

# THE GARDENER'S DIRT

*The Latest Scoop from the Scott County Master Gardeners*

May 2010

The Scott County Extension Master Gardeners' "*Get Growing*" annual plant sale is fast approaching. To all the volunteers, thank you in advance for making this a successful fund raising event! And for the shoppers, bring along your check book and be ready to stock your flower beds on Saturday, May 8th from 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. at the ISU Scott County Extension Office, 875 Tanglefoot Lane, Bettendorf, Iowa. Choose from a wide variety of exceptional perennials grown and donated by fellow Scott County Master Gardeners.

Other activities will be on-going during the day, check out the gardening demos:

- 10:00 a.m. - Whimsical Trough Gardens
- 11:00 a.m. - Activities for Kids: plant seeds in newspaper pot and learn about butterflies
- 12:00 Noon - Plant Propagation-Cuttings & Divisions
- All Day - Gardening Question & Answer booth

It will be a fun day!

For those MG's who are donating plants, drop off dates are:

Saturday, May 1 - 9:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m.

Wednesday, May 5 - 12:00-6:00 p.m.

Thursday, May 6 - 12:00-6:00 p.m.

Friday, May 7 - 12:00-6:00 p.m.

If you need more information on how to prepare plants for the sale, please refer to the tips that were included in the April's DIRT newsletter. If there are any MGs out there who haven't signed up to help in some capacity and have the time, please contact Kathy Hoepfer at [kjhoepfer@msn.com](mailto:kjhoepfer@msn.com). What are you waiting for? *Get growing!*



The following have items to be picked up in the MG office.

Hal Davis

Kevin McMahan

Naomi Haertjens

Brian Thomas

Sue Horan

Bill Wyatt

Pam Looney

#### 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.*

## City of Bettendorf Public Works Day (Recycle)

*Submitted by Ed Sharkness, Committee Chair*

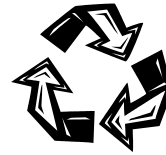
We support the City of Bettendorf Public Works Day (Recycle.) We educate the public regarding composting and answer questions with the portable horticulture clinic. This is a one day program.

Our next action day is Saturday, May 22, 2010. The location is inside the Bettendorf Public Works Building, located at 4403 Devils Glen Road. The building is set back one block behind the Post Office. The work shifts are from 9:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. and from 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. Travel time is additional. The maximum service hours available are the two shifts of two hours each plus travel time. Site preparation is also available.

To sign up, call Scott County Extension at 359-7577.

Activities are:

1. Hand out pamphlets
2. Manage the portable horticulture clinic.
3. Monitor the televised education.
4. Omnibus person.
5. Melody Coffey shall provide a special program for children.



**VOLUNTEER**

- **CORNER**



Marilyn McAllister & Peggy Dykes  
Volunteer Co-Coordiators

Hope you are all enjoying these nice gardening days. I know many if not all of you are out uncovering tender perennials, dividing and transplanting. Don't forget to pot up a few extra for the *Get Growing* Plant Sale on May 8<sup>th</sup>. All details can be found in the April DIRT issue.

Have you all noticed that emails about MG volunteer opportunities have come pouring into our in-boxes within the past few weeks. Thanks Committee Chairs for keeping us notified of meetings and work days. There is no excuse for not participating – the choices are many. If you still haven't signed up for committees or you find one that sounds interesting that you didn't include on the original committee choice form, by all means get involved. Join a work day or planning meeting. Keep connected and don't forget to record your time on the new on-line link. Anyone needing help with any type of volunteer questions, please let us know.

Peggy Dykes & Marilyn McAllister, Co-Volunteer Coordinators.

*One of the most delightful things about a garden is the anticipation it provides. ~W.E. Johns*

## 2010 Tree Planting and Care Committee

*Wayne Hannel – Chair, Tree Planting and Care Committee*

**Thanks to the dedicated volunteers** who assisted the Bettendorf Trees Are Us Committee and the Bettendorf Tree Committee (through Bettendorf Parks and Recreation) pruning approximately 61 trees and mulching approximately 38 trees in Bettendorf parks/streets on March 27, 2010.

Wayne Hannel provided a brief educational session about pruning prior to the hands-on educational activity at Devils Glen Park. After mulching the newly planted trees (fall 2008), the group dispersed to other parks. The activity included the following:

Devils Glen Park:	minimal pruning, 20 trees mulched (trees planted fall 2008)
Devils Glen Road:	23 trees pruned
Leach Park:	14 trees pruned, 11 trees mulched
Edgewood Park:	24 trees pruned, 7 trees mulched

Approximately 16 volunteers (12 Master Gardeners) assisted with the pruning and mulching. In addition to the Master Gardeners, volunteers came with many backgrounds (some dual categories): ISU Community Tree Stewards = 2; Bettendorf Tree Committee = 8; Bettendorf Park Board = 1.

Master Gardeners assisting with the effort included:

Jenny Canier	James Danielson	Wayne Hannel	Sandra Jurgens
Dee Larson	Joyce Lee	Marianne Lemon	Clayton Lloyd
Doug McDonald	Ron Phillips	Diane Soltau	Joe Stewart

→ NOTE: The hands-on activity provided the participants to experience first-hand that Mother Nature's trees do not always look like the classic pictures one sees in the classroom. This required some considerable discussion among the pruning teams about which branch should be pruned as well as how extensive one should prune. There was discussion about the poor pruning practices as well as diseased trees observed on private property adjacent to the public areas. This type of field exercise is a real benefit to enhancing education and perceptiveness of MG's (especially the newer MG's.)

It was a refreshing 38 degrees with a hint of a breeze at pruning time. Nice day.

Thanks again!

→ Remember to turn in your volunteer hours.

### *Upcoming Classes & Events:*

CEU's	Course #	Topic	When	Where	Cost	Instructor	Registration Information
		Master Gardener Advisory Board Meeting	May 6, 2010 6:30 p.m.	ISU Scott County Extension 875 Tanglefoot Ln. Bettendorf, IA			
		Master Gardener Pre-Sale: GET GROWING Plant Sale	May 7, 2010 6:00—8:00 p.m.	ISU Scott County Extension 875 Tanglefoot Ln. Bettendorf, IA			
		GET GROWING Plant Sale	May 8, 2010 9:00 a.m.—2:00 p.m.	ISU Scott County Extension 875 Tanglefoot Ln. Bettendorf, IA			
*		Dwarf Conifers	May 10, 2010	Oelwein & Independence IA	Car pool expenses	Gary Whittenbaugh	319-377-9839 Beginning May 10th
		City of Bettendorf Public Works Day (Recycle)	May 22, 2010 9:00 a.m.—1:00 p.m.	Bettendorf Public Works Bldg 4403 Devils Glen Rd., Bett		Ed Sharkness	To sign up, call Scott County Extension—359-7577
1	-	Not your usual Kitchen Garden	June 5, 2010 9:00—10:00 a.m.	Bickelhaupt Arboretum 340 South 14th St Clinton, IA 52732	TBA	Linda Cornelius Arb Vol & MG	TBA
0	-	Gold Coast Blooms Garden Tour	July 10, 2010	Davenport, IA	TBA	NA	For details 563-326-2894 www.davenportgoldcoast.Com
*	-	All Hort Field Day	July 29, 2010	Horticultural Research Station located 4 miles north of Ames	TBA	Various	TBA
*	To be determined by sessions attended. Submit proof of sessions attended to the ISU Scott County Extension Horticulturist.						

My name is Chuck Doss and I'm a Master Gardener from the Class of 2008. Although I've had only one full year volunteering on committees, in 2009 I thoroughly enjoyed working in the Extension Gardens. I chose to work in the rain garden because the concept of using excess water from the roof of a building to nourish plants with widely varying water needs was fascinating to me. In addition, I've always had a strong interest in native Iowa prairie plants and prairie restoration. I also worked in the Extension's vegetable garden because I know very little about growing vegetables and thought this would be an excellent way to learn from the experts. Currently, I just started my two year term as co-treasurer on the Master Gardener Advisory Board and have signed on to work in the Extension Office's vegetable garden for another summer.

I've always loved the outdoors but my love of gardening developed slowly. My Mother's garden contained the plants familiar to all of us, especially those like me who grew up in the 1950's and 60's—alyssum, marigolds, zinnias, petunias as well as Dutch iris, gladiolus, hens and chicks, primrose and canna lilies. When I became a homeowner myself, I finally started discovering the wide variety of beautiful perennials and shrubs available. Combine the interest in do-it-yourself landscaping with a few trips in the 1980's to the English countryside where cottage gardens fill entire front yards with beautiful waves of color and where you rarely see a weed or a deadhead, and I was finally hooked! I now love to work with perennials and am having a great time trying to transform my backyard into something resembling the gardens I saw in England. Considering my landscaping consisted of a single berm and two neglected yews when I moved in six years ago, it's been a slow job and a real challenge, but one that I enjoy.

I married my wife, Mary, three years ago this April. She retired at the end of February after 34 years of service at Deere & Company where she was manager of media relations. Mary loves working in the garden as well and has a good eye for putting together beautiful container plantings for our patio and porches. Our only children are the furry, four-legged type. There's Franny who is, as best as we can tell, a West Highland Terrier/Poodle mix adopted from the humane society; Chloe, a seven pound Maltese who thinks and acts like she weighs 80 pounds more than she does; and Bonne, our red Maine Coon cat who's not a bit scared of either dog because she outweighs them both.

This July will mark 36 years of working for Deere & Company in the field of information technology. Besides spending 22 years at Deere World Headquarters, I worked the other 14 years at John Deere's East Moline Foundry before it closed. I'm currently an IT analyst in the Finance Division supporting the software that remits payroll and unemployment taxes as well as creates all of Deere's W-2s and 1099-Rs. I also retired as a Master Gunnery Sergeant after serving over 23 years in the Marine Corps Reserves. Besides gardening, I enjoy reading, antiquing with my wife, travelling and, when I retire this August, plan to get back into woodworking.

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



# HORT CLINIC NEWS

Submitted by Bob Krush

- During the first two weeks (April 1<sup>st</sup> – April 15<sup>th</sup>) of the 2010 MG staffed Hort Clinic, 15 of the 22 available sessions (68%) were staffed by MGs. Many of these sessions were covered by first-year MGs along with their mentors. A BIG thank you to the mentors – JoAnn Garlough, Bob Krush, David Sunleaf, and Karen Truesdell. Thanks also to Diane Soltau for volunteering.
- How do you sign up for the hort clinic? Check the calendar on-line at <http://calendar.yahoo.com/scottcomg> to find available dates. We also keep a calendar at the extension office. Call the extension office at 359-7577, e-mail Joy at [venhorst@iastate.edu](mailto:venhorst@iastate.edu), or stop in at the office.
- **ORGANIC MULCH ALERT** One of the organic mulches recommended is cocoa-bean hulls, which is a by-product of chocolate production. Most dog owners know that chocolate is poisonous to dogs. I recently received an e-mail from a friend, who knows that I garden and have dogs. The e-mail contained warnings about not to use cocoa-bean hulls as mulch in areas that are accessible to your dogs. Being a loyal Hort Clinic minion, I had to research this allegation. I found three extension websites (Illinois, Michigan State, and Virginia) which addressed cocoa-bean hulls as mulch and they all pretty said the same thing. Following is an excerpt from an article by Sandra Mason of the University of Illinois Extension.

“Like other mulches the cocoa hulls help to prevent weed seed germination, moderate soil temperatures and help to conserve moisture. However, something I had never considered was that dogs might be attracted to the sweet smell of the cocoa mulch. Ok, so what? So the dog likes to roll and dig in the cocoa mulch. If you are a dog owner, hopefully you know not to feed your dog chocolate since it can be poisonous to them. However, research has shown that cocoa mulch, which contains some of the same toxins as in chocolate, may be ingested as dogs dig through it.

Michelle Wiesbrook and Sharon Gwaltney-Brant reported in a recent University of Illinois Extension *Home, Yard and Garden Pest* newsletter that chocolate contains two compounds toxic to dogs. They are methylxanthines, specifically theobromine and caffeine.

So how much is too much for a pooch? As Wiesbrook and Gwaltney-Brant reported, the amount of methylxanthines in cocoa hulls is substantial at 255 mg/oz. And that's just the theobromine; no data was available for caffeine. In comparison, milk chocolate has only 64 mg/oz of methylxanthines, and less than 1 oz of milk chocolate/lb (2 oz/kg) is potentially lethal to dogs. So 65 oz (4 lb) of milk chocolate would be potentially lethal for a 65-lb dog. But, if she were to eat cocoa-hull mulch, it would only take about 2.25 oz to produce mild signs and 12 oz to be potentially lethal. Of course, these amounts would be much less for a smaller dog.

Some manufacturers do include a warning statement on the bag. If you have an older dog that isn't all that inquisitive, cocoa mulch may not be a problem, but if you have a young dog that tends to dig and chew, you may want to consider different mulch.”

# The Gardener's Dirt

Scott County Extension  
875 Tanglefoot Lane  
Bettendorf, IA 52722-1690  
(563) 359-7577 Fax (563) 355-6569  
www.extension.iastate.edu/scott



## Yard Clippings

Submitted by Christine Rice



Our attitude towards plants is a singularly narrow one. If we see any immediate utility in a plant we foster it. If for any reason we find its presence undesirable or merely a matter of indifference, we may condemn it to destruction forthwith.  
–Rachel Carson, *Silent Spring* (1963), page 70.

Passion for display appears the ruling note in English horticulture of every kind and in every period: we want a show. – Reginald Farrer, Introduction to E. A. Bowles' *My Garden In Spring*, (1914), page 94.

*The Quotable Gardener*, Editor Charles Elliot. New York: The Lyons Press. 1999. Pages 70, 94.

Good seed makes a good crop.  
–English Proverb, page 64.

*A Gardener's Bouquet of Quotations*, Editor Maria Polushkin Robbins. New Jersey: The Ecco Press. 1993. Pages 64.

One is nearer God's heart in a garden than anywhere else on earth. –Dorothy Frances Gurney, page 21.

Finding a place for a garden can be just like a treasure hunt.  
–Sheryl London, page 31.

To have the harvest we must sow the seed. –Liberty Hyde Bailey, page 41.

What is it about gardening that works out something bad? – Anne Chotzinoff Grossman, page 46.

Working in the garden gives me something beyond the enjoyment of the senses. It gives me a profound feeling of inner peace. –Ruth Stout, page 46.

*The Gardener's Guide to Life*. Editor Criswell Freeman. Nashville, TN: Walnut Grove Press. 1997. Pages 21, 31, 41, 46.