

THE GARDENER'S DIRT

The Latest Scoop from the Scott County Master Gardeners

September 2009

MASTER GARDENER FAMILY PICNIC & BONFIRE

Sunday October 4th - 4:00 p.m.



Freeman Tree Farm & Nursery
20599 Utica Ridge Rd
Davenport, IA

Families are Welcome to Attend

Bring a dish to pass and your lawn chairs

Fried Chicken and drinks will be provided

**Please RSVP by September 25th at the Extension Office 359-7577
For any questions contact Rhonda Cooper 370-2402**

In the event of rain the picnic will be held
at the Extension Office.



Social Committee Meeting

October 19th @ 6:30 p.m.
Morrill Room at the Extension Office

Come help us plan the Holiday Party!!

Our Mission

To provide home horticulture information and education to the citizens of Scott County consistent with Iowa State University recommendations. We also strive to increase members' knowledge of horticulture through educational programs.

4-H Fair Judging Committee

Submitted by Dean Stotz—4-H Fair Judging Chair

A meeting was held July 27, 2009, by the 4-H superintendents to explain what duties the Master Gardeners were to perform to assist at the 4-H Judging. The Master Gardeners signed up for the various duties.

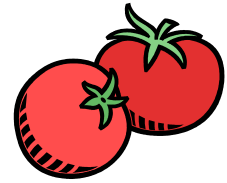


The 4-H Judging was August 2, 2009, at Keppy Hall on the Mississippi Valley Fairgrounds. The Master Gardeners assisted the 4-H superintendents and 4-H exhibitors displaying vegetables and flowers for judging. There were 42 exhibitors versus 28 exhibitors last year.

This was the second year for the one-on-one (judge and 4-H exhibitor) judging.

The superintendents expressed appreciation and complimented the Master Gardeners for their effort and support.

Thank you very much to the Master Gardeners for their support and hope to see you next year. Thanks to Vito Fiore for developing the computer program (on his time before Sunday) to record the exhibitor, vegetables, flowers and color ribbons received



The following Master Gardeners helped:

Joleen Bakken	Eve Corbin	Jan Ehrlich	Vito Fiore
Cecil Fuhlman	Lisa Fuhlman	Joan Gentzkow	Bobbi Goodin
Nancy Gruber	Joan Haberkamp	Wendi Laake	Beth Lotspeich
Barbara Madden	Jan Martin	Susan Reinders	Lisa Schluensen
Sylvia Seymour	Diane Soltau	Cynthia Stolley	Dean Stotz
Karen Stotz	Beverly Thies	Jill Vogt	Joan Waggoner

P.S. Thanks to Barbara Madden for spending her birthday working with her fellow Master Gardeners.

Congratulations!

Arnold Olson is the winner of July's Hort Clinic incentive prize. Arnold volunteered over 20 hours in the Hort clinic for July. (5 certified MG's had over 9 hours. Arnold's name was drawn from all who qualified.) Thanks to all!

Arnold's prize was a container of Nature's Touch Organic Fertilizer.

Congratulations Arnold!

Meet Your Advisory Board Member: Kathy Hoepfer



Fellow Gardeners,

My name is Katherine J. Hoepfer, Master Gardener class of 2007. When I was five years old a neighbor gave me a packet of *Tagetes erecta* (Marigold) seeds. I was hooked. What wondrous beauty came from that paper packet of elongated seeds with their little cream colored tips. That gift gave a five year old child patience and a sense of wonder for the earth. I was never happier my whole young life than when I had my hands deep within the soil. My grandmother always had a garden, there were grapes and apple trees and poppies – I remember the poppies.

Orange tissue papery flowers giving way to huge seed pods and if you turned the seed pod upside down the tiniest round seeds came spilling out the little hole.

My husband, Dan (class of 2007 also) and I purchased property east of Blue Grass 27 years ago. We have worked together to landscape and develop the property. Vegetable gardens were a must with the children and many foster children we raised through the years. The vegetable gardens gave me pleasure because I am a gatherer at heart. Being able to store the excess was a delight to me. Cucumber pickles, pickled beets, frozen berries, grape juice the list could go on forever.

My career path wound its way into the Financial Institution Industry where I have been very happy for over 30 years. I have earned the Certified Credit Union Executive designation as well as have served on several boards including the Illinois Credit Union Foundation Board of Directors.

Reading as well as sewing, bike riding, camping, hunting, dog training and of course gardening are a few of my hobbies.

Our family consists of two sons, a daughter-in law, seven grandchildren, 4 dogs and various other family members. You could say my grandchildren take up most of my time right now. They are all in the Quad City area at this time and we are very blessed.

In 2007 I became a Master Gardener and achieved one of my life goals. I serve on the Scott County Extension Master Gardener Advisory Board and am the current Fundraising Committee Chair.

These words of Julie Morr Messervy, Landscape Designer and author express my true thoughts:

“Of all the wonderful things in the wonderful universe of God, nothing seems to me more surprising than the planting of a seed in the blank earth and the result thereof.”

**News articles are needed for the Gardener’s Dirt
Please have articles to the Extension Office by September 15th**





HORT CLINIC NEWS

Submitted by Bob Krush

- **CLIENTS:** During July 2009, the hort clinic assisted 260 clients. MGs handled 171 of the 260 clients (66 %). For April through July combined, MGs assisted 591 out of 944 total clients (63%). Insect (thanks to the JB's), vegetable, and tree questions were the most popular in July.
- **STAFFING:** Between July 16th and August 15th, MGs staffed the hort clinic on 32 of 44 available sessions or 73%. The MG staffing rate in the hort clinic for the year so far is as follows:
 - April 1-15 = 21/22 = 95.5%
 - April 16-May 15 = 42/44 = 95.5%
 - May 16- June 15 = 27/40 = 67.5%
 - June 16-July 15 = 38/42 = 90 %
 - July 16-August 15 = 32/44 = 73%
 - Overall = 160/192 = 83%
- **FIRST-YEAR MGs:** Between July 16th and August 15th, first-year MGs Lois Fradel, Joyce Lee, and Cheri Slavens completed their required hort clinic service hours. Congrats!! Fourteen of the 17 first-year MGs have now completed their hort clinic requirement. Special thanks go to Kate Gordon, Brian Thomas, and Bill Wyatt for volunteering extra sessions in the hort clinic during this time.
- **VETERAN MGs:** Many thanks to the following “veteran” active MGs who volunteered in the hort clinic between July 16th and August 15th:

Bill Brunkan	Bob Cohee	Sharon Helm	Dan Hoeper	Bob Krush
Arnold Olson	David Sunleaf	Kelly Taylor	Jill Vogt	

So far this year, the veteran MG participation rate in the hort clinic is approximately 15%, i.e. 21 out of 135 veteran MGs have volunteered. Arnold Olson currently has a slight lead over David Sunleaf and Bob Krush in the race for a new car, given at the end of the MG hort clinic season to the person with the most hours volunteered in the hort clinic.

- **LOCUST OR CICADA.** We had some visitors over the other day when one of them announced in horror, “Your dog Ruby is eating a locust !!”. I said it was probably a cicada, which didn’t diminish the horror of the visitor, but led me to the following information from ISU Extension Horticulture and Home Pest News.

What is a "Locust?" (submitted by Bob Krush)

By Donald Lewis, Department of Entomology

It's the second half of summer and the cicadas are a-buzzing in the trees in the late afternoon. When I pointed this out to the neighbor, he said, "Oh. You mean the locusts?" "Well, yes and no." I replied. It's complicated.

The name "locust" is used for two entirely different insects, which unfortunately creates confusion for the general public. The "locusts" that are mentioned in religious texts and in African plagues are a type of migratory grasshopper that builds huge and devastating, crop-eating populations. This is not the same as the prairie, meadow and common grasshoppers found in Iowa crops, gardens and roadsides.

In the eastern USA the nickname "locust" is applied to the annual cicadas. The common annual cicada in Iowa is the species known as the scissor-grinder, *Tibicen auletes*. I'm sure you recognize it by the song of the males if not the appearance, though this is the one that commonly leaves an empty shell on tree trunks and fence posts in the yard. Click [here](#) to play a recording of the annual cicada. Click on "scissor-grinder cicada" link inside the green box titled "Songs of Insects Jukebox" near the bottom of the page.

Annual cicadas are very common and widespread in trees in urban and rural environments. They are harmless and do not feed on garden crops, corn, soybeans or forages.



Oh, and Ruby the dog is fine although it was suggested that maybe I feed her a bit more dog food.



Yard Clippings

Submitted by Christine Rice



Never go to a doctor whose office plants have died. – Erma Bombeck, page 68.

Every garden is a chore sometimes, but no real garden is nothing but a chore.
–Nancy Grasby, page 3.

Many things grow in the garden that were never sowed there. –Thomas Fuller, page 15.

Laws of Gardening:

1. Other people's tools work only in other people's gardens.
2. Fancy gismos don't work.
3. If nobody use it, there's a reason.
4. You get the most of that you need the least.
–Arthur Bloch, page 242.

A garden is the one spot on earth where history does not assert itself. –Sir Edmund Gosse, page 2.

The garden that is finished is dead. –H.E. Bates, (1905-1974), page 92.

A Gardener's Bouquet of Quotations, Editor Maria Polushkin Robbins. New Jersey: The Ecco Press. 1993. Pages 2, 3, 15, 68, 92, 242.

In gardening I have one gift
You won't find in manuals:
I know it's strange,
But I can change
Perennials into annuals.
–Anonymous, page 55.

When I go into my garden with a spade, and dig a bed, I feel such an exhilaration and health, that I discover that I have been defrauding myself all this time by letting others do it for me what I should have done with my own hands. –Ralph Waldo Emerson, speech, "Man the Reformer," 25 January 1841 page 2

I do hold it, in the royal ordering of gardens, there ought to be gardens for all the months in the year, in which severally things of beauty may be then in season.
–Francis Bacon, "Of Gardens," 1625 page 3

The secret of good gardening: choose always the best of any variety you want to grow. –Vita Sackville-West, Garden Book, 1968 page 15

A Gardener's Nosegay. Editor Jude Patterson. New York: Barnes and Noble. 2003. Pages 2, 3, 15, 55.

Thoughts From The Belly

By: Dan Mays – Ironbelly1@aol.com

As many of you already know, I hold a particular fascination with garden design. While I have learned much from reading, viewing, listening and attending the traditional founts of this discipline, undoubtedly my best resource has been garden visitors.

I make no secret of my belief that gardens are to be shared. I see gardens as a blessing bestowed upon a few of us fortunate ones; which in turn requires the tithe of sharing. It tickles me to have as many garden visitors as I do. Young or old, experienced or clueless, each seems to zero-in on divergent aspects that capture their attention. The common thread, however, is simple delight. Be it a toddler's fascination with a praying mantis or a garden mensch discerning the axial placement of focal points, all typically make comments that I can learn from.

I experiment a lot in my gardens. I have always pushed the boundaries – often because the standard advice seemed to be lacking. As long as I am not brewing up an obvious, pending catastrophe; I willingly accept some measure of failure as the price of progress.

One of those recent, ongoing experiments has to do with planting some very tall (8-10 feet) native plants in a small bed along one side of my patio. In this case, the two tall species selected for experimentation were Compass Plant (*Silphium laciniatum*) and Prairie Dock (*Silphium terebinthinaceum*). I selected these two species because of their unique and sizable foliage. Both plants have basal leaves that easily exceed 12 inches. Compass Plant leaves look like a Pin Oak on steroids. Prairie Dock leaves are the size and shape of a garden shovel. Each sends up a flower stalk 8 feet or more tall. Each stalk bears a number of 2 to 3 inch yellow flowers which dance in the sunlight at the slightest suggestion of a breeze. In addition, flocks of Gold Finch feast on the seeds.

As part of good design, I feel that quality gardens should maintain a continuous progression of blooms and interest throughout the year. I have worked hard at accomplishing this feat but, alas, it seemed that few visitors ever took notice. I always cringe when someone rebuts a garden invitation with, "*I have already seen that garden.*" Yes, they may have visited but I know full-well that they have only seen but a brief snapshot of a moment in time. This year, something has changed. On several occasions, a number of different garden guests have actually told me, "*I'll bet your garden constantly changes throughout the year; doesn't it?*" Why ... yes, it does!

Now the question is: Why did they only start noticing a progression now? Hmmmm ...

I think the answer has something to do with my Silphiums. I suspect that looking skyward at the large, marble-sized flower buds on those tall stalks drove home the point of things yet to come. The contrast of having a profusion of blooms at your feet and the anticipation of flower buds dancing above your head is too great to ignore. In addition, I also allow dry seed heads on plants, such as Pale Purple Coneflower (*Echinacea pallida*), to remain as bird food. This three-part contrast apparently helps convey a subliminal garden message of before, during and after.

Curiously, the original intent of my garden experiment was to feature the foliage. However, garden guests only seem to notice the knee-level foliage when I bring their eyes back down to that level and point it out. This is a totally unexpected result – but one worth noting.

In reflection, the truth is that I probably did a lousy job of displaying the foliage. However, in my failure, I have gleaned a pearl of design wisdom. Many "experts" try to reduce landscape design to placement of garden elements on graph paper in the books they write. While this methodology can pay dividends, I never lose sight of the fact that plants are the reason we garden. While good design may enhance the viewing experience, it is the plants that people come to see. I pay particular attention to plants that trigger emotional responses in people. You rarely read about this in design books. I think many seemingly minor aspects of design are too often mistakenly overlooked. Sadly, they almost never find their way into print either. These are the things that I learn by listening and observing. Emotional response to garden plants is an IMPORTANT part of design.

Surprisingly, a number of garden guests have also unexpectedly told me that they were now going to plant either Compass Plants or Prairie Dock in their gardens next year. While standing in stunned silence, I didn't have the heart to tell them that it took 3 years for my Silphiums to start blooming.



WHAT'S HOT IN SCOTT!!

The latest "hot calls" and what to look for from ISU Scott County Extension.

A common question regarding Japanese beetle is:

Can I reduce next year's Japanese beetle population by applying an insecticide to my lawn?

Adult Japanese beetles feed on the flowers, foliage and fruits of more than 300 different kinds of plants. Adults lay eggs in July and August in grassy areas. These eggs hatch into white grubs that feed on plant roots and organic matter in the soil. The grubs remain in the soil until the following June when they transform to new adults and emerge from the soil to start the cycle over.

Female Japanese beetles lay their eggs in grassy areas over a large area (not just your lawn). Treating your lawn with an insecticide will not reduce the Japanese beetle population next year as adults will emerge from numerous places surrounding your property.



The Gardener's Dirt

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Bettendorf, IA 52722-1690
(563) 359-7577 Fax (563) 355-6569
www.extension.iastate.edu/scott

Did You Know????

Submitted by Ann DeSalvo

- You know you're a gardener when:
You can give away plants easily, but compost is another thing.
You'd rather go to a nursery to shop than a clothes store.
You look for gardens open to the public whenever you go on vacation.
And
You are surrounded by terrific people who share your passion.
(Taken from the Hosta Club newsletter)
- Check out this book—Wicked Plants: The Weed That Killed Lincoln's Mother and Other Botanical Atrocities by Amy Stewart. The author takes on over 200 of Mother Nature's creations. Some are lurking in your own back yard.
- The QC Herb Club will have an educational table at VanderVeer Botanical Park's Fall Festival, September 12th. They will feature Herbal Teas and other beverages made with herbs.
- Put the *Gourd Fest* at Roxie and Dallas DeShane's farm on your calendar, Saturday, September 26th. The address is 3316N 1600 Ave. (2 miles north of Orion, IL.) It is from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. There are demonstrations on drying, painting, etc. Also a few vendors and last year a good lunch was available. It is free and food can be purchased.

