

Green Thumb

The Newsletter for Polk County Master Gardeners

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

515-957-5760

February 2009

Eddie's Ready!

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all the people on the Steering Committee for working through a budget, that was very difficult to do. I plan on putting forth some ideas to help us do a better job next year. We are going through some pretty tough times in the country right now and I cannot think of anything better than getting outside and start digging in the soil. It won't be too long before we can do just that. Don't forget all of the projects the Master Gardeners have for you to get the volunteer hours that you need. One other thing please don't forget to report all of your volunteer hours.

Eddie Cox, PCMG Steering Committee Chair

~~~~~

## Greenhouse News

We are off and running. The interns have had the opportunity to learn what we do and why we do it. It has been a pleasure working with all new Master Gardeners. We are starting to get busy and we will need a lot of volunteers. We are doing a lot of seeding now and we will be transplanting soon.

Please remember if we have any special messages or requests from the Greenhouse, they will come from Mary Farlow. She will send an e-mail and it will probably be titled "This & That". I am sorry that some people did not see the e-mail regarding the cancellation on the 18th. The people that showed up did water the plants. Thanks for doing that.

Don't forget, there will be lots of seeds to plant and even some transplanting to do starting this Saturday at the MG greenhouse at the Botanical Center. Please remember your name tag and be ready for instructions at 9 on Saturday and Wednesday mornings.

I am looking forward to seeing all the Master Gardeners at the Greenhouse.

*Eddie Cox, Project Leader*

~~~~~

Botanical Center Grounds News

If you are one of the ones that is reading this article each month, thank you for your kindness. If this is your first time, welcome and I hope you keep reading them in the future. You know it isn't easy to come up with something interesting at this time of year but here goes. So what is happening outside at the Botanical Center 'not much', but behind the scene is a different story. First off, I'm happy to report that VAC (Volunteers Advisory Council) of the Botanical Center has approved \$600 to purchase 7 large cement urns for placement on the long 2 ft high cement wall on the east side and south end of the blue wave garden. This wall has been being discolored with black marks from the wheels of roller blades and skate boarders using it to slide along on for some time now. By placing these 80 lb urns on the wall, fastening them down with the same poly epoxy used to put block caps on and

then planting some dry loving annuals in them, we hope to discourage this practice while adding something of beauty at the same time. The Men's Garden Club has agreed to pay for 3 large obelisk for the new south side rose gardens. Those, along with the two that I'm putting in the blue wave garden for clematis, will be adding some new interesting height architecture to the landscape. They will all be painted French Blue to tie them together. So the "behind the scenes" work goes on even though we can't dig a hole and plant a seed or plant outside yet. I can be contacted by E-mail hostahunter@msn.com [<mailto:hostahunter@msn.com>] or call 967-3394.

Melvin Visser, Botanical Center Outside Coordinator

Botanical Center Show House News

It was great seeing so many people at our open house! In case you missed it, the entire Show House has been turned over to Spring. Come down to see our new displays and chase the winter blues away. We have some very creative MGs in our group!

Our next change-over is at the beginning of April. Theme: "Around the World." We will be installing a Honduran rain forest, a Japanese tea garden, and an Italian outdoor cafe. We will also have bays representing New Zealand, Mexico, Spain, Egypt..... If you want to be involved in creating displays at the Show House, but don't know how to start, come to our next planning meeting, on April 6th. There are still openings available for the June and September change-overs. It's a lot of fun...come on - you know you want to.... If you want to just to get your hands in the dirt, there will lots to do this month. We have work groups on Tuesday and Saturday mornings. Saturdays are mostly involved with Show House chores, but Tuesdays include lots of work in the BC greenhouses as well. It's all a good time, so come on down. mhwphoto@mchsi.com, or 556-3684

Mary Howell-Williams, Project Leader

~~~~~

## **Demonstration Garden News**

Don't forget about the spring planning meeting for Tuesday, March 3 at 6:30 p.m. at the Urbandale Library in Meeting Room A. Everyone who has worked or would like to work in the Demo Garden is welcome. We will review details for the long term plans and discuss areas needing assistance. I apologize to the interns who will be in class. If you cannot attend and are interested, I would be happy to forward you the minutes.

Thanks to Cindy Miller who will serve as a liaison between the various supporting entities (Urbandale Schools/Valerius Elementary and City of Urbandale). We plan to increase our communications and identify opportunities between the groups.

We will again be holding a twig 'party' for anyone interested in learning how to make twig panels, fences or tepee/supports. This will be held on Friday, April 3 at the Extension Office in the large conference room. We will have a potluck starting at 5:30. Please contact Mary Farlow if you are planning on attending. This is a fun way to spend a Friday night. You will need to bring garden wire (22 or 24 gauge), fishing line (10 #), pruning shears and small wire snips. You can bring beads, copper or other decorative wire or ribbon to dress up your design.

Finally, I am still looking for anyone who has interest in roses, native plants and lilies and bulbs.

Please contact Margaret Spikes at 557-8029 (w) or 984-9064 (h) or by emailing [margaretspikes@wellsfargo.com](mailto:margaretspikes@wellsfargo.com)

*Margaret Spikes, Project Co-chair*

~~~~~

Discovery Garden News

With spring getting closer, we have been busy planning for this year's Discovery Garden. Our 2009 Discovery Garden Planning Meeting was held February 11 at the China Moon Restaurant in Ankeny and was attended by a record breaking 46 volunteers. We discussed our Mission Statement and its need for revision. Suggestions will be considered. Since our budget is shrinking it was agreed that all purchases for the Discovery Garden should be presented to the co-chairs for approval before the expenditure is made and we are open to any money-making ideas. Other topics covered were the changing role of the Bed Heads - now called "Bed Designers", work nights chores, the need for our own website linked to the MG website, the plant book and plant list, revisions in the map and new beds and coming projects for this year and next year.

There was so much information presented and discussed at the Planning Meeting, it is too lengthy to include all of it in this month's Green Thumb. If anyone wants more information, please contact Shelley Lande, budstoblMrs@msn.com, 229-5496 and you will be sent a copy of the minutes of the meeting.

Looking forward to working with many of you in the coming season.

Shelley Lande, Co-chair, Iowa State Fair Discovery Garden

Farmers Market News

We are still in the planning stages for the Farmer's Market booth. The dates have not been assigned yet, but we're still collecting names and will send out specific information soon. We still have plenty of openings for volunteers so just drop us an email to be added to the list. Watch the Green Thumb for topic and date updates.

262-4187 aarongreiner@mchsi.com

Aaron and Sarah, Project Leaders

~~~~~

## Enabling Garden News

The Enabling garden committee is still very busy meeting, planning, and preparing for the 2009 year, along with tweaking the many details of our 6th annual Arbor Day Celebration. We hope you can join us on that Saturday morning of April 25th at 10:00am. There will be more information on the event as we approach the date.

Please pray with us for a warm and sunny morning on April 25th!

Starting Tuesday, April 21st anytime, after 4:30pm, will be our first official work night. We will continue to meet on Tuesday evenings until frost, (Geez... did I just say frost? This reminds me of when the stores put out their Halloween "stuff" in early August...) oh garden, my love... We have most of the tools we need in the potting shed so just bring yourself! We would like to invite new interns and other Master Gardeners to join us at the Enabling Garden this year! We look forward to plenty of learning, laughs, fun, and spirit filled moments and memories! We hope to share our passion with you!

*Paula Winslow, Enabling Garden Co-Chair*

~~~~~

Garden Tour News

The Polk County Master Gardeners' Garden Tour visits the Ankeny and Saylorville area on June 20. Here's a sampling of what's in store.

Sunny Enchantment: "I fell in love," explains Master Gardener Nancy Nelson, describing the vibrant pink hue of 'Carefree Beauty,' the sweet fragrance of "Kiss Me", and other cherished attractions in her rose collection. With an abundance of sun, most of her 15 gardens are home to Buck or Easy Elegance blooms. The butterflies, however, prefer the Joe Pye and Liatris. Nearby, hummingbirds dart between weigelia and petunia. Finches feast on coneflower, bluebirds bathe near phlox, and enthusiastic bunnies explore, well, everything - which includes iris, daylily, gladiolas, clematis, Stokes' Aster, ornamental grasses, columbine, Rose of Sharon, viburnum, spirea, sedum, and several varieties of annuals. Even the playful fairies join in the merriment, peeking through the butterfly bush or around the hydrangea.

Shady Oasis: It's taken a while to hit her gardening stride, explains Master Gardener Bonnie McCaughey, who faced challenges of poor clay soils, no morning sun, hot afternoon sun, and a backyard cloaked in shade. And the deer. Always the deer. But out of years of trial and error grew splendor. Sunny beds of blooms greet visitors as they arrive, and nearby bask vegetables and raspberries, but follow the flagstone path past the house and a woodland retreat is revealed. The shadows of a mature canopy dance across a landscape of just about every shade plant you can grow in Zone 5 - Jacob's ladder, pulmonaria, brunneras, oak leaf hydrangea, lenten rose, hostas, ferns, jack-in-the pulpit, corydalis, celadine poppies, bleeding heart, epimedium, solomon's seal, actea, ligularia, ginger, ajuga, lamium, tovara, trillium, and persicaria. In no particular order. The soothing scenery is anchored and enhanced by several arbors, a few birdhouses, a fire pit, a dry creek, and old farm tools placed here and there. A place of wonder to wander.

Save the Date! Tickets for the Garden Tour will go on sale in late May. Watch for more information in a future issue of the Green Thumb.

Michelle Walke, Garden Tour Co-chair.

~~~~~

## Bits & Bytes

### Garden Garage Sale and Bake Sale!

We are planning a Garden Garage Sale to be held on June 6, at the southeast corner of the intersection of Delaware and First streets in Ankeny. Please be thinking of things you would like to donate to our Garage Sale. We are accepting anything to do with gardening, plants, tools, crafted items, home raiser produce, etc. Think about being a volunteer for our sale. If you have any questions, please contact Kathy Gocke at [gocke@aol.com](mailto:gocke@aol.com) or 515-967-3832 or Paula Winslow at [PeaceintheGarden@aol.com](mailto:PeaceintheGarden@aol.com) or 515-967-3409.

\*\*\*

### Books and Plants, the Perfect Combination

All Master Gardeners are invited to a tea party Sunday March 8, 3-5pm in the North Wing of the Botanical Center. The event celebrates the return of the library to the Botanical Center and a new art exhibition by Marilyn Towndrow. There will be a brief ceremony at 4pm.

Our chief volunteer librarian is Carol Visser. The shelves were built by Melvin and Carol Visser.

The Botanical Center library will be accessible daily, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., except when the room is occupied by a paid rental. There will be over 2500 books, numerous videos, CDs and DVDs and current gardening magazines. The library is for use by all Friends members, Master Gardeners, and any Botanical Center visitors. Books can be signed out for use at home, strictly by the honor system. We are also happy to accept donated books.

### Registration is now open for the May 30th bus tour!

Registration is officially open for the May bus tour to Kansas City. Seats are filling up fast, so you will want to get your registration and payment to Jeri McGinnis as soon as possible. Please contact Jeri with questions at [jsmcginnis@netins.net](mailto:jsmcginnis@netins.net) or by phone at 515-314-1326. The registration form is available on the Polk County MG website.

Several people have asked us to hold a spot for them on the August 1st and 2nd trip to northeast Iowa. Please contact Jeri McGinnis to add your name to the list. On that trip we will 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).

### Get a Jump on Spring! Something for Everyone

March 28, 8-5, at the Polk County Extension Office

Please stop at the extension office for a full brochure to see times and get a printable registration form. Most 1.5 or 2 hours workshops offered twice.

Vegetable Gardening- Shelley Lande, Master Gardener

Water Features Big & Small - Doug Rieck, Master Gardener

Organic Gardening/Pest Management - Kathleen Delate, Associate Professor and Organic specialist from ISU

Garden Art - Carol and Mel Visser, Master Gardeners

Composting-Dean Brand and Bruce Travis, Master Gardeners

Personalizing Your Garden/What's IN for Landscaping in 2009 - Lydia Brawner & Julie Catlin, Wright Outdoor .

Vertical Gardening-Melissa Holst, Master Gardener

Rain Barrels - Rain Barrels Iowa

Houseplants Indoors/Outdoors - Elvin McDonald, Director of Friends of the Des Moines Botanical Center

Volunteers are needed for the day, if you haven't volunteered to help and would like to, please email [vhunell@iastate.edu](mailto:vhunell@iastate.edu) or leave a message at 957-5762.

## **Upcoming MG Events!**

### **For your bulletin board**

- March 2 at 5:30 pm: Plant Sale Committee Meeting at the Extension Office
- March 3, 6:30 pm: Spring Planning Meeting for Demonstration Garden - Urbandale Library, Meeting Room A
- March 9, 5:30 pm: Steering Committee meeting at the Extension Office
- March 19, 5:30 - 7:00 pm: Enabling Garden Planning Meeting
- March 20 & 21 Siouxland Garden Show, South Sioux City, NE - Woodbury County MG's
- March 21 & March 25: Demonstration Garden Pruning Labs time to be announced
- March 28 Get a Jump on Spring workshops 8 - 4 at Extension Office.
- April 3, 5:30 pm: Demonstration Garden Twig Party & Potluck
- April 4: Opening: "Around the World" at the Gardeners Show House
- April 6, 6:30 pm: Show House Planning meeting, in the Riverwalk Cafe at the Botanical Center.
- April 8th, 7pm: Garden Tour Meeting, Ankeny Public Library, for Committee and Homeowners.
- April 18, noon: Enabling Garden Clean Up with potluck after
- April 20 no later than April 24: Pick up plants at the greenhouse
- April 21: Enabling Garden first weekly work night
- April 25, 8:30 am (rain date April 26, 1:30 pm): Discovery Garden Spring Clean Up
- April 25, 10:00 am: Enabling Garden Arbor Day Celebration
- May 16, 8:30 am, May 17, 1:30 pm and May 20, 4:00 pm: Discovery Garden Planting Days
- May 1 5:30 to 7 Plant Sale Pre-sale to PCMG only. @ Botanical Center Greenhouse
- May 2 8-4:30 Polk County Master Gardener Plant Sale @ Botanical Center Greenhouse
- May 3 12:30 to 4:30 Polk County Master Gardener Plant Sale @ Botanical Center Greenhouse
- May 20, 4:30 pm and other Wednesdays: Discovery Garden Work Nights
- June 6 Garden Garage Sale and Bake Sale Corner of First & Delaware, Ankeny 8 to 2
- June 13th, 11:30am - 4pm - Garden Tour "Pre-Tour"
- June 16, 7:00 pm: Tops in Pots - Susan Appleget-Hurst at the Discovery Garden
- June 20, 9 a.m. to 4 pm: Polk County Master Gardener Tour
- June 23, 7:00 pm: Rainscaping Iowa - Jennifer Welch, Urban Conservationist at the Discovery Garden