



FARM AND HOME NEWS



CHARLIE BAIER, Iowa State University Howard County Extension Education Director

FOR THE WEEK OF May 9, 2005

ISU Extension to Host Planning & Zoning Workshop

ISU Extension is presenting a workshop for local officials, and anyone else interested in learning about local planning and zoning. The program will cover land use planning, the basics of the zoning ordinance, and the roles of the city council, county board of supervisors, planning and zoning commissioners and the board of adjustment. The workshop will be held **Calmar**, Thursday, May 19, Northeast Iowa Dairy Center & at **Mason City**, Wednesday, June 22, Mason City City Hall. The workshop will begin with registration at 5:30pm. A light supper will be provided. For more information please contact Howard County Extension office at 563-547-3001 or Gary Taylor, ISU Extension at (515) 294-2973. More information can also be found on the web at www.extension.iastate.edu/communities/pandz.html

Rhubarb

The ideal site for rhubarb is in full sun with a well-drained, fertile soil. Incorporate organic matter like compost or well-rotted manure on less than ideal sites. Plant in spring, as soon as the soil is workable. The buds should be planted 2-3 inches below the soil surface. Do not fertilize at planting, but work in organic matter with existing soil. Do not harvest for the first year or two. By the third year, you can harvest stalks for about a month by pulling stalks up and sideways when they are 10-15 inches long. The leaves contain a moderate poison, and should not be fed to livestock. It is a good idea to side-dress plants with 10-10-10 fertilizer in spring, before growth starts. For more about rhubarb, ask at your local County Extension Office for PM-719 Rhubarb in the Home Garden.

Walkway Hosta

I like to use hostas as a border along the walkway from the sidewalk up to my house. If you are thinking about this accent for your home, here are some tips to follow. Hostas love shade and although some will survive in full sun, they will not really thrive. The second thing to remember is that a hosta can grow to be quite large. When you plant them, be sure to leave plenty of space for them to grow, or they will take over your walkway about mid-summer. The common hosta I use grow to be about 30 inches in diameter. So when I plant them by the walkway, I place them about 18 inches from the edge of the walkway and about 30 inches apart. Within three or four years they will grow to their full size and fill in all the space between the plants. Be sure to carefully read the directions that come with the particular plant you buy to determine the spacing need of that species.