



Webster County Acreage Living

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Vegetables & Flowers Suitable for Early Planting



Content provided by Horticulture & Home Pest News, March, 2003 Issue.

- ◆ **Radishes** – Spring radishes are a cool season crop. They can be planted as soon as the ground can be worked in late March or early April. Most cultivars mature in 20 to 30 days. For a continuous harvest, sow seeds every 7 to 10 days until late spring.
- ◆ **Broccoli, Cauliflower, and Cabbage** – These are cool season vegetables, which grow best in temperatures between 60 and 70°F. In central Iowa, plant in mid-April.
- ◆ **Lettuce, Spinach, Collards, and Kale** – Quality of these plants are reduced with the onset of hot weather due to seed heads and bitter taste.
- ◆ **Onions** – Plant onion seeds, sets, and plants as soon as the ground can be worked in spring (late March or early April in central Iowa). Long-day varieties are the best choice for Iowa gardeners.
- ◆ **Peas** – Garden, snow, and snap peas should be planted as soon as the ground can be worked in spring. The crop should be mature in approximately 60 to 70 days.
- ◆ **Carrots** – Carrots can be sown from early spring to early August. For an early crop, sow seeds in early to mid-April.
- ◆ **Potatoes** – Plant certified disease-free potatoes as soon as the ground can be worked in spring. Large potato tubers should be cut into pieces, each containing 1 or 2 growing points or “eyes”. Small potatoes may be planted whole.
- ◆ **Beets and Swiss Chard** – These are other vegetables to plant early through August 1st.
- ◆ **Pansies** – Will withstand late seasons frosts. Prefer cool weather and tend to decline with the onset of warmer weather.
- ◆ **Roses** – If necessary, transplant roses as soon as the ground can be worked in late March or Early April. Bare-root roses should be planted immediately after purchase. If planting must be delayed, place the bare-root roses in a cool location, such as the garage or refrigerator, until they can be planted.



Spring Spruce-Up

Information provided by Doug Stokke, Forest Products Extension Specialist

As temperatures warm and the spring rains come, dirt and mildew on your house and outbuildings can become a real nuisance. Fortunately, cleaning is relatively easy, and a real must if your plans include painting. Paint simply doesn't stick very well to dirt, grease, mold, or mildew.

There are quite a number of commercial siding-cleaning products on the market, however for the cost-conscious, a simple home-brew solution will neatly do the trick for only pennies: mix 1/3 cup household detergent (liquid dishwashing soap will

do fine), 1-2 quarts of 5% sodium hypochlorite (better known as liquid household bleach), and 2-3 quarts of warm water. CAUTION: Never mix bleach with any cleaner or detergent that contains ammonia, as deadly toxic gasses will be generated.

Scrub the surface to be cleaned with a bristle brush or sponge, and then rinse with clean water. If you plan to paint let the surface dry thoroughly before you proceed.



Benefits of Spaying and Neutering Pets

Information provided by Eric R. Burrough, DVM Animal Health Technology, Kirkwood Community College

The value of spaying and neutering animals goes far beyond reducing pet overpopulation to significant health benefits for the pet.

In the female, hormones produced by the ovaries have been shown to precipitate breast cancer in older intact animals. However, spaying a female before their first heat cycle reduces this risk to less than one percent. Females that cycle and are not bred are also at increased risk of uterine infection, uterine cancer, and ovarian cancer.

In the male, testosterone produced by the testicles may cause prostatic hypertrophy, a condition where the prostate swells, resulting in constipation and difficult urination.

There are also significant behavioral advantages for sterilized pets. The absence of sex hormones reduces aggression and the need to roam in search of a mate. Intact animals often become confused and display sexual activity to inanimate objects causing stress to the animal.

A veterinarian is always the most valuable source of information about your pet.

The American Veterinary Medical Association is online at <http://www.avma.org>. The Web site provides information and other pet health concerns.



Spring Allergy Tips

Information provided by the www.weather.com Web-site.

As many allergy sufferers can attest, there is no one "season" for allergies. Different people will be affected by different allergens in the spring, summer or fall. And some allergy-sufferers have perennial (year-round) symptoms.

With seasonal allergies, your symptoms are usually worse during the warmer months of the year. Seasonal allergies are likely to be triggered by pollens from weeds, grasses, and trees and/or mold spores. Perennial allergies are not influenced by seasonality and are usually triggered by indoor allergens -- such as dust mites, mold, house dust, and your pet's dander, saliva and urine.

Each spring, summer, and fall, tiny particles are released from trees, weeds, and grasses. These particles, also known as pollen, hitch rides on currents of air. Although their mission is to fertilize parts of other plants, many never reach their targets. Instead, they enter human noses and throats, triggering a type of seasonal allergic rhinitis called pollen allergy, which many people know as hay fever or rose fever (depending on the season in which the symptoms occur). Of all

the things that can cause an allergy, pollen is one of the most widespread. Short of staying indoors when the pollen count is high--and even that may not help--there is no easy way to evade windborne pollen.

People with allergy symptoms, such as the runny nose of allergic rhinitis, may at first suspect they have a cold--but the "cold" lingers on. It is important to see a doctor about any respiratory illness that lasts longer than a week or two. When it appears that the symptoms are caused by an allergy, the patient should see a physician who understands the diagnosis and treatment of allergies.

The first solution to consider is to avoid the allergen that is bothering you. Even if you could stay indoors all the time, however, it would still be difficult to avoid every airborne allergen. Fortunately, symptoms often can be controlled with medications. Effective medications that can be prescribed by a physician include antihistamines and topical nasal steroids--either of which can be used alone or in combination. Many effective antihistamines and decongestants also are available without a prescription.



FALL 2004 MID-IOWA MASTER GARDENER PROGRAM



Master Gardeners are trained volunteers who share a love of gardening, an enthusiasm for learning, and a commitment to helping others.

Since 1977 more than 7,000 Iowans have received Master Gardener training from Iowa State University Extension. The 40-hour program provides research-based information about lawn care, ornamental trees and shrubs, insects, plant diseases, soils, plant nutrition, vegetables, fruits, house plants, garden design, annuals, and perennials.

Training sessions will be offered this year from Mid-September through October. The classes will be held at sites within Webster, Humboldt, Hamilton and Wright Counties.

You can become a Master Gardener if you are interested in learning about plants and gardening, attend the training program, provide forty hours of volunteer service, and are willing to help others.

Pre-registration is required. (Cost will be approx. \$110 – includes reference materials and instruction.)

Specific dates, locations, costs and schedule of topics will be available by August 10, 2004.

For more information, please contact the Webster County Extension Office at 515-576-2119 or e-mail Jim Patton at jlpatt@iastate.edu.



You Know You're a Master Gardener If....



Information provided by the Master Gardener Update Newsletter

You know you're a Master Gardener if.....

- ⊗ You grab other people's banana peels, coffee grinds, apple cores, etc. for your compost pile.
- ⊗ All your neighbors come and ask you questions.
- ⊗ You know the temperature of your compost every day.
- ⊗ You spend more time volunteering than at home.
- ⊗ You buy a bigger truck so that you can haul more mulch.
- ⊗ You've given up trying to get the dirt out from underneath your fingernails.
- ⊗ You're boss makes "taking care of the office plants" an official part of your job description.
- ⊗ Everything you touch turns to "fertilizer".
- ⊗ You plan vacation trips around the locations of botanical gardens, arboretums, historic gardens, etc.
- ⊗ You sneak home a 7 foot Japanese Maple and wonder if your spouse will notice.
- ⊗ When considering your budget, plants are more important than groceries.
- ⊗ You appreciate your Master Gardener badge more than your jewelry.
- ⊗ When you talk "dirt" at baseball practice.
- ⊗ You spend more time chopping your kitchen greens for the compost pile than for cooking.
- ⊗ You like the smell of horse manure better than Estee Lauder.

Cooking the Perfect Steak

Information provided by Paulelda Gilbert, ISU Extension Nutrition & Health Field Specialist

May is beef month, therefore, a perfect time to be preparing a steak. It's easy to cook up a great-tasting steak at home when you follow these helpful hints:

- Pat beef steaks dry with paper towels for better browning.
- Leave a thin layer of fat on steaks during cooking to preserve juiciness. Trim fat after cooking. Most steaks purchased in supermarkets have a fat trim of 1/8 inch or less.
- Turn steaks with tongs. Do not use a fork, which pierces the beef and allows flavorful juices to escape.
- USDA recommends cooking steaks to an internal temperature of at least 145°F for medium rare. Medium is cooked to 160°F and well done is 170°F.
- For steaks thicker than 1-1/4 inches, remove from heat when the internal temperature is 5°F less than the desired temperature. Enjoy!

How Much to Buy		
	Beef Cut	Servings/Pound (3 ounces cooked trimmed)
STEAKS	Chuck Shoulder	3 1/2
	Chuck Top Blade	3
	Flank	4
	Porterhouse/T-Bone	2 1/2, 3
	Rib, Ribeye	2 1/2, 3
	Tenderloin, Top Loin, boneless	3 1/2, 4
	Top Sirloin, boneless	3 1/2, 4
	Top Round, Round Tip	3 1/2, 4
ROASTS	Ribeye	3 to 3 1/2
	Rib	2 1/2
	Eye Round, Round Tip, Tri-Tip	3 1/2 to 4
POT ROASTS	Arm, Blade, Shoulder, boneless	2 1/2 to 3
	Brisket	2 1/2 to 3
OTHER CUTS	Beef for Stew	2 1/2 to 3
	Ground Beef	4
	Short Ribs	1 1/2 to 2 1/2

Chart provided the Texas Beef Organization

Beef & Broccoli Slaw Wraps

- 1 pound 80% lean ground beef
- 1/4 cup finely chopped onion
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1/4 teaspoon pepper
- 3 cups packaged broccoli or cabbage slaw mix
- 1/4 cup hoisin sauce
- 4 burrito-size (10-inch diameter) flour tortillas, warmed.
- In large non-stick skillet, brown ground beef and onion over medium heat 8 to 10 minutes or until beef is no longer pink, breaking beef up into crumbles. Pour off drippings; season with salt and pepper.
- Stir in slaw mix and 1/4 cup hoisin sauce; heat through.
- Spread 1/4 of beef mixture (1 cup) evenly over each tortilla, leaving 1-1/2 inch border on all sides. Fold right and left edges of tortilla over filling/ fold bottom edge up over filling, then roll up, jelly-roll fashion. If desired, cut in half and serve with additional hoisin sauce.

Recipe taken from the Iowa Beef Industry Council.

Beef Industry Trivia (answers bottom of page)

1. How many basketballs can be made from one cowhide?
2. What nutrient does beef provide that helps build strong blood?
3. What was the first breed of cattle brought to the U.S.?
4. How many breeds of cattle are in the U.S.?
5. What is the theme for beef advertising?
6. What breed of cattle originated in Iowa, near St. Mary's?

Answers: (1) 11; (2) iron; (3) longhorns; (4) 70 different breeds that are registered; (5) Beef. It's What's For Dinner; (6) Polled Hereford



Morels

Information taken from the *Mushrooms & Other Related Fungi* publication.

The morel, or sponge mushrooms, are the first edible field fungi to appear in the spring, generally from mid-April to mid-May in the north central U.S. depending on rainfall and warmer temperatures. They are found in open wooded areas, on the edges of more dense woods, in old orchards, and occasionally in lawns or pastures.

The several species of morels are all excellent eating—except for people who are allergic to them. Morels vary from 2 to 8 inches in height with a tan, light brown to gray, pitted, sponge-like hollow cap on a hollow stalk.

Morels may occur singly or in groups, similar enough in color to the over-wintered leaves to make searching for them a challenge for even the experienced “hunter”.

To learn: about the structure and development cycle of mushrooms; how to identify mushroom species using color photographs and detailed descriptions; which mushroom species are edible and which are not; and about other common groups of fleshy fungi, stop in the Webster County Extension Office and pick a copy of the *“Mushrooms and Other Related Fungi”* publication for just a \$1.50.



The Boxelder Bug Invasion

Information provided by Donald Lewis, ISU Extension Entomologist

The boxelder bug (BEB) is a common and well-know insect in Iowa that is most abundant after summers when the month of May is very warm and July is very dry. However, the abundance varies greatly from place to place as well as from year to year. There are some BEB problems even in years when a widespread outbreak does not occur.

During the summer months, BEBs live, feed and reproduce on trees, shrubs and other plants. They feed on sap from their host plants but do not cause significant damage. BEBs become nuisance pests when they leave the plants to find hiding places for the winter. They congregate in the sunshine on the south sides of buildings, trees and rocks. From there they stray into houses through cracks in the foundation and siding, gaps along windows and doors, and other small openings. BEBs within walls or attics remain inactive while they are cold. The nuisance occurs when the ones warmed by heat from the furnace or the sun become active during the winter and crawl into the rooms.

BEBs do not reproduce indoors. BEBs do not feed indoors. BEBs are harmless as they can not damage the house, its furnishings or occupants. They can be, however, a considerable nuisance.

There is no easy way to determine when and where there will be a problem until it starts. By then it may be too late for effective treatment. Bugs could be controlled on the trees in mid summer with insecticides such as diazinon, Orthene and Sevin, but the effectiveness is limited.

The best deterrence against BEBs is to prevent entry by caulking and sealing possible entry sites. Secondly, spraying to reduce the number outdoors may limit the number that will get into the house. A lawn and garden insecticide (such as Sevin, diazinon or Dursban) or soapy water spray (5 tablespoons of liquid detergent per gallon of water) can be used outside on masses of bugs perched on and along the foundation in the fall. Repeated applications are usually necessary especially when using a soapy water spray.

Unfortunately, there is no easy cure for eliminating BEBs already inside the house. They are generally not killed by the aerosol household insecticide products, and most residual insecticides (ant and cockroach dusts or sprays) are not of much benefit. A sure control for bugs already in the house is to remove them as they appear by vacuuming, sweeping or picking them up and discarding.



Samples May Tell the Story

Information provided by Jim Patton, Webster CEED and Audra Fisher, Office Manager.

Depending on the month, the Webster County Extension Office receives inquiries on identification of plants, weeds, trees, and various insects, along with the diseases that plague them. Some can be identified quickly in the office, while others such as insects are scanned and e-mailed to ISU to be identified, which usually only takes a day to get the results. Also, Jim Patton, Webster County Extension Education Director has been known to visit the location for more information.

It is important that when you bring in a sample that you give us as much information as possible. (Examples: general location, number found, damage symptoms, affected parts, are other species affected, how quickly has the problem progressed, when was it noticed and any history.) This helps speed up the identification process.

We also provide soil sample bags and corn and soybean testing bags for you to stop in and pick up. They come with a set of instructions to follow and where to send when finished, along with a minimal fee. Water testing kits are available at a cost of \$12 each. (The \$12 covers the testing of the total coliform and nitrate only.)

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Psssst!!!



Wanted: Bugs - Dead or Alive

Information provided by Audra Fisher, Office Manager.

The Webster County Extension office is in the process of developing a collection of insects. We welcome unusual and common insects in good condition (*preferably dead*).

Our goal is to collect a wide a variety of insects for an informational display that could be taken to schools or various programs.

So far, our insect zoo consists of the following:

- Dung Beetle
- Male Stag Beetle
- June Bugs
- Adult Longhorned Beetle
- Grape Pelidnota
- Numerous Japanese Lady Beetles

