

**Mahaska County
Iowa State University Extension**

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Oskaloosa IA 52577
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www.extension.iastate.edu/mahaska
Office Hours: Monday-Friday
8am – 1 pm, 1:30 – 4:30 pm



At the Garden Gate

May 2011



Mahaska County Extension Horticulture Newsletter

Mahaska County Master Gardeners Plant Sale

Saturday May 21, 2011; 8 - 11 am

Mahaska County Extension Office,
212 North I Street, Oskaloosa

Featuring: Perennials, Annuals (flowers & vegetable)
including heirloom tomatoes EON Garden Markers &
Second time around gardening items including books & periodicals

Proceeds will be used for future
speaker fees and events.



Wanted: The Mahaska County Master Gardeners are seeking donations for their Plant Sale. *You don't have to be a Master Gardener to donate to the Plant Sale!*

In addition to labeled annual transplants and perennial divisions (especially plants that may not be found at the garden centers!); the committee is encouraging donations for the “Second Time Around” area (*as many gardeners hate to throw away useful items– even when they may not need them!*) They are encouraging donations of gently used:

- gardening tools
- baskets, vases, & flowerpots
- garden decorations

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IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY
University Extension

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

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- birdhouses
- plantstands, etc
- as well as gardening references, cookbooks and periodicals.

Please contact a Master Gardener or the Mahaska County Extension Office about donating items.

Recycle your plant containers! Many garden centers, and gardeners including the Mahaska County Master Gardeners reuse plant containers. If you can't find someone to reuse, Please drop off cleaned plant containers at the Extension Office. *Note: The thin plastic used for individual bedding plants is not easily reused.*

Master Gardener work sessions and meetings

May 7 Lacey Gardens 8:30 am

May 10 Meeting, Plant dig 6:30 pm

May 24 Flagpole Garden 4 pm—?

**weather may postpone work sessions, please contact the office or Master Gardener in charge of the garden if you have questions regarding if work sessions will be held.*



Junior Gardeners 4H club

will meet at Lacey garden on **Monday, May 23, 2011 at 7 pm.** Topic is Pizza Rocks (geology of Iowa). If weather is inclement, we will meet at the Extension Office.

Junior Gardeners is a special interest 4-H club. If you are already a member of one 4-H club in Mahaska county, you do not pay an additional enrollment fee to attend Junior Gardeners events. **All Mahaska County 4-Hers are welcome to attend.**

For more information, please contact Suzette Striegel at the Mahaska County Extension Office.

4-H Horticulture Project Resource: for information on specific vegetables, video clips, harvesting & cleaning tips, tips for talking with the judge & “what’s wrong with my plant/vegetable” visit www.extension.iastate.edu/4h/projects/Horticulture/vegetables.htm. **This is an updated site that will benefit 4-Hers who plant to exhibit vegetables.**

Upcoming Events

- May 7** Lacey Garden work session 8:30 am
- May 10** Master Gardener Business Meeting 6:30 pm
Plant Dig, weather permitting
- May 14** Planting a Rainbow-Family Gardening 1 pm
at the Garden, weather permitting
at MCEO if weather inclement
- May 18** Canning Kitchen Tour 4:30 and 6:30 pm
See page 3, call office if you wish to attend
- May 21** Master Gardeners Plant Sale 8-11 am
at Mahaska County Extension Office (MCEO)
- May 23** Junior Gardeners -7 pm
at the Garden, weather permitting
at MCEO if weather inclement
- May 24** Flagpole Garden planting 4 pm- ?

Webinar—Plant Communities of Iowa 6:30 pm
- May 28** “Heroes for a Day” Upland Restoration
Field Day at Hull Area
See page 5, please contact MCCB 641-673-9327
Or Jeff VanderBeek 641-660-2671

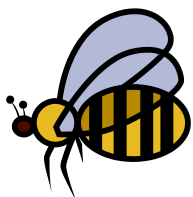
If you want more information about any of the Mahaska County Extension horticulture events or have horticulture questions, please contact Suzette Striegel, Mahaska County Extension Horticulturist by calling 641-673-5841 or emailing striegel@iastate.edu.



Garden To Do List for May

- Acclimate seedling to outdoor conditions before planting
- Plant a herb garden for your Mom
- Sow sweet corn and bean seeds in the garden
- Thin seedlings of lettuce, carrots and radishes
- Plant brightly colored flowers to attract pollinators
- Don't remove tulip and daffodil foliage until it yellows
- Remove excess plant debris from ponds or water features
- Mulch around newly planted trees and shrubs
- Pinch mums to promote compact shape and more blooms
- Beet greens are nutritious and delicious
- Weeding can burn more calories per hour than a brisk walk

These items are from the 2011 ISU Extension Garden Calendar.



The next Back to Basics Beekeeping Club meeting will be **Saturday, May 21. It will be a field day** at Craig Greene's house 1554 135th Pl Knoxville at 1:30 pm. ***This will be the last meeting until fall.***

If you are interested in attending and/or joining this group, please contact Craig Greene at 641-842-2112.

Making Moss Baskets Workshop

Saturday, May 21; 10:30 am—Noon

Marion County Extension Office; 1445 Lake Drive, Knoxville
Materials will be available to purchase or you may bring your own. For more information contact Karen Ackley 641-682-2014

Monroe County Master Gardeners Plant Sale

Saturday, May 14; 8—11 am (longer if there are still plants)

At Monroe County Extension Office; 219 B Ave West, Albia
Sales are on a donation basis

Planting a Rainbow-Family Gardening

Will be held on **Saturday, May 14 at 1 pm.** Family Gardening is gardening activities for young gardeners (in grades K – 3) and their parents or grandparents. It will last approximately one hour, and will be held at the Lacey Garden along the bike trail (1718 Pella Avenue). *Note: If weather is inclement we will meet at the Mahaska County Extension Office.*

The children's book "Planting a Rainbow" by Lois Ehlert inspired the theme for this Family Gardening session. It is a book about the types and colors of flowers.

The fee for Family Gardening is \$2.50 per child. The accompanying adult is free! Please contact the Extension office to **register by May 9th.**



Canning Kitchen Tour

Home food preservation materials and supplies can utilize a lot of family space in your home. Many who preserve during most of the summer months dream of having a space devoted exclusively to this task. Linda Forsythe has such a space.

Mahaska County Master Gardeners will host an opportunity to learn about the canning kitchen Nolen and Linda Forsythe built on **Wednesday, May 18 at 4:30 and 6:30 pm.** You may attend either tour.

The presentation will be at their home at 2415 255th Street; Oskaloosa. There is no cost to attend this program, and it is open to the public. However, space is limited to 25 for each tour. *Please call the Extension office at 641-673-5841 by Noon on May 18th to indicate you will be attending.*

To reach their home east of Oskaloosa; turn left (south) off Hwy 92 onto Osburn Avenue; travel $\frac{3}{4}$ mile to 255th Street and turn left (east); and the house is on the left (North) and the mailbox is marked. The canning kitchen is located near the garden.

Food Preservation Publications Available

Iowa State University Extension (ISUE) has the following food preservation publications that may be of interest to gardeners and home food preservers.

PM 638	Canning and Freezing Tomatoes ; 4 pages
PM 1043	Canning Fruits ; 9 pages
PM 1044	Canning Vegetables ; 7 pages
PM 1045	Freezing Fruits and Vegetables ; 6 pages
PM 1366	Making Fruit Spreads ; 5 pages
PM 1368	Making Pickles and Pickle Products ; 10 pages

These publications (as well as many others) are at the Mahaska County Extension office or available for download at the ISUE online store www.extension.iastate.edu/store.



The University of Georgia has written a home preserving guide entitled "So Easy to Preserve". The Mahaska County Extension office has order forms, or you may visit http://www.uga.edu/setp/order_book.pdf.

*Note: If you have food preservation questions you may call the ISU Extension **AnswerLine** 800-262-3804; Monday-Friday 9 am-Noon, 1-4 pm. They answer questions related to home and family.*

Canners tested at the Extension Office

The Mahaska County Extension Office (and many counties in Iowa) can test the pressure gauge on your canner **FOR FREE**. Only the lid needs to be brought to the office. Testing the pressure gauge annually is recommended.

No appointment is needed, but testing may not be able to be completed the same day. Please contact Lea DeCook; at MCEO, phone 641-673-5841, or email decookl@iastate.edu if you have questions.



ISU Extension (ISUE) Publications of Interest

IDEA 2	Small Fruits: Insects and Disease Management for Backyard Fruit Growers in the Midwest
IDEA 3	Tree Fruits: Insects and Disease Management for Backyard Fruit Growers in the Midwest
PM 453	Fruit Cultivars for Iowa
PM 607	Suggested Vegetable Varieties for the Home Garden
PM 608	Tomatoes
PM 683	Composting Yard Waste
PM 820	Garden Soil Management
PM 1239	Growing and Drying Herbs
PM 1398	Growing and Overwintering Everlasting Flowers
PM 1676	Tree Planting: Planning
PM 1888	Peppers
PM 1932	Drought Tolerant Annuals and Perennials
PM 2004	Home Landscape Design
RG 302	Edible Flowers
RG 326	Growing Impatiens
RG 314	Growing Petunias
RG 324	Zinnias
SUL 12	Using Mulches in Managed Landscapes

These publications (as well as many others) are available to purchase or download at any county Extension office or at the ISUE online store www.extension.iastate.edu/store.

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Rutabaga: As a member of the Brassicaceae family (as is kale), this root crop has that distinctive broccoli flavor. However, if roots are harvested early they are more tender and mild. Since the seeds are so small, plantings typically need to be thinned in early May.

Garlic scapes: While garlic is planted in the fall and not necessarily a unique crop, harvesting the immature flower buds are not a common practice among most gardeners. Watch for the flower stalks to emerge in early May. As soon as they begin to curl, but before the flowers open, they are ready for harvest. Cut the stalk as close to the foliage as possible. They add a fresh garlic taste to cuisine.

Additional information for the more common vegetable crops in your garden can be found in the ISU Extension publications [PM 819, Planting a Home Vegetable Garden](#) or [PM 534, Planting and harvesting times for garden vegetables](#).

This article was prepared by Jennifer Bousset, Iowa State University Department of Horticulture. It originally appeared in Horticulture and Home Pest News April 20, 2011. The current issue and link to the archives of HHPN articles is at <http://www.ipm.iastate.edu/ipm/hortnews/>. The archive can be searched by author, date and topic.

What would be a good soil mix for a raised bed? Raised bed soils should be light and well-drained. An excellent soil mix can be prepared by mixing equal parts topsoil, organic matter (well-rotted manure, compost, or peat), and coarse sand. Before filling raised beds, remove the grass sod (if present) and work up the existing soil with a rototiller or spade. Add a few inches of the soil mix, then incorporate it into the existing soil. Continue to add and incorporate additional soil mix until the raised bed is filled. **Incorporating the soil mix into the existing soil prevents the formation of distinct layers in the raised beds. Distinct layers of soil impede water movement and discourage root growth.**

Source: Ask an ISU Extension Gardening Experts April 4, 2008

“Heroes for A Day” Upland Restoration Field Day

Saturday, May 28 9 am—3 pm

Hull Area (5 miles west of Oskaloosa on Hwy 92)

You are invited to become a volunteer in a one-of-a kind upland restoration project in Mahaska county. The Mahaska County Pheasant Forever, Oskaloosa Pioneering Ringnecks, Iowa DNR, Mahaska County IRVM and MCCB will be working on various projects such as building brush piles, planting food plots, shrub and tree planting, native grass seeding, drilling and more. **Help is needed! This event is receiving national recognition and coverage by Field & Stream magazine and Toyota.** They will be at the event! For more information call Jeff VanderBeek at 641-660-2671 or ssfans@mchsi.com or call MCCB at 641-673-9327.

Summer Webinars Offered

The Iowa Master Gardener program will offer the second annual **Summer Webinar Series: Garden Natives & Invasives 2011**. The Iowa State University Extension Mahaska County office is hosting these gardening webcast programs. They are being held 6:30 –8:30 pm.

The first session, Plant Communities of Iowa, is scheduled for May 24 and will discuss the history and relevance of native ecosystems across Iowa. Geology, soils, climate and human intervention will be included. Items regarding the culture of some of these plants will include discussions on how things like aspect, slope and soil types play a role in selecting proper plants for your sites. By learning some of these principles, participants will be better able to design their own landscapes using native plants. Suggested species of native plants for each plant community will be mentioned. The session presenter is Howard Bright of Ion Exchange, Inc., Harpers Ferry, Iowa.

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Identification and Management of Invasive Woody Plants in Iowa is scheduled for June 28. This session will include a discussion of our most notorious invasive woody plants, their potential impacts, and the life history characteristics of woody plants that increase the likelihood of their invasiveness. In addition, we will discuss how a specific invasive plant (common buckthorn) contributes to the establishment of other invasive pests, and a citizen-scientist project that participants can join to help manage buckthorn. Two presenters from Iowa State University – Jan Thompson, Department of Natural Resource Ecology and Management, and Matt O’Neal, Department of Entomology – will conduct this session.

Tallgrass Prairies of Iowa is the topic of the third session on July 26. During this session, the history and reach of the Tallgrass Prairie Center located in Cedar Falls, Iowa, will be displayed. The mission of the Tallgrass Prairie Center is to ‘develop research, techniques, education and Source Identified seed for restoration and preservation of prairie vegetation...’. Daryl Smith, from the Tallgrass Prairie Center and University of Northern Iowa, is the presenter.

On August 23, Native Friends and Invading Forces, the final session, will highlight the importance of native species and discuss the problems and related issues with invasive species in Iowa. An attempt will be made to define the elusive terms “native” and “invasive.” Participants will learn about appropriate and inappropriate uses of native materials, and also tips on selection of plant materials for use in landscapes with a better chance of not overstaying or overgrowing their welcome. Because gardening success is often largely dependent on choosing materials to fit planting sites that are adapted, an exploration of reasonable site adaptations will be included in the session. The program will help tie together information that has been presented in earlier programs in the series and will be presented by Rich Pope, Harrison County Extension Coordinator from Logan, Iowa.

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Please join us this summer to learn more about these timely topics in gardening. Please contact Suzette Striegel, Mahaska County Extension Horticulturist email striegel@iastate.edu or phone 641-673-5841 with questions regarding these programs. Cost to attend the webinars is \$5. Please contact the office by noon the day of the program you plan to attend.

Uncommon Garden Produce

Each Spring gardeners plan out their vegetable gardens with tomatoes, onions, and peppers predominating. There is good reason for that; few other crops are as useful and versatile in the kitchen. However, if you are looking to add some diversity to your vegetable garden this year, here are five less common choices that are very easy to grow in your garden. Plus, each of these crops can be planted now.

Kale: The health experts tout this as one of the healthiest foods you can eat. The good news for gardeners is kale is incredibly easy to grow. Sow seed directly in the ground as soon as the soil can be tilled in the spring. Once the plants are established, leaves can be harvested for use. The mature plant is cold hardy and will survive very low temperatures in the fall. In fact, it typically outlives all of the other plants in the vegetable garden.

Parsnips: This surprisingly tasty and versatile root requires a long season to grow but can be kept in the garden over the winter for storage. Direct seed parsnip any time after April 1st in Iowa for a fall or following spring harvest.

Amaranth: As a grain crop with an ancient history, this incredibly fertile plant (hundreds of thousands of seeds are produced on one plant) can yield a rewarding harvest. Two words of warning: it is closely related to a common garden weed in Iowa, red root pigweed, and the seed has to be properly winnowed to be useful in the kitchen.

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