

Green Thumb

The Newsletter for the Polk County Master Gardeners

October 2009

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University Extension

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ISU Polk County Extension, 1625 Adventureland Drive, Altoona
Phone 515-957-5760.

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Eddie's Ready!

I would like to reflect back on the year. We had a good year in the Greenhouse, we had a very successful plant sale and all of the gardens survived the strange weather we had this year. The Garden Tour was a huge success and the Bus Trips were very popular and sold out. The Show House has looked very good this summer and all the volunteers did a fine job with the outside gardens at the Botanical Center. We had a new project started this year. Alecia Kates started an Empowerment Garden and has done a great job with it.

I would like to thank all of the people who have volunteered to help us with all of our projects, you have made everything possible. I have enjoyed my year as chairman of the Steering Committee. It has been a wonderful experience.

Remember our Fall Harvest Dinner will be held on October 22nd at the ISU Extension Office. Once again, the Steering Committee has agreed to buy dinner for the interns who have met all their requirements and will be receiving their certificates and name badges at the dinner. **Eddie Cox, PCMG Steering Committee Chair**

Seed Orders!

Remember the dead line to get your wish list to your Garden Heads is October 9, 2009. If you have any questions please contact Kathy Gocke at Gocke@aol.com or 967-3832. Looking forward to a great year.

October 2009

Eddie's Ready!

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Annual Harvest Celebration Invitation

Mary will be printing new directories soon so you can pick them up at or after the October 22 Harvest Celebration. If there are any changes in address, phone, email or if you'd like a different photo this year, you need to let her know by the end of next week (10-9-09).

Directory Updates

Kent Zarley has a new email address:

aslan0828@gmail.com

Patrick Schmitt has a new email and phones:

SchmittPatrickJ@gmail.com

Home 515-279-9645 | Cell 515-657-1937

Farmer's Market News

As we set up the booth for September's market appearance, we were greeted to a spectacular sunrise setting the tone for our entire day. It was a busy morning as we discussed the do's and don'ts of food preservation. Hopefully we were able to give guidance to those who had never canned before and we provided updated refresher information to experienced canners.

The one thing that really struck us was how many people are not canning foods using the USDA guidelines. With the renewed interest in home gardening and preserving, it is of the utmost importance that we advise the public on proper techniques for safely keeping their harvest. The Extension offers many free publications on proper canning and preserving techniques on their [Food Preservation website](#).

We'd like to remind all Master Gardener's that these publications are available and recommend them to anyone who may be canning to help prevent anyone from getting sick from improperly preserved food.

Be sure to stop by our last appearance of the year this October 17th as we cover garden and yard preparation for winter. Don't miss it on September 19th! **Aaron and Sarah**

Enabling Garden News

Can this be the end of September? The due date for this article snuck up on me so it will be short and to the point.

First of all thank you to Dr. Mark Gleason for adventuring out to the Enabling garden to share with us the information about keeping our plant healthy, we had the best turn out of the season!

~ Important dates to remember ~

October 3rd PSHW (prairie seed harvest walk) @ 10:00am @ EG

October 5th Enabling Garden meeting @5:30 @ Extension office

October 10th PSHW @! 10:00am @ EG and fall clean up @ 2pm

October 17th PSHW @10:00am @ EG and fall clean up @ 2pm

October 24th PSHW @ 10:00am

October 31st PSHW @ 10:00am

Any questions please call 957-5761 or email: peaceinthegarden@aol.com **Paula Winslow, Enabling Garden co-chair**

Demonstration Garden News

We had a good turnout for the Demonstration Garden potluck and fall planning meeting. We reviewed plans for this fall and for next year, including swapping the location of the Food Pantry garden with the Theme Garden, and the 'Character Counts' color theme for the 2010 Theme Garden, with help from the classes at Valerius Elementary School. Thanks goes to Cindy Miller for helping to coordinate. If anyone is interested in assisting on the Theme and Food Pantry gardens, please let me know. I also have an opening in the Ring Around the Rosey garden.

We also had a great day on September 19 to rejuvenate the iris, hemerocallis and Asiatic lily beds. The new 'bulb bed' has been reworked and replanted, with some of the same plants as well as daffodils, more irises, Oriental lilies, alliums and will be the future site of summer bulbs.

Thanks to Clel Ruppert for his donation of surprise lilies, and to the Master Gardeners who assisted with the renovation: Aaron Bewyer, Marj Akers, Sharon Cummins, Linda Thomas, interns Jennifer, Linda and Phil Murphy, Cindi Larson and Janet Piller. Now the hard part will be waiting until spring!

We also have some work still going on this fall, specifically in moving the herb and butterfly beds, adding raised beds to the new vegetable garden near the shed, and reworking a large area between the shed and garden. That area presents issues with mowing so some bricks and flower beds will be added, as well as moving a tower to hide the watering spigot. It will be a lot of work on a few remaining Saturdays (Oct. 3, 17 and 31); October 31 also is the date of the fall cleanup, starting at 9 a.m. Thanks for your ideas! **Margaret Spikes, Project co-chair**

Botanical Center Grounds News

Well, all you have to do is look around you and the signs of fall are everywhere. You can feel and smell it in the air right now.

One of the things always amazes me in the fall. A weed that germinated such a short time ago, and may be only a couple inches or so tall, will still set seeds, when normally at maturity it would be two or more feet tall. It's like a baby having babies. But their mission and connection with the time of year are so strong, that they know their days are numbered; few die from frost without first fulfilling their destiny to go to seed. I bring this up since it is the time of year we tend to let our guard down and stop removing those pesky weeds - especially the little ones - as frost will soon get them. This is poor logic, as the seed remains viable even though the parent plant has died. So, even though the threat of first frost is ever growing closer and all those pesky weeds will die, we must remember that their ability to infest our soil with new seed remains unless the seed is removed before it drops to the ground.

Have a great fall everyone and come see us at the BC anytime, as we are there all winter as well. Please contact me by e-mailing hostahunter@msn.com or call 967-3394.

Melvin Visser, Botanical Center Outside Coordinator

Botanical Center Show House News

I hope everyone comes to see our latest exhibit: Re-Purposed Gardens. The displays are both fun AND inspiring!

Please remember that any of you can join in on the fun - we welcome new display-makers. We have bays available to design for our April, July, and October 2010 change-overs. Work as a team, or by yourself.

We would particularly like to invite local garden clubs to design displays, so if you are member of a club, please send me the contact info, so that I can issue an "official" invitation. Contact Mary at mhwphoto@mchsi.com, or 556-3684. *Mary Howell-Williams, Project Leader*

Empowerment Garden News

The Empowerment Garden has a new location! We originally began at 18th and Gillette in the King-Irving neighborhood. The garden is now located at the corner of 13th and College, which is in between the King-Irving and Mondamin-Presidential neighborhoods in Des Moines.

Last weekend a group of volunteers along with the Des Moines Dream Center installed a decorative picket fence that was donated by the Des Moines Arts Festival. The fence was decorated by children who visited the Des Moines Arts Festival this year.

This fall we have started our planning for the landscape of the garden with the Iowa State University Landscape and Architecture students. The students met with residents to get input on what they would like to see in the garden. The ISU students surveyed the site and are working on a draft layout of the garden based on resident input.

We are also planning a door knocking event with residents and ISU Landscape and Architect students. We will go door-to-door with a survey to get further input on what would lead the residents to participate in the construction and maintenance of the gardens.

If you are interested in earning your volunteer hours with the Empowerment Garden or if you would like more information, please contact Alecia Kates at 515-419-6801 or

aleciakates@yahoo.com

Garden Tour News

June 19, 2010 is the date for next year's Garden Tour. We are still looking for a few more gardens for the tour. It is not too late for the committee to take a look at your garden this fall if you are interested or if you know a Master Gardener that you think should be on the tour. The tour will be in the West Des Moines/Clive/Urbandale area. Contact either Linda Day, lbday@mchsi.com, 515-490-4417, or Carol Nading, carolnading@nadinglaw.com, 515-289-1532, so we can come take a look.

Discovery Garden News

Seems like fall just arrived and we are already busy getting ready for 2010. Our 2nd Annual Discovery Garden Awards and 2010 Pre-planning Meeting will be held Wednesday, October 7, 6:00

pm at China Moon Restaurant in Ankeny. There will be a buffet and awards before the meeting (price approx \$10 plus drinks). We urge anyone who has helped out at the Discovery Garden or is interested in helping out at the Discovery Garden in the coming year to attend so we can discuss bed openings, seed orders, and projects we want to pursue.

Again - a big "THANK YOU" to everyone who helped make 2009 the Best Year Yet. We look forward to working with all of you and more next year. *Shelley, Jean, Cheree and Dean, Discovery Garden Co-Chairs*

And the winners are...

The American Garden Award Winners have been announced! The winners are decided by votes cast at 17 American gardens. The most popular flower- Rudbeckia 'TigerEye Gold'. In 2nd place: Petunia Baby Duck Yellow. And third, Pentas 'Northern Lights Lavender'. To learn more about the competition, visit www.americangardenaward.org.



Bits & Bytes

Education Opportunity

Fall Bulb Mart Speakers - Come to the north end of the potting shed at the Des Moines Botanical Center to learn from some great Des Moines gardening resources during the Fall Bulb Mart. Bulb Mart hours are:

October 1, 5-8 p.m.: Deb Wiley (6 and 7 p.m.)

October 2, 10 a.m. - 8 p.m.: Sandra Gerdes (6 p.m.), Marcia Leeper (7 p.m.)

October 3, 10 a.m. - 5 p.m.: Susan Appleget-Hurst (11 a.m.), Denny Schrock (1 p.m.), Kelly Norris (2 p.m.)

October 4, 10 a.m. - 5 p.m.: Elvin McDonald (1 p.m.), Marcia Leper (3 p.m.)

Volunteer Opportunity

Take a Survey

Lori Nudo George is working on a gardening story for The Saturday Evening Post. She's hoping our Master Gardeners will help her. If you are interested, please answer one or more of the questions and email Lori at l.george@mchsi.com or call her at 515-267-0613.

1. There are by-the-book tips for starting seeds indoors and then there are the little tips and tricks and rules of thumb you learn from doing it every year. I'd love to know your best tip or trick for No-Fail Seed Starts.

2. In January, I look forward to getting seed catalogs in the mail and planning my summer garden. I'd like to put together a list of the best-of-the-best Seed Catalogs Gardeners Love and Why. Consider your favorites for heirlooms veggies, flowers, widest selection, unusual varieties, equipment, etc. Let me know what you love and why. I'm planning on pulling together a list of the top 3 to 5 catalogs everyone should get their hands on if they'd like to try growing plants from seed.

3. Do you have any tips to find interesting seeds locally (i.e., do most botanic centers sell more interesting seeds than you might find at Menards, any other ideas)?

Miscellaneous Bits!

Free Sedum! Pam Heilskov has 3 large containers of "orphan" tall, red-headed sedum from a bed

redesign.

They can be picked up ANYTIME from the driveway at: 755 NE Spring St. in Ankeny. If I get home from work and they are gone, I know that they have found a good home!

Directions: From the 1st St. exit from I-35 (exit 92) drive north on Delaware Ave. to NE 47th St.; turn left (west) about 4 blks to Briarwood Dr.; turn right (north) on Briarwood to NE Spring St. (first street going west); turn left (west) just around the corner.

The plants are on the driveway of the first (corner) twinhome on the south side--west unit. You cannot miss them! The neighbors will be forever grateful if the sedum finds a new home.

Pam also has a question for the group: Has anyone ever used the deep window wells for egress windows as a place to overwinter potted plants (geraniums, mums, etc.)? I am going to try setting some out there on the gravel, covering the well with clear plastic, and opening the window a crack for heat just to see if it's a viable option. I have a "well" on the south and one on the west. I think I will put out a thermometer as well. Not sure about the ventilation. I know that they sell hard plastic covers for these large wells, but want to be sure a person can still climb out in case of emergencies. If you have thoughts to share, please email her at pam.j.helisov@emcins.com.

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.

Need horseradish

Does anyone have a horseradish plant looking for a new home? If so please contact Gene and Jennie Clay 4144 15th St. Des Moines, IA 50313 515 244-1434

Upcoming MG Events!

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
SUSPENDED 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



ISU Polk County Extension Master Gardeners
invite you to our

Annual Harvest Celebration

Thursday October 22th, 2009

Polk County Extension Office 1625 Adventureland Dr., Altoona, IA
 Mark your calendars and plan to attend. Bring friends, spousal units, kids - anybody! Please plan to attend our annual Polk County Master Gardener family get-together and awards program for our newest MGs.

AGENDA

5:30pm Garden Book/Magazine/Seed Exchange

Bring any good ole garden books, magazines or seeds to trade with your fellow gardening friends. It is a good chance to pass along some of those garden-related items that are too good to toss. Please label any seeds or plants so everyone else will know what is available.

6:00 pm Buffet Dinner of Pork Chops with Wild Rice, Salad & Rolls, Pumpkin Bars

7:00pm Business Meeting and Awards, Extended Service & Lifetime Membership

8:00pm 40-hour Awards to Master Gardener Interns

Social hour: Get to know the new interns.

Price \$15.00 each. Dinner will be prepared by Cruisin' Cuisine.

Seating is limited to the first 125.

Please RSVP to 957-5761 or mfarlow@iastate.edu by noon October 16, 2009.

The caterer needs to know how many are coming. You can pay at the door.

(Unless you are one of the interns who will be receiving your certificate.

Those meals will be paid by PCMG Steering Committee.)

If you can't make it in time for dinner, join us for the presentations and get to know the new interns. We want you there!



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