



GARDENER'S DIRT

The Latest Scoop from the Scott County Master Gardeners

January 2009

Annual Meeting 2009
Monday, January 12, 2009

Doors Open at 6:00 p.m.
Meeting begins at 7:00 p.m.

Reservations required no later than Jan 6th by phone 359-7577 or email vgall@iastate.edu

Dinner will be provided by "A Guy and a Grill." The menu is grilled chicken breast, au gratin potatoes, Caesar salad, dinner roll and a Dessert Buffet.

We need volunteers to make a dessert that serves 10 or more for our Dessert Buffet. If you'd like to be one of 10 MGs to help us out with this task, contact Rich Craddick at rich_craddick@kentfeeds.com or 391-3734. He'll provide you with the details.

Fine print: Remember, you won't be able to vote in the Advisory Board Election if you don't have your hours turned in. Get your hours turned in by December 31, 2008—no extensions on this deadline!

Bring your donations of the items listed below to the Annual Meeting

Food Pantry Donation List

Here's a shopping list for the items requested by our 3 designated Food Pantries:

✂ -----

- | | |
|--|---------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Peanut Butter | <input type="checkbox"/> Bar Soap |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Tuna | <input type="checkbox"/> Toilet Paper |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Soup | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Macaroni & Cheese | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Crackers | |

✂ -----

Clip this out and take it with you to the grocery store before the Annual Meeting.

The local Food Pantries who will be receiving our donations are as follows:

*Central Community Circle Food Pantry—6th and Vine, Davenport; Headed by Sr. Marilyn Shierbrock

*New Hope Presbyterian Food Pantry— 4209 W. Locust, Davenport
Director Sylvia Seymour is a Scott County Master Gardener

*Friendly House—1221 Myrtle St., Davenport. The Kids' Gardening Committee teaches pre-school children and maintains a summer garden with elementary school children.

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.

Holiday Party 2008

Submitted by Amy Hinke



On Monday, December 15th 56 Master Gardeners and guests braved the cold and icy conditions to attend the 2008 Holiday party held at the Butterworth Center in Moline. Everyone had the opportunity to enjoy an ice-breaker game, guessing what garden item was identified on their backs until 6:30 when the soup buffet opened. Eleven delicious soups, along with many breads, crackers, and desserts were provided by the Social Committee and other volunteers. After dinner the drawing for door prizes was held, and attendees had the opportunity to continue visiting while enjoying the background music of Christmas carols. Games were enjoyed in the library, and the evening was rounded out with an ornament exchange and more visiting.

The Social Committee would like to thank the following individuals for donations: Jan Martin, Joleen Bakken, and Carol Newkirk.

The committee would also like to thank all members and other Master Gardeners who provided the meal and worked tirelessly behind the scenes to make this year's Holiday party another smashing success. We wish you a safe and happy holiday season and we'll see you next year for numerous fun and exciting social events!

2008 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 and mulching trees on November 15, 2008, Middle Park, Bettendorf.

Wayne Hannel provided an educational session about pruning and mulching prior to the hands-on activity.

Approximately 27 volunteers (11 Master Gardeners) assisted with the pruning and mulching. In addition to the Master Gardeners, volunteers came with many backgrounds (some dual categories): Community Tree Stewards = 4; Bettendorf Tree Committee = 8; Bettendorf Park Board = 1; Pleasant Valley High School = 6; Bettendorf High School = 3; concerned citizen = 1.

Master Gardeners assisting with the effort included:

James Danielson
Sheila Lang
Ed Sharkness
Dianne Williams

Hal Davis
Doug McDonald
Andrea Springmeier

Wayne Hannel
Ron Phillips
Joe Stewart

Ellen Kelley
Doug Truesdell
Sally Stewart

Approximately 83 trees were pruned; approximately 40 trees were mulched.

The temperature was an invigorating 35 degrees with 20 mph wind at pruning time.

Thanks again!

➔ **Remember to turn in your volunteer hours.**

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



Adult Education Activities for 2008

Submitted by Ray Wolf

A successful year is coming to an end for the Adult Education committee and Speaker's Bureau. Four classes were taught at the Extension office by Tom Dywiak (Starting Seeds and Plant Propagation), Jackie Arvidson (Shade Gardens), Laurie Elliott (Container Gardens), and myself (Butterfly Gardens). These topics were selected based on a survey conducted at the Annual Meeting back in January, so your input and attendance were critical in making these classes a success. The assistance of class facilitators led by Marilyn McAllister was a great help to the speakers.

Classes provided by Iowa State specialists, Duane, and other Master Gardeners included the Shade Tree Short course at ISU, Pruning Ornamental Trees and Shrubs, and a number of additional classes presented by MG's in partnership with other gardening groups.

In addition to these classes, Sylvia Seymour and Tom Monroe took the lead in developing and delivering a series of basic gardening classes to seniors at the Davenport North YMCA. Topics included garden preparation, annuals, vegetables, perennials, daylilies and irises. We plan to continue our relationship with the Y and perhaps expand from the senior audience to include families.

Speaker's Bureau, led by Dorothy Kroeger, enjoyed a successful year with 15-20 requests for talks from around the county. Some of these speaker requests were for weekdays, which can present a challenge in finding someone available to give a talk. So if you are interested in speaking on garden topics and can adjust your schedule, please note that on the survey to be given at the Annual Meeting.

We are planning to have both a spring and fall schedule of classes in 2009. Topics will be based on your feedback at the Annual Meeting. Keep an eye on the Dirt for the latest information on available classes.

There are a number of groups in the area from Cedar Rapids to Clinton to Rock Island to Muscatine who also present excellent learning opportunities. I would encourage you to check these out as it is a chance to hear different speakers and meet fellow gardeners from around the area.

The number of class offerings provided by gardening groups has expanded greatly in the past few years, so it is a challenge for us to remain relevant in this area. Your ideas and suggestions are always welcome.

Board Briefs

Submitted by June Breeding



At the last Board meeting on December 4th, the board heard a presentation from Wayne Hannel, Chair of the Tree Planting and Care Committee, in reference to the Committee's 2008 projects and anticipated projects for 2009. Wayne will continue as the Chair of the Tree Planting and Care Committee for another year.

The Board would like to thank Michelle Gheer and Amy Hinke for their hard work chairing the Social Committee. You did an excellent job. In 2009 the Social Committee will be chaired by Sally Freeman and Rhonda Cooper.

The Board also reviewed plans for the upcoming Annual Meeting on January 12th at 6 p.m. We encourage every member to attend as there are several board positions open that will be filled during the meeting.

A complete set of minutes from this meeting is available at the Extension office. Please join us at the next Board meeting on Thursday, January 8th at 6:30pm.

Thoughts From The Belly

Dan Mays—Ironbelly1@aol.com

Last month I wrote about winter activities which keep us gardeners occupied through the winter months. As I write this column, it is currently -6 degrees (Yes, below zero.) and the wind is blowing 25 to 30 miles per hour. Needless to say, my trowel is going to remain on the shelf today. However, I still have a busy, gardening-related day planned.

Three new books have recently arrived and my lovely wife Cyndia just made a fresh pot of coffee. After reading my email, I will probably head out to the sunroom to peruse the new books. I may also sort through a few seeds I collected this past growing season. However, I am especially looking forward to reading one of my new books, [Plant-Driven Design: Creating Gardens That Honor Plants, Place, and Spirit](#) by Scott Ogden and Lauren Springer Ogden.

I have heard Lauren Springer (now Ogden) speak several times. I have always been impressed by her no nonsense approach to design. In this book, Lauren and her husband Scott, directly challenge the standard landscape design advice. Not so coincidentally, this is the same “standard advice” so many of us have absolutely failed to implement ... let alone comprehend. Perhaps next month, I will be able to provide a review of this new book.

In the mean time, I thought I might provide a review of a recent afternoon spent “gardening” in my sunroom.

I was quietly enjoying my post-Thanksgiving, Friday afternoon playing the role of amateur botanist. I had gone out to my gardens to collect seed from my native planting of *Ruellia humilis* (Wild Petunia).

The wife was gone and I had the house all to myself. I was seated at my favorite seed cleaning spot -- a glass-topped patio table in our sun room. As I looked outside, I could still see remaining patches of frost in shaded areas. Conversely, I was reveling in the warmth of the sunshine streaming into the sun room. No noise. No distractions. It was just me and my little pile of freshly gleaned seed capsules -- also basking in the sun.

Having just finished stripping all the seed capsules from their stems, I was enjoying a cup of coffee; dreaming of little *Ruellia* seedlings poking their green cotyledons up through potting soil in the months to come. All of a sudden, it was like Yosemite Sam had entered the room, pistols a-blazing. Shrapnel was bouncing off my glasses and ricochets were flying everywhere.

I suddenly realized that it was the seed capsules which were exploding. YIKES!!! My meticulously collected seeds were being strewn about the room; leaving me with only a pile of duff and empty *Ruellia* “cartridges”. I quickly slid the remaining seed capsules into an old wire food strainer that I often use to remove dust and debris from a collection of seeds. I then covered the top of the strainer with paper, thereby containing my “petunia popcorn”.

A little online research quickly discovered that the seeds of *Ruellia humilis* are described as: “explosively dehiscent”. (Now you tell me!) In fact, a plant cousin is even named *Ruellia strepens* (*Strepens* is the Latin word for rustling or making a loud noise, presumably referring to the explosive fruit.)

The perils of obtaining your botanical pleasure!

Did You Know?

Submitted by Ann DeSalvo



In case you received or bought a Norfolk Island pine for the holidays

- A Norfolk Island pine (*Auracaria heterophylla*) is not a pine tree at all, or even a conifer. It got its name from a five-mile long island in the middle of nowhere, east of Australia. The island was discovered by Captain Cook who named it after the Duchess of Norfolk. The Norfolk Pines in our stores come from Florida. They do make good house plants even if you don't turn yours into a Christmas tree.
- They require lots of light, so in a south facing window it will do well, possibly growing up to 6 feet.
- Their soil should be just lightly moist at all times. Too little water and the lower branches will droop a bit and the needles will yellow.
- A requirement is to make sure the plant has a range of temperatures to 70 degrees in the day and down to 55 at night. A bit of humidity helps too.
- When you buy a Norfolk pine, you can start small or buy large. Smaller plants will need repotting every 12 months. Once they get 4 feet tall, you can usually wait two or three years between repotting. Just remember on their natural island they can grow to 200 feet tall.



Yard Clippings

Submitted by Christine Rice



January is the best time for gardeners. From the window of the attic where I write, the gardens are bare to their bones, neat and clean, nicely edged, weed-free. They are an empty page on which to draw the garden of my dreams.

—Sara Stein, *My Weeds*, 1988, page 7.

During some of the warm days that nearly always come towards the end of February, if one knows where to look in some sunny, sheltered corner of a hazel copse, there will be sure to be some Primroses, and the first scent of the year's first Primrose is no small pleasure.

—Gertrude Jekyll, *Wood and Garden*, 1899 page 14.

A Gardener's Nosegay. Editor Jude Patterson. New York: Barnes and Noble. 2003. Pages 7, 14.

Of all the floures in the mede,
Thanne love I most these flours white and rede,
Swiche as men callen daysyes in our toun...
Allas, that I ne had Englyssh, ryme or prose,
Suffisant this flour to preyse aright!

--Geoffrey Chaucer, Prologue to *The Legend of Good Women*, (c.a. 1380-1386), page 69.

A little studied negligence is becoming to a garden.
—Eleanor Perenyi, *Green Thoughts*, (1981), page 85.

There is nothing like the first hot days of spring when the gardener stops wondering if it's too soon to plant the dahlias and starts wondering if it's too late.

—Henry Mitchell, *The Essential Earthman* (1981), page 55.

The Quotable Gardener, Editor Charles Elliot. New York: The Lyons Press. 1999. Page 69, 55, 85.

A garden is a grand teacher. It teaches patience and careful watchfulness; it teaches industry and thrift; above all, it teaches entire trust.

—Gertrude Jekyll, page 243.

The great challenge for the garden designer is not to make the garden look natural, but to make the garden so that the people in it will feel natural.

—Lawrence Halprin, page 11.

A Gardener's Bouquet of Quotations, Editor Maria Polushkin Robbins. New Jersey: The Ecco Press. 1993. Page 11, 243

The Gardener's Dirt

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Upcoming Classes & Events:

CEU's	Course #	Topic	When	Where	Cost	Instructor	Registration Information
		Master Gardener Advisory Board Meeting	January 8, 2008 6:30 p.m.	Scott County Extension Office 875 Tanglefoot Ln, Bett			
		Master Gardener Annual Meeting	January 12, 2009 6:00 p.m. Meeting at 7:00 p.m.	Scott County Extension Office 875 Tanglefoot Ln, Bett			Reservations required no later than January 6th 359-7577
*	NA	International MG Conference	March 22-26, 2009	Las Vegas, NV	TBA	various	http://www.unce.unr.edu/imgc/

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

HAPPY NEW YEAR

