

# Green Thumb

The Newsletter for Polk County Master Gardeners

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

515-957-5760

April 2009

## Eddie's Ready!

On March 18th, Leon Shaw and I had the opportunity to visit with a number of Master Gardeners from around the state. They were in Des Moines for Legislative day. They had a tour of our greenhouse and I believe they were quite impressed with our operation.

There were several that asked if they could come in on a Saturday morning and work with our volunteers. I strongly urged them to do so. There were some teachers in the group and I invited them to bring their class to the Greenhouse on a field trip and they said they would certainly consider that.

Please don't forget all the volunteer opportunities coming up and when you volunteer, please report your hours.

*Eddie Cox, PCMG Steering Committee Chair*

**NEWS FLASH!!!! We're swamped and need all hands on deck. Lots and Lots of labeling and transplanting needs to be done so from now until plant sale, we'll have THREE work sessions at the greenhouse. Please join us on Monday, Wednesday and Saturday from 9 until noon and help us prepare the plants for our gardens and the plant sale. Eddie**

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Did you know all three Polk County Master Gardens feature All-American Selections (AAS) and are classified as AAS Display Gardens?

## Farmers Market News

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Spring is in the air and the Farmer's Market will be starting soon. We're still waiting for our official dates but we've asked for the 3rd Saturday of each month.

If you have already contacted us we'll send out details and schedule information as soon as our dates are assigned. The monthly topics are coming together nicely and we have experts lined up for butterfly gardening, hostas and canning. There are many topics which are popular for questions, so we'd like to feature them at the booth and are searching for experts. These topics include, organic gardening and pest management, vegetable gardening, tree care and identification, and fall/winter yard preparation. If you are an expert in any of these things or have another area of expertise you'd like to share, drop us a line.

Remember this is both a great opportunity for education hours as you prepare and volunteer hours during the market. We're also looking for a transporter to help pick up the equipment at the end of the market and return it to the Extension office the next week. Email [aarongreiner@mchsi.com](mailto:aarongreiner@mchsi.com) [<mailto:aarongreiner@mchsi.com>] to be added to the list.

Watch the Green Thumb for topic and date updates. *Aaron and Sarah, Project Leaders*

## Directory Update

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Master Gardener Katie Mitchell has moved. You can contact her at: 125 Marshall Drive, Waukee, IA 50263

## 2009 Master Gardeners Plant Sale is Right Around the Corner

There are three ways to help:

### Have you dug your perennials yet?

Over the next few weeks as you get out into your gardens, keep the Plant Sale in mind for any perennials that you are dividing or getting rid of. All we ask is that they be in good condition, and that they are labeled to show what they are. Pricing will be taken care of, so you don't have to worry about that. We had quite a few houseplants like Aloe and Spider Plants last year that sold well also. Please contact me to let me know what you will be bringing, or if you have any questions or concerns - [Melissa.Holst@wellsfargo.com](mailto:Melissa.Holst@wellsfargo.com) or [Melissaholst@hotmail.com](mailto:Melissaholst@hotmail.com). We have empty pots available at the extension office and the greenhouse if you need any.

Please drop off your perennials at the Extension Office during the week OR from 9-12 on Wednesday and Saturday at the Greenhouse. We would prefer to have them dropped off before Wednesday, April 29<sup>th</sup>

### Volunteer!

We are still looking for volunteers for the 2009 M.G. Plant Sale. The sale will be on Saturday, May 2nd and Sunday, May 3rd this year. There are two shifts available on Saturday and one shift on Sunday.

Saturday, May 2nd - AM - 7:30-12:30 or PM - 12:00-4:30 , or Sunday, May 3rd - Noon-4:30 Contact Shawnee Holtkamp if you are interested in volunteering at 515-868-3385 or [shalea1331@yahoo.com](mailto:shalea1331@yahoo.com) Are you a baker?

**We need treat donations for the plant sale volunteers.** They can be brought in the day of the sale or during the pre-sale. Everything is welcome!

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## Botanical Center Grounds News

Ah yes, Spring has sprung, the grass has riz and this is where cleanup time is.

Sorry about that but couldn't resist. Actually, clean up has started, when we got down to the Botanical Center last Friday, it was a beautiful day, and 2 of the BC Hort Girls and 3 of us volunteers went to the riverfront with hedge clippers, power blower and rakes to clean up the south end. We ended up taking 2 heaping pickup loads of leaves, dead plant material and general debris out of just the daylily and Blue Wave Garden area.

For those who have expressed an interest in helping outdoors, watch your e-mail for up-coming work projects and general information that I will be starting to send out as nicer weather gets more promising. I'm going to be looking for helping hands on several projects as soon as things dry up enough to do them and then planting will be getting started as well, in just a little over another month. So dig a hole, plant some seeds and then sit back and watch for the weeds, any bets on which start to grow first?

Need to converse with me? Email [hostahunter@msn.com](mailto:hostahunter@msn.com) or call 967-3394.

*Melvin Visser Botanical Center Outside Coordinator*

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## Get a Jump on Spring Workshop

"WOW!", "Tremendous!" , "More than I expected!", "You made a painter out of me!" - these are a few of the comments we received from Saturday's workshop. All had a great time, thanks to our presenters and volunteers. Presenters included Shelley Lande, Dean Brand, Bruce Travis, Melissa Holst, Doug Rieck and Carol and Mel Visser.

Our terrific volunteers were Jean Bean, Tracy Corsello, Theresa Garrison, Anne Finch, Carol Whitson and Karie Lash. I want to thank all of the Master Gardeners who attended, without your support we would not be a success. Again, thank you to everyone involved for such a great day. *Virginia Hunnell.*

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## Botanical Center Show House News

The Show House has gone international! Our newest theme is "Around the World". Displays include vignettes from Spain, Honduras, Japan, Italy, New Zealand, Mexico and Egypt. We had a lot of fun creating this exhibit, so please come down and visit. Many thanks to all of our incredible volunteers!

Next planning meeting is Monday, April 6th, at 6:30. We will meet at the Show House, and move to the Riverwalk Cafe. Everyone is welcome, especially if you think you might want to be involved in the Show House this summer or fall. Contact Mary at 556-3684 or [mhwphoto@mchsi.com](mailto:mhwphoto@mchsi.com) *Mary Howell-Williams, Project Leader*

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## Demonstration Garden News

I'm sure most of you already have on your calendars, the Demonstration Garden spring clean up date is Saturday, April 25 starting at 1 p.m.. Depending on weather and plant conditions, we may have lilies, raspberries and/or grasses available for splitting or digging. Bring your normal spring clean up tools.

We will have the benefit of a 9th grade class helping out with community service projects on Wednesday, April 23 at 9:30 am to 2:30 pm. They will be helping with garden cleanup and with wood chipping some paths. If you have some extra 5-gallon buckets for that day, please let me know. We will have them use the buckets for a wood chip bucket brigade. You are welcome to join them if you'd like--could be fun!

We now have electricity and lights at the shed (so we can work later in the evening if we'd like). Thanks to John Ridgway for his help to get this completed.

Continued thanks go to the Design Committee for plugging away on the wants and needs for the garden. While we haven't heard yet on whether we have received any additional grants, the Finance Committee is still looking into that area.

We may need some extra homes to keep our Demo Garden plants for about 10 days (April 24 to May 3 time frame). If you can help hold and water some of the flats for a short time, please let me know.

As a reminder, work nights will begin the Monday after Mother's Day (May 11), and will be Mondays and Thursdays at 6:30 p.m. I am still looking for a volunteer to help coordinate the watering schedule. In addition, I have a large bulb/corm/lily bed which is in transition. I'd like some folks to assist with talking through design and stages of that. For that discussion, I've reserved a study room at the Urbandale Library for 6 pm. on Monday, April 6. Please let me know if you are interested or have questions.

Thanks, and have a great spring! 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*

## Empowerment Garden News

We are in the planning and design stages of the Empowerment Gardens in the King Irving Neighborhood! The Empowerment Gardens' mission is to empower individuals to cultivate themselves and the neighborhood through gardening and landscaping.

The gardens are being established to meet specific pride and perception goals in the King Irving Neighborhood.

\*Increase resident participation in King-Irving Neighborhood projects and activities

\*Improve community pride and perception

\*Increase the availability of affordable healthy fresh food in the community

\*Create opportunity for residents to share their talents and get to know one another

\*Enter at least one city garden tour per year.

The King-Irving Empowerment Gardens are a combination of vegetable garden (edible landscape) and flowers. The gardens will be in multiple locations serving as educational, social, and economic tools.

We are looking forward to getting the site prepared and doing some planting on May 9th in conjunction with the neighborhood Habitat For Humanity Block Clean Up day!

If you are interested in volunteering in the Empowerment Gardens, please contact *Alecia Kates* at 515-419-6801.

## Greenhouse News

The plants are looking great and there are a **lot** of them. Just like every year, we are running out of room and we have to put plants on the floor. We have a lot of transplanting to do so we will need a lot of volunteers to help. I sure do appreciate all the volunteers that work in the greenhouse.

We are getting the plants labeled as soon as they are transplanted. We can do this because of the laptop computer we purchased this year. I would like to thank Jean Koch, Barb Hans and Deb Regennitter for operating the computer for us. This makes us much more organized and more efficient.

I look forward to seeing all of you at the Greenhouse.

*Eddie Cox, Project Leader*

## 2009 Polk County Master Gardener Bus Tours

Registration forms for both trips are available on the Polk County Master Gardener Website.

**One Day Trip:** WOW! We've had so many people register for the bus trip to Kansas City (May 30th) that we've decided to add a second bus. While in Kansas City we will be touring Bird's Botanicals and their cave full of orchids, enjoying Overland Park Arboretum and Botanical Gardens, and shopping at Heartland Nursery. One bus will be leaving from the Extension Office in Altoona and the second bus will be leaving from Urbandale. We will be contacting those of you who have already registered for the trip to confirm which bus you want to ride on for the day.

We have also added a pick-up point at the Bevington exit south of Des Moines on I-35. If you want to join the bus at that exit, please let us know.

If you still haven't registered for the trip - you need to send in your registration and check ASAP (you're not officially registered until we receive your check).

We do have seats left, but the seats are going quickly.

**Two Day Trip:** The trip many of you have been asking for: 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 now available - send in your check to hold your spot!

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). Registration forms are available on the PCMG web page or at the Extension Office.

## Garden Tour News

Spread the word...the Polk County Master Gardeners' Garden Tour visits the Ankeny and Saylorville area on June 20. Here's a preview...

### Plants at Play

The plants here share an acre of land with a host of fauna, an expansive sky, and a generous dose of humor supplied by Master Gardener Margaret Spikes - who has been known to garden in a jester's hat. A lot of ground has been covered by a lot of perennials having a lot of fun. Asiatic lilies, roses, ornamental grasses, echinacea, and a myriad of shrubs frolic among painted bowling balls, wine bottle borders, colorful saucers, twig art, a farm fence, bed headboards, and an arbor swing. Zinnias smile near the backdoor, a nearby kitchen garden offers fresh flavors, and an emerging cutting garden cascades down a 1700-square-foot slope. And the blueberries? Who knows where they've been moved to this year. Study a working 3-bin compost station, explore a handsome new garden shed, visit the memory garden, and don't miss the Harry Lauder's Walking Stick bush.

### On Gossamer Wings

For 16 years they've come. By the thousands. Beckoned by a sea of color - the bright blooms of pentas, heliotrope, nicotiana, rudbeckia, echinacea, heliopsis, and more - the butterflies descend in search of food and shelter. Below, in the Saylorville Butterfly Garden, they take up residence among prairie sections and 35 perennial and annual flower beds - each tended by volunteer gardeners, each cultivated to support the butterflies' complete life cycle. Protected by a perimeter of apple, cherry, willow, and white oak, as well as lilacs, dogwoods, and viburnums, the gardens offer safe haven. Native flowers provide the best supply of nectar, while herbs, cabbages, milkweed, nasturtium, and a host of shrubs supply vital larval food for the next generation.

Educational signage invites human visitors to explore and possibly encounter Monarchs and Swallowtails flitting among the Mexican sunflower, Fritillary and Sulphur sipping in the puddles, and Red Admirals sunning themselves on large rocks. Even the endangered Skippers have been spotted!

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

*Beth Wilson, Garden Tour Publicity.*

## Discovery Garden News

SPRING IS HERE!! We are really ready and getting excited to get things cleaned up and under way for what will surely be our best year yet. I know we say that every year, however, we like to think every year is our best year yet.

Eddie and the greenhouse crew have some pretty good looking plants growing that will be ready to be picked up the week of April 20. Bed designers keep watching your emails and mailboxes as within the next week we will determine when the Discovery Garden will be picking up their plants. Eddie wants each garden to pick up all of their plants at a specified time.

With the early pick up date, if there is anyone who can spare a little room to house some of the plants through the late April/early May weather, please contact Jean Roe.

Remember, Clean Up Day will be April 25, 8:30 am at the Discovery Garden (rain date April 26, 1:30 pm). The garden will probably be pretty clean as we are fortunate enough to have a group of ninth graders from West Des Moines coming in on April 23 to work with Jean and Cheree on raking and trimming, BUT never fear this only gives us more time to start with the projects set for this year. Weather permitting we will have compost available that day to be spread on each of the beds, there will be rocks to remove from the pond so we can start on the renovation, an arbor to be moved from the Children's Garden, roses to prune and two tree roses to move.

etc, etc, etc. There will be plenty of work available for everyone and this should give us a jump start on the season. Lately we have been discussing what to do with the windmill and out of the blue the fairgrounds contacted me to let me know that the people who donated the windmill want to renovate it. It will be removed from the garden, renovated and returned. We are excited to see its transformation.

If anyone has any questions about the Discovery Garden and its volunteer opportunities, please feel free to contact either Shelley Lande, Jean Roe, Cheree Tilton or Dean Brand and we will be glad to give you an overview. Hoping to see many familiar and many new faces this year and looking forward to working with all of you.

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

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## Enabling Garden News

Listen, can you hear her? Mother Nature is calling us, and she is saying in her smooth, breezy, crisp, whisper, "Come to the Enabling Garden..."

You have many opportunities:

April 18 @ 5:00 pm Work night

April 21st @ Noon Work day and Potluck

April 25th @10:00am Arbor Day Celebration We welcome all new interns and faithful Master Gardeners to join us on the above dates the month of April!

The Enabling Garden is looking real good and the new pathway to the south end of the garden is all finished, thanks to Paul Wilkens.

This is the time of year when the Enabling Garden updates start getting shorter, why? Because I'm heading out to the garden!

Have fun, and hope to see you at the Enabling garden! *Paula Winslow, Enabling Garden Co-Chair,*

[peaceinthegarden@aol.com](mailto:peaceinthegarden@aol.com), 515-967-3409.

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## Opportunities

### Joyce Carle Update

As some of you know, Master Gardener Joyce Carle was severely injured a couple of weeks ago in a snowmobile accident that killed her adult daughter from Ankeny. They had gone to the Black Hills area for spring break. She has extensive injuries but is expected to recover. It sounds like Joyce will be out of ICU soon. A group is being organized to do spring clean up in Joyce's yard, since it may be a couple of months before she's released. Joyce is currently at Rapid City Regional Hospital, 353 Fairmont Blvd., Rapid City SD 57701.

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## Opportunities, continued

**Federated Garden Clubs Of Iowa Gardening Study Course I** --Session 8 Iowa Arboretum, Luther, Iowa, April 9-10, 2009

APRIL 9, 2009 (Thursday): Talk about Soils, Lawn and Garden Weed Identification, Plant Propagation from Seed, and Plant Propagation Activity from cuttings.

APRIL 10, 2009 (Friday): Basic Botany, Houseplants, and Exam Master Gardeners may be awarded 1 hour CEU for each 1 hour class time. Registrations accepted until April 1, 2009. Walk-ins always welcome, but handouts may be limited. For more information or to register, contact Jennie Clay at 515-244-1434.

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### **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 sale. We are accepting anything to do with gardening, plants, tools, craft items, home raised produce, etc. Think about being a volunteer also. 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.

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### **Grow Something Beautiful**

East High's new 9th grade academy is east of East High School in a rather drab and bare bones building. They would like to do some landscaping in the front of the building but need some help knowing what to plant. If a Master Gardener is willing to help design this project, and earn some Community/School volunteer hours, contact Cathy Mussett RN BSN, East 9th Grade Academy, 242-8491 or [Catherine.mussett@dmps.K12.ia.us](mailto:Catherine.mussett@dmps.K12.ia.us)

### **Upcoming MG Events!**

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 9-10: Iowa Arboretum, **Gardening Study Course I**

April 16 7pm: **Winter Education Class**: What's New at the Plant Sale & What's the Scoop on Junior Master Gardeners? at the Extension Office

April 18, 5:00 pm: Enabling Garden **Clean Up**

April 20 no later than April 24: Gardens **pick up plants** at the greenhouse

April 21 Enabling Garden **first weekly work night** and potluck

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 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 9 Planting at the **Empowerment Garden**

May 16, 8:30 am, May 17, 1:30 pm & May 20, 4:00 pm: **Discovery Garden Planting Days**

May 20, 4:30 pm and other Wednesdays: **Discovery Garden Work Nights**

June 6 **Garden Garage Sale and Bake Sale** Corner of 1st & 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**