It was overcast all morning keeping it cool, but it didn't rain until we were all packed up. The market was slow to start, probably due to the State Fair, but by the end it was packed with people.

This month's topic was butterfly gardens, hosted by our wonderful and knowledgeable experts Melissa Holst and Don Kerr. They brought an assortment of host and nectar producing plants to attract monarch and swallow tail butterflies. For host plants we had dill, parsley, tropical milkweed, and common milkweed. As examples of butterfly nectar plants, we had butterfly bush, echinacea, coreopsis, bee balm, and yarrow just to name a few. The biggest draws for the day were the eggs, caterpillars and chrysalis showing nearly every stage of monarch butterfly development. Children and adults alike were eager to get an up close look at these fascinating insects.

If you want to learn more about attracting butterflies to your garden, come listen to Melissa and Don on September 8th, at 6:30 pm at the Discovery Garden.

Next month's topic will be about canning and preserving all the bountiful produce from your garden. It's fun and easy. If you haven't canned before, stop at the market and we'll show you how. Plus you might get a recipe or two. Don't miss it on September 19th!

Aaron and Sarah

Botanical Center Grounds News

Our latest project on the river front has been a major one. Between the volunteers and a couple of the Gardeners at the BC, the area from the river boat landing south along the Blue Wave Garden has been cleaned of all the Barberry (which was mostly dead on the river side) plus odds and ends of various unwanted trees, grapevines, scrub brush, poison ivy, and weeds have been removed and or a pesticide applied to them. As we are preparing to be gone for several days, we missed the last work time but understand in celebration of this accomplished task, all the volunteers had their coffee break down there and enjoyed the view of the river. Another example of how a few working together can make a big difference. Thanks to all of you who helped. If you are interested in helping to make a difference, please contact me by E-mail hostahunter@msn.com or call 967-3394.

Melvin Visser, Botanical Center Outside Coordinator

Botanical Center Show House News

We will have a great new exhibit opening at the Show House on September 12th: Re-Purposed Gardens.

Come see creative ways to put "junk" to good use in your gardens.

Also: our next planning meeting is on September 21st, at 6:30. We will start in the Show House to tour the new displays. Everyone is welcome. If you are interested in getting involved in 2010, please come. There are currently many display opportunities open. Contact mhwphoto@mchsi.com, or 556-3684.

Mary Howell-Williams, Project Leader

Garden Tour News

YES!!! We're still looking for a few more gardens for next spring's garden tour. To those of you who have volunteered your gardens... THANK YOU!!! The area between Douglas (N) and Ashworth(S) and 35th/100th Street (E) and Jordan Creek Parkway (W) which would be most ideal. If you have a garden - or know of a great garden - in or near that area, please let us know. We'd love to come and take a look!

Contact: Linda Day, lbdlay@mchsi.com or 515-490-4417

Enabling Garden News

This time of year at the Enabling Garden we're getting ready to order some compost and start thinking about fall clean up dates. After all, it is only 60 degrees outside and feels a bit like autumn - where does the time go?

Before that happens we will have our last talk of the 2009 season on September 12 at 10:00am with guest speaker, Dr. Mark Gleason, professor and plant pathologist from Iowa State University. You probably remember Dr. Gleason from your Master Gardener classes, he will bring some plant samples to share and talk about keeping your plants healthy. We sure hope you'll be able to join us. We'll have drinks, treats, and some door prizes.

Last month Master Gardener, Tina Gosselink gave an amazing demonstration on flower arranging. Tina magically fashioned several extremely beautiful arrangements from flowers she picked at the Enabling Garden. Tina made it look so simple and very impressive; we hope she can share the presentation with us next year! Thank you very much Tina!! Thank you to all the volunteers who have helped us this summer to keep the Enabling Garden looking so gorgeous! This year has been, to say the least, a challenge for us with all the construction going on, but we do persevere. Some of the good things this year have been the blessings of continual rains; otherwise it would take about 4 hours for one person to water the garden. Additional blessing are the core of Master Gardeners, a few new interns and one, "intern- to- be" who have loyally helped by keeping the weeds pulled, dead heading, and harvesting the vegetables for the local food pantry on a daily/weekly basis. THANK YOU!

We're starting to think about seed orders for next spring and will schedule a meeting soon. We have a couple of areas open, if you would like to have an area at the Enabling Garden next spring through fall to design and take care of, please let Christine, Paul or me know. This will give you an opportunity to get in on the seed ordering process.

Please think about joining us on a Tuesday evening and September 12th we would love to have you share some moments with us!

Any questions please email, peaceinthegarden@aol.com or ccbark1989@aol.com. Or you may call Paul at 515-480-0120.

Paula Winslow, Enabling Garden co-chair

Discovery Garden News

WOW - Did the State Fair just come and go?? We can still hear the echo in our ears "The very best this garden has ever looked", "I love your pond, did you do something different to it?", "The colors in this year's garden are just beautiful", "I do believe this is the best garden ever, how did you do it?" and on and on until our heads are so swollen, we will probably never be able to get our caps on again. We answered questions, pointed out plants, gave out website and other information and just had a good time with the visitors to our garden during the State Fair. We also learned a few things ourselves so that next year's garden will, yes, be "The Best garden yet". But - we could not have done all of this without the help of all of our volunteers. Truly, the Discovery Garden volunteers this year were the BEST YET. There was never a down time in the garden as we went from back breaking project to back breaking project without complaints and working together. There were times we couldn't believe that things would possibly be ready for the fair, but we all made it happen and I, for one, can say this garden was, by far, the best (and I am sometimes difficult to please when it comes to gardens).

SO - THANK YOU to all who helped out this year. You can be very proud of your accomplishments.

Don't forget we still have educational talks in September to look forward to. On Tuesday, September 8 at 6:30 pm MGs Melissa Holst and Don Kerr will be speaking to us on Butterfly Gardening and we have added a talk at the request of many people on Tuesday, September 15 at 6:30 pm, Chris Thompson from "Just Add Water", will be speaking on How to Get our Ponds Ready for Winter. Mark your calendars and hope to see many of you there.

Our organized Wednesday Work Nights have been suspended for now. However, we still need to keep things looking good for the many visitors who come to the garden. So, in lieu of our regular work nights, we urge anyone who needs extra hours or just some time in the garden to come out and deadhead, water, weed, etc at any time.

The garden (and fairground gates) are always open to the public so just come when it is convenient to you. We will also combine our educational talks with a work session beginning at 4:30 on Tuesday, September, 8 and Tuesday September 15 to mow, water, deadhead, weed, edge and do any little project that needs doing beforehand.

If there are any special projects which need done, we will call a special work day/night.

Clean Up Day will be scheduled at a later time, depending on the fall weather.

It seems impossible, however, it is time already to start thinking about our 2010 garden. There are some bed designer openings for the coming year. If anyone is interested, please contact Shelley Lande, Jean Roe, Cheree Tillton or Dean Brand so we can give you information on becoming a Bed Designer for the Discovery Garden. We will have our annual Discovery Garden Volunteer Recognition/2010 Discovery Garden Planning Meeting at the beginning of October, so be watching your emails for information on where and when. We urge anyone interested in being a Discovery Garden volunteer for 2010 to come and give us their input and suggestions.

Again, Thanks to all of our volunteers, we hope to be seeing a lot more of you.

Shelley, Jean, Cheree and Dean, Discovery Garden Co-Chairs

Demonstration Garden News

Things appear to be winding down at the Demonstration Garden, but looks can be deceiving!

The gardens have been producing lots of squash, beans, tomatoes and even okra for the Urbandale Food Pantry. Thanks to Allen and Sandie Sydnese for their constant care of their garden, as well as Cindy Miller and others who have been caring for and harvesting from the UFP garden. If you have extra produce from your garden which needs a home, you may consider the UFP as well. The Urbandale Food Pantry is open from 10:00 - 2:00 on Mon, Wed & Thurs. The address is 7611 Douglas, Ave, Suite 31, Urbandale 50322. Phone is 515-251-6688. The apples and plums are starting to mature as well. Master Gardeners are welcome to harvest the apples; donations to the Master Gardeners organization are suggested but not required. And it wouldn't be a newsletter article without having a date to mark down!! Please note September 17 on your calendar for a Demonstration Garden Potluck and Fall Planning meeting. Since chicken will be provided, please RSVP to Mary Farlow at the Extension Office (957-5761) no later than September 15 at noon.

Potluck suggestions are for those whose names end in A-G: appetizers, H-R: side dishes and S-Z: desserts. Set up will begin at 5:00; potluck will begin at 6. Please let me know if you have any questions please call Margaret Spikes at 984-9064 or email margaretspikes@wellsfargo.com. Thanks for your ideas!

Margaret Spikes, Project Co-chair

Bits & Bytes

2020 Vision: Creative Solutions for our Changing World Iowa Environmental Council Annual Conference and Members Meeting September 25, 2009

8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

DMACC Ankeny Campus

Early Bird Registration until August 18! - Students only \$20, includes lunch Registration Materials online

Volunteer Opportunity

Gardeners Show House Ornament Sale

A fundraiser with proceeds going toward Master Gardener expenses at the Gardeners' Show House will be held during the Botanical Center Holiday Bulb Mart. Donated European glass ornaments will be sold during the Bulb Mart the weekend of November 6th and 7th. Shelley Bain and Nancy Bork are coordinating the event and would welcome other Master Gardeners to join us in this fun fundraiser.

We'll need help setting up (date and time TBD) and with sales Friday evening and during the day on Saturday. We'd also appreciate donations of new or like new European ornaments that you no longer use.

Please contact Shelley at 557-8111 (office) or sbain@mchsi.com for more information or to sign up.

Education Opportunity

Gardening Study Course II - Iowa Arboretum Sept. 17-18, 2009 subjects to be covered are Techniques for Growing Vegetables, Understanding Plant Diseases, Understanding Insects, How New Plants are Developed and Evaluated, Container Gardening, Techniques for Growing Lawns/alternatives and Water Gardening. We meet at 8:15 both days. Please Contact Jennie Clay at gjclay@msn.com.

Upcoming MG Events!

September 8, Fall MG intern classes begin. Schedule of topics will be on website, in case you need ed. hrs.

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 the Enabling Garden.

September 14, 5:30 **Steering Committee Meeting** Polk County Extension Office

September 15, 6:30 pm **How to Get Ponds Ready for Winter** Chris Thompson Discovery Garden

September 17, 5:00 pm **Potluck Picnic**, Demonstration Garden

September 21, 6:30 **Showhouse planning meeting** Botanical Center Gardeners Show House

October 22, 6:00 pm **Fall Harvest Celebration and Awards** ISU Polk County Extension Office

October 31, 9:00 am **Fall Clean-up Day** Demonstration 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