

**Mahaska County
Iowa State University Extension**

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8am –1 pm, 1:30 –4:30 pm



At the Garden Gate

August 2011



Mahaska County Extension Horticulture Newsletter

Master Gardener Training Enrollment has begun

Mahaska County will be offering Iowa State University Master Gardeners training Tuesday evenings and selected Thursday evenings 6:30-9:30 pm; September 6th through November 3rd, 2011.



Trainees attend classes taught by Iowa State University Extension professionals in topics ranging from lawn care, flower and vegetable gardening, ornamental trees and shrubs, fruit crops and houseplants to insect, disease and weed control, soil and plant nutrition and pesticide safety. There will be approximately 40 hours of instruction.

The classes will be held at the ISU Mahaska County Extension Office. Participants also attend one day of classes on Iowa State University campus either Saturday, October 15 or 29, 2011. This training has a \$150 fee. A \$25 late fee applies for those enrolling after August 31, 2011.

To insure an enrollment of six trainees and encourage early enrollment the Mahaska County Master Gardeners will cover \$25 of the tuition fee for the first six trainees to enroll.

Additionally, in exchange for training, participants are asked to volunteer 40 hours of service to their local extension program within the next year. Master Gardeners can answer requests for gardening information, staff plant clinics or displays, speak to local groups, teach youth, provide horticulture therapy activities for the elderly, and

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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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supervise or judge county fair Horticulture activities as judges or project coordinators.

For more information or to receive an enrollment packet—please contact Suzette Striegel at the Mahaska County Extension Office.

Master Gardener Business Meeting

Will be held on **August 9th at 6 pm** at the Mahaska County Extension Office Auditorium followed by winter & spring program planning.



Master Gardeners Tour of the Allen Fox prairie near New Sharon is scheduled for **Thursday, August 11 at 6:30 pm**; with a raindate of Saturday, August 13 8:30 am. *Please contact the office for directions and carpool arrangements.*

Note: the tour maybe postponed to next year due to the earlier than normal prairie plant development—please check your email and mail.

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 parking lots.

August dates are Tuesday, August 9 and Saturday, August 13. While you are shopping, stop by and ask a Master Gardener your gardening questions!

Upcoming Events

- August 9** *Master Gardener booth at the Farmer’s Market 4-6 pm
Master Gardener Business Meeting 6 pm
Followed by winter & spring program planning*
- August 11** *Allen Fox prairie tour 6:30 pm
(raindate is Saturday August 13, 8:30 am)*
- August 13** *Master Gardener booth at the Farmer’s Market 8-11 am*
- August 11-21** *Iowa State Fair; visit the horticulture displays
Especially the Polk County Master Gardeners’
Discovery Garden at the Agriculture Building!*
- August 23** *Native Friends and Invading Forces Webinar—
6:30-8:30 pm at MCEO*
- August 22** *Junior Gardeners; 7 pm
at the Lacey Gardens, weather permitting
at MCEO if weather inclement*
- August 29** *Master Gardener Youth committee & Junior
Gardeners Leaders meeting; 6:30 pm at MCEO*
- August 31** *Master Gardener Training enrollment deadline
\$25 late fee applies after this date*

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.

ISU Extension (ISUE) **Publications of Interest**

- PM 534 **Planting and Harvesting Times for Garden Vegetables**
- PM 666 **Weed Management in the Home Garden**
- PM 683 **Composting Yard Waste**
- PM 820 **Garden Soil Management**
- PM 1239 **Growing and Drying Herbs**
- PM 1266 **Tomato Disease and Disorders**
- PM 1398 **Growing and Drying Everlasting Flowers**
- PM 17067 **Growing Grapes in the Home Garden**
- PM 1933 **Common Rose Diseases**
- PM 1942 **Annuals**
- PM 1966 **The Garden Guide to Midwest Annuals and Perennials**
- PM 2004 **Home Landscape Design**
- RG 205 **Store Pesticide Wisely**
- 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.

Native Friends and Invading Forces Webinar

will be viewed at the Mahaska County Extension Office on **Tuesday, August 23, from 6:30 to 8:30 pm.** This 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 over-staying 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.

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.

Junior Gardeners 4-H Club

In addition to gardening tasks, we will have a garden celebration on **Monday, August 22 at 7 pm.** It will include making fresh salsa, and making plans for the upcoming year.

This activity is open to all 4-Hers and will be held at Lacey Garden (1718 Pella Avenue) weather permitting. If inclement weather, 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



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additional enrollment fee to join the Junior Gardeners. **All Mahaska County 4-Hers are welcome to attend.** For more information, please contact Suzette Striegel at the Mahaska County Extension Office.

Master Gardener Youth Committee & Junior Gardener 4-H Leaders Meeting

will be **Monday, August 29 at 6:30 pm** at the MCEO.

It is almost too late to spray for Bagworms

The dramatic displays of the pinecone-like bagworm silken “bags” made from bits of plant debris covering an ornamental evergreens are beginning to be seen. Eventually the larva will make bags 1 to 1 ½ inch long. Bagworms feed most notably on arborvitae and junipers but also can infest other conifers and some broadleaved trees and shrubs.

Bagworms are interesting moths. The larvae hatch from eggs that overwinter in the bags that remain tied to the shrubs. Once they hatch, the larvae prowl the plant feeding, and slowly build the silken bag with needles or leaf fragments woven in to provide them with camouflage and protection. Toward the end of the summer, they attach their bag to a branch with silk and molt into dark brown pupae within the bag.

The habits of male and female moths are different. Males emerge as flying hairy brown moths that are nearly clear-winged, but the females are wingless, legless and grub-like, staying the rest of their lives in the bag. The male finds females to mate, followed by the female producing eggs that are left to overwinter inside the bag. Each bag may contain from 500 to 1000 eggs, and hatching and emergence usually takes place in May and early June. Newly hatched larvae generally crawl out and start feeding on the over-

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are above 50 F, the tubers may begin to sprout in two or three months. When stored below 40 F, potatoes develop a sugary, sweet taste. Sugary potatoes can be restored to their natural flavor by placing them at room temperature for a few days prior to use. Do not store potatoes with apples or other fruit. Ripening fruit give off ethylene gas, which promotes sprouting of tubers.

Why are my potatoes knobby?

Fluctuations in soil moisture levels during tuber development may cause knobby potatoes. Watering on a regular basis (about once a week) during dry periods will help prevent this problem.

This information was prepared by Richard Jauron, Iowa State University Extension Horticulturist. If you have additional horticulture questions you may contact the experts at hortline@iastate.edu or call 515-294-3108.

Garden To Do List

- Harvest onions when the tops fall over and begin to dry
- Harvest, dry and store herbs for later use
- Cut flowers from your garden and place in vases indoors
- Sow lettuce, spinach and radish for fall harvest
- Check out the vegetable and fruit displays at the Iowa State Fair
- Add water to ponds and water features as needed
- Continue to harvest zucchini and cucumbers to keep plant protective
- Freeze or can excess garden produce
- Go to ISU Extension for information on preserving garden produce
- Contact your extension office to join the Master Gardener training program
- Pick up and destroy windfall apples to reduce overwintering insects
- Sow grass seed (late)



These items are from the 2011 ISU Extension Garden Calendar.

Harvesting and Storing Potatoes

When should I harvest my potatoes?

Potatoes can be harvested when the tubers are small and immature (“new” potatoes) or when the crop is fully mature. “New” potatoes are dug when the plants are still green and the tubers are greater than 1 inch in diameter. New potatoes should be used immediately, as they do not store well. Potatoes grown for storage should be harvested after the vines have died and the crop is mature. To check crop maturity, dig up one or two hills after the plants have died. If the skins on the tubers are thin and rub off easily, the crop is not fully mature. Allow the crop to mature for several more days before harvesting the potatoes. When harvesting potatoes, avoid bruising, skinning or cutting the tubers. Damaged potatoes should be used as soon as possible.

Why are some of my potato tubers green?

Potato tubers actually are enlarged underground stems. When potato tubers are exposed to light (either in the garden or storage), their skin turns green due to the formation of chlorophyll. The chlorophyll itself is not a problem. However, higher levels of glycoalkaloids also develop in the green tissue. Green tubers have a bitter taste and can cause nausea, headaches and other health problems if eaten in large quantities. Tubers with small green areas can be safely eaten if the green portions are cut off and discarded. It would be best to discard potatoes that are largely green.

When growing potatoes in the garden, hill soil around the base of the potato plants to prevent the tubers from being exposed to light. After harvesting, store potatoes in a dark location.

How should I store my potatoes?

After harvesting the potatoes, cure the tubers at a temperature of 50 to 60 F and high relative humidity (85 to 90 percent) for two weeks. The curing period allows minor cuts and bruises to heal. Thickening of the skin also occurs during the curing process. Once cured, store potatoes at a temperature of 40 F and relative humidity of 90 to 95 percent. Store the crop in a dark location, as potatoes turn green when exposed to light. If storage temperatures

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wintering plant, but some may spin a thread of silk and “balloon” on spring breezes to infest nearby plants.

Usually, broadleaved plants suffer little lasting damage but the evergreens may be severely crippled, and can die in two to five years if the infestation repeats.

If you have valuable ornamental evergreens with bagworm bags present, there are two things that can be done:

1. Cut the bags from the tree (scissors work well) before the larvae hatch (by early May next year). But to have success, you need to be thorough; getting them all. Carry the removed bags away for disposal, or,
2. Apply an insecticide to treat newly emerged larvae in early June next year. If live bagworms are present two weeks later, a repeat treatment can be applied. Applications made too late (when the larva are too large and often no longer outside the bag) are of little value.

Remember that larvae must be present and actively feeding to be controlled by the insecticide. Effective products for homeowner use include Bt products like Dipel® (if available), carbaryl (Sevin® and others), malathion, permethrin (Ortho Max®, Eight®, Spectracide Bug Stop®, et al.), Conserve® and others. These insecticides may kill beneficial insects so use them with care and follow the label instructions.

This article was modified from an article prepared by Rich Pope, Harrison County Program Director. The original article appeared in Horticulture and Home Pest News. More HHPN articles about this topic and many others of interest to gardeners can be found at <http://www.ipm.iastate.edu/ipm/hortnews/>

Top Ten Ways to Kill a Tree

1. Plant a tree that will be too big for the space when mature. *Remember to consider the mature size and look up, down and side to side before planting at a site.*
2. Improperly plant the tree. *Follow a tree planting guide especially for depth and diameter, remembering to remove all container/ball/burlap materials.*
3. Over or Under mulch the tree. *The goal is 3-4 inches of mulch; which does not touch the tree trunk and extends to the dripline.*
4. Leave the staking materials on tree after one year. *Only stake if needed, and promptly remove materials.*
5. Injure the tree with mowing equipment. *Correct mulch use will greatly reduce this possibility.*
6. Over prune, improperly prune or fail to prune a tree. *Utilize proper methods (including timing) of pruning and wound care.*
7. Disturb large roots close to the tree trunk. *Ninety percent of tree roots are in the top 12-18 inches of soil and often extend several times the height of the tree.*
8. Change the tree's soil environment by changing grade, or compacting.
9. Over or under-watering. *Trees need 1 inch of rain fall per week, do not apply more and water trees when there is no rain.*
10. Fertilize with a fast release fertilizer the first year. *Only apply slow release fertilizer; best practice is to perform a soil test and apply needed fertilizer before planting the tree.*

What can you do with excess fresh produce?

Here are ideas for what you can do with this August's inevitable bumper crop of zucchini — besides ditch them on your neighbors' doorsteps at midnight.

- Preserve the bounty to share with others (as gifts, care packages, etc)

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- Donate to the Ecumenical cupboard or specific church food pantries (learn their acceptance procedure first!).
- Donate to one of the numerous nonprofit organizations and/or senior housing complexes that serve prepared meals, which often contain canned or processed food (again, visit with the dietary staff at specific locations to learn their acceptance procedure first!).
- Donate to fellow gardeners whose gardens may have flooded or just not produced as well as intended.
- Donate to interested non-gardeners who may pursue gardening as a hobby. (They also maybe interested in learning how to preserve the bounty as well!)

Preserve the TASTE of Summer is a comprehensive food preservation program that includes both online lessons and hands-on workshops. It is a great opportunity for anyone age 18 years or older who is interested in learning how to safely preserve foods. For more information contact local ISU Extension offices or www.ucs.iastate.edu/mnet/preservation/home.html

Please note: the Food preservation publications have been revised. The reference numbers are still the same. You may visit www.extension.iastate.edu/store to download the publications or obtain a copy at our office. The publications are:

PM 638	Canning and Freezing Tomatoes
PM 1043	Canning Fruits
PM 1044	Canning Vegetables
PM 1045	Freezing Fruits and Vegetables
PM 1366	Making Fruit Spreads
PM 1368	Making Pickles and Pickle Products

