

**Mahaska County
Iowa State University Extension**

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Office Hours: Monday-Friday
8am –1 pm, 1:30 –4:30 pm



At the Garden Gate

July 2011



Mahaska County Extension Horticulture Newsletter

Tallgrass Prairies of Iowa Webinar

will be viewed at the Mahaska County Extension Office on **Tuesday, July 26, from 6:30 to 8:30 pm.** 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.

Please join us to learn more about this timely topic. Cost to attend the webinar is \$5. **To insure an adequate number of handouts, please confirm your attendance the day before the presentation** with Suzette Striegel (email: striegel@iastate.edu or phone: 641-673-5841). This program will be cancelled if there is less than 5 attending.

Prepare for the Fair Workshop (For Floriculture and Horticulture)

Have you wondered about showing your homegrown flowers and vegetables at the Southern Iowa Fair? Wonder no more, and come to our workshop!



Eileen Blom, Mahaska County Master Gardener and Open Show Floriculture and Horticulture superintendent will give lots of tips and how-tos for potential horticulture show participants.

On Tuesday, July 12, a session for 4-Hers and potential open show

(Continued on page 2)

IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY
University Extension

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

(Continued from page 1)

entrants, children and adults will be held at 7 pm. It should last about an hour and will be held at the Mahaska County Extension Office Auditorium. **There is no charge for this event.**

Note: this will be the Junior Gardeners 4-H session for July.

Note: The Southern Iowa Fair book is incorrect for Open Show Floral and Horticulture information. Please refer to the separate handout available at the Southern Iowa Fair office or the website www.southerniowafair.com. **All ages of local gardeners are encouraged to exhibit at the Open Floral & Horticulture Show at the Southern Iowa Fair. Entries are received on Wednesday, July 20, 8-10 am.**

Information for 4-Hers exhibiting horticulture at the Southern Iowa Fair is in the fair book on page 159 or the website: www.extension.iastate.edu/mahaska/info/4h/fair+forms/htm. Please note the changed goal card instructions for general exhibits. **4-H Horticulture Judging is Tuesday, July 19, 9-1 pm.** You must sign in by noon at the 4-H building.



4-Hers should also consult publication **4-H 464 Preparing Cut Flowers and Houseplants for Exhibition, and 4-H 462 Harvesting and Preparing Vegetables for Exhibit.** The publications are available for download at www.extension.iastate.edu/store. An additional 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” is at www.extension.iastate.edu/4h/projects/Horticulture/vegetables.htm. **This is an updated site that will benefit 4-Hers who plan to exhibit vegetables.**

Upcoming Events

- July 4** July 4 holiday, MCE Office closed
- July 9** Master Gardener booth at Farmer’s Market 8-11 am
- July 12** Master Gardener booth at Farmer’s Market 4-6 pm
- July 12** Master Gardener Business Meeting 6 pm
- July 12** Prepare for the Fair 7pm
- July 18-24** Southern Iowa Fair
July 19, 4-H Horticulture judging 9 am-1 pm
July 20, Open Floriculture and Horticulture Show entries 8-10 am
- July 19** ISU All Horticulture Field Day; Gilbert, Iowa
- July 26** Tallgrass Prairies of Iowa Webinar
6:30-8:30 pm at MCEO

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 July

- Remove suckers at the base of crabapples
- Play a game on the lawn with your child or children
- Cut back leggy petunias to rejuvenate plants
- Remove canes of summer -bearing red raspberries after last harvest
- Continue to control weeds in vegetable and flower gardens
- Water flower and vegetable gardens early in the morning to reduce disease
- Invite friends and neighbors to tour your garden
- Take note of the different butterflies in the garden
- Water vegetables with soaker hoses instead of sprinklers
- Place sprigs of herbs in vases for use during the week
- Continue to harvest beans and squash to keep plants productive
- Contact your county extension office about the Master Gardener program
- Divide bearded iris



These items are from the 2011 ISU Extension Garden Calendar.

Make Plans to Enroll in Master Gardener Training



Mahaska County will be offering Master Gardeners training this fall. The training will be Tuesday evenings 6:30-9:30 pm; September through November 2011. Fee will be \$150.

Enrollment will begin in late July. For more information or to receive an enrollment packet—please contact Suzette Striegel at the Mahaska County Extension Office.

“We can in fact only define a weed, *mutatis mutandis*, in terms of the well-known definition of dirt- as matter out of place.
What we call a weed is in fact merely a plant growing where we do not want it.”

EJ Salisbury The Living Garden 1935

ISU All Horticulture Field Day

The All-Horticulture Field Day will be held on **Tuesday, July 19, 2011** at the Iowa State University Horticulture Research Station in Gilbert, Iowa.

Areas of interest include: vegetable production, apple, grape, and small fruit production and wine tasting, lawn and turf management, urban tree development, landscape design and installation, organic horticulture, and farm pond and surface water management.

This field day is an opportunity to showcase all of the research projects being conducted at the station in all areas of horticulture. Concurrent sessions will allow you to learn more about specific areas of horticulture and to network with others in the "growing" horticulture industry.

Registration begins at 8:00 a.m. followed by the program from 9:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m. Registration forms are available at the Mahaska County Extension Office or at <http://www.hort.iastate.edu/news/>

Master Gardeners Booth at Farmer’s Market

The Mahaska County Master Gardeners will have an informational booth at the Ruritan’s Farmers Market in Oskaloosa the second Tuesday and Saturday June– September.



The Farmers Market hours are Tuesday 4-6 pm on the east side of the square; and Saturday 8-11 am by the basketball courts on South D street between Hy-Vee and Fareway.

July dates are Saturday, July 9 and Tuesday, July 12. While you are shopping, stop by and ask a Master Gardener your gardening questions!

Mid Summer Activities for the Vegetable Garden

Mid to late summer is the time to harvest, replant, and wait in the home vegetable garden.



Many early season root crops should now be harvested for use or storage. If left too long, many will begin to flower, which degrades the palatability of the roots. Some examples of root crops that are now ready are carrots, beets, garlic, onions and rutabagas. Even selective harvesting of potatoes – known as 'new' potatoes – can be done this time of year. Dig carefully near the potato plant to select a few tubers and then be sure to mound the soil back up and around the plants to protect developing potatoes.

The areas of the garden where root crops were harvested can be tilled and replanted for a fall crop. Peas, spinach, radish and turnips are good candidates for replanting now and enjoying a fall harvest. The Iowa State University Extension publication **PM534 Planting and Harvesting Times for Garden Vegetables** has useful tips and a seasonal calendar.

Zucchini and other summer squash are now flowering and fruiting. Many gardeners are concerned about seeing zucchini blossoms without having a resulting zucchini form. In many cases, the first blossoms on the vine are male blossoms, which provide pollen but do not fruit. As female blossoms emerge, which are characterized by a small immature fruit behind the bloom, the fruit should begin to develop.

This article was prepared by Jennifer Boussetot, Department of Horticulture, Iowa State University. It originally appeared as a Horticulture and Home Pest News July 28, 2010. More HHPN article may be found at <http://www.ipm.iastate.edu/ipm/hortnews/>

Note: ISUE publication PM 534 is available at our office or the website www.extension.iastate.edu/store/. Other uses for garden space originally used for early maturing crops include other short

(Continued on page 5)

ISU Extension (ISUE) Publications of Interest

PM 608	Tomatoes
PM 683	Composting Yard Waste
PM 820	Garden Soil Management
PM 1266	Tomato Disease and Disorders
PM 1706	Growing Raspberries in the Home Garden
PM 17067	Growing Grapes in the Home Garden
PM 1795	Common Butterflies of Iowa
PM 1888	Peppers
PM 1966	The Garden Guide to Midwest Annuals and Perennials
PM 2004	Home Landscape Design
RG 324	Zinnias
RG 601	Gardening for Butterflies
RG 603	Iowa Butterfly and Caterpillar Food Preferences
SUL 3	Diagnosing Tree Problems
SUL 6	Managing Storm Damaged Trees
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.

(Continued from page 7)

gardeners with a small amount of space. Those elements include **Sun**—The plants butterflies and caterpillars enjoy almost all need full sun (6 hours or more). Also the butterflies love to sunbathe, place landing pads and perches in open locations.

Shelter— If your garden site has wind issues, consider protecting the site by changing its' proximity to buildings or planting landscape plants (trees and shrubs) to reduce the winds.

Soil-Fertility— Take and soil test at the garden site and modify as needed. Keep in mind most sites it will become difficult to modify the soil once plants are established.

Water-Puddles—Have a water source nearby when establishing plants. Butterflies like to drink from free standing water, a few artificial puddles can be established if your site does not have any.

Food Sources & Plants—Incorporate a wide variety of plants which are nectar sources and host plants for the caterpillar stage. Also different flower structure to accommodate different species.

Note: Many host plants are considered weeds, and may give the garden an unkept look. Also, when caterpillars eat plants, the plants may not be attractive after being fed upon. You may wish to place some or all of caterpillar food sources in less prominent locations. *Please refer to RG 603 Iowa Butterfly and Caterpillar Food Preferences*

Other Food Sources—Some species of butterflies feed on rotting fruit, and other sap flows and animal dung. If you want to attract those species, consider having a corner of the garden for other food sources.

Potential problems-

An attractive garden for butterflies is also attractive for undesired creatures. Be aware they may visit also. Insecticides often harm caterpillars and butterflies avoid their use if possible.

(Continued from page 4)

season vegetables including: cole crops, lettuce, salad greens and the establishment of cover crops. (see below).

Cover Crops (AKA green manure, or catch crops)

Grains, grasses or legumes planted in the later summer are inexpensive ways to build better soil. These crops are then plowed, or tilled under in the spring. When an entire garden can not be seeded to a cover crop, gardeners can rotate the portion planted to a cover crop from year to year.

While growing, the crop will reduce soil compaction, assist in weed control and prevent wind and water erosion. If inoculated legumes are used nitrogen will be added for subsequent crops. All crops will add organic matter to the soil, and all soils need organic matter to remain a healthy soil. Organic matter will benefit the microorganisms and earthworms. Since organic matter decomposes continually it must be added continually. Additionally if the crop is deep rooted it will improve soil structure or tilth.

Prior to planting the cover crop fertilize according to your soil and crop needs. *Prepare the seed bed and plant the crop so that a minimum of 4 weeks of growth occurs before cold weather.* Many different crops may be considered for use as a cover crop. Mixtures can also be used. Many gardening books and periodicals will have specific rates and qualities of each crop. Your specific choice will depend on your soil, future cropping plans, and seed availability. Irrigation may become necessary depending on rainfall.

In the spring, turn the cover crop at least 3 weeks before you intend to plant to allow for decomposition. If it is tall, it may need mowed prior to turning. Do not allow the crop to go to seed.

Note: More information on cover crop establishment for organic farming may be found at Iowa State University Leopold Center.

(Continued on page 6)

(Continued from page 5)

More information for cover crops for gardens may be found in numerous organic gardening references and <http://www.gardening.cornell.edu/factsheets/ecogardening/improsoilcov.htm> and http://urbanext.illinois.edu/gardenerscorner/issue_06/fall_05_09.html

Pollen and Pollen Stain Removal

Don't dab or brush off the fabric, this may push the pollen deeper into the fabric.

Instead:

- **Shake the particles off,**
- **Vacuum the particles up, or**
- **Use a piece of tape to pick the particles off.**



If there is a stain; Blot (from the back if possible) with dry cleaning solution and a clean white cloth. Remember to move to different areas of the blotting cloth as you blot. Pre-treat the area with stain remover before washing.

To avoid pollen and pollen stains affecting fabrics; simply grasp the tips of stamens with tissue, and snip off the pollen before it stains fabric.

This information results from a client inquiry. Answers to questions relating to home and family topics can be found at www.extension.iastate.edu/answerline/ or 800-262-3804.

Spruce and Other Conifers Continue to Struggle

It just seems like one thing after another with conifers. For years we have dealt with stressed conifers due to excessive soil moisture. Iowa has been in a weather pattern of increased spring rainfall for several years. Large amounts of rain that saturate the soil for long periods are problematic for some trees. Conifers especially need well drained soils. If they are planted in a clay soil or any areas where soil can remain saturated for even short

(Continued on page 7)

(Continued from page 6)

time periods conifers will experience root damage. Root damage prevents the tree from uptaking water when they need it. As a result, we often see browning of needles and needle drop which also occurs with some needle cast diseases that affect spruce.

This spring we have received a lot of samples with *Rhizosphaera* needle cast. The wet weather is a bit of a double whammy to the spruce as it harms the tree and benefits fungal diseases. We have continued to get lots of samples of spruce, concolor firs, white pine with browning needles that is likely due to root damage.

In the past couple of weeks we are also getting samples with the new growth brown and dead. There have been reports of herbicides causing problems for conifers, particularly spruce and white pine. Please see current articles for more information on this topic as it becomes available.

There have also been many samples from areas where no herbicides were used and so it is most likely environmental. We think that possibly the very hot weather and winds we had earlier this spring combined with damaged roots made it very hard for trees to keep up with the water needs of the new growth.

This article is modified from an article prepared by Laura Jesse and Erika Saalau, Plant & Insect Diagnostic Clinic; Iowa State University. It originally appeared as a Horticulture and Home Pest News June 15, 2011. More HHPN article may be found at <http://www.ipm.iastate.edu/ipm/hortnews/>

Cultivate a Butterfly Garden

The popularity of butterfly gardening is evident by the numerous books, websites, and articles on the subject. For someone with limited space or time to devote to the hobby, the information contained in them can be more than they are interested in pursuing.

But the elements that all gardens should contain if they are to attract butterflies is not un-accomplishable by even beginning

(Continued on page 8)