

THE GARDENER'S DIRT

The Latest Scoop from the Scott County Master Gardeners
February 2011

2011 MG Advisory Board

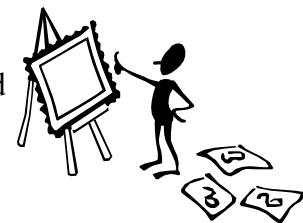
Year Elected (term)	Name	Notes
2011 (1 st)	Michele Dane	Chair
Appointed 2010 (1 st)	John Hale	Vice Chair
2011 (1 st)	Bob Cohee	Secretary
Appointed 2010 (1 st)	Chuck Doss	Treasurer
2011 (2 nd)	Vito Fiore	
2010 (1 st)	JoAnn Garlough	
2011 (1 st)	Linda Kuffer	
Appointed 2010 (1 st)	Beth Lotspeich	
N/A	open	Volunteer Coordinator (nonvoting)
N/A	Chris Mostaert	Intern Rep. (nonvoting)
N/A	Becky Bray / Duane Gissel	Staff (nonvoting)

Board Briefs

Submitted by Michele Dane

The first Advisory Board meeting of the new year was held January 6th. It was reported that 164 perpetual calendars had been sold to date. Board members were encouraged to sell five calendars each. At \$7.00 each, these beautiful calendars should go quickly.

The board voted unanimously to commend the social committee for a wonderful holiday party. The committee did a great job in organizing and carrying off a memorable event.



Details for the annual meeting were discussed and finalized.

A complete set of minutes for the January 6th meeting is available at the extension office. Please join us at the next meeting, January 6th.

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.

Well Worth A Read!!

Submitted by Wendi Laake

Now that the outdoor growing season is past it is time for my second favorite hobby, curling up with a good book. For those of you who like to combine hobbies like I do, I have put together a little reading list for the long, cold winter.

Grow Great Grub: Organic Food from Small Spaces

By Gayla Trail Publisher: Clarkson Potter, c2010

This book has nice glossy photos and some really great ideas. A nice seed starting and planting chart is a great reference. Lots of herb, flower and heirloom recipes. Canning guide and other garden related crafts. This is a great book for a crafter who likes to cook too. Trail also has a popular website/blog www.yougrowgirl.com.



The Small Budget Gardener: All the Dirt on Saving Money in Your Garden

By Maureen Gilmer Publisher: Cool Springs Press, c2009.

Gilmer's book has pretty basic gardening information. Some really neat recycling projects in chapters 6 - Don't Throw it Away: Recycle and Reuse Everything and 7 - Tips and Tricks: Twice the Garden for Half the Price. One of my favorites is the vintage chandelier water feature. Nice landscape ideas too. This book features a really unique reference section in chapter 11 called Your Tax Dollars at Work: Government Payoffs which has information on the USDA and the PLANTS database. The photos and illustrations in this book are rather basic.

Garden Whimsy

By Tovah Martin and Richard W. Brown Publisher: Houghton Mifflin Company, c1999

The oldest book in this group but still relevant and fresh, this book is a neat collection of featured gardens and narrative descriptions. The cover photo of Venus in a prom dress centered in a lush garden really pulled me in. The featured gardens are from all over the country so there are several different types of climates. A lot of the focus is on garden art. One of my favorite passages is in chapter 4, Peter Wooster: Lord Peter Whimsy. The author describes Peter Wooster's 1955 melon colored Chevy as a part of the garden landscape. The city of Davenport certainly wouldn't go for that here and definitely not in Bettendorf, the premier city but the author does make a convincing argument.

The Nonstop Garden: A Step-by-Step Guide to Smart Plant Choices and Four-Season Designs

By Stephanie Cohen and Jennifer Benner Publisher: Timber Press, c2010

This book is a riot of color. The photos are wonderful and the color combinations are just a knockout. The featured gardens are very modern looking and there are some great ideas in this book for color combinations. Lots of sample layouts and great chart in the back called Peak Performance at a Glance. This chart is easy to use and a handy little tool. They could have used a whole lot more on winter pointers in this book for the title. The book is a total of 248 pages with *only* 5 pages devoted to winter. As we know winter is a lot longer than that!

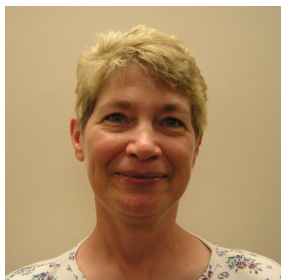
Starter Vegetable Gardens: 24 No-Fail Plans for Small Organic Gardens

By Barbara Pleasant Publisher: Storey, c2010

Now this book was a bit of a surprise. The cover did not grab me. As you can tell from the previous reviews, I am a sucker for nice glossy photos. This cover is a rather bland drawing of veggies but I am so glad that I decided to do the old thumb through at the library shelf. This book had some great ideas! It is really a guide to establish a new garden with several different plans/strategies on how to go about it. The most interesting was the easy-care bag garden. Pleasant describes how to establish a garden year-by-year for three years with bags of topsoil. You say, ok really, duh but they grow the produce *in* the bag. "The garden is big enough to keep you in fresh food all summer but not so big that it will take over your life." And by the third year you have an established garden plot that tripled in size from 64 to 168 square feet. It is a really manageable project for a beginner and a neat plan for a more seasoned gardener wanting to overhaul their garden. Well worth a read.

I hope that you will give some of these books a read. I really enjoyed them as the season wound down. All of these books are available through the public library system. Happy reading!

Meet Your Advisory Board Member: Linda Kuffer



Hello Master Gardeners! My name is Linda Kuffer and I am part of the Class of 2009. Originally from western New York, I find gardening here similar to gardening there. Vegetable gardening is my 'first love' because I love to cook and the fresh produce in the summer is heavenly! We have a wonderful strawberry patch and harvested about 125 quarts of strawberries this past summer. I can eat strawberries three meals a day! When I was about 6 years old my mother would pay me five cents for every quart of strawberries I would pick from our family garden.

Then she would take them to the local grocery store and sell them.

I am Purchasing Officer for Metropolitan Medical Laboratory, so gardening offers me an opportunity to step away from my job and forget about emails and phone calls.

My husband joins me in the garden and is always ready to do the heavy lifting, pull weeds, or run the rototiller. But it is important that I keep the hedge trimmers away from him (sometimes things get trimmed before they have had a chance to flower.)

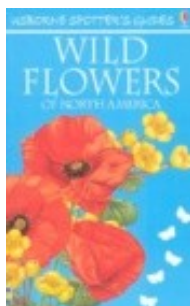
Between the two of us we have 6 kids and 10 grandkids. Unfortunately they are all too far away to see regularly. When it is too cold to garden we like to hit the slopes and do a little skiing.

As a relatively new Master Gardener and even newer Board Member, I look forward to learning from all the veterans in the organization.

Thanks!!



Thank you JoAnn Garlough for the donation of the book *Container Gardening* by *Stephanie Donaldson* to the ISU Scott County Extension Master Gardener Library.



Thank you Nancy Gruber for the donation of the book *Spotter's Guide to Wildflowers of North America* to the ISU Scott County Extension Master Gardener Library.

Thoughts From the Belly

By: Dan Mays—Ironbelly1@aol.com

It has been several months since I have created an installment of this column. Perhaps I should explain that for a number of months my work schedule has morphed into ten-hour days, seven days per week. In addition, since last spring, I also began attending classes at St. Ambrose University to complete my bachelor's degree. In addition to an already intense work schedule, my studies required an additional commitment of 20 to 30 hours of homework per week. For reasons of prioritization, *Thoughts From the Belly* took a several month hiatus. I simply had no uncommitted time slots.

This column was not the only thing put on hold. Work in my gardens also was placed further down the prioritization list. Fortunately, this period of benign neglect in the gardens provided an excellent test of a few of my garden design theories. As many of you might already know, I believe that most gardens suffer from three adverse consequences of design flaws:

1. Far too much time is wasted on the color wheel and flower color selection while concepts that actually create more impact are ignored.
2. Most designs are too complicated.

Most gardens require too much endlessly repetitive work—the result of poor design.

Quite simply, the test was to see how my gardens performed without routine nudging from my guiding hands. Other than planting a few veggies, edging all the beds and planting a few flats of the perfumed annual edger, [Sweet Alyssum](#), I only pulled a few weeds that were really glaring at me and causing embarrassment. The mulch and beds packed with tough plants—many of them natives—performed exceptionally well. Although I could see a few extra weeds poking their heads out, it is doubtful that casual garden guests even noticed. Quite frankly, the trees, shrubs, and native plants boldly solidified the garden beds and serendipitous splashes of color appeared and senesced in a successional progression orchestrated by varying bloom times of selected perennials.

Weeding has never been much of an issue in my beds except in one area where I have been attempting to use [Curly Allium](#) as an edging plant. I love the look of this plant, especially when used as a pathway edger beside high-traffic areas. The problem is that without persistent weeding, I have been unable to keep the bluegrass from my pathways from tillering under and into the Curly Allium. By the time the grass grows tall enough to see it, the roots have become firmly enmeshed with the Allium roots. To get the grass out, you have to also rip-out the Allium and separate the roots—a tedious, time-consuming process. When I get done, I feel like I have just practiced that old Viet Nam-era nonsense: “*I had to destroy the bed in order to save it.*” I love this plant, but with my current schedule I am going to replace it with something requiring lower maintenance. At a later date, I hope to learn a better way to utilize this delightful little onion. Any plant (like this one) that reliably blooms when little else is in bloom deserves my consideration.

The performance of Sweet Alyssum as an edger is superior to Curly Allium largely because of growth habit. The Alyssum is a ground-hugging sprawler which effectively shades out most weed competition. On the other hand, Curly Allium also hugs the ground, but does so without creating a blanket of shade. Most weed seeds require light to germinate. In reality, the Alyssum plays the role of mulch in the area it occupies. For the most part, mulching prevents most weeds not by smothering them, but rather by preventing weed seed germination because the growth-triggering sunlight never reaches the weed seeds lying in wait.

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



Upcoming Classes & Events:

CEU's	Course #	Topic	When	Where	Cost	Instructor	Registration Information
*	-	Winter Gardening Fair	February 19, 2011 8:30 a.m.-3:30 p.m.	Kirkwood Community College (workshops held in Cedar Hall & Iowa Hall) 6301 Kirkwood Blvd SW Cedar Rapids, IA	\$49.00 Includes lunch	Various	(319) 398-1022 or 1-800-332-8833 Register online (Brochure & reg. form available at ISU Extension office.)
*	-	Shade Tree Short Course	February 23-25, 2011	Scheman Building ISU Ames, IA	\$150.00 \$175.00 after 2/14	Various	http://www.ucs.iastate.edu/mnet/shadetree/home.html
NA	-	Introduction to Making Bent Willow Furniture	February 26, 2011 8:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m.	Nahant Marsh Education Center	\$40.00	Becky Horton	Continuing Ed Class EICC
*	-	Nursery School Lessons in Gardening	February 26, 2011 8:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m.	I Wireless Center Moline, IL	\$45.00	Various	Online under registrations at http://web.extension.illinois.edu/rockisland/
NA	-	Geocaching	March 5, 2011	Nahant Marsh Education Center	\$10.00 Children 8-18 \$5	John Morgan	Continuing Ed Class EICC
3	-	Invasive Plant Workshop	March 10, 2011 9—noon or 5:30-8:30	Duck Creek Lodge 3300 E Locust Davenport	\$5.00 (includes workshop & August 6th field day (9-noon))	Various	359-7577 ISU Scott County Extension
2.5	-	Money Really Does Grow on Trees or Opportunities in Agroforestry	March 15, 2011 6:30 p.m.—9:00 p.m.	Nanant Marsh Education Center	\$12.00	Tom Wahl	TBA
2	-	ISU Scott County Extension Hort Clinic Training	TBA	ISU Scott County Extension 875 Tanglefoot Lane, Bett	NC	Various	359-7577 ISU Scott County Extension Master Gardeners Only
*	-	2011 Art of Gardening	March 19, 2011	Muscatine Comm College Strahan Hall, 152 Colorado St Muscatine, IA	\$40.00	Various	Rebecca Each 563-263-5701 beach@iastate.edu
*	-	2011 All-Iowa Hort Expo	March 25-27, 2011	Bridge View Center 102 Church St., Ottumwa, IA	TBA	Various	TBA
*	-	QCCA Lawn & Garden Show	March 25-27, 2011	QCCC Expo Center 2621 4th Ave., R I, IL	TBA	Various	Walk in
NA	-	Introduction to Digital Nature Photography	April 16, 2011 9:00 a.m.—3:30 p.m.	Nahant Marsh Education Center	TBA	Bob Bryant	Continuing Ed Class EICC
TBA	-	Summer Webinar Series TBA	May 24, 2011 TBA	ISU Scott County Extension 875 Tanglefoot Lane, Bett	\$5.00	TBA	359-7577 ISU Scott County Extension
TBA	-	Summer Webinar Series TBA	June 28, 2011	ISU Scott County Extension 875 Tanglefoot Lane, Bett	\$5.00	TBA	359-7577 ISU Scott County Extension
TBA	-	Summer Webinar Series TBA	July 26, 2011	ISU Scott County Extension 875 Tanglefoot Lane, Bett	\$5.00	TBA	359-7577 ISU Scott County Extension
3	-	Invasive Plant Field Day	August 6, 2011 9:00 a.m. to noon	Black Hawk Historic Sit Singing Bird Lodge	\$5.00 (included in the work- shop fee if attended on March 10)	Various	359-7577 ISU Scott County Extension
TBA	-	Summer Webinar Series TBA	August 23, 2011	ISU Scott County Extension 875 Tanglefoot Lane, Bett	\$5.00	TBA	359-7577 ISU Scott County Extension
*	-	2011 International Master Gardener Conference	October 11-14, 2011	Charleston Convention Center Charleston, W. Virginia	TBA	Various	Info at http://imgc.ext.wvu.edu/

* To be determined by sessions attended. Submit proof of sessions attended to the ISU Scott County Extension Horticulturist.

Items To Be Picked Up!!

The following have items to be picked up at the Extension Office.

Judy Blake
Karen Crawford
Melanie Hayes
Marilyn Mcallister

Laurie Boussmaerie Elliott
Becky Danner
Matt Hogan
Kevin McMahan

Rhonda Cooper
Bob Krush
Ellen Kelley
Jacki O'Donnell

Eve Corbin
Naomi Haertjens
Sue Laimans
Elena Robertson

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



I feel every garden should have some element of mystery in its design: whatever the size, it is best if not all visible at once. The largest garden looks smaller if you can see it in one glance. Even in the smallest area it must be possible to plant so that there is some element of surprise: peer behind a shrub or over a low wall to discover some pleasant composition of textured leaves or a plant flowering secretly; turn a corner to the “surprised” by some new color; have your mood changed by stepping out of shadow into sunshine. Gardens should invite exploration with a path that curves out of sight: it may lead nowhere, but has the effect of making you feel that more is to come. –Penelope Hobhouse, page 241.

A Gardener's Bouquet of Quotations, Editor Maria Polushkin Robbins. New Jersey: The Ecco Press. 1993. Page 241.

If you want to be happy for an hour, have a party.
If you want to be happy for a week, kill your pig and eat it. But if you want to be happy all your life, become a gardener.
–Chinese Saying, page 25.

The wise gardener anticipates June in January. –
House and Garden, page 37.

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

In order to live off the garden, you practically have to live in it. –Kin Hubbard, page 49.

The Gardener's Guide to Life. Editor Criswell Freeman. Nashville, TN: Walnut Grove Press. 1997. Pages 25, 37, 46, 49.